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Mäkelä, Tuukka & Talka, Adam

The Effect of Leadership Culture on Occupational Well-being

A Mixed-Methods Study in Wärtsilä's Information Management Unit

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Author: Mäkelä, Tuukka & Talka, Adam
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ABSTRACT:

Työhyvinvointi on tärkeässä roolissa arvioidessa työntekijöiden työtyytyväisyyttä ja toimintakykyä työurien pidentyessä. Johtamiskulttuurin ja johtamiskäytänteiden on havaittu vaikuttavan työhyvinvointiin, työtyytyväisyyteen ja -motivaatioon. Johtamiskulttuurin toimivat käytänteet ovat kuitenkin organisaatio- ja kontekstisidonnaisia. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, onko johtamiskulttuurilla yhteys työntekijöiden työhyvinvointiin Wärtsilän Information Management (IM)-yksikössä ja edistävätkö Wärtsilän Leadership model sekä Well-being framework työhyvinvointia.

Tutkimus on toteutettu kyselytutkimuksena Webropol-kyselytutkimustyökalun avulla. Aineisto koostuu tilaajaorganisaation työntekijöiden vastauksista (n = 87, miehiä n = 45, naisia n = 40, ei halua sanoa n = 2), jotka kerättiin 11.–31.12.2025. Johtamiskulttuurin yhteyttä työhyvinvointiin arvioidaan Likert-asteikollisten ja avoimien kysymysten avulla. Kvantitatiivinen aineisto analysoitiin kuvailevien tilastojen, ristiintaulukoinnin, Spearmanin korrelaatioiden ja hierarkkisten monimuuttujaisten regressioanalyysien avulla. Kvalitatiivinen aineisto analysoitiin temaattisella analyysillä käyttäen sekä deduktiivista että suunnattua lähestymistapaa. Määrälliset ja laadulliset tulokset yhdistetään kokonaisvaltaisen kuvan muodostamiseksi, jonka lisäksi havaintoja peilataan aikaisempaan tutkimusnäyttöön ja muodostetaan kehitysehdotukset.

Johtamiskulttuuri on yhteydessä työhyvinvointiin. Leadership -summamuuttuja korreloi merkittävästi kaikkien hyvinvoinnin osa-alueiden kanssa. Lisäksi johtaminen on vahvin yksittäinen selittäjä kaikille hyvinvointimuuttujille taustatekijöiden jälkeen. Taustamuuttujat eivät selitä hyvinvointia yhdessäkään mallissa. Yksittäiset johtamiskäytänteet selittävät hyvinvointia, ja vastaajat korostavat luottamusta, avoimuutta, yhteistyötä, palautteenantoa ja autonomian tukemista hyvinvointia edistävinä tekijöinä. Hyvinvointia heikentäviä tekijöitä ovat epäselvä priorisointi, työkuorman kuormittavuus, vaihteleva ja heikko viestintä sekä johtamiskäytäntöjen epäyhtenäisyys. Laadulliset ja määrälliset tulokset tukevat sekä toisiansa että kokonaiskuvaa.

Johtamiskulttuuri on yhteydessä työntekijöiden työhyvinvointiin Wärtsilän IM-yksikössä ja on keskeinen työhyvinvoinnin selittäjä. Wärtsilän Leadership model on vahvasti yhteydessä työhyvinvointiin, mutta vain tietyt johtamiskäytänteet edistivät työhyvinvointia. Hyvinvointia tukevat yhteistyön edistäminen, luottamuksen rakentaminen, jatkuva kehittäminen ja esihenkilöiden suora hyvinvoinnin tukeminen. Kehityskohteita ovat johtamiskäytänteiden johdonmukaisuuden puute sekä epäselvyys, viestinnän parantaminen, työkuorman suuruus ja priorisoinnin heikkous.

KEYWORDS: occupational well-being, leadership culture, continuous improvement, employee, information technology

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Abbreviations

DEI = Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

F = F-statistic

JD-R model = Job Demands–Resources model

M = Mean value

OCB = Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

p = p-value

p. & pp = page(s)

PSC = Psychologically Safe Climate

Q = Question (survey item)

R² = Coefficient of determination

SPSS = Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

WHO = World Health Organisation

1 Introduction

1.1 Relevance and significance

Kelloway and Barling (2010, p. 275) conclude that organisational leadership is related to health and safety outcomes for employees. Leadership influences employee well-being, shapes resilience, job satisfaction, and mental health, especially in rapid social and economic changes (Tribhuvan et al. 2025, p. 642). Leadership culture has become an important factor shaping occupational well-being. Leadership behaviours have been shown to affect employee well-being, which in turn impacts employee performance (Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise, 2020, p. 35). However, leadership research should focus not only on higher performance but also on enhancing employee well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018, p. 189). Understanding these dynamics is essential for an organisation to build sustainable human resources management and adapt to a changing environment and challenges.

Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise (2020, p. 35) finds that leadership has meaningful impacts on employee well-being and health through, for example, role modelling, inspiration, motivation, and stimulation. These behaviours are found in transformational leadership. Arnold (2017, p. 381) states that transformational leadership predicts both positive and negative aspects of well-being. Transformational leadership has especially been seen to positively impact psychological well-being (Arnold, 2017, p. 389; Montano et al., 2017). For example, a Swedish thesis notes that in IT project teams, agile and democratic leadership styles positively influenced psychological safety and trust (Koutny & Chatziadam, 2023, p. 2). Engaging leadership practices have been found effective, and managers are encouraged to use those methods in their work (Mazzetti & Schaufeli, 2022, p. 18). Also, supportive leadership has been seen to have an association with job satisfaction, meaning at work, well-being, and quality of life (Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise, 2020, pp. 16–17). The listed studies show that

leadership and leadership practices are connected to employee well-being, but the best practises are still related to the context, as the Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise (2020, p. 35) highlights.

Theoretical frameworks such as the Self-determination Theory and the Job Demands-Resources model offer explanations for how leadership affects well-being. The Self-determination theory indicates that leadership practices that support, for example, autonomy and competence, enhance motivation and psychological health (Deci & Ryan, 2000, pp. 262–263). Similarly, the Job-Demand Resources model indicates that leadership practices play a crucial role in helping prevent burnout and increase motivation (Demerouti et al., 2001, p. 508). These frameworks are closely aligned to Wäertsilä's Leadership model and Well-being framework, which are discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

Previous literature confirms that leadership culture influences occupational well-being. The context of the organisation influences the effect greatly, and no one-size-fits-all solution works for all organisations. This thesis advances the current research field by discussing the effect of leadership culture on occupational well-being in Wäertsilä's Information Management unit's global and multi-cultural context. The thesis compares the findings to Wäertsilä's internal frameworks and provides practical ways for leadership development.

1.2 Research problem

Occupational well-being is a strategic priority in organisations globally. Leadership culture plays a key role in shaping the work environment and influencing employees' performance. Wäertsilä has developed a Leadership model and a Well-being framework that are designed to respond to the mentioned strategic priority and reflect its commitment to continuous improvement and sustainable performance. This thesis examines how

leadership culture in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit affects occupational well-being and suggests the best practices to be integrated into a practical leadership guide.

The research questions in this study are:

1. Is Wärtsilä's Information Management unit's leadership culture connected to its employees' occupational well-being?
2. Does Wärtsilä's Leadership model improve the Information Management unit's employees' occupational well-being?
3. What leadership practices can be recommended to improve the occupational well-being in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit?

1.3 Scope of the study

The scope of this study was defined by the needs and expectations of the commissioning organisation. The study aims to disclose the status of leadership culture in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit and see its effect on well-being. It also aims to assess how well leadership practices align with Wärtsilä's Leadership model and Well-being framework. The study then aims to bring up the best practices to enhance employee well-being through leadership practices that are found to improve it. The study will focus on leadership practices that shape the culture and not focus on other parts of organisational culture that influence well-being.

1.4 Key terms and concepts

Leadership culture is formed by the words, actions, and practices of leaders, as well as the physical environment they have built. Organisations are made of physical and social constructions, and therefore it's important to understand organisational culture, as it helps create and shape processes and performance (Hogan & Coote, 2014, p. 1618).

Leaders influence organisational culture by communicating core values and demonstrating behaviours that reflect those values (Adeniyi et al., 2024, p. 250; Al-Swidi et al., 2021, p. 9). We approach leadership culture through the Wärtsilä Leadership model, which represents Wärtsilä's strategic guidelines for every leader and supervisor in the organisation, and gives guidelines for daily leadership practices.

Leadership is the cornerstone of organisational success, and it is built around influence, guidance, and the ability to inspire employees and teams toward shared goals (Oshame & Maureen, 2023, pp. 1388, 1393). Leadership includes practices that are a tangible and visible part of leadership culture. *Leadership practices* are a coordinated effort among participants that focuses on what people accomplish together (Raelin, 2017, p. 3). Consequently, leadership and culture are closely interconnected. Unlike leadership culture, a leadership practice doesn't personate a single leader, because it emerges through daily processes, routines, and shared problem-solving (Raelin, 2017, p. 3).

Occupational well-being is created by culture, practices, and the workplace environment legislation (STM, 2024b). It means safe, healthy, and productive work performed in a well-managed work environment by skilled employees (Työturvallisuuskeskus, n.d.). Occupational well-being aims to ensure the safety of the employees. It aims to prevent and manage occupational injuries, illnesses, and disabilities, and to promote health and productivity, not only for workers but also their families and communities (Bulat, 2008, p. 1015). Occupational well-being is approached in this thesis through the Wärtsilä Well-being framework, which highlights chosen elements (Organisation and work, Leadership, Sense of belonging, Learn and grow, Safety, and Healthy lifestyle) and emphasises Wärtsilä's aim to support employee well-being and a healthy organisational culture. We don't examine other known occupational well-being theories or elements outside Wärtsilä's Well-being framework context in this study.

1.5 Wärtsilä as an organisation

This thesis is made in collaboration with Wärtsilä Corporation. Wärtsilä is a global leader in technology and lifecycle solutions for the energy and marine sectors. The organisation was established in 1834, and its headquarters are in Salmisaari, Helsinki, Finland. Wärtsilä is listed on Nasdaq Helsinki (Wärtsilä, 2025a) and has operations in 77 countries in over 230 locations worldwide. At the end of 2024, Wärtsilä had approximately 17,200 people employed (Wärtsilä, 2025a).

In 2024, Wärtsilä's net sales were approximately 6.45 billion euros, and that had increased 7 % from the previous year. The order intake was 8,07 billion euros, and the operating result was 716 million euros, making it 11,1 % of net sales (Wärtsilä, 2025a). The organisation's operations are divided into three main businesses: Marine, Energy, and Portfolio Business. The strategic focus of Wärtsilä is on decarbonisation and sustainable technologies.

The Marine business offers, for example, propulsion systems, hybrid technologies, and lifecycle support for the shipping industry. The Energy business offers flexible power plants, energy storage, and optimisation solutions that help with transitioning to 100 % renewable energy. The Portfolio business consists of independently run business units, including Gas Solutions, Water & Waste, and Marine Electrical Systems, whose aim is to accelerate performance and explore different strategic options (Wärtsilä, 2025b).

1.6 Research structure

The thesis follows a modified "IMRaD" format. "IMRaD" format refers to a structure that is divided into four main sections: introduction, methods, results and discussion (George Mason University Writing Center, n.d., Scientific (IMRaD) Research Reports – Overview). The introduction gives an overview of the subject and relevant studies about it and presents the research questions and study objectives. After the introduction is a

background section where relevant research and central concepts are presented. In the methods section, we present the study's data collection methods and give an overview of the data collection process. Data analysis and empirical results focus on describing the study analysis and results, and how they answer the research questions and objectives. In the discussion section, we compare the empirical results with previous research and examine their similarities and differences. In the conclusion section, we summarise the central findings, present the limitations and practical implications of the study, and propose future research.

2 Leadership and occupational well-being

In this section, we discuss the central concepts of leadership and occupational well-being through relevant studies. Leadership is explained through leadership culture, which in this study is made up of leadership practices and leadership behaviour. Occupational well-being is discussed through its impact on performance and work. These central concepts define and underlay the leadership and well-being in Wärtsilä's context, which is discussed in section three.

2.1 Leadership culture and leadership practices

Leadership culture is shown through the words, actions, and practices of leaders. Organisations are made of physical and social constructions, and therefore it's important to understand organisational culture as well as the leadership culture. Leaders influence the formation of an organisation's culture by setting clear expectations and values for operations (Adeniyi et al., 2024, p. 250). These actions and values can also influence individual behaviour and values. For example, green organisational culture also increases employees' ecological thinking and behaviour (Al-Swidi et al., 2021, p. 9). Modern leadership emphasises the importance of inclusion, collective leadership, and empowering employees, aiming to improve the overall well-being of the employees (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 633). Organisational culture also supports innovative behaviour that is crucial for organisational performance (Hogan & Coote, 2014, p. 1618).

Leadership practises are a crucial part of a healthy leadership culture. According to Adeniyi et al. (2024, p. 249), organisational culture and leadership practices must work in harmony to support organisational success. This connection must be actively and continuously nurtured. Bhoir and Sinha (2024, p. 10) argue that organisations should recognise employee well-being as a key agenda and responsibility in their human resources practices. Norton et al. (2022, p. 206) find that, for example, leadership practices such

as group activities can foster positive workplace behaviour and stimulate brainstorming, and over time, these practices can become norms.

As a leader, respecting, acknowledging performance, supporting, and encouraging employees can have a positive effect on employees' work vigour by fulfilling their needs and enhancing perceived well-being at the workplace (Hogan & Coote, 2014, p. 1618–1619; Liu et al., 2024, p. 8). According to Oshame and Maureen (2023, pp. 1392–1393), modern leadership requires rapid adaptability, emphasises ethical values, and the ability to navigate globalisation and technological change. Successful leaders master the art of balancing transformative vision with transactional accountability. Leadership development should combine traditional and modern practices with an emphasis on emotional intelligence, cultural competence, technological literacy, and continuous learning to keep pace with evolving global trends. (ibid.) Overall, these elements highlight that leadership practices are essential to the development and sustenance of a strong leadership culture.

2.2 Leadership behaviour

Globalisation, competition, insecurity, and rapid technological change have made working life more complex, and to foster organisational well-being, leaders are required to find new ways to achieve it (Molino 2019, p. 8). Leadership behaviour influences organisational culture, and it can promote, for example, a healthy organisational environment (Blesch, 2015, pp. 3, 9–10). According to Al-Swidi et al. (2021, p. 15), leadership behaviour guides the organisation's vision, values, and goals, which in turn form the organisational culture. Thus, it should also be aligned with, for example, human resource management practices. According to Kaluza et al. (2021, p. 419), in principle-driven leadership, leaders must be supported and trained in leadership behaviours. This helps leaders adopt behaviours that support the implementation and achievement of those practices in the organisation.

Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022, p. 17) argue that leadership behaviour, such as engaging leadership, can increase personal resources and support work engagement on an individual level. In addition, on the team level, it may lead to even better team resources, such as trust and participation, and improve the team's effectiveness. They can influence specific types of well-being through different means, and the same leadership behaviour can have different effects on several different elements of well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018, p. 185). Moreover, Alturaysi (2024, pp. 677–678) finds that health-oriented leadership has had positive correlations with well-being factors among IT workers. Health-oriented leadership can create an environment that supports employees' well-being through employee-centric practices and valuing employee health above all else. Additionally, Li et al. (2023, p. 409) find that destructive leadership decrease multiple negative factors such as turnover, emotional exhaustion, burnout, employee distress, and deviance.

On the other hand, Li et al. (2023, p. 409) note that leadership behaviours can also have negative effects on employees' and their well-being. For example, destructive leadership was negatively associated with employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, job commitment, and organisational identity. Additionally, destructive leadership can increase the workload, which can lead to exhaustion (Molino et al., 2019, p. 9). Moreover, Kaluza et al. (2021, p. 407) state that principle-based leadership (e.g. health-oriented leadership) can have negative effects on leader-member relationships if they do not align with employees' needs. These examples demonstrate how leadership behaviours can affect organisational culture and well-being.

2.3 Occupational well-being

In this section we define occupational well-being, discuss how it affects organisational performance and success, and explain how it plays a role in daily work and leadership considerations. Occupational well-being is shaped by workplace and subjective and psychological factors (Naveena & Murthy, 2025, p. 57) and predicts an organisation's

performance and success (De Neve et al., 2023, p. 4; Krekel et al., 2019, p. 24). Employees' occupational well-being indicates the overall positive feelings and emotional experiences that employees have in their current work, and it's also a key indicator of their wider psychological well-being (Zheng et al, 2015, p. 635). For example, work-life balance is vital for preventing health risks such as stress and burnout (Zagaria, 2024, p. 164). Occupational well-being and negative health consequences have also been related to workers' age (Andersen et al., 2021, p. 832).

According to Wijngraads et al. (2021, p. 798), when discussing employee well-being or occupational health, it's important to clarify related constructs. For instance, worker well-being is broader than employee well-being, because it also includes non-employed individuals such as volunteers and contractors. It also focuses on constructs originating in the work context. It also contrasts with well-being at work, which concerns the experience of well-being during work activities, and general individual well-being, which is not limited to working life. (ibid.) In this study, we focus on employee well-being rather than the broader concept of worker well-being. While worker well-being encompasses all individuals engaged in work, our research context is an organisation that aims to understand and improve the well-being of its own employees. Employee well-being specifically addresses experiences and outcomes within an employment relationship.

Higher levels of well-being are associated with better task performance and creativity, customer loyalty, profitability, and lower turnover rates (Krekel et al., 2019, p. 2). Job quality is a key determinant of overall well-being, which highlights the importance of a healthy working environment (Green et al., 2024, p. 848). According to Murphy (2024, p. 31), leadership, organisational culture, job satisfaction, job quality, and family-friendly practices are factors that shape employee well-being. From the economic point of view, employee well-being is associated with organisational productivity, innovation, profitability, and employee commitment. Promoting work-life balance, employee development, health and safety prioritisation, and supporting employee commitment improve employee well-being. For example, committed employees are more adaptable, vigour, and

perform better, which leads to increased profitability regarding the investments in employee well-being (Manka & Manka, 2023, p. 73; Viitala, 2021, Chapter 2.6., *Henkilöstövoimavarat: Sitoutuminen*). Human resource practices focused on well-being can positively impact organisational performance by fostering a positive atmosphere and attitudes and engaging employees (Huettermann & Bruch, 2019, p. 1063).

Occupational health is strongly dependent on environmental factors. Air quality, pollution, radiation, noise, workplace safety, and work-related diseases such as accidents and stress-induced injuries are part of occupational health (World Health Organisation (WHO), n.d.). Work ability is a key factor of workplace well-being, because it's based on individual resources and job demands (Andersen et. al., 2021, p. 831; *Työterveyslaitos*, n.d.). It also works as a predictor of short- and long-term outcomes for employees and organisations, and it's influenced by health outcomes such as diligence and emotional stability (Cadiz et al., 2019, pp. 128–129). Although work ability and well-being are related, work ability can remain at a normal level even when perceived well-being declines temporarily (Laine et al., 2016, p. 295). The leader's role in promoting well-being at workplaces is significant. Leaders can improve the atmosphere, help employees work more efficiently, provide meaning, and help employees to take care of their health by recognising individual needs and aspirations (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 634).

3 Leadership and well-being in Wärtsilä

In this section, we discuss the leadership and well-being promotion that are practised at Wärtsilä, and to which known theoretical framework they can be linked. We examine leadership culture and occupational well-being through the Wärtsilä Leadership model and the Wärtsilä Well-being framework. These guidelines define the organisation's goals and principles not only at the organisational level, but also for the supervisors and leaders throughout every element of the daily work. Health determinants, which we cover in this thesis, are also part of the Wärtsilä Well-being framework. We identified Wärtsilä's leadership culture to align with transformational leadership principles.

3.1 Wärtsilä's leadership culture

Inspiring, motivating, building trust, and developing employees are key principles in transformational leadership (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 632). Additionally, in transformational leadership, leaders aim to create and lead by a clear vision to achieve organisational goals (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 632; Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 25). These are also specified as organisational goals and mentioned in the Wärtsilä Leadership model (Image 1), which defines the leadership culture in Wärtsilä.

Lasrado and Kassem (2021, pp. 178, 184) find that organisations combining transformational leadership and involvement-oriented culture tend to perform better and achieve higher levels of excellence. Transformational leadership culture is positively associated with employee well-being, as it supports job satisfaction and engagement and is linked to reduced emotional exhaustion (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 639; Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 26). By promoting employees' personal resources, transformational leaders can help employees successfully manage job demands and prevent exhaustion (Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 26). Transformational leadership has been seen as the best way to promote employee well-being due to its strong correlations with outcomes mentioned above, and a strong association with lower emotional exhaustion (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 639; Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 26).

In addition, transformational leadership has been shown to reduce cognitive, emotional, and physical job demands (Fernet et al., 2015, p. 27). This type of inclusive leadership also fosters autonomy, competence, and relatedness, making a positive impact on employee vigour and well-being (Liu et al, 2024, p. 6). Transformational leadership practices build an organisational environment that creates trust, respect, and motivation, which are also visible throughout the Wärtsilä Wellbeing framework. These also promote a culture of well-being and performance excellence (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, pp. 640, 642).

However, Hay (2006, pp. 15–16) notes that this type of leadership can cause psychosocial challenges for those being led, and therefore, transformational leadership style must be guided by the right moral rules. In addition, high transformational leadership and high presenteeism have led to higher levels of sickness absence due to rising work demands (Arnold et al., 2017, p. 391). Also, in some cases, transformational leadership has not been able to promote employee well-being. In a study sample from France, transformational leadership does not have a significant effect on employee well-being among an operating division (Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 45).

In the operative division, work is more about routines and can also be strictly guided by certain processes and measured by performance indicators. Transformational leadership emphasises vision, meaningfulness, and autonomy, which are not as achievable in that work environment. Additionally, cultural factors such as hierarchy and bureaucracy can impact transformational leadership. In this regard, French society has a higher power distance than other countries (Lee & Ande, 2023, p. 108), which may influence the outcomes, and not apply in all countries.

3.2 The Wärtsilä Leadership model

In Wärtsilä, leadership culture is defined with the Wärtsilä Leadership model (Image 1). The model includes three main components: Energise and lead the way, Develop people and teams, and Challenge and support change. The components define guidelines for

leadership and its aims in the organisation. According to Hogan and Coote (2014, pp. 1618–1619), the type of organisational culture that values, expects, and facilitates calculated risk-taking, challenges status, appreciates employees' efforts, cherishes inter-functional cooperation, internal communication, and is flexible enhances norms that will eventually create innovation. When an organisation encourages new approaches, it creates an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage, and it can also motivate employees. Leaders play a key role in this process and in its further processing and utilisation. These perspectives are presented in the Wärtsilä Leadership model and are explored thoroughly in the following chapters.



Image 1. The Wärtsilä Leadership model (Wärtsilä SharePoint, 2025).

3.2.1 Energise and lead the way

“Energise and lead the way” is one of the three elements in the Wärtsilä Leadership model. It can be seen as an inspirational and trend-setting action in the organisation. Fostering positive energy and leading by example are the main focuses. These characteristics are associated with transformational leadership. Transformational leadership emphasises inspiring vision and direction, which increases meaningful work and psychological safety (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 632; Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 25). Transformational leadership has been associated with positive well-being outcomes and

decreasing negative well-being outcomes (Arnold, 2017, p. 382; Tribhuvan et al, 2025, p. 639; Zwingmann et al., 2014, p. 45), which suggests that a leader's ability to energise and motivate employees reduces stress and increases engagement.

Fostering a positive atmosphere at the workplace can improve organisations' productivity and team spirit. According to Cabrera et al. (2025, pp. 10–11, 15–16), positively energising leadership creates positive relational energy among employees, leading to improved work performance. They argue that values such as humility, authenticity, work passion, humour, trust, and spiritual and servant leadership have been associated with positive relational energy.

Yaffe and Kark (2011, pp. 2, 14) find that leading by example can improve organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), which translates to better team cohesion, morale, and productivity. Improved OCB also fosters extra-role behaviour, which means that employees are more willing to help colleagues and do extra work tasks. According to Eisenkopf and Kölpin (2023, pp. 555–556, 560–561), leading by example improved goal clarity, consistency, and coherence among employees. It also supported cooperation and created positive long-term effects on contributions, which was highlighted when group size increased. However, larger groups challenged the leaders and negatively affected their ability to coordinate those contributions effectively. (ibid.)

3.2.2 Develop people and teams

“Develop people and teams” is the second element in Wärtsilä's Leadership model, and it aims to support and enhance employee development on both individual and team levels. Dachner et al. (2021, pp. 3–7) suggest that employee-driven and proactive employee development enhances performance and growth. Autonomy, time and location flexibility, and digital interaction are crucial for learning and development. At the team level, it requires structures that enable proactive development (e.g., time, autonomy, digital channels), as learning increasingly takes place in everyday work, regardless of time and place. (ibid.) These practices are highly encouraged in Wärtsilä.

According to Dachner et al. (2021, p. 2), employee development is a shared responsibility. Employees need to be motivated, and organisations must provide resources and empower individuals. They argue that when employees take an active role in their own development, they can utilise the organisation's resources. Additionally, by recognising employees as entrepreneurial in their development, greater results can be achieved. In Wärtsilä, this is shown by, for example, encouraging employees to attend a variety of courses and learning opportunities that are offered but not forced on them. Team bonding activities, such as team-building exercises, maintain organisational health and enhance team performance (Blesch, 2015, pp. 9–10). The Information Management unit and smaller teams inside it have organised several team-building exercises, aiming for better cohesion and performance through them, and the feedback around those has been very positive.

Dachner et al. (2021, pp. 5–10) argue that organisations should support learning and enable it with digital tools. They state that as work becomes more complex, dynamic, and digitally mediated, employee development must become more autonomous and learner-controlled. Changes in the working environment, such as due to COVID-19, accelerated the change to digital learning tools and hybrid models (Mikolajczyk, 2022, pp. 553–555). Wärtsilä provides a large pool of digital learning related to, e.g. artificial intelligence and different platforms or tools to answer the needs and changing environment. The employees are encouraged to take part in e-learning and improve their competencies, but the courses are not forced and can be taken based on the employees' own interests. According to Dachner et al. (2021, pp. 5–10), online-based courses, certifications, and job crafting demonstrate how learning can occur anytime independently, which are well-facilitated in Wärtsilä. They also argue that it requires learning and development to adopt more agile and needs-based designs that balance self-learning with highly engaging, real-world experiences. However, it must also be noted that employee-driven learning is necessary but insufficient and needs to be monitored to avoid cognitive overload while preserving autonomy (Dachner et al., 2021, p. 11; Mikolajczyk, 2022, p. 556).

Job crafting can develop organisation-related know-how, and certifications can create monitored goals and be rewarded. Employers' role is to create an organisational culture where feedback is requested and given in real time (Dachner et al., 2021, pp. 5–10). Encouraging developmental feedback from supervisors is vital for personal growth, work vigour, and workplace well-being (Liu et al., 2024, p. 8). If employees get support from their employers, they are more likely to commit to and pass the courses (Dachner et al., 2021, p. 8).

Development is usually seen as a partnership between organisation and employee (Dachner et al., 2021, pp. 5–6), as it also is throughout Wärtsilä. However, Wallo et al. (2024, pp. 237–243) argue for a dual-channel model of learning-oriented leadership. Leaders enable learning through direct and indirect behaviours. Direct behaviours contain supporting, educating, demanding, and leading by example. Indirect behaviours shape the learning context by building climate, organising work, freeing resources, and fostering knowledge sharing. This reframes leaders as multi-level operators who translate cultural intent into daily practices and balance planned and spontaneous actions to make employee-driven development possible and sustainable. (ibid.)

3.2.3 Challenge and support change

“Challenge and support change” is the final element of the Wärtsilä Leadership model. Wärtsilä encourages its employees to challenge and support change to achieve an agile and flexible organisation and a leadership culture that is efficient and responsive to increasing competition in the global market. Challenging change in an international context involves questioning established norms and processes and proactively pursuing organisational renewal and continuous improvement. Transformational leaders in this setting strategically drive change by inspiring vision, promoting employee motivation, and ensuring that employees remain resilient during dynamic periods (Usman, 2020, pp. 98, 103).

According to Usman (2020, p. 102), transformational leaders encourage innovation and enhance organisational change in a global environment. In Wäertsilä's Information Management unit, innovation and learning are continuously encouraged and supported. The organisation promotes continuous learning and collaboration between teams to further widen the knowledge network and promote best practises. Employees are encouraged to learn and grow through one-to-one, team, and unit meetings. They are offered a variety of e-learning and face-to-face training to increase occupational learning and professional competence. However, constant change may risk triggering resistance, stress, or negative attitudes toward change (Usman, 2020, pp. 102–103).

Supporting change emphasises stabilising and enabling individuals during transformation through clear communication, trust, and shared resources. Cao and Le (2022, p. 169) argue that transformational leadership positively influences organisational change capability, especially through disclosure-based and reliance-based trust. This highlights transparent leaders' ability to earn employee trust, which can lead to smoother transitions in a global context. However, individual factors such as education level, working experience, and working position are also significantly linked to organisational change capability. (ibid.)

Effective change in international organisations demands a nuanced balance, where leaders must challenge existing norms and support employees through change. Smollan and Morrison (2019, p. 327) argue that change may have stressful impacts on employees and be highly demanding. Organisational change can harm employees' psychological safety and have imminent negative effects (Walk et al., 2024, p. 1451). Thus, leaders must embody change, alignment, and back support architectures that reinforce the transformational journey. This balance is vital and must be monitored for the leadership culture to be positive and support well-being.

3.3 The Wärtsilä Well-being framework

Complementing the Wärtsilä Leadership model is the Wärtsilä Well-being framework, which focuses on developing and supporting employees' well-being through specific goals and actions. The role of occupational well-being in organisational performance and work-life sustainability is widely acknowledged and often part of organisational strategies. Wärtsilä focuses on its employees' well-being and has embedded it in strategic decision-making. In 2024, Wärtsilä launched the Well-being framework (Images 2 and 3) as part of its strategic employer branding framework, establishing well-being as part of Wärtsilä's strategic development and guiding leaders in their daily actions (Wärtsilä, n.d., Fuel your Power – our commitment to our people and future talents). In this section, we will go through Wärtsilä's Well-being framework elements, except for "Leadership", as it is discussed extensively in section 3.1. (Image 1). The elements are divided into smaller sections that are constructed from the elements' description bullet points that are visible in Image 3.



Image 2. The Wärtsilä Well-being framework (Wärtsilä SharePoint, 2024).







Element	Description
 Organisation & work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wäertsilä Way forms the foundation for our Wellbeing. • We set clear goals and expectations and agree on roles and responsibilities. • We balance the individuals workload by good work prioritisation and sufficient resourcing. • We believe that working should feel meaningful and rewarding for everyone.
 Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energise and lead the way. • Develop people and teams. • Challenge and support change.
 Sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in our teams and trusting relationships at work. • We encourage and embrace open dialogue. • We honor everyones individual strengths and support each other.
 Learn & Grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We foster a learning organisation with a strong growth mindset. • We support the learning of our employees enabling them to thrive.
 Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety is a precondition – once safety is secured, we can focus on wellbeing. • We provide safe and healthy environment, both physically and psychologically, where everyone can perform, thrive and be creative.
 Healthy lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support our employees to foster healthy lifestyle. • We respect boundaries between work and non-work time. • We approach wellbeing holistically to support employees physical, mental and social wellbeing. • We understand that wellbeing is deeply personal and there is no "one-size" fits for all.

Image 3. The Wäertsilä Well-being framework (Wäertsilä SharePoint, 2024).

3.3.1 Organisation and work

“Organisation and work” is one of the six elements that indicate how well-being is supported at the organisational level. Setting clear goals and expectations and agreeing on roles and responsibilities creates a foundation for efficient and well-being-supportive work. Secondly, Wäertsilä ensures that every employee’s workload is balanced with good work prioritisation and sufficient resourcing. Lastly, they believe that working should feel meaningful and rewarding for everyone in the organisation.

“Setting goals and expectations” is one of the descriptions in the “Organisation and work” element. Studies find a strong positive connection between goal setting, performance, and motivation (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024, p. 5; Schkolski, 2025, p. 108). Setting challenging and specific goals can improve employee productivity, motivation, self-monitoring, job satisfaction, and well-being (Schkolski, 2025, pp. 98, 109). In performance management systems, goal setting is an important factor in increasing productivity (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024, p. 5). Schkolski (2025, pp. 108, 110) proposes that effective goal setting should be made by following a six-step framework: specificity, challenge and ambition, personalisation, monitoring and feedback, engagement, and balance. He also argues that self-monitoring helps employees achieve goals by fostering habits that support productivity over time. Additionally, self-monitoring and self-reflection can lead to self-

improvement by improving productivity and well-being at work (Meyer et al., 2021, p. 1883). However, self-monitoring can be time-consuming for employees, and therefore, it can and should be done more effectively. For example, automatic measurements could improve self-reflections and productivity when employees are not required to self-report their progress (Meyer et al., 2021, p. 1882).

On the other hand, goals reflect expectations but don't specifically set them (Strulov-Shianin & Steiny Wellsjo, 2025, p. 2). Expectations can be seen as a negative way of leadership if they are unattainable. Strulov-Shianin and Steiny Wellsjo (2025, pp. 14–15) find that goals and optimistic expectations can improve performance. Additionally, even ambitious goals don't negatively affect performance. By tailoring personalised goals for the employees, the organisation can make sure that goals are attainable and challenging enough to support motivation (Schkolski, 2025, p. 110). Setting reasonable goals and expectations enhances employee performance and well-being by increasing satisfaction (Strulov-Shianin & Steiny Wellsjo, 2025, pp. 6, 17–18), fostering supportive and collaborative environments, and sustaining productivity (Schkolski, 2025, p. 110).

“Agreeing on roles and responsibilities” is the second description in the Organisation and work element. Agreeing on roles and responsibilities has been recognised as a crucial factor in supporting employees' occupational well-being. Clear roles and responsibilities enable effective and productive work life, while supporting well-being and psychological factors (Gil-Garcia et al., 2020, pp. 2–5). Clear roles predict better job satisfaction and higher emotional well-being, especially during organisational change (Zettna et al., 2024, p. 11). Effective communication, use of boundary objects, and diversity management support role clarity (Gil-Garcia et al., 2020, pp. 6–7). Also, non-discrimination is an important factor when assigning roles that support performance (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024, p. 5). Role clarity is likely to be emphasised in sectors where conditions are constantly changing (Zettna et al., 2024, p. 13), as in a global technology organisation like Wärtsilä.

Role clarity supports organisational functioning and creates a positive atmosphere at the workplace. According to Gil-Garcia et al. (2020, pp. 2–5), clarity of roles and responsibilities improves both single-organisational and inter-organisational performance. Also, it builds trust among employees, enhancing, for example, collaboration, reducing conflicts, and supporting participation in the organisation. Kundu et al. (2020, p. 467) find that role clarity can also improve internal motivation and foster innovative work behaviour. They argue that supporting innovation is a crucial resource that every organisation should embrace and find solutions to enhance. Additionally, innovation and seamless working within the organisation can be seen as a competitive advantage that also attracts new talent. Leaders' role clarity supports the positive effects among employees (Zettina et al., 2024, p. 14). Leaders should clarify role boundaries and expectations to support innovation in the organisation (Kundu et al., 2020, p. 468).

Role clarity's effect on employee well-being, especially on psychological health, is crucial and can help build sustainable careers. Zettina et al. (2024, p. 11) argue that employees with clear roles have lower psychological strain and reduced fatigue during organisational change. They argue that this supports the fact that, with effective role and responsibility management, organisations can support occupational well-being and sustainable careers. The effect can also be seen in peer relationships since clearly defined peer leadership roles significantly enhance team cohesion, job satisfaction, and team effectiveness in various industries (Edelmann et al., 2024, p. 24).

However, assessing employees' psychological health can be problematic. Zettina et al. (2024, p. 13) state that psychological distress is more holistic and reflects a general state, whereas job satisfaction is more specific to the working environment. Also, psychological distress reflects poor mental health, and job satisfaction is a positive factor, which reflects a state of well-being. Focusing only on psychological health risks can oversimplify the multidimensional nature of occupational well-being. (ibid.) For example, organisational functioning also depends on structural factors such as leadership quality, workload management, and social support.

“Work prioritisation and sufficient resourcing” is the third description in the Organisation and work -element. Regarding job demands, resource management, and occupational health, leaders’ decisions about work prioritisation and sufficient resourcing are vital in supporting employees’ health and well-being. The WHO has recognised excessive workload as a vital psychosocial risk for the working population (WHO, 2024). High demands tend to increase the risk of exhaustion, and insufficient resources may lead to burnout and disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001, pp. 499, 508). Stable organisational resources and healthy leadership are important, especially when job strain increases (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, pp. 2, 7). Van der Molen et al. (2020, pp. 1, 10) state that high job demands, work input, rewarding imbalance, and the organisation’s lack of justice significantly increase stress-related psychological disorders. However, sufficient staff is the strongest and most consistent predictor of improved mental health care quality, access, continuity, and satisfaction (Boden et al., 2021, p. 1).

Leaders directly influence employees’ job demands and resources. Tummers and Bakker (2021, p. 9) state that leadership is the primary mechanism in shaping workload, prioritisation, and resources in organisations. They argue that especially supportive leadership has been associated with increased resource sufficiency because it can remove obstacles and prevent overloading employees. Leadership that increases employees’ influence regarding work prioritisation in the organisation, decreases work pressure, and improves results (West et al., 2022, pp. 2, 7). Evidence-based prioritisation routines such as planning, goal-setting, and work task organisation support productivity and well-being (Patzak et al., 2025, p. 2). Leaders are responsible for making sure that employees have enough resources to perform, how they experience demands, and that policies are aligned with the organisation’s strategic goals (Tummers & Bakker, 2021, p. 8; Wachira & Simon, 2024, p. 33).

Resource allocation is an important factor for organisational performance. Clear targets, prioritisation systems, and adequate resourcing are vital for maintaining organisational performance (Wachira & Simon, 2024, p. 33). Resource management is a key element

for well-balanced workload allocation, which supports employee well-being by affecting engagement, reducing exhaustion (Jo & Shin, 2025, pp. 17–19), motivation, job demands and strain (Tummers & Bakker, 2021, p. 10). These findings demonstrate that work prioritisation and sufficient resourcing are foundations for organisational performance, employee well-being, and effective leadership.

“Meaningful work and rewarding” is the fourth description in the Organisation and work -element. Meaningfulness at work is increasingly important to employees and increases its importance from the perspective of employers. Through meaningful work, employees are more satisfied and more involved in the organisation’s daily activities. Van Wingerden and Van der Stoep (2018, p. 1; Cascio, 2003) argue that employees value meaningful work more than pay or promotions. Meaningful work also enhances work engagement and performance (Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2018, p. 6), organisational commitment, productivity, and loyalty (Geldenhuis et al., 2014, p. 9). Especially, psychological meaningfulness improves work engagement (Geldenhuis et al., 2014, p. 8). It can also prevent exhaustion and improve overall happiness (Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2017, p. 31).

Rewarding is a key element of employee satisfaction. One might think that rewards are associated with monetary rewards, promotions, or other assets. However, in today's workplace, organisations need to find other ways to reward their employees. Often, these methods are more sustainable and improve employee satisfaction in a more comprehensive way than previous reward methods. According to Thibault Landry and Whillans (2019, pp. 139, 143), reward satisfaction increases well-being, intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment. They argue that when assessing reward effects, it's important to understand the psychological needs (e.g., autonomy, competence, relatedness). Figueiredo et al. (2025, pp. 16525, 16550) argue that post-pandemic, reward systems have become strategically critical, and they influence knowledge sharing and innovation. They argue that with effective reward systems, organisations can improve their talent retention and competitiveness. In addition, reward systems can also help

organisations reach their strategic goals by encouraging and stimulating employees. They emphasise that these systems need to be developed by and for managers so they can recognise and value the work done.

3.3.2 Sense of belonging

Wärtsilä supports employees' experience of being accepted and valued and improves a psychologically safe environment to work, which can help employees participate in more comprehensive ways and create valuable relationships. According to WHO (2024b), discrimination, inequality, and job insecurity are globally recognised risk factors for mental health. Positive relationships and inclusion at work support employees' mental health. (ibid.) An inclusive, safe, and fair environment can support employee development and well-being by allowing them to admit mistakes and ask for help without fear of embarrassment or exclusion.

"Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)" is one of the descriptions in the Sense of belonging -element. It's important to provide an environment that embraces employees from different cultures and backgrounds in a global organisation like Wärtsilä. Diversity in the workplace can have positive effects on the environment, job satisfaction, and motivation among employees. It can also support organisations' performance by developing a more inclusive and supportive working atmosphere. Ayele et al. (2024, pp. 14–16) find that diversity climate can support employees' motivation, prevent discrimination, support inclusion, and enhance employees' belongingness. They argue that workplace belongingness and thriving increase extra-role performance, and leaders can enhance it by positive affective presence. An organisation's diversity communication and cultural intelligence also improve an inclusive climate, which supports employee engagement (Men et al., 2023, pp. 463, 465). Regarding leadership, inclusive leadership leads to higher job satisfaction, and an inclusive climate increases the effect (Phillips et al., 2025, p. 588). An effective diversity climate supports and values employees in a way that encourages role-wide performance (Ayele et al., 2024, p. 16).

Holtschlag et al. (2025, pp. 1310, 1315–1316) suggest that to enhance gender equity, organisations should focus on pairing diversity initiatives with explicit pay equity policies with transparent pay structures, standardised raise criteria, and equity audits, rather than balancing the number of males and females in the organisation. Organisations should pay attention to measures beyond numbers and use advanced analytics (e.g. decision trees or SHAP values) to identify affecting factors. All interventions should also be tailored, and organisations should train their leaders and employees on diversity and equity. (ibid.) Diversity training improves awareness, changes attitudes, emotions, motivations, behavioural skills and intentions (Zhao et al., 2025, p. 60).

Men et al. (2023, p. 465) suggest that organisations should ensure that all employees have access to cultural intelligence learning opportunities. They also urge organisations and communication professionals to focus on proactive measures regarding inclusion and to embed it into organisational culture. Also, Phillips et al. (2025, p. 588) state that organisations should develop inclusive behaviours and sustain evidence-based cultural competence training. However, most studies have used one-off DEI-training sessions (1 hour to 3 days); follow-up has varied, and they have provided weak evidence (Wang et al., 2024, pp. 156, 158, 164). In addition, DEI has also been seen as ineffective and increasing group tensions (Mogilski et al., 2025, pp. 1173–1174). On the other hand, diversity and inclusion interventions have targeted effects on learning outcomes such as career satisfaction or psychological strain (Zhao et al., 2025, p. 64).

“Open communication and dialogue” is the second description in the Sense of belonging element. Conversations at the workplace, social situations, and other interactions reflect the state of the organisational atmosphere (Mosse et al., 2023, p. 2; Musheke & Phiri, 2021, p. 669). As we argued in section 2.3, a positive workplace environment supports an individual’s health and job satisfaction. It is therefore important for organisations and their leaders to invest in it, as it supports the functioning of the entire organisation. Rituals and symbolic practices such as recognition events or team-building

exercises embed cultural significance and strengthen employees' sense of belonging (Norton et al., 2022, p. 207; Blesch, 2015, p. 10).

Effective communication is vital for an organisation (Musheke & Phiri, 2021, p. 669). Open conversation is based on transparency, and when all information is shared and everybody can participate, it can lower organisational structures (Mosse et al., 2023, p. 2). Transparency, open discussions about pay, equity, and diversity support building an organisational culture that fosters these values (Holtschlag et al., 2025, p. 1316). Edmondson and Besieux (2021, pp. 282–283) argue that conversations can be either high-quality or low-quality, depending on the participants, the leader, and the dynamics. Low-quality conversation can harm learning and change, and a lack of leadership can increase the pressure in diverse groups. This can also harm psychological safety and prevent high-quality conversations, which would have the potential to increase organisational effectiveness. (ibid.)

However, Musheke and Phiri (2021, p. 669) don't see a relationship between management and methods used for communication. On the other hand, they agree that effective communication has positive effects on organisational performance. They also argue that the meaning and role of leadership in communication can therefore also be multifaceted and case-specific. Empathy, presence, and listening are cornerstones of an open dialogue (Mosse et al., 2023, p. 1). Open conversation also fosters psychological safety and builds continuous interaction among employees (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, pp. 271, 279–280). However, when performed online, participants have found these events to be overwhelming, unclear, uncomfortable, and distressing (Tribe et al., 2019, pp. 4–5), which must be considered in a hybrid working environment like Wäertsilä.

“Employees' individual strengths and peer support” is the third description in the Sense of belonging element. Employees' individual strengths affect how they work and how effectively they can manage the job demands. By helping and supporting employees' growth, organisations can prevent future work-life challenges regarding coping and

well-being at work. Organisational support is linked with better work engagement and satisfaction with life (Meyers et al., 2018, p. 1836). According to Moore et al. (2022, pp. 266–267), utilising one's strengths at work supports success, promoting vitality and learning. They also argue that when strengths are identified and considered in the community, the use of strengths is reflected more strongly.

In addition to the support provided by the organisation related to using individual strengths, it is worth offering employees training and development opportunities, as it supports success at work (Moore et al., 2022, p. 268). When an organisation actively supports the identification and use of employees' strengths, it can increase employees' general and work well-being, as well as reduce burnout and prevent mental health problems in the workplace (Meyers et al., 2018, pp. 1838–1839). However, Lyons et al. (2021, pp. 10, 14) do not prove the connection between group peer-support interventions and mental well-being (e.g., depression or empowerment). They found some potential in self-management interventions and longer interventions (over six months), especially for personal recovery. Additionally, attempts to change psychological behaviour can trigger resistance, which needs to be acknowledged beforehand (Ruiz-Pérez et al., 2025, p. 13).

3.3.3 Learn and grow

Wärtsilä's Well-being framework emphasises supporting employees' learning, providing continuous learning, and enabling them to be the best versions of themselves. Supporting employees in their development is a key element in transformational leadership (Wallo et al., 2024, p. 245). Continuous learning is a key factor in future working life (Beier et al., 2025, p. 85). "Supporting development" is one of the descriptions in the Learn and grow element. At the organisational level, it can help create a culture that helps identify the skills and knowledge that employees have. When colleagues recognise each other's strengths, it also supports collective learning (Moore et al., 2022, p. 262). As stated earlier, organisational culture influences employees' attitudes and therefore contributes to organisational performance (Hogan & Coote, 2014, p. 1618).

From an organisational perspective, leaders can facilitate employee learning by providing support, educating, making demands, and leading by example (Wallo et al., 2024, p. 245). According to Azeem et al. (2021, p. 1), a business's ability to compete in the digital economy era is dependent on organisational culture, and all business developments come from a high-performance culture. Fast-paced work life requires employees to adapt new skills faster, which makes it necessary for organisational adaptability (Beier et al., 2025, p. 84). However, continuous learning may also become a burden for the organisations and weaken their agility if new skills do not meet the organisational needs (Dewi et al., 2019, p. 58).

“Continuous learning” is the second description in the Learn and grow element, and a highly enforced concept in Wärtsilä's strategy. However, it may also create challenges among employees. According to Beier et al. (2025, pp. 85, 103), organisation-centric learning is not a sufficient way to develop employees in modern work life. It ignores the labour market and vulnerable workers who are essential to the organisation. An individual-centred approach to workplace learning focuses on individuals' opportunities, motivation, and capacity for continuous learning to remain productive and employable. It encompasses education and skills development, as well as in the workplace, and provides a basis for new research and practice solutions. Combining the individual-centred and organisation-centred perspectives could support employee well-being and improve organisational productivity by supporting the workforce, and benefit society by maintaining employment. (ibid.)

According to Greco et al. (2025, pp. 2, 13), education is usually accompanied by an immediate increase in expectations on performance. A performance-centred perspective may force employees to focus on applying existing skills rather than spending time to learn new skills. In addition, the availability of learning opportunities does not guarantee that they are aligned with the organisation's principles or that employees will perceive the lessons learned in the same way. Continuous learning is trending in organisations, but rapid upskilling can create skill mismatches, which can create frustration among

employees and development issues from an organisational perspective. (ibid.) The constant need for skills changes and the need for new skills can cause further skills mismatches (Bachmann et al., 2024, p. 6). In accordance, learning cultures tend to fail if learning isn't aligned with organisational needs (Dewi et al., 2019, p. 57).

3.3.4 Safety

Wärtsilä highlights safety as the premise for well-being. They aim to provide a safe and healthy environment, both physically and psychologically, for the employees to perform, excel, and be innovative. Psychological insecurity can have not only negative health effects but also financial consequences (Sabbath et al., 2018, p. 741). Sorensen et al. (2020, p. 2) conclude that work conditions are key determinants of employee safety and well-being. They argue that structural factors, such as technology, climate, and economic conditions, directly affect safety and health risks daily. Additionally, psychological safety at the workplace is crucial for overall well-being. Sabbath et al. (2018, pp. 738–739, 741) find that employees who have experienced humiliation (e.g., bullying or incivility) are more likely to have mental health issues and mental health care utilisation. Also, being ignored or excluded at work is strongly associated with the same results. They argue that, if bullying is work-related, such as withholding information, it has greater implications for organisational performance. On the other hand, if bullying is more personal, such as exclusion from a group, it may have greater implications for individual well-being. (ibid.)

Other benefits of supporting a psychologically safe climate (PSC) are reduced job demands, harmful conditions, psychological strain, and improved well-being (Amodu et al., 2023, p. 6). These benefits can be processed to individual and organisational performance, which can create a competitive advantage. According to Amodu et al. (2023, pp. 6–7), a high PSC has a broad and consistent impact on well-being at work. Workplace mistreatment, such as bullying, harassment, violence, or abuse, is reduced or eliminated, and well-being challenges, such as burnout, emotional fatigue, and workload, are reduced. Also, mental health problems, such as psychological strain, stress, and

depression, are avoided. In addition, it supports resilience, psychological safety, and general health and strengthens the positive effects of work resources, such as social support and job control. From a work performance perspective, a high PSC increases job satisfaction, job absorption, engagement, and productivity, and reduces absenteeism and turnover. It also supports an active, proactive, and creative approach to work, reinforces safety behaviour, and improves service quality, especially in areas where employees' actions have a direct impact on patients or customers (ibid.), which is key in Wäertsilä's customer-centric context.

3.3.5 Healthy lifestyle

Focusing on overall health is a cost-efficient, sustainable, and effective way to keep employees productive and satisfied. Employers' influence on employees' health can reach non-work time. Preventive measures are an effective way to improve an organisation's overall health. Physical activity, dietary interventions, and measures to reduce psychological stress have been effective for improving employee well-being. Zhang et al. (2025, p. 29) state in their literature review that physical activity, dietary, and psychological interventions have the most positive effects and are the most effective in improving well-being measures (e.g., body composition, clinical health outcomes, and promoting healthy habits) among employees. In addition, Grimani et al. (2019, p. 10) find that multi-level interventions have improvements in absenteeism, work performance, workability, and productivity. They argue that well-being initiatives that consider physical working conditions and organisational structures are most effective in promoting well-being at work.

The COVID-19 pandemic increased the prevalence of remote and hybrid work, which also affected the way of working in Wäertsilä. These changes challenged organisations and employees regarding well-being. One major challenge has been the boundary between work time and non-work time, which is also recognised in Wäertsilä. Human resource management practices, such as flexible working arrangements, well-being initiatives, and supervisor development, play a key role in promoting employee well-being in

this regard (Bhoir & Sinha, 2024, p. 8). Organisational culture acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between leadership and well-being, and cultures that emphasise recognition and fairness strengthen the positive effects of leadership (Jo & Shin, 2025, p. 2). In addition, supervisor support remains crucial even in remote work environments (Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise, 2020, p. 24). While working from home, especially conscientious employees may be working overtime due to easy access to online working environments. According to Hopkins (2024, pp. 6, 9), organisations have been addressing this challenge by creating flexible working environments, but these can also create a working culture where employees are always reachable. They suggest that to prevent this, organisations need to establish clear boundaries between work time and non-work time. Additionally, the negative health impacts that this type of work culture manifests are mainly psychological, but also skeletal and musculoskeletal, and overall well-being related.

4 Methods

4.1 Measuring well-being and leadership

Measuring well-being is important since it provides valuable information in addition to economic measures to show progress and help decision-makers design better policies that enhance individual lives and consider what individuals value (Adler & Seligman, 2016, p. 17; Forgeard et al., 2011, p. 79). Well-being is a multidimensional concept that has both subjective and objective sides, such as positive emotions, relationships, and achievements. Subjective well-being indicators have been seen to be reliable and valid on both individual and societal levels (van Hoorn, 2007, p. 223).

With different well-being measurement methods, it's possible to better understand the aspects that influence the quality of life and take targeted actions (Adler & Seligman, 2016, p. 12; van Hoorn, 2007, p. 223). Closed-question measures and word measures are effective for assessing well-being (Wijngaards et al., 2021, p. 803). However, with cognitive or physiological measure metrics, the results may not be as effective in measuring well-being compared to self-assessments (Yetton et al., 2019, p. 1). These findings were considered while choosing the measurement method for this thesis.

Surveys are the most common method of data collection in quantitative research (Valli, 2018, pp. 261–262). Blesch (2015, pp. 6–7) states that questionnaires can also be used in leadership training and development for self-analysis and to gain insights. Assessments can provide insights into managerial and leadership styles and show their impact on organisational culture and health. For example, Liu et al. (2024, pp. 1, 6) use a questionnaire to determine the relationship between leadership and employee well-being. They find questionnaires to be a valid and reliable method for measuring individual experiences. The reliability and validity of questionnaires can be ensured and improved by designing, planning, and piloting them properly (Hossan et al., 2025, p. 135). According

to Batista-Foguet et al. (2021, pp. 1, 18), the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is the leading survey to assess leadership. However, despite its popularity, they found it not to be that reliable in measuring different leadership styles. The previous findings highlight the need for a critical evaluation of questionnaires to be suitable for research.

4.2 Advantages and limitations of measuring well-being and leadership with surveys

Self-measurements in surveys can measure multiple areas of well-being and are also cost-effective because they are suitable for a large research population (Cooke et al., 2016, p. 736; Sallis & Saelens, 2000, p. 1), which also applies to leadership questionnaires. Self-assessed well-being measurements and surveys offer a clear picture of an individual's experience of their own well-being (Lucas, 2018, p. 52; Sallis & Saelens, 2000, p. 5). Self-assessment methods can, for example, explore psychometric properties (Lucas, 2018, p. 45). The survey form in this study focuses on psychological well-being, and in this regard, self-assessments are reliable (Salsman et al., 2014, p. 205). In addition to the previous finding, questionnaires can also be used to assess leadership (Blesch, 2015, p. 6), which promotes the use of a questionnaire in this thesis.

Despite the positive findings, self-assessed measurements and surveys also face challenges when measuring well-being and leadership. Työterveyslaitos (2010, p. 7) find that only one in five employees finds occupational well-being surveys beneficial. Health-related surveys are also subject to recall bias and social desirability bias (Cleland et al., 2018, p. 10), which could affect the survey results. Blesch (2015, p. 6) also notes that employees may overestimate attributes in leadership questionnaires. Additionally, Fischer et al. (2023, pp. 1, 8) claim that questionnaires do not actually capture what leaders do. They argue for a more insightful approach to researching leadership and to measuring leadership as behaviours, rather than relying solely on questionnaires.

Because of the previous findings, the researchers need to select suitable methods to ensure the study's validity and reliability. For example, if validated questionnaires are not used, the survey form should be tested with target group members before final data collection to prevent misunderstandings (Valli, 2018, pp. 261–262). However, multi-item surveys have been seen to reduce bias in results (Prince et al., 2020, p. 1) and predefined options to enhance the results (Valli, 2018, pp. 261–262). In this survey, the previous findings were taken into consideration, and questionnaires were chosen for resource and practical purposes. The use of a mixed-methods approach and proper piloting was used to minimise the possible bias and false results that the previous research highlighted.

4.3 Data description

The research data consist of Webropol survey responses from employees of Wärtsilä's Information Management unit. The survey was designed to examine the relationship between leadership culture and occupational well-being in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit.

4.3.1 Survey questions

Valli (2018, pp. 261–262) states that the easiest way to collect survey data is to use a previously validated and tested form. Since that was not possible due to Wärtsilä-specific questions, a new one was created. The survey form was developed in collaboration with Wärtsilä representatives and the University of Vaasa thesis supervisor. According to Valli (2018, pp. 261–262), a survey form should be simple and self-explanatory. Each respondent should find a suitable answer, and the survey form should create “a discussion” with the respondent. These aspects were considered when designing this study's survey form.

The survey structure included both qualitative and quantitative sections, consistent with mixed-methods research style (Moeller et al., 2016, Section 3, What is mixed methods research?). Bryman (2006, p. 111), Stentz et al. (2012, p. 1), and Hossan et al. (2025, p. 1) find that combining qualitative and quantitative data is beneficial for gaining deeper insights into leadership behaviours and their impacts. The survey consisted of multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions. The questions were organised into sections: Section 1: Background information, Section 2: Open-ended questions, and Section 3: Leadership and well-being statements. Each section started with a short description of its contents and explained the main terms to ensure and assist respondents in answering the section's questions. This also helped them recall their experiences, thereby minimising the recall bias and enhancing the respondents' ability to understand the questions in the intended manner. The survey's technical design also guided respondents in answering the intended questions appropriately. The survey was anonymous, and Likert-scale questions were also used in the background information to ensure respondents' anonymity.

4.3.2 Survey piloting

Since the design of the survey sections was not guided by prior studies, validated surveys, or theoretical frameworks, the survey form was tested and validated to enhance the study's academic value. The reliability, repeatability, and validity of the survey form were tested on two occasions with a five-person pilot group of Wärtsilä employees in Helsinki, Finland, and Vaasa, Finland. The pilot group was chosen to represent the actual survey group as much as possible (Valli 2018, pp. 261–262). The pilot group was instructed to give feedback on the form and answer it truthfully. The first pilot survey was sent to the pilot group on November 24, 2025. The pilot group completed the survey within three working days. The second round of pilot surveys was sent to the pilot group on November 28, 2025. The pilot group completed the survey within four working days. During the piloting phase, we ensured, together with Wärtsilä, that the survey would reach the respondents. After pilot survey data gathering, the two rounds of answers were compared to each other to confirm the repeatability and validity of the form.

The reliability, repeatability, and validity of the survey form were consistent. In questions 22 and 28, the answers were slightly tilted towards a more positive result in the second round of piloting, but in other questions, the answers were aligned between the two pilot rounds. The pilot group did not provide any additional feedback. Other feedback was provided by the University of Vaasa supervisor and supervisors from Wärtsilä. The supervisor's feedback was used to improve the technical implementation of the survey and form to make them more understandable and user-friendly. With the feedback, it was ensured that the participants who opened the survey did not stop answering because of technical implementation or understanding difficulties. The feedback was also used to make the survey easily accessible and low-threshold to ensure a high response rate. With the pilot results and changes made after the gathered feedback, it was decided to continue to the final data gathering with a version of the survey form that is provided in Appendix 1. Before data collection, the survey form was revised and accepted by Wärtsilä and the University of Vaasa's supervisors to be used for data collection.

4.3.3 Data gathering

The target group consisted of all employees of the Information Management unit across all locations. The survey was implemented electronically using the Webropol survey tool, provided by the University of Vaasa. A personal email link to the survey was sent to all target group employees. The personal email links ensured answering only once and enabled the researchers to send reminder messages. The personal emails also included all relevant survey and thesis documents, attached as a PDF file. The research email for survey participants is provided in Appendix 2.

Data collection was conducted between December 11, 2025, and December 31, 2025. The chosen schedule was designed to achieve the highest possible response rate despite the challenging data-collection timeline imposed by year-end deadlines. Wärtsilä had a company-wide internal survey about occupational health at the beginning of December, which was not intended to overlap with this thesis survey. Since the internal survey

ended on December 10, 2025, data collection for this thesis could begin only on December 11, 2025. The timeline for sending survey emails was designed to be busy and achieve responses on days when the most employees would be working, according to Wärtsilä's thesis supervisors. Detailed information on the data collection timeline is shown in Table 1. After the data collection, the survey responses were imported into IBM SPSS Statistics (Armonk, NY, USA), where the quantitative data were analysed, and a PDF file was created to analyse the qualitative data.

Table 1. Data collection.

Date	Sent emails (n)	Number of responses (n / %)
11.12.2025	382	15 / 3.9 %
16.12.2025	367	23 / 6.3 %
18.12.2025	344	14 / 4.0 %
22.12.2025	328	9 / 2.7 %
29.12.2025	318	10 / 3.1 %
30.12.2025	306	9 / 2.9 %
31.12.2025	296	7 / 2.3 %
Total	2341	87 / 22.8 % of target group

The median time to complete the survey was 14 minutes and 2 seconds. There were 45 unfinished answers, with the most common place to discontinue being page three of the survey. 66 % of employees who began the answering process also completed it. The answers and the following results applied to the entire Information Management unit since the survey collected enough responses that represented the target population, as argued by Polit and Beck (2010, p. 1452).

4.4 Ethical considerations and artificial intelligence

The thesis was made in collaboration with Wärtsilä, and the researchers received a salary for completing the thesis. Wärtsilä's needs were considered, but their contribution to the thesis did not affect the objectivity of the thesis or the results. The thesis followed

the guidelines by Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta (TENK) (2023). The thesis refers to previous literature according to TENK (2023) academic principles by complying with honesty, carefulness and responsibility according to the best knowledge of the researchers. The choice of the research subject was based on ethical principles, and its results were designed to improve the occupational well-being of the commissioning organisation through improved leadership culture.

At the beginning of the study, approval from Wärtsilä's Information Management unit was obtained, allowing us to proceed with the thesis project. Before beginning the research and data collection, the researchers ensured that the research did not need special permissions from an ethics committee and that the thesis did not disclose any health-related information that could require further ethical approvals. This was verified by both the University of Vaasa and Wärtsilä supervisors.

Data protection was ensured to guarantee the anonymity, privacy, and security of the gathered data. The survey does not request health data, but employees' experiences of health and well-being might still disclose personal information in the open-ended questions. Also, the survey could reveal internal organisational issues. It was ensured that the survey didn't disclose employees' personal identities and that all data remained anonymous. The survey responses couldn't be traced back to individual employees by reasonable means.

All survey respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the research and the reason for their answers. Participants provided their consent to take part in the study, and they had the opportunity to stop participating in the study at any point during the process. Participation in the study was accessible to the entire Wärtsilä Information Management unit regardless of employees' gender, age, or other background. The participants' answers were treated equally by the researchers. The research findings were treated objectively. The results were not manipulated to favour any desired results. The research was not influenced by the researcher's own assumptions and opinions. The

target organisation cannot compromise the objectivity of the research or the results. The research evidence should not be used for purposes that are harmful to employees.

Artificial intelligence was used in the thesis as a supportive tool to enhance the quality and efficiency of the research and writing processes while also maintaining research ethics, transparency, and integrity. Artificial intelligence was not used to replace critical thinking, results, or academic discussion, but it was used as a supportive tool. Artificial intelligence was used for language refinement, structural organisation, searching academic papers, and idea creation in different phases of the work. The thesis authors were fully responsible for analytical decisions and the interpretation of results.

The artificial intelligence tools that were utilised were Microsoft Copilot and Grammarly. The tools were used by the University of Vaasa and Wärtsilä accounts. The accounts had organisational licenses, which ensured data privacy concerns. Microsoft Copilot provided drafting support, improved language clarity, helped search relevant research material, and supported idea creation in different phases of the study. It was used, for example, to brainstorm ideas on how to analyse the data properly to answer the research questions. Grammarly was employed to ensure a higher standard of academic language, and it was used as an extension in Microsoft Word. It provided feedback on grammar, punctuation, and style, which helped correct and maintain an academic tone in the thesis paper.

Artificial intelligence was not used to create original research content. All artificial intelligence suggestions were reviewed critically to preserve the originality and validity of the thesis paper. This approach to artificial intelligence use ensured that researchers and the thesis followed the ethical guidelines of research.

5 Data analysis and results

Appropriate and justified methods were used to analyse the research data. For the analysis of the quantitative data, IBM SPSS Statistics (Armonk, NY, USA) was used. The methods used to analyse the qualitative data were descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, Spearman's correlation, and hierarchical multiple regression. The qualitative data were analysed thematically, using both a deductive and a directed approach. The quantitative and qualitative results were combined to provide comprehensive answers to the research questions.

5.1 Data analysis of quantitative data

All quantitative survey questions were based on a modified Likert scale, except for the background questions, which consisted of multiple-choice questions. The modified Likert scale questions were divided into six categories: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree, and 6 = I don't know. Option 6 was excluded from the data analysis because it did not provide relevant information for the thesis and was included in the survey only as an option for respondents to choose if necessary. Option 6 was marked as "System-missing" in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The original five-point Likert scale was retained for descriptive purposes to show the full range of responses across agreement levels for the survey statements. This decision ensured that responses from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree" were visible and comparable with respect to the research questions of this thesis. This also ensured that the results were transparent and reflected the intensity of respondents' attitudes towards leadership culture and well-being.

However, a decision was also made to combine categories into broader groups for additional analysis. The answer options "1 = strongly disagree" and "2 = somewhat disagree"

were combined into a “1 = negative” category, and the answer options “4 = somewhat agree” and “5 = strongly agree” were combined into a “3 = positive” category. The “3 = neither agree nor disagree” was coded as “2 = neither agree nor disagree”. This change was made on a statistical and conceptual basis. Combining the two categories increased the cell counts and improved the validity of the performed statistical tests. From a conceptual point of view, the combined categories still reflected the polarity of responses by showing positive, neutral, and negative responses, which kept the data and results valid. The decision to analyse both the original and altered datasets was made to obtain results that showed both moderate and strong agreement and disagreement with the survey statements.

Sum variables were derived from questions that measured specific aspects of the Leadership model and the Well-being framework. Sum variables were made for categories: “Organisation and work”, “Leadership”, “Sense of belonging”, and “Healthy lifestyle”. Categories “Learn and grow” (question 23) and “Safety” (question 24) were asked with one question, so no sum variables were constructed for those categories. The sum variable “Organisation and work” was constructed from questions 16–19. The sum variable “Leadership” was constructed from questions 28–33. The sum variable “Sense of belonging” was constructed from questions 20–22. The sum variable “Healthy lifestyle” was constructed from questions 25–27.

The reliability of the sum variables was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha and Pearson’s correlations. The sum variable “Organisation and work” had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.712, indicating adequate internal consistency. The Item-Total charts showed that removing a single variable would not significantly improve reliability, supporting the decision to use the sum variable. Pearson’s correlations were between .235 and .637, with p-values between .030 and < .001. The correlation was at times relatively weak, but still significant. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .663, which is moderate but still acceptable. Based on this analysis, a sum variable “Organisation and work” was formulated.

The sum variable “Leadership” had a Cronbach’s alpha of .877, indicating internal consistency. The Item-Total charts showed that removing a single variable would not significantly improve reliability, supporting the decision to use the sum variable. Pearson’s correlations were between .300 and .711, with p-values between .005 and $< .001$. The correlation was at times relatively weak, but still significant. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .867, which is acceptable. Based on this analysis, a sum variable “Leadership” was formulated.

The sum variable “Sense of belonging” had a Cronbach’s alpha of .842, indicating internal consistency. The Item-Total charts showed that removing a single variable would not significantly improve reliability, supporting the decision to use the sum variable. Pearson’s correlations were between .547 and .805, with p-values under .001. The correlation was significant. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .675, which is moderate but still acceptable. Based on this analysis, a sum variable “Sense of belonging” was formulated.

The sum variable “Healthy lifestyle” had a Cronbach’s alpha of .754, indicating internal consistency. The Item-Total charts showed that removing a single variable would not significantly improve reliability, supporting the decision to use the sum variable. Pearson’s correlations were between .409 and .623, with p-values under .001. The correlation was at times relatively weak but still significant. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .658, which is moderate but still acceptable. Based on this analysis, a sum variable “Healthy lifestyle” was formulated.

5.2 Data analysis in SPSS

The research participants are described in Table 2. The survey was answered by 87 respondents, 22.8 % of the target group. The most common age group was 41–50-year-olds (44.8 %), with 51.7 % being males. The most common work location was Helsinki (48.3 %), and the biggest type of work was mostly remote (48.3 %). 73.6 % of

respondents were not in a supervisory role, and 93.1 % of respondents had permanent contracts. The largest group for employment time in Wärtsilä was 4–10 years (33.3 %).

Table 2. Background information of participants.

Background	Group	Respondents (n / %)
Age	18–30	13 / 14.9 %
	31–40	17 / 19.5 %
	41–50	39 / 44.8 %
	51–58	11 / 12.7 %
	Over 58	7 / 8.1 %
Gender	Male	45 / 51.7 %
	Female	40 / 46.0 %
	Other	0 / 0.0 %
	Prefer not to say	2 / 2.3 %
Work location	Helsinki	42 / 48.3 %
	Vaasa	24 / 27.6 %
	Mumbai	9 / 10.3 %
	Turku	3 / 3.5 %
	Other	9 / 10.3 %
Way of working	Fully remote	4 / 4.6 %
	Mostly remote	42 / 48.3 %
	Evenly remote and on-site	28 / 32.2 %
	Mostly on-site	13 / 14.9 %
	Fully on-site	0 / 0.0 %
Supervisory role	Yes	23 / 26.4 %
	No	64 / 73.6 %
Employment type	Permanent	81 / 93.1 %
	Fixed term	1 / 1.2 %
	Trainee / Intern	5 / 5.7 %
Years at Wärtsilä	Less than 1	13 / 15.0 %
	1–3	18 / 20.7 %
	4–10	29 / 33.3 %
	More than 10 years	27 / 31.0 %

Mean values and standard deviations of respondents' answers to well-being (Q12–Q15), Well-being framework (Q16–Q27) and Leadership model (Q28–Q34) questions were analysed in SPSS through descriptive statistics and a comparison of means analysis. The average values and standard deviations of answers to well-being, Well-being framework and Leadership model questions are presented in Table 3 to show the overall attitudes and experiences of the employees regarding well-being and leadership. The mean values were all positive, between 3.72 and 4.63, and the standard deviations were between .60 and 1.20.

Table 3. Mean values of answers to well-being and leadership questions.

Question	Mean (1-5)	Standard deviation
12. I consider my well-being to be good.	4.31	0.88
13. I'm interested in Wärtsilä's well-being initiatives.	4.40	0.83
14. I consider my health literacy to be adequate.	4.41	0.80
15. I acknowledge how Wärtsilä's Information Management unit's leadership practices affect my well-being.	3.99	0.87
16. My work feels meaningful and rewarding.	4.31	0.77
17. My workload is balanced by good work prioritisation.	3.92	1.04
18. My workload is balanced by sufficient resourcing.	3.72	1.20
19. I have been given clear goals and expectations about my work.	4.13	0.96
20. I feel a sense of belonging in my team.	4.48	0.86
21. I feel valued and supported in my team.	4.58	0.76
22. Fairness and equal treatment are encouraged in my team.	4.59	0.79
23. I'm supported and encouraged to learn and grow in my work.	4.49	0.78
24. Wärtsilä's Information Management unit has a psychologically safe environment where I can excel.	4.22	0.84
25. Wärtsilä's Information Management unit supports to foster a healthy lifestyle.	4.15	0.94
26. My boundaries between work and non-work time are respected.	4.49	0.90
27. My personal needs are acknowledged in my work.	4.38	0.83
28. My supervisor guides with clarity and purpose.	4.35	0.63

Question	Mean (1-5)	Standard deviation
29. My supervisor inspires the team.	4.31	0.71
30. My supervisor encourages collaboration across the organisation.	4.55	0.70
31. My supervisor actively builds trust.	4.52	0.68
32. My supervisor encourages continuous improvement.	4.63	0.60
33. My supervisor actively supports my well-being at work.	4.39	0.85
34. Overall, the leadership culture in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit supports employee well-being.	4.11	0.89

5.2.1 The effect of leadership culture on occupational well-being

Crosstabulation was used to measure the effect of leadership culture and leadership practices on self-evaluated well-being. Firstly, crosstabulation was done between question 34 (Q34): "Overall, the leadership culture in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit supports employee well-being", with all background questions (gender, age, work location, remote or on-site, supervisory role, employment type, and years at Wärtsilä). The analyses were made with combined dichotomised answer option variables because the sample sizes were small.

To examine background questions and Q34, we performed a 2x2 cross-tabulation with gender (male & female), age (under 40 years & over 40 years), work location (in Finland & others), supervisory role (supervisors & non-supervisors), employment type (trainee/fixed-term & permanent), and work experience (1–3 years & more than 4 years). In addition, we performed a 2x3 cross-tabulation with work type (mostly remote, hybrid & mostly on-site). None of the background variables showed a statistically significant association with respondents' opinion of leadership culture (gender ($\chi^2(1) = .798$, $p = .372$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .534$), age ($\chi^2(1) = .625$, $p = .429$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .539$), work location ($\chi^2(1) = .646$, $p = .422$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = 0.681$), work type ($\chi^2(2) = .829$, $p = .661$, Cramer's $V = .098$), supervisory role ($\chi^2(1) = 1.325$, $p = .250$,

Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .335$), employment type ($\chi^2(1) = .054$, $p = .816$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = 1.000$), or years at Wärtsilä ($\chi^2(1) = .293$, $p = .588$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .762$).

Secondly, crosstabulation was done between Q12: "I consider my well-being to be good" with all background questions to examine if background questions are associated with Q12. We performed a 2x2 cross-tabulation in the same way as with Q34. In addition, we performed a 2x3 cross-tabulation with work type. No significant associations emerged for gender ($\chi^2(1) = 3.076$, $p = .079$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .133$), age ($\chi^2(1) = .003$, $p = .957$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = 1.000$), work location ($\chi^2(1) = .091$, $p = .762$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = 1.000$), working type ($\chi^2(2) = .385$, $p = .825$, Cramer's V = 0.068), supervisory role ($\chi^2(1) = 1.228$, $p = .268$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .433$), employment type ($\chi^2(1) = .511$, $p = .475$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = 1.000$), or years at Wärtsilä ($\chi^2(1) = .599$, $p = .439$, Fisher's Exact Test: $p = .711$).

Additionally, we analysed how different background groups feel about their well-being. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and a comparison of means analysis. Q12, Q13: "I'm interested in Wärtsilä's well-being initiatives", Q14: "I consider my health literacy to be adequate", and Q15: "I acknowledge how Wärtsilä's Information Management unit's leadership practices affect my well-being" were analysed with background variables in their modified and combined variables as mentioned in the previous analysis. The results are presented in Appendix 3, showing that the mean values were all positive, between 3.80 and 4.62, and the standard deviations were between .51 and 1.15.

To test whether the leadership culture was associated with occupational well-being, we computed Spearman's correlations between the "Leadership" sum variable and multiple well-being outcomes. The well-being outcomes were the sum variables of "Organisation and work", "Sense of belonging", and "Healthy lifestyle", and single questions: "Q24: Wärtsilä's Information Management unit has a psychologically safe environment where I can excel", "Q23: I'm supported and encouraged to learn and grow in my work", and Q12. In the sum-variable analysis, "Leadership" correlated positively and significantly

with every outcome (Table 4), with the strongest association being with “Organisation and work” and “Healthy lifestyle”, and positive, smaller associations with Q23, Q12, Q24, and “Sense of belonging”.

Table 4. Spearman’s correlations between the Leadership sum and well-being outcomes.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Leadership	-						
2. Organisation & Work	.54***	-					
3. Sense of Belonging	.36**	.40***	-				
4. Healthy Lifestyle	.43***	.56***	.20	-			
5. Q24	.39***	.48***	.36***	.55***	-		
6. Q23	.42***	.31**	.31**	.31**	.18	-	
7. Q12	.40***	.58***	.42***	.54***	.44***	.29*	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Leadership culture and employees’ background variables had no significant relationship, and the demographic or work-related groups did not differ significantly in how they evaluated leadership culture or their well-being. Group variables were high across all analyses, indicating a positive experience of well-being regardless of background. On the other hand, leadership culture showed a consistent connection to all dimensions of occupational well-being. Employees viewed their well-being, support for learning, psychological safety, and work-life balance positively, which were associated with their experiences of leadership practices and leadership culture, aligning with Tribhuvan et al. (2025, p. 642). The findings indicate that well-being is shaped by how leadership is presented in daily practices and that leadership culture influences occupational well-being, supported by previous literature (e.g., Kelloway & Barling, 2010, p. 275; Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise, 2020, p. 35; Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 642). However, older employees perceived their well-being to be higher than that of younger employees, which is the opposite finding from what Andersen et al. (2021, p. 832) state.

5.2.2 Does leadership culture predict dimensions of occupational well-being

Next, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was made to determine whether leadership culture predicts different dimensions of occupational well-being and the Well-being framework. The dependent five-scale variable was a part of the Well-being framework, and the leadership five-scale sum variable was the predictor of interest. Each sum variable or single item was analysed in a separate regression model. The background variables were entered as controls based on previous findings, and they were binary or three-level categories because of small cell sizes. Analyses were done using linear regression with the enter method, and the results are presented in Table 5. The control variables did not significantly predict "Organisation and work", "Sense of belonging", "Healthy lifestyle", "Q24: Safety", "Q23: Learn and grow" or "Q12: General well-being". When leadership was added in step 2, all the models improved, resulting in significant overall models. Leadership was a strong predictor of "Organisation and work", "Sense of belonging", "Healthy lifestyle", "Q24: Safety", "Q23: Learn and grow" and "Q12: General well-being".

Table 5. Regression analysis to determine whether leadership culture predicts elements of occupational well-being.

	Organisation and work		Sense of belonging		Healthy lifestyle		Q24: Safety		Q23: Learn and grow		Q12: General well-being	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Variable	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Gender	-.19	-.11	-.02	.05	-.14	-.08	.03	.08	-.02	-.03	-.11	-.06
Age	.04	.00	.09	.05	.01	-.02	.06	.03	-.09	-.11	.04	.02
Work location	.13	.03	.12	.03	.15	.08	.09	.03	.23	.16	.17	.11
Way of working	.06	.05	-.07	-.07	.01	.01	.11	.11	.03	.02	-.11	-.12
Supervisory role	-.10	-.02	-.18	-.11	-.18	-.13	-.18	-.14	.03	.08	-.12	-.07
Employment type	.11	.10	.01	-.00	.17	.16	.11	.10	.00	-.01	.16	.14
Years at Wärtsilä	-.11	-.01	-.25	-.16	-.05	.02	-.17	-.11	-.20	-.14	-.15	-.09
Leadership sum	-	.50***	-	.44***	-	.34**	-	.29*	-	.32**	-	.33**
ΔR^2	-	.21	-	.17	-	.11	-	.08	-	.11	-	.11
R^2	.10	.31	.09	.26	.10	.20	.10	.18	.11	.20	.11	.20
F	1.23	22.38***	1.08	16.63***	1.18	9.08**	1.13	6.51*	1.33	8.09**	1.23	8.44**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. R^2 = explained variance

Leadership accounted for an additional 8% to 21% of the variance in well-being outcomes beyond background characteristics, depending on the outcome variable. Leadership culture is a central driver of occupational well-being in the Information Management unit, substantially shaping and predicting experiences about organisation and work, sense of belonging, healthy lifestyle, psychological safety, learning and growth, and general well-being, further strengthening previous literature's findings (e.g. Deci & Ryan, 2000, pp. 262–263; Demerouti et al., 2001, p. 508; Koutny & Chatziadam, 2023, p. 2; Swedish Agency for Work Environment Expertise, 2020, pp. 16–17). However, it must be noted that the method used has statistical restrictions due to small sampling, so the results are indicative and should be interpreted as such.

5.2.3 Which leadership practices improve occupational well-being

Finally, we analysed which leadership practices within the Leadership model were associated with different dimensions of occupational well-being, to identify which leadership practices should be recommended to improve employee well-being. Multiple regression analyses were conducted in which the six five-scale leadership items representing the Leadership model (Q28–Q33) were entered simultaneously as predictors. Separate regression models were estimated for each part of the Well-being framework, which allowed assessment across different aspects of well-being. The background variables were included as controls in all models, as in the previous analyses. All analyses were done using linear regression with the enter method, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression analysis to determine whether leadership culture predicts elements of occupational well-being.

	Organisation and work		Sense of belonging		Healthy lifestyle		Q24: Safety		Q23: Learn and grow		Q12: General well-being	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Variable	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Gender	-.19	-.11	-.02	.03	-.14	-.10	.03	.07	-.02	.03	-.11	-.03
Age	.04	.06	.08	.07	.01	.08	.06	.07	-.09	-.11	.04	.08
Work location	.13	-.01	.12	.01	.15	.09	.09	.00	.23	.17	.18	.08
Way of working	.07	-.04	-.07	-.10	.02	-.15	.12	.12	.03	.00	-.11	-.24
Supervisory role	-.10	-.01	-.18	-.10	-.18	-.13	-.18	-.15	.03	.08	-.12	-.07
Employment type	.07	-.02	.01	-.08	.11	.06	.07	-.09	-.01	.01	.15	.10
Years at Wärtsilä	-.10	-.10	-.24	-.18	-.05	-.13	-.16	-.18	-.20	-.14	-.15	-.20
Q28	-	.34*	-	.19	-	-.03	-	.10	-	.03	-	.22
Q29	-	.02	-	.24	-	.00	-	.12	-	.13	-	-.02
Q30	-	-.17	-	-.19	-	.07	-	-.33	-	.13	-	.05
Q31	-	-.08	-	.02	-	-.16	-	.27	-	-.03	-	-.15
Q32	-	.18	-	.17	-	-.03	-	.03	-	.04	-	-.05
Q33	-	.38**	-	.12	-	.61***	-	.15	-	.09	-	.42**
ΔR^2	-	.28	-	.18	-	.20	-	.09	-	.05	-	.14
R^2	.10	.40	.09	.31	.09	.33	.10	.24	.11	.20	.10	.28
F	1.11	5.61***	1.06	3.57**	.99	4.04**	1.07	2.06	1.27	1.28	1.13	2.70*

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. R^2 = explained variance

Across the analysis, the background variables did not significantly predict any well-being outcomes. The findings show that the Leadership model is strongly associated with employee well-being. Still, only certain leadership practices demonstrate unique power when leadership practices are examined together. These were about collaboration, building trust, continuous improvement, and direct support for employee well-being, aligning with the findings of Alturaysi (2024, pp. 677–678), Beier et al. (2025, p. 103), and Tribhuvan et al. (2025, pp. 640, 642) on leadership practices that support well-being. However, it must be noted that the method used has statistical restrictions due to small sampling, so the results are indicative and should be interpreted as such.

5.3 Data analysis of qualitative data

Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1286) emphasise the importance of selecting a specific approach to analyse the gathered data. A description of the approach to data analysis strengthens the method's scientific base and increases the study's trustworthiness and validity. The data analysis method used in this thesis was thematic analysis. The chosen method was selected because it enables an analysis that addresses the research questions. The researchers used a deductive approach in which categories and themes flow from the data and are not preconceived, and a directed approach in which predefined themes are used, as Hsieh and Shannon (2005, pp. 1279, 1282) explain.

The open-ended questions of this thesis survey were answered as follows: Q9 (n = 73), Q10 (n = 74), and Q11 (n = 69). The process of the quantitative analysis was inspired by Hsieh and Shannon's (2005, p. 1279) data analysis structure: systematic reading of data, preliminary coding of answers, thematic search and making of themes, specifying and naming of themes, and reporting the results. To make the process visible and understandable, the researchers show the process inspired by using Graneheim and Lundman's (2004, pp. 107–108) example figures of making themes in all qualitative analyses. The examples of the used analysis methods are shown in Appendices 4–5, which

describe the analysis for positive and negative impacts of leadership practices on occupational well-being.

5.3.1 Leadership practices' impact on occupational well-being

Positive impacts. After a systematic review of the data, six positive attributes were identified in responses discussing the positive impacts of leadership practices on occupational well-being. The attributes and similarities are presented in Appendix 4, which shows that leadership culture is supportive when it allows competence and control but isn't surveillant, aligning with previous literature (Cabrera et al., 2025, pp. 10–11; Cao and Le, 2022, p. 169). It also shows that presence, dialogue, and recognition are resources for well-being, and that respect for personal time and boundaries sustains occupational well-being. These findings are also present in the literature (Jo & Shin, 2025, p. 2; Mosse et al., 2023, p. 2).

Additionally, leadership culture supports well-being by reducing uncertainty through clarity and open communication, as Gil-Garcia et al. (2020, pp. 6–7) find. In conclusion, leadership culture is positively connected to occupational well-being through autonomy, coaching, support and flexibility, which were summarised under the theme “human-centred enabling leadership” (Appendix 4). These findings also align with Deci & Ryan (2000, pp. 262–263), Liu et al. (2024, p. 6) and Schkolski (2025, p. 110) findings. Lastly, the findings align with Wärtsilä's Leadership model by developing people through coaching, learning, and energising via supportive leadership and enabling change through experimentation (Image 1).

Negative impacts. Nine negative attributes were identified in responses discussing leadership practices' impacts on occupational well-being. The attributes and the similarities are opened and described in Appendix 5, which shows that strain is stronger when overload is not addressed, and that unclear structures weaken the sense of control and well-being, which has also been noted in literature (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, pp. 2, 7; Demerouti et al., 2001, pp. 499, 508). The table also shows that psychological safety

weakens through unfairness, exclusion, or heavy-control management practices, and low transparency reduces trust, which in turn reduces well-being. The findings are common and presented in Boden et al. (2021, p. 1), Sabbath et al. (2018, pp. 738–739, 741), and Tribhuvan et al. (2025, p. 633).

Additionally, Appendix 5 shows that change becomes harmful when support is missing, as Walk et al. (2024, p. 1451) find. Moreover, negative themes show a connection between leadership culture and occupational well-being through uncertainty, overload, low fairness, poor transparency, and unmanaged change, which undermine well-being, and were summarised under the theme “uncertainty and overload undermine well-being” (Appendix 5). The findings are also present in the literature (Holtschlag et al., 2025, p. 1316; Zettna et al., 2024, p. 11). Lastly, findings regarding too many initiatives and resource issues align with the Job Demands–Resources model (JD-R model) (Demerouti et al., 2001, pp. 499, 508), which could suggest implementation issues about the Well-being framework (Image 2 & 3) or the Leadership model (Image 1). However, this analysis provides only partial evidence for this question.

The respondents described the leadership culture as directly influencing their occupational well-being both positively and negatively. Occupational well-being improves and weakens in connection with leadership behaviours and practices within Wäertsilä’s Information Management unit. The positive impacts were listed as trust, autonomy, flexibility, supportive one-to-ones, constructive feedback, open communication, clear roles and expectations, and different learning opportunities. These leadership practices were described to reduce stress, support the work-life balance, strengthen motivation, and build psychological safety. On the other hand, occupational well-being was negatively impacted through unclear expectations, role unclarity, heavy workload, insufficient prioritisation, limited resources and resourcing, unmanaged and unsupported change, micromanagement, weak communication, lack of transparency, and unfair treatment. These leadership practices were described to lead to stress, frustration, a weakened sense of control and lower psychological safety.

5.3.2 The Leadership model reflected in the Information Management unit's leadership practices

In this section, we analysed the data on how Wärtsilä's Leadership model is reflected in the Information Management unit's leadership practices. The data were analysed using predefined themes derived from the Leadership model categories. The predefined themes were "Develop people and teams", "Challenge and support change", and "Energise and lead the way". After analysing the predefined themes, another theme was found from the data: "Implementation uneven with structural and/or resource gaps", which was also analysed as part of the Leadership model analysis, as it discussed the lack of implementing the model in practice.

Develop people and teams. Four sub-themes and attributes were identified: learning and knowledge sharing, exposure and coaching, growth plans, and collaboration culture. The findings show that the respondents describe concrete development practices, indicating principles of daily leadership. Employee-driven and proactive development (Dachner et al., 2021, pp. 3–7) and encouraging developmental feedback (Liu et al., 2024, p. 8) are also supported in previous studies.

Challenge and support change. Four sub-themes and attributes were identified: constructive change practices, change overload, unmanaged change, and time and capacity constraints. The findings show that the respondents value experimentation and continuous improvement, but the volume of change and limited capacity constrain them. Stress caused by change (Smollan & Morrison, 2019, p. 327; Usman, 2020, pp. 102–103) and the importance of smooth change (Cao & Le, 2022, p. 169) are supported in previous studies. Additionally, elements of transformational leadership, such as encouragement and communication (Usman, 2020, p. 102) and trust (Cao & Le, 2022, p. 169), are supported.

Energise and lead the way. Three sub-themes and attributes were identified: direction and clarity, role-modelling, and safety and care. The findings show that energising

leadership is reported when direction, example, and care are visible, linking them to motivation and safety. Leading by example (Eisenkopf & Kölpin, 2023, pp. 555–556; Yaffe & Kark, 2011, pp. 2, 14), and caring qualities, such as humility and authenticity (Cabrera et al., 2025, pp. 10–11), are also supported in previous studies.

Implementation is uneven with structural and/or resource gaps. Five sub-themes and attributes were identified: variability, time for development, teams vs. individuals, career path transparency, and career support gap. The findings show that not all areas of the Wärtsilä Leadership model are well-implemented, and that the available resources do not always match the intended need, which is important to empower individuals (Dachner et al., 2021, p. 2). Also, transparency issues and variability were seen to undermine the implementation of the model. Additionally, previous research suggests that organisations should combine individual and organisational-centred perspectives in learning (Beier et al., 2025, p. 103). Moreover, team-building exercises maintain organisational health and support team performance (Blesch, 2015, pp. 9–10).

The previous findings highlight that the structural limits, team variance, and career transparency are considered to weaken the model implementation. Also, the way the Wärtsilä Leadership model is implemented into practice is connected to occupational well-being, especially when respondents link it to safety and care. It can weaken well-being when the change is excessive or unsupported. Answers partly support that the Wärtsilä Leadership model can foster better well-being with safety, support, and learning. However, implementation gaps and changes can moderate the positive impact.

The Leadership model is present in daily work and supports employee well-being, particularly in learning, psychological safety, and clarity, but its effectiveness is varied across teams and is limited by insufficient time, resources, and structural clarity. The respondents reported the elements of the Leadership models section “Develop people and teams” to be visible through learning opportunities, responsibility delegation, mentoring, collaboration, and career growth plans. Employee-driven, proactive, autonomous,

and flexible learning is vital for employee development (Dachner et al., 2021, pp. 3–7). These practices were seen to support personal and team development as well as improve competencies and engagement. According to Dachner et al. (2021, pp. 2–7), employers need to provide resources and motivate employees to develop. Employee development is a shared development between employees and the employer.

The elements of “Energise and lead the way” were visible through clear communication of priorities and visions, leaders’ positive mindset, psychological safety, role-modelling, and the supportive presence of leaders. These practices were seen to support motivation and clarity. Positively energising leadership (Cabrera et al., 2025, pp. 15–16) and leading by example affect the overall atmosphere in the organisation (Eisenkopf & Kölpin, 2023, pp. 555–556). The elements of “Challenge and support change” were visible through continuous improvement, pilots, retrospectives, and openness to new ideas. These practises were seen to help teams navigate transitions. Leading with vision, supporting and encouraging employees (Usman, 2020, pp. 102–103), and positively influencing organisations’ change capability (Cao & Le, 2022, p. 169) are also highlighted in previous studies. On the other hand, the respondents also highlighted capacity restrictions, unmanaged change, and change overload, which limited the positive impacts and negatively affected occupational well-being.

5.3.3 Recommended leadership practices to improve the overall occupational well-being

In this section, we analysed what the recommended leadership practices are to improve the overall well-being in the Information Management unit. These positive similarities and attributes were identified from the answers: communication and transparency, workload and well-being, collaboration and safety, and growth and structure.

Communication and transparency. Six sub-themes and attributes were identified: open and regular updates, goal and metric transparency, change communication and co-creation, decision transparency, visible leadership, and strategy linkage. The findings show

that the respondents recommend proactive two-way communication and visible decision-making to build trust, which is key for improving well-being. High-quality communication can help manage uncertainty and contribute to the organisation (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, p. 283) and lower organisational structures (Mosse et al., 2023, p. 2). Additionally, transparency can help build desired organisational culture (Holtschlag et al., 2025, p. 1316).

Workload and well-being. Six sub-themes and attributes were identified: realistic workload, meeting hygiene and recovery, focus time, fair compensation for workload, cultural norm shift, and load monitoring. The findings show that the recommendations showcase structural changes for strain, for example, meeting load, overtime, and chronic busyness, as concrete ways to improve well-being. Leadership is a key element in managing workload, prioritisation, and resources (Fernet et al., 2015, p. 27; Tummers & Bakker, 2021, p. 9). Well-managed prioritisation (Patzak et al., 2025, p. 2) and resource management (Jo & Shin, 2025, pp. 17–19) can help support employee well-being, motivation, job demands, and strain (Tummers & Bakker, 2021, p. 10).

Collaboration and safety. Eight sub-themes and attributes were identified: structured collaboration, inclusion and voice, cross-functional collaboration, psychological safety, listening and care, recognition and feedback, face-to-face practices, and team identity. The findings show that the respondents seek inclusion, listening, recognition, and genuine human connection to raise psychological safety and strengthen well-being. Previous research identifies inclusion, recognition (Tribhuvan et al., 2025, p. 633; Ayele et al., 2024, pp. 14–16), an open conversation (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, pp. 279–280), and feedback from supervisors (Liu et al., 2024, p. 8) as contributing factors.

Growth and structure. Nine sub-themes and attributes were identified: role clarity, fair structures, clarity and structure, career development, development modalities, protect learning time, decision flow, operational excellence, and standardisation. The findings show that clear roles and targets, real career development, protected learning time, and

more lean ways of working are seen to sustain well-being. Role clarity supports job satisfaction and emotional well-being (Zettina et al., 2024, p. 11), and single-organisational and inter-organisational performance, while building trust, enhancing collaboration, and reducing conflicts (Gil-Garcia et al., 2020, pp. 2–5). It can also support innovation and internal motivation (Kundu et al., 2020, p. 467), lower psychological strain, and reduce fatigue (Zettina et al., 2024, p. 11).

The previous findings highlight that the respondents propose leadership practices that target well-known well-being attributes: workload control and prioritisation, psychological safety and recognition, open and transparent communication, inclusive collaboration, and role and career clarity. These are presented to improve occupational well-being, which indicates a clear link between leadership culture and employees' occupational well-being. Additionally, the respondents highlight concrete leadership actions that could improve occupational well-being and help implement the Leadership model and the Well-being framework into daily practices.

The recommendations were around four main areas: strengthening transparency and communication, managing workload and supporting work-life balance, strengthening collaboration, inclusion and psychological safety, and enhancing development, clarity, and the ways of working. The summarised and recommended leadership practices are shown in detail in Table 7. Supporting transparency helps build lower organisational structures (Mosse et al., 2023, p. 2), and developing and freeing communication can support psychological safety at work (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, pp. 279–280). Effective communication can help organisations gain a competitive advantage by increasing organisational effectiveness (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, p. 283; Musheke & Phiri, 2021, p. 669). A diversity climate supports inclusion and employees' belongingness (Ayele et al., 2024, pp. 14–16), and diversity communication may also improve inclusion and employee engagement (Men et al., 2023, pp. 463, 465). Inclusive leadership supports higher job satisfaction, and an inclusive climate increases the effect (Phillips et al., 2025, p. 588).

Managing resources, which was found lacking (Table 7), balances workload and reduces exhaustion (Jo & Shin, 2024, pp. 17–19), job demands, and strain (Tummers & Bakker, 2021, p. 10). Additionally, promoting work-life balance and employee development (Murphy, 2024, p. 31). Moreover, setting reasonable goals and expectations (Strulov-Shianin & Steiny Wellsjo, 2025, p. 6) and clearer roles can help strengthen a collaborative atmosphere (Schkolski, 2025, p. 110). Utilising dual-channel learning, different learning behaviours (indirect and direct), employee-driven development (Wallo et al., 2024, pp. 237–243), agile, and needs-based designs for learning (Mikolajczyk, 2022, pp. 553–555), while supporting learning with digital tools, can help enhance development (Dachner et al., 2021, p. 5). Additionally, with clear goal-setting and work task prioritisation, an organisation can support employee well-being and productivity (Patzak et al., 2025, p. 2; Schkolski, 2025, pp. 98, 109).

Table 7. Recommended leadership practices to improve occupational well-being.

Strengthening transparency and communication	Managing workload and supporting work-life balance	Strengthening collaboration, inclusion and psychological safety	Enhancing development, clarity and the ways of working
More regular and open updates and two-way communication	Ensure realistic workloads and avoid “chronic” overtime	More structured collaboration across functions and reduce the silos	Clearer roles, responsibilities and expectations
Clearer explanation of the reasons behind changes	Improve prioritisation and reduce meeting load	Better inclusion in decision making and active listening from leaders	Fair and consistent career paths
Visibility into plans, goals, progress and decision making	Have “no-meeting days” and protect focus time	Make a safe space for raising concerns	Better support for career and professional development through mentoring and protected learning time

Strengthening transparency and communication	Managing workload and supporting work-life balance	Strengthening collaboration, inclusion and psychological safety	Enhancing development, clarity and the ways of working
Greater leadership presence and transparency in strategy deployment	Address the “busy” culture and compensate overtime fairly	More face-to-face interaction and team-building	Transparent project funnelling, standardised processes, reduced internal complexity and wider use of Wärtsilä Continuous Improvement practices
		Recognition practices that validate contributions	

6 Discussion

Leadership and organisational culture affect employees' behaviour and well-being (Adeniyi et al., 2024, p. 249; Al-Swidi et al., 2021, p. 9; Hogan & Coote, 2014, p. 1618; Liu et al., 2024, p. 8). It can promote a healthy organisational environment (Blesch, 2015, pp. 3, 9–10) and it predicts organisational performance and success (De Neve et al., 2023, p. 4; Huettermann & Bruch, 2019, p. 23; Krekel et al., 2019, p. 24; Murphy, 2024, p. 31). The results of this study emphasise the role of leadership culture in shaping employees' occupational well-being in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit. Both the quantitative and qualitative results indicate that well-being is deeply rooted in daily leadership behaviours, communication patterns, and the organisational structures created by managers and supervisors. Leadership practices demonstrate clear associations with occupational well-being, suggesting that workplace leadership forms the context, which defines employees' experiences through support, motivation, clarity, and strain. In the following sections, the results are discussed in depth and related to previous literature.

6.1 Leadership culture's connection to occupational well-being

Employees perceive Wärtsilä's leadership culture to affect their occupational well-being. For example, participants felt their occupational well-being was supported with leadership practices such as autonomy, good work-life balance, face-to-face meetings, and clear targets. Additionally, the quantitative analysis confirmed the findings; leadership systematically and positively connected to occupational well-being ($\rho = .427$, $p < .001$) with health indicators. The findings support the conception that occupational well-being is built in the workplaces and through the leadership practices in them. Occupational well-being can be seen as a separate dimension from overall individual health, although it's evident that occupational well-being, general well-being, and a healthy lifestyle are connected to each other.

Although employees perceive leadership culture as influencing their well-being, it is important to discuss how these daily leadership practices translate into well-being outcomes. The findings suggest that well-being is not created by isolated, certain initiatives but rather through daily interactions between supervisors and employees. The consistency between the qualitative experiences and the quantitative correlations suggests that leadership behaviours create the conditions and environment in which, for example, workload, clarity, and support are either strengthened or weakened. Additionally, leadership culture appeared influential even though employees' general perceived well-being levels were already high. This supports the idea that leadership behaviours and practices may function as protective factors that help employees maintain well-being during high-demand periods, as was the case during the data collection. The results, therefore, support the notion that leadership culture not only promotes well-being but may also buffer against strain when demand and load are high.

Another aspect to consider is that none of the background variables – such as age, gender, or tenure – showed a connection to employees' well-being or their perceptions of leadership. This finding may indicate that leadership does not depend on who the employee is, but on how leadership is practised in everyday work. For leadership to be successful, its practices and goals must be balanced with employees' needs. For example, excessive health-oriented initiatives can take over time from other important aspects at the workplace and weaken well-being. Uniformity, as this suggests, is a cohesive leadership environment in which norms and expectations play a stronger role than personal or demographic differences. Additionally, a hybrid and fast-paced environment of the Information Management unit may increase the importance of leadership practices, because when employees face heavy workloads and shifting tasks, leadership can be the constant stable that maintains balance and manages uncertainty, which may partially explain why leadership was connected to employee well-being.

6.2 Leadership model's connection to occupational well-being

Employees perceived Wäertsilä's Leadership model as well implemented in the organisation, and supervisors largely acted accordingly. The elements of the Leadership model functioned mainly as intended, guiding supervisors' work, and their goals were achieved well. Creating well-being was perceived as an active process, which also promoted the well-being of the employees in this study, according to the answers. In addition, employees perceived their well-being to be at a good level (Q12, M = 4.31), which is significant and further emphasised since the survey was conducted at the end of the year, in the middle of a hectic time. This reaffirms the importance of well-being implementation in leadership culture. When the implementation process is successful, organisations can achieve their strategic well-being goals even in suboptimal times.

The finding that the Leadership model was mainly perceived as well implemented suggests a strong alignment between leadership expectations and daily supervisory behaviour. This is important since leadership frameworks might fail in practice when implementing intentions into supervisory actions. In this study, employees' experiences indicate that the model is not just a strategic document, but an actionable framework reflected in how supervisors communicate, set expectations, and support their teams. However, it is also relevant to consider the potential gap between the model's intended results and the aspects that employees consider most meaningful. For example, employees emphasised relational elements, such as dialogue, trust, fairness, and one-to-one well-being support, more than visionary elements such as inspiration.

This suggests that while the Leadership model functions effectively, certain aspects may carry more weight in influencing well-being than others. The fact that well-being levels stayed high during a demanding period suggests that the Leadership model may strengthen resilience by providing consistency during possible uncertainty. On the other hand, it is also possible that employees' positive answers reflect a sense of psychological fulfilment, meaning that when leadership acts in a way that meets employees'

expectations, well-being follows. This connection may be worth further examination in the future.

Furthermore, the strong alignment between the Leadership model and employees' experiences raises a question of which elements of the model are translated most effectively into daily practices. The components of fairness, trust, clarity, dialogue and safety that the employees valued most may be the factors that drive well-being, aligning with (Amoadu et al., 2023, p. 6; Edelman et al., 2024, p. 24; Zettna et al., 2024, p. 11) findings. On the other hand, the less mentioned components of, for example, inspiration, may also be effective but in a less central role to everyday well-being. This notion suggests that the Leadership model could be further prioritised by highlighting the behaviours that have the strongest practical impact on employees' experiences, at least in the Information Management unit.

6.3 Leadership practices to improve occupational well-being

Transformational leadership practices are presented in the Wärttilä Leadership model but are not entirely transformed into practices in the Information Management unit. The model provides simplified guidelines for the leaders, but in this section, those are divided into more detailed and practical points. Clarity, especially role clarity at work, supports employee well-being (Edelman et al., 2024, p. 24; Zettna et al., 2024, p. 11) and organisational performance (Gil-Garcia et al., 2020, pp. 2–5; Edelman et al., 2024, p. 24; Kundu et al., 2020, p. 467; Zettna et al., 2024, p. 11). Additionally, workplace safety, both physical and psychological, affects employee well-being (Amoadu et al., 2023, p. 6; Sabbath et al., 2018, pp. 738–739, 741; Sorensen et al., 2020, p. 2). In this study, employees perceived psychological safety and clarity to be supporting their well-being, which is aligned with previous studies. Quantitative data supported these findings (Safety Q24, M = 4.22; Clarity Q28, M = 4.35).

Participants identified clarity and transparency, as well as dialogue and collaboration, as having positive impacts on their occupational well-being. They also perceived the absence of any of these traits to harm their occupational well-being. These findings are aligned with previous studies (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, pp. 279–280; Holtschlag et al., 2025, p. 1316). We found that aiming for clarity and transparency in leadership could help prevent frustration, loss of motivation, and improve productivity, especially when employees can focus on work itself. Clarity in organisations reduces confusion and creates trust and certainty, which are important factors for employees in a fast-paced, changing, and unstable work life. If the organisation manages to offer its employees high levels of trust and certainty, it may help employees manage exhaustion and stress and support them emotionally.

Open conversation has been found to support psychological and relational safety (Edmondson & Besieux, 2021, pp. 279–280). Employees perceived open dialogue with the line manager and clear communication to support their well-being. Human ways of leading are usually desired, and even more crucial in the remote work era. When employees have fewer face-to-face encounters with their colleagues and supervisors, it's understandable to desire regular interactions where one can give and receive feedback and take care of their social needs. In Wärtsilä's Information Management unit, all the employees worked at least part of the week remotely (Table 2), highlighting the importance.

Continuous learning supports employee well-being by increasing capabilities, which helps support motivation and productivity (Beier et al., 2025, p. 103). We found that employees also highly value learning and knowledge sharing, and that they are encouraged to develop and grow within the organisation. The quantitative data confirmed this conception (Q23, M = 4.49). Additionally, employees perceived their leaders to be actively building trust in the workplace (Q31, M = 4.52). However, in some studies, continuous learning has been seen to create challenges with raising expectations (Greco et al., 2025, pp. 2, 13) and skill mismatching (Bachmann et al., 2024, p. 6). In addition, organisation-centric learning can be insufficient (Beier et al., 2025, p. 85).

Usually, organisations focus on developing their employees to match new requirements and prepare them for challenging tasks. However, studies rarely discuss the challenges that continuous learning can create. The negative effects are rarer, but they are important to acknowledge, as they can create barriers to organisational development and success. For learning and development to be effective, employers can, for example, create a development path comprising different courses and certificates. Achievements can be rewarded with development points or pay raises. These types of rewards can encourage employees to actively learn more alongside their work and not think about continuous improvement as a burden.

Resource management (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, pp. 2, 7; Demerouti et al., 2001, pp. 499, 508; Tummers & Bakker, 2021, p. 9), workload management (Patzak et al., 2025, p. 2; West et al., 2022, pp. 2, 7), clear targets and goal setting (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024, p. 5; Schkolski, 2025, p. 108; Wachira & Simon, 2024, p. 33), unfair treatment at workplace (Boden et al., 2021, p. 1), and discrimination (Akanpaadgi et al., 2024, p. 5) affect employee well-being. For example, the JD-R model is a widely known theory that demonstrates the relationship between job demands, resource management, and occupational well-being.

Lack of resource or workload management, unclear expectations, micromanaging, unfair treatment, not respecting work-life boundaries, up-down decision-making, and bad communication were associated with negative effects on employee well-being. Workload and resource management were among the most common elements that employees brought up that cause strain, which was found in both quantitative and qualitative data. This affirms the connection between job demands and occupational well-being. It also highlights the demands of modern working life and what matters to employees in a pleasant working life. The quantitative data showed that resource management and workload management were the two main improvement points in Wärttilä's Information Management unit (Q17, M = 3.92, Q18, M = 3.72). According to the quantitative data, for example, clarity (Q19, M = 4.13; Q28, M = 4.35), fairness (Q22, M = 4.59), and

respecting work-life boundaries (Q26, $M = 4.49$) were on the other hand well achieved, which indicates that resourcing and workload stand out as the main improvement points, since the other questions mean values are significantly higher.

Moreover, the prominence of well-being support as a unique predictor across different well-being outcomes suggests that employees respond strongly to leadership that recognises humanity and day-to-day challenges. This also aligns with transformational leadership practices, emphasising, for example, compassion, transparency and psychological safety. At the same time, the identified challenges, especially resource and workload issues, highlight that good leadership cannot entirely compensate for structural or organisational shortcomings. Effective leadership may buffer strain, but insufficient resources, a high workload, or unclear goals and expectations will still undermine well-being, even when leadership behaviours are otherwise positive. This emphasises the importance of viewing leadership practices within broader organisational structures and not being satisfied with positive results if there are still areas to improve.

Furthermore, the possible tension between clarity and autonomy is an area for further discussion. While employees value clarity, excessive oversight or communication can lead to micromanagement, which negatively affects well-being. Leaders must balance structure and oversight with trust and autonomy, which becomes even more crucial in hybrid environments where communication gaps and misunderstandings can happen more easily. Similarly, collaboration was highlighted as a valuable behaviour because it fosters positive relationships, but it can also help solve bottlenecks and resource struggles. Collaboration can therefore be seen as both a relational leadership practice and a strategy to manage job demands. Finally, although continuous improvement was appreciated by some, the literature and results highlight that learning expectations and too quick changes can become burdensome if they are not supported properly. Leaders may need to pace expectations and changes to ensure that learning does not become an additional source of strain to already heavily loaded teams and employees.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Conclusion of results

Firstly, the study examined “Is Wärtsilä’s Information Management unit’s leadership culture connected to its employees’ occupational well-being?” The employees perceived the leadership culture to influence their occupational well-being (e.g., Healthy lifestyle $\rho = .427$, $p < .001$). Occupational well-being appears to be primarily defined through workplace practices such as autonomy, work-life balance, clear targets, and supportive supervisory communication.

Secondly, the study examined “Does Wärtsilä’s Leadership model improve the Information Management unit’s employees’ occupational well-being?” Wärtsilä’s Leadership model was mostly seen as well implemented, and supervisors were mainly seen to act according to its principles. Employees reported high well-being levels (Q12, $M = 4.31$), even during a demanding period, highlighting the importance of well-being practices in daily leadership, and indicating that the Leadership model improves occupational well-being. From leadership practices, clarity (Q28, $M = 4.35$), fairness (Q22, $M = 4.59$) and psychological safety (Q24, $M = 4.22$) were considered as strong well-being supporters.

Thirdly, the study examined “What leadership practices can be recommended to improve the occupational well-being in Wärtsilä’s Information Management unit?” Employees highlighted transparency, communication, and collaboration as well-being improvers, and the absence of these as harmful. Challenges related to resource and workload management, unclear expectations, and inconsistent communication negatively affected well-being. These issues were also present quantitatively as the lowest-rated items (Q17, $M = 3.92$; Q18, $M = 3.72$), which must be considered in future leadership practices to further improve occupational well-being in the Information Management unit.

7.2 Strengths and limitations

The decision to use a mixed-methods approach was a clear strength in the study. The use of quantitative methods gives a limited background result of the current state of leadership practices in the Information Management unit, but the addition of qualitative data to support the evidence gives a deeper insight into the effect of leadership practices on occupational well-being. The quantitative approach gives a structured, validated, and relatively wide range of responses to assess the employee experiences, and the qualitative approach offers explanations for the reasons behind the quantitative side.

A major source of bias in the study was the use of a survey to gather the data. Since the study is built on subjective survey data and not, for example, objective longitudinal data, it cannot be used to conclude certain cause-and-effect relations about the effect of leadership culture on occupational well-being. On the other hand, self-reported occupational well-being is a deeply personal experience that is difficult to measure objectively. The use of a survey as the data collection method was supported by previous research, which discussed that subjective well-being indicators have been seen to be reliable and valid to measure well-being (van Hoorn, 2007, p. 223; Wijngaards et al., 2021, p. 803). Additionally, the use of a survey allowed for a larger sample size than, for example, interviews because of the limited resources of the researchers.

The survey form was designed purely for Wärtsilä's needs, and it was not built on previously validated surveys since they would not meet the needs. The repeatability, reliability, and validity of the survey were tested in a pilot with Wärtsilä's employees before the actual data gathering. The results were cohesive, but still some minor per-day variance was noted, which must be considered when examining the results. A technical limitation of the survey was the possible long duration of filling out the form, if the participant took a longer time to consider the answers. The average response time still stayed within the promised duration of the survey.

Additionally, the survey questions were formed in an easily understandable format, but the terms could still have been difficult for participants not engaged in well-being topics, which could influence the results. The Likert-scaled questions could also cause participants to select the “neither agree nor disagree” answer option, but that was minimised by adding the “I don’t know” answer option. The researchers explained the key terms in the survey but decided not to explain all terms because the survey form would have become too long and overwhelming. This meant that the participants had to contact the researchers as instructed or figure out the possible difficult terms themselves in case of needed help. No participants contacted the researchers during the survey.

The participants were clearly informed that answering the survey and taking part in the study is optional and anonymous, and that the human resources department of the commissioning organisation cannot see the raw research data. Despite that notion, the participants may have answered in a socially desired way if they felt that their answers could have an impact on their role in the workplace. This limitation was minimised by clearly informing the sovereignty of the researchers and the minimal role of the commissioning organisation in the technical stages of the survey implementation and data analysis.

A possible source of bias in the results is the background factors and well-being knowledge of the participants. Even though the results are generalizable to the entire unit and possibly to all white-collar units in the organisation, only 22.8 % of the unit’s employees answered the survey. Since a question can be asked if only the employees who are the most interested in leadership and well-being initiatives answered the survey, this could influence the results. This could misinterpret the result to one side or another, but it cannot be confirmed, so the results must be considered reliable.

The results’ reliability and validity in practice are influenced negatively by the small cell sizes of the survey dataset. In the analysis phase, variables were made into dichotomised and three-scaled variables to improve the reliability of statistical tests. This then had an

impact on the biggest possible differences in the survey results, because the small cells had to be combined into larger ones. Additionally, the use of a regression analysis has methodological restrictions, and our dataset was on the limit for it to be used, which must be considered when interpreting the validity and strength of the quantitative results.

On the other hand, the analyses still show the impact direction and provide more reliable results than the analysis that would have been made with the raw dataset or only crosstabulations. The small cell sizes also had an ethical implication, because if the analysis had been made with specific group filters, the participants would have been easily identifiable, which was not wanted. On that note, a decision was made not to go into deeper group-specific analysis to not disclose any personal information. This limitation is not major, since the commissioning organisations and the thesis goal is to achieve a comprehensive picture of the state of the organisation and not necessarily identify small groups' personal needs. In this case, the limitation is mainly a theoretical, not a practical one.

Recall bias is another possible source of bias in the study. The employees were asked to think about previous experiences, which could cause recall bias. On the other hand, they were asked about specific leadership practices that would help them remember certain behaviours. With self-reporting of well-being, the reliability of the result is influenced by daily variance. For example, psychological well-being can be influenced by a good night's sleep, a bad day, or work stress, which might have a concrete influence on the selected answers. This study's data collection was also conducted at the end of the year, when all employees were caught up in final deadlines and a hectic time, which could influence the amount and quality of the answers.

7.3 Practical implementations

The practical recommendations for Wärtsilä's Information Management unit can be divided into four main areas according to our results and supported by the previous literature: strengthening transparency and communication; managing workload and supporting work-life balance; strengthening collaboration, inclusion, and psychological safety; and enhancing development, clarity, and ways of working. Strengthening transparency and communication includes having more two-way communication, open and clear explanations of the reasons behind changes, and clearer visibility into plans and decision-making. Managing workload and supporting work-life balance means ensuring better workload management, better work prioritisation, and getting away from the "busy culture" mentality, which was seen in both qualitative and quantitative results as the main improvement points. Strengthening collaboration, inclusion, and psychological safety means having more collaboration across team and unit borders, better inclusion in decision-making, creating a safe space for raising concerns, and recognising contributions. Enhancing development, clarity, and ways of working includes creating transparency in career development options, better support in professional development, and having standardised processes all around.

7.4 Future research

For the commissioning organisation. A suggested next step for the commissioning organisation is to implement the survey in a larger part of the organisation to see whether the same results can be seen in different white-collar units. That would potentially showcase organisation-wide improvement areas or parts of the Well-being framework and the Leadership model, which are not suitable for the organisation or are not implemented properly. Another next step is to follow up on this same study to complete a redo of the study in a year, when corrections have been made to improve the areas where improvement space was noticed. The longitudinal approach would give a numerical result to show whether the improvements made a desired difference. This would

allow for a more fault-proof analysis of the best practices and not rely on a single measurement time.

Another future research topic would be to identify the smaller groups in this study that reported the most well-being issues to target correcting practices for them. This would potentially limit the number of well-being issues and thus reduce sick leave and costs related to well-being. The limitation for this is that in the current study, all the identifiers have been removed, and total identification of potential risk groups is not possible. Another limiting aspect is that the researchers promised anonymity for participants, and that would jeopardise it. In future research, those methods of data collection should be considered where there is a possibility for ethical and secure targeting. Finally, studies that consider different times of the financial quarters would possibly identify the most burdensome times when the leadership behaviours and well-being are most tested. Identifying these variables would help with preventative and effective measures.

For the research community. Future research should consider studying the topic in wider and comparable settings. The effect of leadership practices on occupational well-being should be studied in different areas of work and organisations to identify area or work-specific needs and best practices. Longitudinal studies in different fields would bring value in understanding how leadership practices influence occupational well-being. Global comparative studies would bring views on how different countries' leadership practices and the specific structures of the working life influence employee well-being. These studies would help identify generalizable practices and allow their implementation nationally, considering the country-specifics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey form

Master's thesis: The effect of leadership culture on occupational well-being in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit

We invite you to take part in the University of Vaasa's master's thesis for Wärtsilä's Information Management unit "The Effect of Leadership Culture on Occupational Well-being," conducted by Tuukka Mäkelä and Adam Talka as part of their master's studies in Human Resource Management.

The Information Sheet, Data Protection Notice and Informed Consent of this research are attached to the email.

1. I sign and date the consent form, give permission to use my answers, and participate in this study.

Yes

Section 1: Background Information

2. Gender

Male

Female

Other

Prefer not to say

3. Age

18–30 years

31–40 years

41–50 years

51–58 years

Over 58 years

4. Work location

Helsinki

Vaasa

Turku

Mumbai

Other

5. Do you work remotely or on-site?

- Fully remote
- Mostly remote
- Evenly remote and on-site
- Mostly on-site
- Fully on-site

6. Are you in a supervisory role? (You have 1 or more subordinates)

- Yes
- No

7. Employment Type

- Permanent
- Fixed term
- Trainee / Intern

8. Years at Wärtsilä

- Less than 1 year
- 1–3 years
- 4–10 years
- More than 10 years

Section 2: Open-ended Questions

Key term in this section:

- *Leadership practice*: Leadership practice is the actions performed by the leaders which guides processes and routines.

9. What leadership practices have positively or negatively impacted your well-being? Please describe.

10. Wärtsilä's Leadership model includes three main principles.

- Energise and lead the way
- Develop people and teams
- Challenge and support change

How do you see Wärtsilä's Leadership model reflected in your team's leadership practices?

11. What leadership practices would you recommend being used to improve the overall well-being in your team/the Information Management unit?

Section 3: Well-being & Leadership

Likert Scale questions ranging from 1–5, and an additional “6 = I don’t know” option.
Please rate the following statements:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Somewhat disagree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Somewhat agree
- 5 = Strongly agree
- 6 = I don’t know

Well-being statements:

Key terms in this section:

- *Health literacy*: Health literacy means being able to access, understand and use information in ways that promote and maintain good health and well-being.
- *Well-being*: Well-being means a positive state in which a person experiences a good quality of life, feels meaningful and is able to function in their everyday lives.

12. I consider my well-being to be good.

1 2 3 4 5 6

13. I’m interested in Wärtsilä’s well-being initiatives.

1 2 3 4 5 6

14. I consider my health literacy to be adequate.

1 2 3 4 5 6

15. I acknowledge how Wärtsilä’s Information Management unit’s leadership practices affect my well-being.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Well-being framework

16. My work feels meaningful and rewarding.

1 2 3 4 5 6

17. My workload is balanced by good work prioritisation.

1 2 3 4 5 6

18. My workload is balanced by sufficient resourcing.

1 2 3 4 5 6

19. I have been given clear goals and expectations about my work.

1 2 3 4 5 6

20. I feel a sense of belonging in my team.

1 2 3 4 5 6

21. I feel valued and supported in my team.

1 2 3 4 5 6

22. Fairness and equal treatment are encouraged in my team.

1 2 3 4 5 6

23. I'm supported and encouraged to learn and grow in my work.

1 2 3 4 5 6

24. Wärtsilä's Information Management unit has a psychologically safe environment where I can excel.

1 2 3 4 5 6

25. Wärtsilä's Information Management unit supports to foster a healthy lifestyle.

1 2 3 4 5 6

26. My boundaries between work and non-work time are respected.

1 2 3 4 5 6

27. My personal needs are acknowledged in my work.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Leadership model

Key term in this section:

- *Leadership culture*: Leadership culture is the shared values, beliefs, and leadership behaviors of an organization. It's influenced by the words, actions, and environment of leaders.

28. My supervisor guides with clarity and purpose.

1 2 3 4 5 6

29. My supervisor inspires the team.

1 2 3 4 5 6

30. My supervisor encourages collaboration across the organisation.

1 2 3 4 5 6

31. My supervisor actively builds trust.

1 2 3 4 5 6

32. My supervisor encourages continuous improvement.

1 2 3 4 5 6

33. My supervisor actively supports my well-being at work.

1 2 3 4 5 6

34. Overall, the leadership culture in Wärtsilä's Information Management unit supports employee well-being.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix 2. Email for survey participants

Dear all,

We invite you to take part in the University of Vaasa's master's thesis survey for Wärtsilä's Information Management unit, "**The Effect of Leadership Culture on Occupational Well-being**". The thesis is supervised by Mari-Ella Juhola and Nina Sode-Carlsen.

The aim of the research is to seek insights into how leadership practices affect employee well-being and to provide actionable information to improve leadership culture within Wärtsilä's Information Management unit. You are invited to participate in this study because your experiences are relevant to the research aims. The survey will take around 10-15 minutes, and your participation is voluntary and greatly appreciated.

The deadline for answering this survey is December 31, 2025.

If you wish, you may withdraw from the study at any point. Completing the survey is fully anonymized, and responses cannot be linked to individual participants. **Attached are the appendices that contain the information sheet, data protection notice and informed consent of this survey.**

Thank you for your participation, and we wish you a great end of the year!

Best regards,
Tuukka Mäkelä & Adam Talka

Tuukka Mäkelä, email, phone
Adam Talka, email, phone

Appendix 3. Descriptive statistics and comparison of means analysis of how different background groups feel about their well-being

Crosstabulation between Q12 and the background variables.

Background	Group	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Median
Age	Under 40	4.26	.98	4
	Over 40	4.33	.84	4.5
Gender	Male	4.50	.59	5
	Female	4.19	1.00	4
Work location	Finland	4.27	.91	4
	Other	4.58	.67	5
Way of working	Mostly remote	4.33	.81	4
	Hybrid	4.33	1.00	5
	Mostly on-site	4.23	.93	4
Supervisory role	Yes	4.50	.60	5
	No	4.25	.96	4
Employment type	Permanent	4.27	.91	4
	Trainee / fixed term	4.28	.89	4
Years at Wärtsilä	1–3	4.46	.74	5
	More than 4 years	4.24	.94	4

Crosstabulation between Q13 and the background variables.

Background	Group	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Median
Age	Under 40	4.12	1.11	4
	Over 40	4.53	.63	5
Gender	Male	4.35	.84	5
	Female	4.53	.61	5
Work location	Finland	4.35	.85	5
	Other	4.67	.65	5
Way of working	Mostly remote	4.44	.71	5
	Hybrid	4.22	1.09	5
	Mostly on-site	4.62	.51	5
Supervisory role	Yes	4.57	.66	5
	No	4.36	.80	5
Employment type	Permanent	4.00	1.15	4
	Trainee / fixed term	4.42	.82	5
Years at Wärtsilä	1–3	4.48	.75	5
	More than 4 years	4.35	.87	5

Crosstabulation between Q14 and the background variables.

Background	Group	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Median
Age	Under 40	4.27	1.00	4.5
	Over 40	4.48	.69	5
Gender	Male	4.37	.62	4
	Female	4.57	.80	5
Work location	Finland	4.41	.84	5
	Other	4.45	.52	4
Way of working	Mostly remote	4.48	.66	5
	Hybrid	4.23	.95	4
	Mostly on-site	4.58	.90	5
Supervisory role	Yes	4.57	.79	5
	No	4.36	.80	5
Employment type	Permanent	4.25	.96	5
	Trainee / fixed term	4.42	.80	4.5
Years at Wärtsilä	1–3	4.57	.57	5
	More than 4 years	4.33	.89	5

Crosstabulation between Q15 and the background variables.

Background	Group	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Median
Age	Under 40	3.90	.94	4
	Over 40	4.03	.83	4
Gender	Male	3.93	.81	4
	Female	4.13	.80	4
Work location	Finland	3.96	.90	4
	Other	4.18	.60	4
Way of working	Mostly remote	3.80	.76	4
	Hybrid	4.14	1.01	4
	Mostly on-site	4.31	.75	4
Supervisory role	Yes	4.26	.81	4
	No	3.89	.87	4
Employment type	Permanent	3.80	.87	4
	Trainee / fixed term	4.00	.87	4
Years at Wärtsilä	1–3	4.14	.88	4
	More than 4 years	3.91	.86	4

Appendix 4. Positive impacts of leadership culture on occupational well-being

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Sub-theme	Theme
“Trust and full ownership, not micro-management, are impacting positively...”	Trust and ownership improve well-being	Trust and autonomy	Human-centred enabling leadership
“Space to make own decisions, low hierarchy and trust...”	Low hierarchy and space to make decisions improves well-being		
“My line manager provides support when needed but lets me independently do my work without micro management...”	Support and independence improve well-being		
“Positive: Regular One to One meetings with my manager...”	Regular one-to-ones support well-being	Coaching and one-to-one support	
“Providing guidance and giving freedom. Recurring 1-to-1s with manager.”	Guidance, freedom and recurring one-to-ones improve well-being		
“Verbal appreciation, publicly, but even better 1:1...”	Appreciation and recognition strengthen well-being	Recognition and support	
“Remote work has significantly improved my well being...easier for work-life balance...”	Remote work improves well-being	Flexibility and well-being	
“Flexibility... take a day or two off... not getting a guilty feeling when being sick...”	Flexibility and no guilt for illness improves well-being		
“My manager’s vision... results matter, not the exact hours... reduced the stress...”	Results orientation reduces stress		

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Sub-theme	Theme
“Clear communication and transparency... reduces uncertainty and stress.”	Transparency reduces stress	Clarity and transparency	
“Clear target setting, roles and responsibilities...”	Clear targets and roles support well-being		
“Open dialogue with line manager... humor... leaders guiding towards the correct answer.”	Open dialogue supports well-being	Dialogue and collaboration	

Appendix 5. Negative impacts of leadership culture on occupational well-being

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Sub-theme	Theme
“Negatively: ... lack of ability to funnel projects, not enough meaningful feedback...”	Weak funnelling and lack of roadmap increases strain	Workload and structure strain	Uncertainty and overload undermine well-being
“Too long hours... expectation that everything is handled... amount of meetings”	Long hours and too many meetings strain well-being	Overload	
“Negative impact is work overload that is usually ignored...”	Ignored overload harms well-being	Overload and lack of responses	
“Unclear expectations... ‘what should I be aiming for...’ ... excluded of topics...”	Unclear goals and exclusion cause insecurity	Role and expectation uncertainty	Uncertainty
“Negatively: lack of future roadmap...”	Missing roadmap creates uncertainty		
“Negatively: ... inability to define roles clearly... uncertainty and frustration...”	Role uncertainty creates frustration		
“Negative impact: Micromanaging, unfair treatment... expecting availability outside working hours...”	Micromanagement and unfairness harms well-being	Control and fairness violations	
“Negative – No inclusion.”	Lack of inclusion harms well-being	Exclusion	
“Negative: ... rigidity and biases creates blocks to well being.”	Bias and rigidity undermine well-being	Fairness and respect issues	
“Decision are made with very small circles... Nova MT is more like a black box... communication is rare...”	Small-circle decisions and low transparency harm well-being	Deficit in transparency	

Meaning unit	Condensed meaning unit	Sub-theme	Theme
"I am receiving some information... a lot happening in the background... not communicated well..."	Inconsistent communication increases uncertainty		
"Too many new initiatives, all at the same time..."	Excess change creates stress	Change overload	
"...heavy workloads during changes"	Overworked during change		