

Managerial Perspectives on Employee Wellbeing in the North-East Region of Romania

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Abstract. *Employee wellbeing is an important factor in achieving success in an organization, influencing productivity, job satisfaction and employee engagement. Despite its importance, many organizations struggle to implement comprehensive wellbeing programs that address all dimensions of employee health. This study explores the perspectives of 30 managers of organizations in the North-East Region of Romania, from different fields of activity (agriculture, construction, trade and IT services), who have between 5-200 employees under their control, on the wellbeing of employees in their organization, considering five dimensions of wellbeing from existing Scientific Literature: physical, emotional, social, financial and psychological. In January - February 2025, a structured questionnaire was administered to these 30 managers from the North-East Area of Romania to collect data on the implementation of wellbeing initiatives in their organizations. The results of the study show that most organizations have implemented physical and emotional wellbeing initiatives, in contrast to other wellbeing programs, such as financial ones, which the organizations in the present study do not emphasize. On the other hand, according to the results of this study, social wellbeing initiatives are considered by these organizations, the study highlighting that employee-employer cooperation is essential for all these organizations. However, the study has limitations, given the small number of managers who responded to the questionnaire, and its results cannot be applied to the entire northeastern region of Romania. In the future, a study is needed that has a broader perspective on employee wellbeing, with a larger sample of respondents and that also involves the perspectives of employees. The present study also offers insights for organizations that want to focus on employee wellbeing by taking into account each dimension of wellbeing. At the same time, this research highlights the importance of integrating wellbeing initiatives into organizational strategies to create a healthier and more engaged workforce.*

Keywords: employee wellbeing, organizational performance, manager perspectives, wellbeing initiatives, workplace health.

Introduction

People spend most of their day at work, in fact these days people spend more time at work and less time at home, therefore they are being influenced by their work environment, colleagues and managers. Consequently, the workplace is the place where wellbeing could most easily be spread (Quirk et al., 2018).

Numerous academic research (Nordstrom et al., 2020) suggests that work could have a negative impact on employee wellbeing, with research documenting precisely how work often affects mental health, causing negative effects (e.g., stress, obesity, emotional exhaustion and even the "burnout" phenomenon), so we can say without a doubt that work has long been considered a social determinant of health.

Creating a climate of psychological balance and satisfaction of inner needs for employees is essential. A recent study (Weziak-Bialowolska, et. al., 2023) shows that employees who perceive their workplace climate as an environment that cares about employees are substantially less likely to be diagnosed with depression.

There is a lot of research that tries to identify different elements that influence wellbeing, elements such as job satisfaction, work engagement, organizational commitment, positive and negative emotions at work, positive and negative affect, intrinsic motivation and wellbeing (Kun et al., 2017).

Substantial evidence supports the notion that a healthy workforce provides a competitive edge in the business world (Fabius et al., 2021). By placing a strong emphasis on the physical and mental health of employees, companies are more likely to encourage employee ownership of the organization's success. In addition, such organizations are better prepared to select and hire the best specialists, having increased efficiency in the recruitment and selection of candidates (Fabius et al., 2021).

All organizational processes should be directed towards a goal that constantly supports and protects employee wellbeing. This assume organizations to actively seek and implement strategies that enhance the wellbeing of their employees (Treven et al., 2015).

Wellbeing management focuses primarily on the employee, recognizing a direct link between their wellbeing and the healthy development of the organization. The wellbeing of employees significantly influences the wellbeing of the organization (Treven et al., 2015).

Studies (Chakraborty et al., 2019) have shown that wellbeing initiatives in an organization not only improve employee health, but also contribute to improved organizational performance, reduced absenteeism and higher levels of engagement. This study is based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001), which assumes that wellbeing initiatives act as resources that mitigate workplace stress and increase employee resilience. This research explores managers' perspectives to gain deeper insight into how organizations in northeastern Romania address employee wellbeing and to identify areas in need of improvement.

Given that the literature (Kowalskia & Loretto, 2017) argues that the most important dimensions of wellbeing are the physical, along with the social and psychological, the present study aims to develop some research questions and analyze the results of the questionnaire according with the existing Scientific Literature. In this regard, the study focuses on the following research questions:

- (1) Do managers consider the physical wellbeing of employees?
- (2) Are emotional wellbeing programs considered by the employer?
- (3) Is social wellbeing an employer objective?
- (4) Are there financial wellbeing programs in the organization?
- (5) Are psychological wellbeing initiatives valued?

The research wants to evaluate the perspective of 30 employers on the wellbeing of employees in the North-East Area of Romania and also to examine which dimensions of wellbeing are or are not being put into practice by employers in that area.

This study uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques. In January - February 2025 a structured questionnaire was administered to 30 managers from the North-East Area of Romania, from different fields of activity (agriculture, construction, trade and IT services), who have between 5-200 employees under their control, to collect data on the implementation of wellbeing initiatives in their organizations. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data and the findings were compared with the existing literature to identify trends and gaps. The results of this research provide insight for organizations that want to implement employee wellbeing in their management policies. The study also highlights for participants aspects of employee wellbeing that could benefit from improvement. .

Literature review

Adam M. Grant (2007) argued that wellbeing is not merely the absence of illness but the presence of positive states that enable individuals to thrive (Molek-Winiarska et al., 2024). Martin Seligman (2011) defines wellbeing as a state that involves positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment.

Wellbeing at work is considered by many authors as the result of the interaction between individual characteristics and those of the work and organizational environment (Biggio et al., 2013).

Wellbeing at work has also been defined as the creation of an environment that promotes “a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation” (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2022).

In the literature, there are theories that emphasize the role of employees' perceptions of their work environment (i.e. perceptions of the organization's policies, practices and systems), experiences of interaction with their environment and the importance of these perceptions and experiences for employees' psychological health (Weziak-Bialowolska et. al., 2023).

However, wellbeing at work is multidimensional (Grant et al., 2007; Kun et al., 2017). Analyzing the specialized literature, we identified several dimensions of employee wellbeing we consider essential: physical, emotional, social, financial and psychological.

The physical dimension of wellbeing is one of the most frequently mentioned in the literature, along with psychological and social wellbeing (Kowalskia & Loretto, 2017). It includes factors such as nutrition, exercise and access to healthcare. For example, one way to support the physical dimension of wellbeing can be through offering nutrition programs and gym memberships (Hall et al. 2023).

Emotional wellbeing refers to the ability to understand and manage emotions. It involves very good management of emotions so that the employee can cope with stress (Laine & Rinne 2015). To promote emotional wellbeing, managers can adopt a management style focused on creating a welcoming workplace that provides employees with the opportunity to thrive and motivate them at the same time.

Regarding the social dimension of wellbeing, this is the key to creating well-connected social connections that motivate employees through a conducive workplace. Pagán-Castaño et al. (2020) argued that these connections increase job satisfaction and employee morale, making them less likely to feel pressure from their employer or the negative aspects that may arise. As

examples, we can mention initiatives such as team-building activities, social events, mentoring programs.

Financial wellbeing focuses mainly on financial stress, which is the main cause in today's society and it could have a decisive impact on the overall wellbeing of an employee (Chakraborty et al., 2019). In an organization that pursues higher financial performance, employees may experience increased levels of work intensity and stress (Pagán-Castaño et al., 2020). In this way, an organization should help the employee manage this stress through various financial education programs in order to achieve financial security.

Psychological wellbeing necessarily involves the mental health of the employee (Dollard & Bailey, 2021), as well as promoting employee purpose, autonomy and self-fulfillment in the workplace (Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2023). It includes initiatives such as career development opportunities, goal-setting workshops and self-understanding training. A psychologically healthy workforce is not only more productive, but also more innovative and engaged (Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2023).

The study considers several models of wellbeing established in the literature, including the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. This model was developed by researchers Wilmar Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker in the early 2000s and provides a conceptualization of the "demands" and "resources" of the job, presenting the causal link between these concepts and the wellbeing of employees. (Demerouti et al., 2001)

Also, according to the JD-R model, each job can be characterized both in terms of job demands and job resources.

Job demands highlight aspects of a job that require sustained physical or psychological effort, associated with certain generated effects, such as increased stress or fatigue. These demands can be related to, among other things, workload, time pressure, emotional demands or physical demands. When demands reach a high level, exceeding an individual's ability to cope, they could cause strain, burnout and negative health outcomes (Demerouti et al., 2001).

In contrast, professional resources aim to help employees achieve their professional goals, reduce workplace demands, and promote personal growth and development. These resources may include social support from colleagues or superiors, autonomy and decision-making authority, feedback and recognition, opportunities for skill development, and a supportive organizational culture (Demerouti et al., 2001).

The JD-R model emphasizes that job demands and professional resources are closely linked, influencing employee wellbeing from two perspectives: both from a health perspective and from a motivation perspective.

If job demands exceed available resources (the employer demands more than the employee can handle), employee health may be jeopardized, resulting in stress and burnout. This process occurs when the employer's high demands practically exhaust the employee's energy and cognitive resources, which has only negative effects (decreased performance at work, decreased employee attendance, and continuous staff turnover).

On the other hand, if job resources exceed the employer's demands, then we are dealing with an increase in motivation, with employees experiencing a state of wellbeing (they feel involved, satisfied). This process occurs when employees identify their work environment as supportive and helpful in achieving goals, feeling appreciated and motivated to develop professionally.

The JDR model emphasizes the importance of creating a workplace focused on the human resource, taking into account its needs and limitations. By focusing on the employee, organizational goals are much more likely to be achieved.

Organizations should also consider a modern approach to leadership (Asmawi et al., 2015).

An example of this is “participatory leadership” (Gil-Cordero et al., 2023), a leadership style appreciated in an organization in light of the changes produced within it. It is characterized by employee-oriented managers who support and encourage their employees to express their ideas, while also taking these ideas into account in the decision-making process (Coffeng et al., 2023). In this way, employees are encouraged to get involved in the decision-making process, assuming specific work tasks (Qing et al., 2020).

Mourad et al. (2020) argued that satisfied employees are also more productive. In this sense, participative managers take into account the opinions of their employees in the decision-making of the organization. When employees are actively involved in their work, their wellbeing will not be long in coming (Rana et al., 2019).

Furthermore, managers play a crucial role in creating a work environment that promotes employee wellbeing.

According to the literature (Bennett et al., 2017), for an employer to ensure the wellbeing of its employees, it must be involved in identifying the wellbeing needs of employees, take into account and put into practice their ideas. At the same time, the manager must consider the wellbeing of employees as a “teamwork”, and their priorities must be clearly established. In addition, the employer must consider the wellbeing of employees as an integral part of its management policy and not as an additional program or policy (Bennett et al., 2017).

In order to develop a long-term management strategy, Bennet Joel (2017) states that the employer must assess the organization’s level of readiness for certain wellbeing programs and implement them gradually. At the same time, the author argues that the programs must be clear, coherent and applicable as quickly as possible, consulting certain specialists before putting them into practice. These programs also need to be personalized (given the dynamic and highly personal nature of employee wellbeing, with each employee having their own perception of wellbeing). Bennet Joel (2017) also emphasizes the importance of promoting a communication strategy that is adapted to a wide number of employees, which is best explained to them, the author arguing that no program, no matter how well-designed, will be successful if the target audience does not understand it.

Despite the growing number of researches on employee wellbeing, there are still obvious gaps. We mention that from our analysis there are no studies on employee wellbeing from the perspective of managers in the North-Eastern Region of Romania. The research aims to identify managerial gaps regarding wellbeing in an organization, in order to develop, in future research, a wellbeing management model that could be best applied to organizations in the North-Eastern Region of Romania.

Methodology

This study aims to assess employer perspectives on employee wellbeing in the North-East region of Romania, in order to be a step in the future development of a management model based on employee wellbeing. Additionally, it seeks to identify which dimensions of wellbeing are currently being implemented—or neglected—by these 30 employers in this area.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. In this regard, we identified 30 managers of commercial companies from different fields of activity (agriculture, construction, trade and IT services) in the northeastern area of Romania who have several employees under their control (between 5-200 employees). During January-February 2025, a structured questionnaire was administered to these 30 managers to gather quantitative data on their perspectives regarding employee wellbeing across five dimensions which we found in the specialized literature (considering, for example, The Wheel of Wellness Model, evoked by Myers et al. (2000)) and which we consider to be essential in a management model based on employee wellbeing: physical, emotional, social, financial and psychological. The qualitative aspect involved analyzing open-ended responses to gain deeper insights into these managers' attitudes and practices.

The study only considered private organizations and tried to bring together managers from distinct areas of activity, which do not have the same object of activity, precisely in order to analyze managers' perspectives on employee wellbeing in a diversified way. Their main objects of activity were agriculture, construction, trade and IT services. Regarding the size of the organizations, they ranged from 5 employees to 200.

The research is guided by five research questions:

- (1) Do managers consider the physical wellbeing of employees?
- (2) Are emotional wellbeing programs considered by the employer?
- (3) Is social wellbeing an employer objective?
- (4) Are there financial wellbeing programs in the organization?
- (5) Are psychological wellbeing initiatives valued?

These research questions were defined in connection with existing Scientific Literature (Myers et al., 2000) and it is also based on the growing recognition of employee wellbeing as a key element to success in an organization, taking into account the five dimensions that we consider essential in achieving wellbeing. In this way, physical and emotional wellbeing are fundamental to employee health, while social wellbeing fosters collaboration and job satisfaction. In addition, financial and psychological wellbeing are essential for reducing stress and increasing long-term commitment.

The research was conducted using a structured questionnaire that was distributed to 30 managers of organizations in the northeastern area of Romania, organizations with different objects of activity (agriculture, construction, trade and IT services). The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions that addressed five dimensions of employee wellbeing: physical (questions 1-4), emotional (questions 5-8), social (questions 9-12), financial (questions 13-16) and psychological (questions 17-20). The data were collected through an online survey platform (Google Form), and the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics (using Microsoft Excel to generate the percentages of the responses).

This study builds on previous research in the specialized literature that highlights the importance of employee wellbeing in organizational performance (e.g., Grant et al., 2007), also considering some wellbeing models from the scientific literature (JD-R model, Wheel of Wellbeing model).

Results and discussions

The study showed that managers only implement certain dimensions of wellbeing, while other dimensions are not taken into account. Regarding the physical dimension of wellbeing, gym memberships and nutrition programs are poorly implemented. In this regard, only 3.3% of

managers surveyed offer nutrition programs to employees (*Figure 1*). On the other hand, continuing in the physical dimension of wellbeing, 60.0% of organizations provide access to medical assistance (*Figure 2*), a result that is also in line with research conducted by Adam M. Grant et al. (2007). Recreation time is offered by 53.3% of managers.

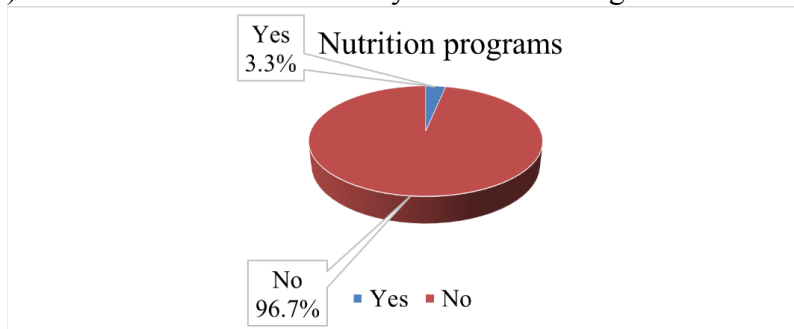


Figure 1. Nutrition programs

Source: Authors' own research results.

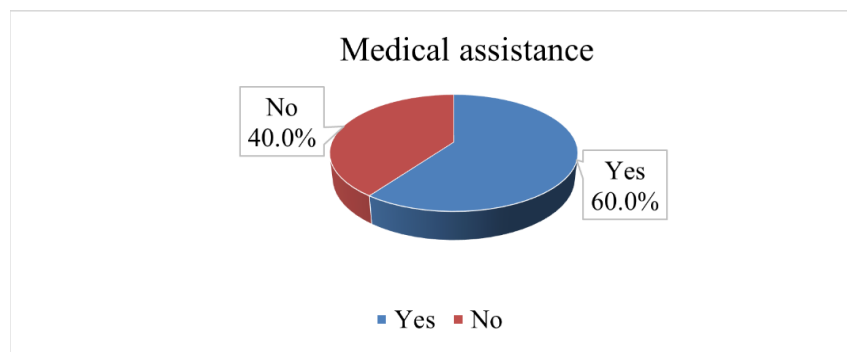


Figure 2. Medical assistance

Source: Authors' own research results.

Regarding the emotional dimension of wellbeing, all 30 managers offer employees communication terminals. On the other hand, continuing in the same dimension, only 10% of them have implemented stress management programs in their organizations (*Figure 3*). In the same vein, a small percentage (26.7% of managers) offers programs to quit smoking, while 76.7% offer flexible working hours to employees (*Figure 4*).



Figure 3. Stress management programs

Source: Authors' own research results.

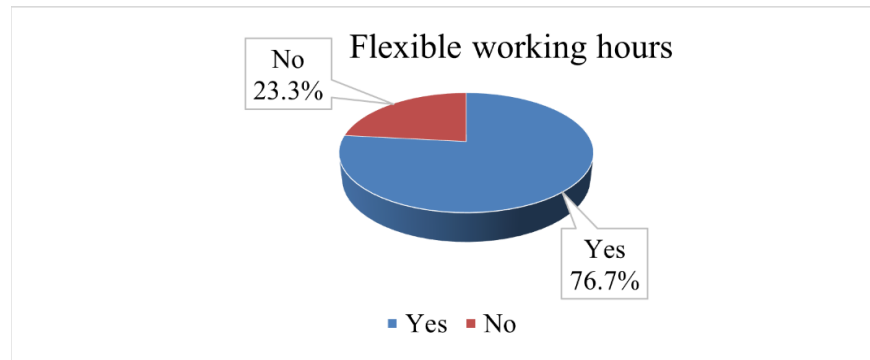


Figure 4. Flexible working hours

Source: Authors' own research results.

The social dimension of wellbeing plays an important role in the managerial vision of the 30, considering the results. Thus, 60.0% of managers encourage going out with colleagues and 70.0% of them support social events. An even higher percentage (86.7%) has implemented mentoring for new employees in their organizations, so that their accommodation is as fast and pleasant as possible. (Figure 5). All 30 managers support the importance of collaboration between employees in order to achieve professional objectives.

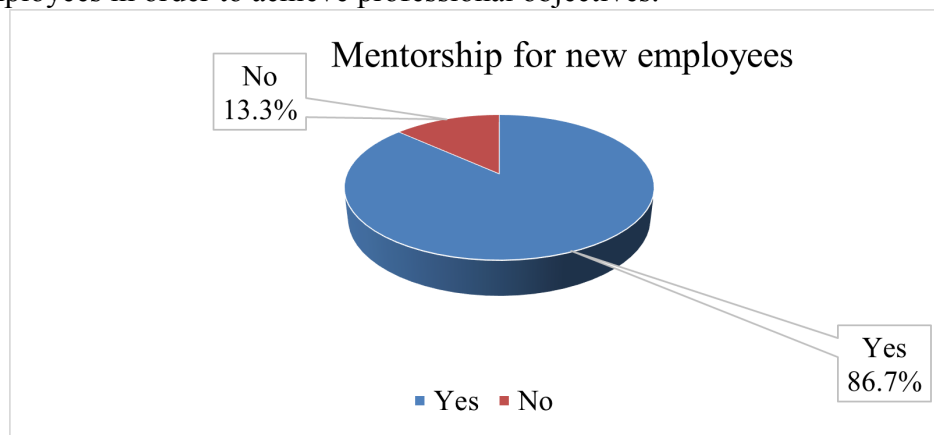


Figure 5. Mentorship for new employees

Source: Authors' own research results.

The financial dimension of wellbeing is the least implemented among the 30 organizations. Only 10.0% of organizations offer stress management programs (Figure 6) and the same percentage offer money-saving programs. 13.3% of managers emphasize to employees the importance of financial contingencies, and only 10.0% of them have implemented financial education programs about saving money. The results from the financial dimension of wellbeing do not support Chakraborty et al. (2019)'s claims regarding the importance of financial security.



Figure 5. Financial stress management programs

Source: Authors' own research results.

Considering the results of the questionnaire, the psychological dimension of wellbeing occupies an important place for managers. Although a small number of them have implemented personal development programs (26.7%) (*Figure 6*) or talent recognition programs (16.7%) (*Figure 7*), 90.0% of them claim to focus on employees' strengths and 96.7% recognize the importance of continuous professional training (*Figure 8*).

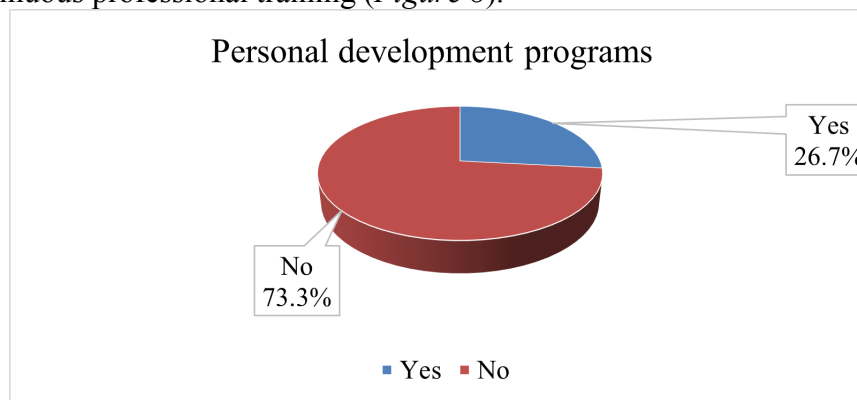


Figure 6. Personal development programs

Source: Authors' own research results.

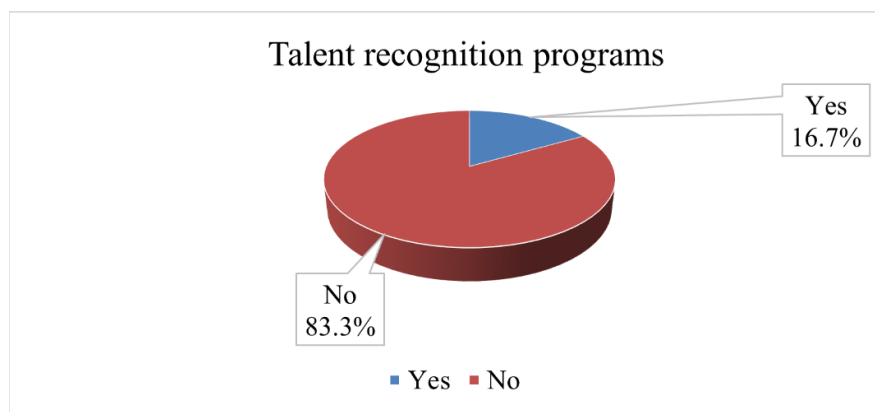


Figure 7. Talent recognition programs

Source: Authors' own research results.

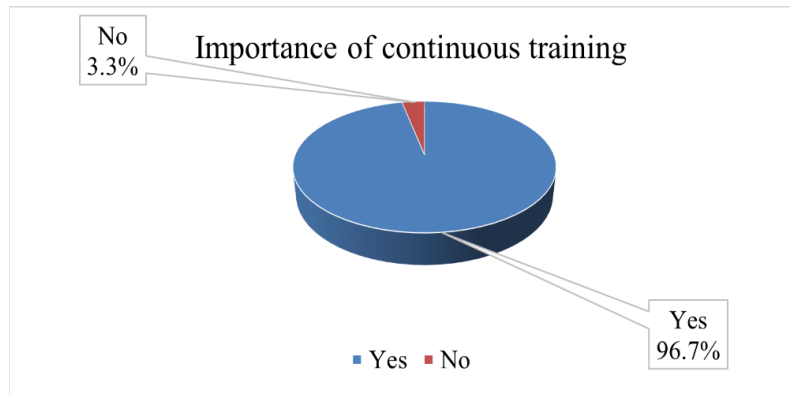


Figure 8. Importance of continuous training

Source: Authors' own research results.

In addition, while physical and emotional wellbeing initiatives were relatively common, financial wellbeing programs were largely absent. However, the widespread implementation of social wellbeing initiatives (e.g., mentorship and social events) exceeded expectations, with 86.7% of organizations offering mentorship for new employees (*Figure 9*). This suggests that managers place a high value on fostering social connections among employees.

The results align with previous research by Grant et al. (2007), which found that organizations often prioritize physical and emotional wellbeing over financial wellbeing. As Grant et al. (2007) explains, organizations may allocate resources to areas where they perceive the greatest return on investment; physical and emotional wellbeing programs are often seen as more directly linked to reducing absenteeism, improving morale and increasing productivity, whereas the benefits of financial wellbeing programs may be less immediately apparent.

Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of wellbeing programs across all dimensions.

Table 1. Comparison of wellbeing dimensions

Dimension of wellbeing	Wellbeing initiative	Yes (%)	No (%)
Physical	Gym memberships	6.7	93.3
	Nutrition programs	3.3	96.7
	Medical assistance	60.0	40.0
	Recreation time	53.3	46.7
Emotional	Communication terminals	100.0	0.0
	Stress management programs	10.0	90.0
	Quit smoking programs	26.7	73.3
	Flexible working hours	76.7	23.3
Social	Outings with colleagues	60.0	40.0
	Social events	70.0	30.0
	Mentorship for new employees	86.7	13.3
	Employee cooperation	100.0	0.0
Financial	Financial stress management programs	10.0	90.0
	Savings programs	10.0	90.0
	Awareness of unexpected financial situations	13.3	86.7
	Discussions about investments	40.0	60.0
Psychological	Personal development programs	26.7	73.3
	Talent recognition programs	16.7	83.3
	Focus on employee strengths	90.0	10.0
	Importance of continuous training	96.7	3.3

Source: Authors' own research results

Considering the results of the study, regarding the financial dimension of wellbeing, these 30 organizational leaders from the northeastern area of Romania do not consider the real importance of this dimension, especially the negative effect that financial stress could have on the wellbeing and overall performance of employees. The percentages reflect the deficiencies of JD-R “resource” (e.g., financial stress management programs) and signal unmet “requirements” (Demerouti et al., 2001). “Without this understanding, financial wellbeing is not implemented.

The findings of this study suggest that these organizations should give more importance to implementing financial and psychological wellbeing programs in order to fill the existing gaps and thus support employees. The specialized literature (Treven et al., 2015) suggests the existence of managerial programs that provide visible results in increasing employee wellbeing. For example, regarding the financial dimension of wellbeing, the introduction of savings plans and the development of financial education (saving money and possible investments) would increase employee wellbeing. Also, to discover and develop employee skills, employees could use personal development workshops (psychological dimension of wellbeing). Moreover, organizing individual meetings with the employee would allow the manager to identify possible employee problems from an early stage, while also creating a strengthening of the professional bond between them (social dimension of wellbeing). In addition, expanding stress management programs could further support the emotional dimension of wellbeing.

Conclusion

This study addresses the perspectives of 30 managers from the North-East Region of Romania on employee wellbeing, considering five dimensions of wellbeing: physical, emotional, social, financial and psychological. The results of the study show that certain dimensions are implemented among the 30 organizations (the physical and emotional dimensions), in contrast to the financial and psychological dimensions, dimensions to which managers did not pay due attention. Programs in the social dimension of wellbeing enjoy recognition from managers, being implemented by a high percentage of them. Thus, the importance of collaboration and the development of a strong professional bond between employee and employer is highlighted. These results contribute to providing perspectives on the wellbeing of employees in organizations from the North-East of Romania, while also highlighting the gaps in the current organizational practices of these 30 managers.

The importance of this research lies in its practical implications for organizations in the North-East Region of Romania that want to improve employee wellbeing and, consequently, organizational performance. By addressing the gaps highlighted (in the financial and psychological dimensions), organizations can approach different programs to improve financial education in their own organization, manage employee stress, ultimately benefiting from a more engaged and productive workforce. In addition, this study emphasizes the need for a global approach to wellbeing, recognizing that all dimensions are interconnected and essential for the overall health of employees, forming a whole (wellbeing).

The results of the research could be studied by managers and organizations in order to identify and implement programs that address each dimension of wellbeing and that best fit management policies. Future research could explore the impact of wellbeing programs on employee performance and the link between these programs and organizational performance (if and how they influence it). In addition, comparative studies in different fields of activity could provide more information on how these programs could best be put into practice.

However, the present study has several limitations. Thus, the sample size of 30 managers limits the general applicability of the results, even in the North-East Region of Romania, given the number of organizations surveyed, and employee perspectives were not analyzed. Also, the data were collected through questionnaires completed by employers, where responses can be influenced by various external factors.

Finally, an important limitation of the study is that it focused exclusively on managers' perspectives. In future research, we aim to also analyze employees' perspectives on their wellbeing in an organization (e.g., what influences it, how it can be maintained or developed), taking into account the dimensions of wellbeing presented in this study. Moreover, a wellbeing management model that is applicable to a larger number of organizations in this part of Romania could address the gaps identified in this study.

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