

PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELL-BEING FOR EMPLOYEES IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN FINLAND

A collaborative study with HEPA Europe

Abstract

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<p>Promoting physical activity and well-being for employees in small and medium-sized enterprises in Finland A collaborative study with HEPA Europe</p>		
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<p>The purpose of the study was to create better understanding of the different methods small and medium-sized companies have utilized to promote physical activity and well-being with their employees in Finland in 2010-2020. The study was conducted in co-operation with HEPA Europe as a part of their research on physical activity campaigns and interventions conducted in small and medium-sized enterprises.</p> <p>The theoretical part of the study focuses on the meaning and methods of employee well-being, prevalent recommendations of physical activity for adults and the definition of SMEs through books and articles. The theories and views are scrutinized through a managerial perspective and focus on promoting the physical well-being of employees. The presented theories are complemented with data on the current situations of employee activity and small and medium-sized companies in Finland.</p> <p>The empirical section of the thesis describes the method of data collection through curated Google search and the different phases of the study. The study is conducted through a review of grey literature as instructed by HEPA Europe. The thesis utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods as the search results are processed in excel sheet and the contents analyzed through the theoretical framework.</p> <p>The results of the study show that campaigns organized with structural fund initiatives, and co-operations with graduate students have been the primary options for companies to promote physical activity within their employees. The limited data indicates the need for further research to create more comprehensive results as the gathered data does not correlate with the number of SMEs in Finland. The results raise a question of confidentiality in employee well-being.</p>		
Keywords: Employee well-being, SMEs, physical activity, HEPA Europe		

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

Well-being at work is a growing trend that is becoming more important than ever before as ever more companies are turning to applying more agile methods in working systems and environments. Furthermore, the employees of new generations are looking for flexibility in their careers. Companies can be seen focusing on employee well-being as a way to distinguish themselves from other companies and to appeal to new employees. When employees feel physically and mentally healthy while at work, they can feel more motivated and satisfied towards their own work. (Kauhanen 2016, 17.)

Work well-being in Finland is highly monitored. Different organizations and institutions closely follow the employee well-being in different sectors. Most of these organizations offer consultations, trainings and research results to companies, and this way create easy access to information and different methods of promoting employee well-being. The most notable of these organizations are Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, The Centre for Occupational Safety, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, ETLA Economic Research and lastly Labor Institute for Economic Research. These organizations bring the current situation of employee well-being and work conditions up to public discussion regularly, yet data of the actual actions taken in different sized companies is not brought up to the common public.

Sedentary behavior is a recognized, major risk, in the modern work life. The absence of physical activity combined with continuous sitting have been proven to lead to chronic conditions and diseases. Daily exercise and over-all activity can be used to minimize the negative effects caused by long term sitting. (Ekelund, Steene-Johannessen, Brown, Wang Fagerland, Owen, Powell, Bauman & Lee 2016.) Deteriorating physical and mental health of employees can be expensive for companies. Sick-leaves, lower productivity, early retirement, and stand-in employees all take up resources that could be used more effectively. (Kauhanen 2016, 17.) Precautionary measures are needed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has asked the European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA Europe) to conduct a study of the amount of organizations promoting physical exercise for their employees in given countries. The study is called "Mapping and describing Workplace Physical Activity interventions, practices, programs and protocols for small-to-medium enterprises: A scoping review of grey literature". (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020.) This thesis is conducted in

collaboration with HEPA Europe, with the author compiling the data for the required grey literature review.

1.2 Thesis objectives, research questions and limitations

The purpose of this thesis is to create a better understanding of the different ways' small and medium-sized companies support and promote their employees' physical activity. The aim is to produce a review of what has been done to promote employee well-being in small and medium sized enterprises, and how the methods have changed in the last decade through review of grey literature. The second objective for the thesis is to question why these methods have been chosen from the managerial perspective.

When scaling through the previous studies on employee well-being and small and medium sized enterprises, the author noticed that these studies have mainly focused on employee motivation and retention, the effect different well-being methods have on employees, and the challenges small and medium-sized companies face in their field. Most of the previous studies concerning physical activity in companies have been made from the viewpoint of health care and social studies. This thesis approaches the topic from business and management perspective with the main research question as follows:

- What are the methods that companies have used to promote their employees' physical activity and well-being in small and medium-sized enterprises?

In order to answer the research question, the following sub-questions should be resolved:

- Why have the chosen methods been selected?
- What means do managers have in promoting employee activity?

To make the topic clearer the author limits the observed enterprises to small and medium sized Finnish companies. The legislation and societal structure create certain requirements for companies in Finland and thus the results collected through the study might vary if executed or studied in another country. Secondly, the thesis will focus on reviewing grey literature. By grey literature, the author means noncommercial researches, newsletters, reports, and private company publications. Thirdly, the research will focus on the different methods used and decided on by company management to promote physical activity in companies which is why the author has decided to exclude different national programs aimed at increasing the health and physical activity of Finnish individuals in general, if not aimed specifically to aforementioned company types, as these programs are aimed for everyone. Finally, the author has decided to limit the time period studied to the

second decade of 21st century as there is a higher possibility for records of programs and promotions to be found online from this time frame.

1.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis is created through a literary review focusing on employee well-being, and strategic leading. The theory creates a base for the discussion and analysis of the research question and data. The chosen sources also frame the perspective on the topic studied. Previous studies on employee well-being mainly focus on physical and mental well-being as one entity. This thesis focuses on the different methods that have been utilized by companies.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is mostly based on the book “Työhyvinvointi organisaation menestystekijänä” by Kauhanen (2016). This book covers employee well-being in companies as a whole and brings forward the importance of including employee well-being in the company’ strategy. Another theory that is introduced as a part of well-being management is the five-step well-being model by Rauramo (2012). The theories and definitions are complemented with data and definitions concerning the current situation of employee wellbeing in different sized companies in Finland compiled by the Finnish Olympic Committee.

The definitions of work well-being, small and medium sized companies, different well-being promotion methods and the challenges for companies are all relevant in the study. When the challenges and different methods are clear, as well as the target groups, can different observations and deductions be made.

1.4 Research methodology and data collection

Research approaches can be divided to two main categories, deductive and inductive. Deductive approach in researches is often linked to quantitative research method. Deductive approach starts with a hypothesis that it aims to confirm or deny with testing while inductive approach creates a theory by detecting and monitoring repetitive patterns and events. Because of this inductive research method is often linked to qualitative research method. (O’Gorman & MacIntosh 2014, 50–52, 140, 174.)

Research methods are divided to quantitative and qualitative research, to numerical and descriptive approach. Quantitative method is based on collecting and analyzing numerical data. Quantitative research creates static and measurable data on the studied topic, that can be easily replicated in later studies of the same topic. The method requires a hypothesis which it aims to answer by scaling the collected data with percentages and

comparisons. Qualitative method on the other hand is more descriptive and focuses on analyzing collected opinions and thoughts through given information and theory. The method is more flexible, and the results can vary depending on the study subjects. Qualitative research does not require a hypothesis to answer to but can be used to question the hypothesis or create one from the data results. Both aforementioned research methods can be used at the same time as mixed methods. Usage of only one research method is known as mono method. (O’Gorman & MacIntosh 2014, 50–52, 118, 156.)

The data for this thesis is collected through a scoping review of grey literature for HEPA Europe whose representative works as the commissioner of this thesis. The research approach is inductive, as the theory of why certain methods of promoting physical activity within employees are used by small and medium sized companies is created only after the collected data is analyzed. The thesis process begins with data collection from which similarities and methods are noted forming a hypothesis and leading to the creation of theory. The research method is both quantitative and qualitative, as the data is collected and analyzed through numerical data with an excel table listing organizations and companies that have implemented some type of promotion of physical activity in Finland during 2010–2020. From the collected data the author makes deductions to answer the research questions with the help of the theoretical research. The data is collected with a curated Google search. The method is explained in more detail alongside the phases of the study.

1.5 Thesis structure

The theoretical and research part of this study is divided into seven chapters (Figure 1). The first chapter provides the introduction to the topic, including the thesis structure, objectives, and methods. The second chapter includes a literary review and continues on describing what wellbeing at work means and how it affects employees and the company. The chapter also includes description of different methods of promoting exercise to employees.



Figure 1 Thesis structure

The search method and different phases of the research is explained in chapter four, followed by discussion and analysis of the results in more detail in chapter five. Chapter six focuses on the conclusions, answers to the research questions and reliability of the study with suggestions for further research. Finally, chapter seven concludes this thesis by summarizing all the chapters together.

2 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELL-BEING AT WORK

2.1 Well-being at work

Work is an indispensable part of modern human life, and one source of well-being. Work guarantees income, creates rhythm to life, brings new social relationships and enables enjoyable life. On the other hand, private life affects the working life as well. The meaningfulness of work depends on the person. Therefore, the experience is subjective, and the topic is complicated to discuss. Work environment and working conditions influence the individual's experiences of work and well-being, and no two experiences are the same. (Rauramo 2012, 10, 126.)

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (2020) defines work well-being as a combination of enjoyable, productive, rewarding, safe and healthy work. Well-being at work cannot be achieved through separate campaigns and events. More effective ways are created through managerial decisions and planning of daily work. The actions required must scale through the whole organization from employees to the working environment, processes, and management. According to the institution, pleasant and rewarding work can affect people's life management positively all-around.

According to Kauhanen (2016, 22, 63) organizations have always thought about the well-being of their staff in one way or another in order to generate more profit. The basic definition of work wellbeing, as it is nowadays viewed, was formed in the beginning of 21st century. Modern companies have chosen to focus on employee well-being as a way to cut costs in the long run and to generate both direct and indirect profits. Studies show that investing in work wellbeing reduces staff costs, by lessening the number of sick leaves and work-related accidents, occupational diseases, and premature retirements. In addition, investing in the employee well-being at work improves job satisfaction resulting in longer employment contracts. All of these factors affect the company's productivity and costs.

Rauramo (2012, 10–14) has created a five-step model of work well-being based on Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy is based on five needs of individuals; psychological needs of food, water, warmth and rest, safety needs of security and safety, need of belonging and love, esteem needs of feelings of accomplishment and need of self-actualization. The needs must be met in that order for the individual to advance forward to the next stage. Rauramo has turned and modified these basic needs into steps of well-being at work that also support individual's well-being in all aspects of life. In this model the steps are named health, safety, sense of community, valuation, and

competence (Figure 2). The steps cannot be advanced on by employees on alone but require support from the organization.

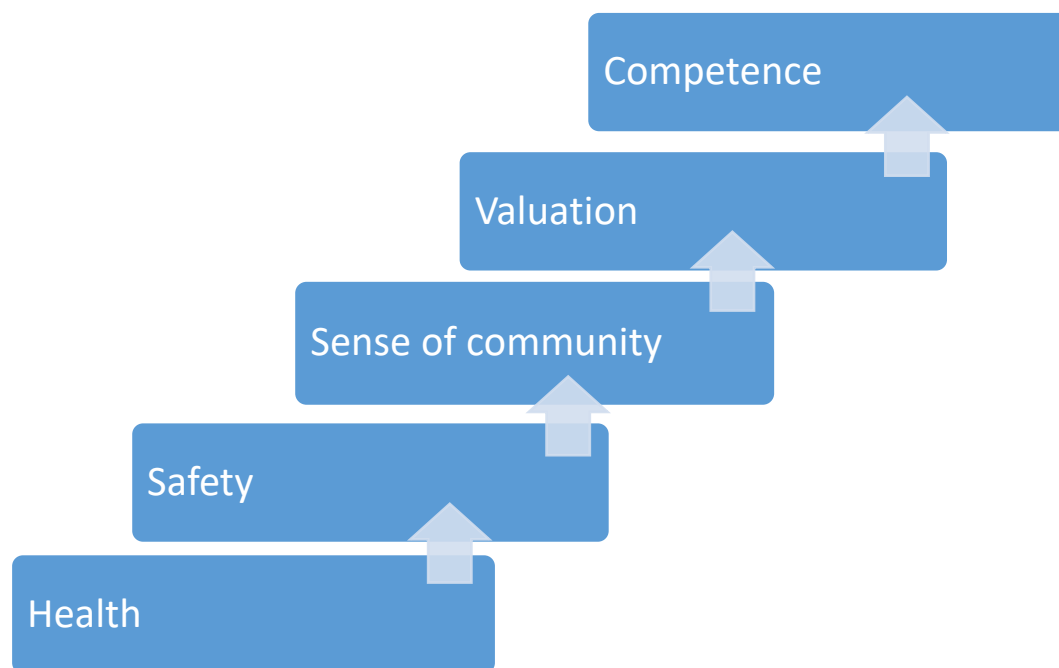


Figure 2 Five steps of work-wellbeing (Adapted Rauramo 2012, 7)

Figure 2 shows the steps of work-wellbeing. Health is the first step in the model, and it creates the basis for the well-being staircase. In the model, health encompasses all aspects of mental-, social- and physical well-being. Because of this, only treating physical symptoms of sickness at occupational healthcare does not guarantee a healthy employee. The employer can support the employees' health with flexible working hours that fit the employee's life, sport vouchers that the employee can use for exercise of their choice and with stable working environment. (Rauramo 2012, 25–28.) The next steps in the figure are safety and sense of community. Safety encompasses safe work and working environment, sufficient livelihood, equal and just work community. Sense of community covers the social atmosphere in the company, from coworkers to management and different management styles. (Rauramo 2012, 70–76, 104–110.) The last two steps in the figure are valuation and competence. Valuation means the employees feelings of value to the workplace, importance of their work and fairness of rewarding strategies. Finally, competence covers the need for creativity and challenges in work to keep the employee motivated. (Rauramo 2012, 123–127, 145–146.)

2.2 Stages of physical activity

UKK Institute (2019) has published recommended weekly physical activity amounts for adults 18-64 years old to keep up their health, well-being, performance, and work capabilities. Adults should practice aerobic physical activities that moderately raise their pulse 2h 30min in a week or 1h 15min in a way that raises their pulse notably. Adults should also practice muscle strengthening and balance training exercises such as gym, stairs and outdoor work that increases their mobility and keeps up their performance twice a week. Light exercises, such as walking the dog, taking the stairs, and walking around should be done as often as possible. Small breaks to sedentary behavior are advised to be taken every time there is a chance. These recommendations can be seen in a form of a pyramid in Figure 3. (UKK Institute 2019.)

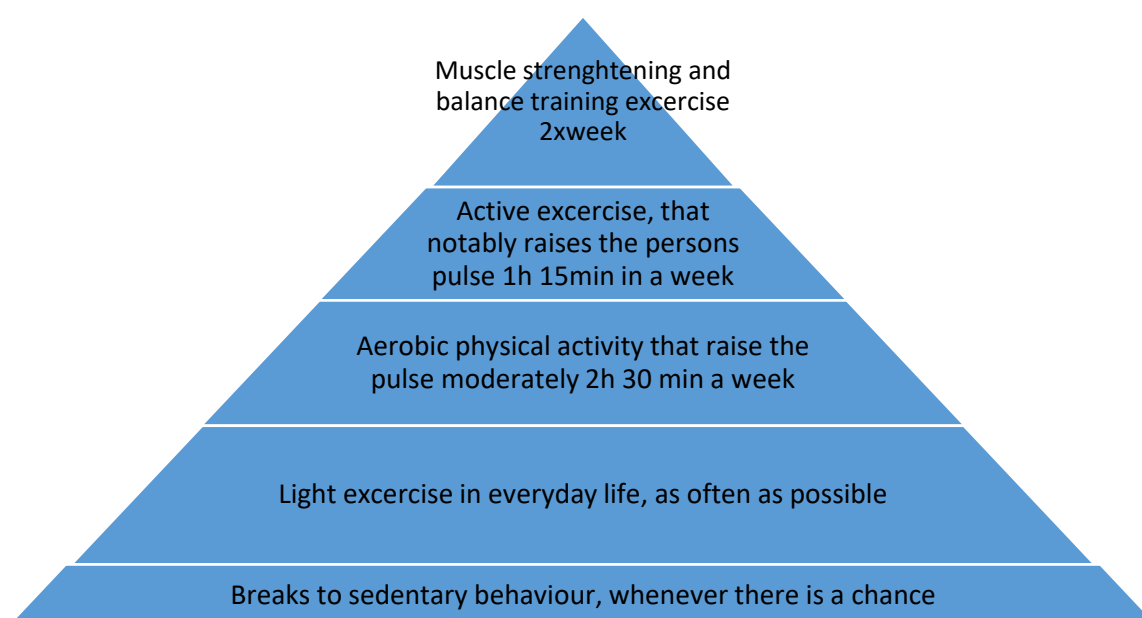


Figure 3 physical activity recommendations (adapted UKK Institute 2019)

Figure 3 shows the recommended amounts of physical activity. Breaks to sedentary behavior create the base of the pyramid, followed by light exercise in daily life. To support well-being and health, adults are recommended to actively exercise beyond the first two layers either by moderate aerobic physical activities for 2h 30 min a week or with more challenging activities for 1h 15min a week. These exercises should be accompanied by muscle strengthening and balance training exercises two times a week.

Physical activity can also be divided by the type and goals of the exercise. Health enhancing physical activity keeps up the persons health with daily, small, aerobic activities in everyday life. While fitness training promotes health and aims for better physical fitness with moderate and challenging exercises few days a week. (UKK Institute 2016.)

2.3 Managerial viewpoints

Organizational environments in Finland have rapidly changed since the beginning of 21st century. After the economic crisis in 2008 the economy has been more reserved, changing the productivity and profit of companies with inflation. Employee costs are high, and with the changing infrastructure of the modern world companies need new skills and ideas to survive. Some changes are happening fast, and require quick reactions while some changes, such as the large demographic changes caused by the retirement of older generations, have been recognized years ago. The challenges caused by these changes may appear in different ways between different fields but will require fast reactions and adaptability from the management of companies. Central changes and challenges that will affect most organizations management in the later part of the current decade are (Kauhanen 2016, 16–18):

- operational environments becoming more complex
- increase in competitiveness in international world
- increased risks in business
- utilization of the digitalization of information and communication
- diversity of the employees
- rise in expectations of social- and environmental responsibility.

To keep their current employees, and to appeal to the new generation of employees who are viewing work differently from their predecessors, employee well-being plays a critical role in companies. Skilled employees can create a competitive advantage. (Kauhanen 2016, 17.) Yet, well-being in companies requires active management. Managers and supervisors need to know what is happening with the employees and how the work environment and network affects their feelings of well-being. To support well-being, the managers should know what their employees need and organize actions, methods and activities that support and answer to these needs. Flexibility towards employees and their needs can pay itself back with lower retention rates, lessening sick leaves and improved productivity. Good communication of the different options and methods available is important. (Kauhanen 2016, 89–91.)

Well-being development projects require funding, planning and implementation resources. Changing the existing well-being program requires active planning and research on the reasons why the existing program has not performed as well as expected. Funding the development program can be done by the company itself or with help from different development funds and organizations (Kauhanen 2016, 99–102):

- employee pension insurance companies often offer different types of chargeable and free well-being planning programs to their clients
- sports clubs
- National Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment (ELY keskus)
- the Finnish Work Environment Fund
- Business Finland
- Fit For Life Initiative Fund (Kunnossa Kaiken Ikää, KKI program).

2.4 Promotion of physical activity by the employer

The Finnish Olympic Committee publishes a study called Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri biannually. The study maps out the current situation of employee physical activity in Finnish companies. The study counts in all physical activity by employees if the employer has partaken in the costs or organizing of the activity. The main methods listed in the study are (Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri 2019,7):

- dressing rooms, sport areas and showers at the workplace
- sport vouchers and credit for employees
- sport days and competitions
- break exercise equipment at the office
- ergonomic work environment
- information to employees in cooperation with occupational healthcare
- employee sport clubs and teams that the company supports financially.

Occupational healthcare, in its current form, aims to continuously develop the working positions and conditions of employees to support the employee's ability to work through their whole professional life. The employer and occupational health service provider create a plan together that cover the actions and procedures best suited for the company's needs. In Finland, the employer is required by law to organize precautionary occupational health services to their employees. The service can be organized through public or private sector service provider, or by arranging medical facilities for the employees alone or in cooperation with another company. (Kauhanen 2016, 36–37.)

The decision to use the company resources for promoting and supporting employee's physical activity is often made in the executive level in companies. The decision can be expensive in bigger companies, as the same benefits and possibilities to partake in activities must be given to all employees. In some companies the responsibility in arranging

and planning the methods and ways has been entrusted to the HR-department. The different activities and campaigns can also be utilized in cooperation with occupational health specialists and work well-being teams found in bigger companies. (Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri 2019, 11.)

Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri 2019 (27–28) study states that supporting employee well-being and physical activity can affect the company image positively. Kauhanen (2016, 58–58) supports this study result with notions to companies' competitive advantage. Recognizing the aspects that affect employee's well-being, and how to promote positive feelings are vital for the management. When employees feel positive about the company they work for and their work environment, they are more committed to their work and bring in more results. Positive employee image can create value for the company in recruitment processes if the company is seen as preferred to its competitors by talented recruits. Employees are often the first contact between the company and its customers and help to create the image of the company for people to have in their mind, so taking care of the employees' well-being is essential.

2.5 Challenges in promoting physical activity

Challenges to promote and support physical activity within employees vary from resources to motivation. Smaller companies might not have the resources or financial capability needed to activate and support their employees. The employees might not be interested in the events organized by the company or they are already active and do not benefit from the extra resources used in activating them. Another challenge is the available information of the benefits. (Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri 2019, 25, 44.) Finnish government supports companies offering their employees well-being benefits with tax reliefs up to 400€ per employee (Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri 2019, 26). This support may help the companies financially but does not cut the resources required in arranging and managing the benefits and activities (Kauhanen 2016, 29–30).

3 SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

3.1 Definitions of small and medium-sized enterprises

Small and medium sized companies (SMEs) are defined as companies that employ less than 250 employees with an annual maximum turnover of 50 million euros or an annual balance-sheet totaling at maximum of 43 million euros. The companies must also adhere to the criteria of independence. If another company, by itself or jointly, owns 25% or more of the SMEs shares and does not fall into the criteria of SMEs itself the criteria of independence is not met. (Statistics Finland 2020a.)

The European Commission (2020) has created more detailed division of SMEs into small and medium-sized companies by the total amount of employees, yearly turnover, and balance-sheet. (Table 1.) A company is considered to be a small if it employs ten to fifty people, and medium-sized if it employs fifty to two hundred and fifty people. Companies with ten or less employees are classified as micro companies.

Table 1 Definition of company sizes (European Commission 2020)

Company size	Number of Employees	Turnover	Balance-sheet
Micro	< 10	≤ 2M€	≤ 2M€
Small	< 50	≤ 10M€	≤ 10M€
Medium	< 250	≤ 50M€	≤ 43M€

3.2 SMEs in Finland

In 2018 there was 19,927 SMEs in Finland. Of these companies 16,910 were classified as small based on their employee count. The most common company type in Finland is micro companies of four or less employees as seen from Figure 2. (Statistics Finland, 2020b.)

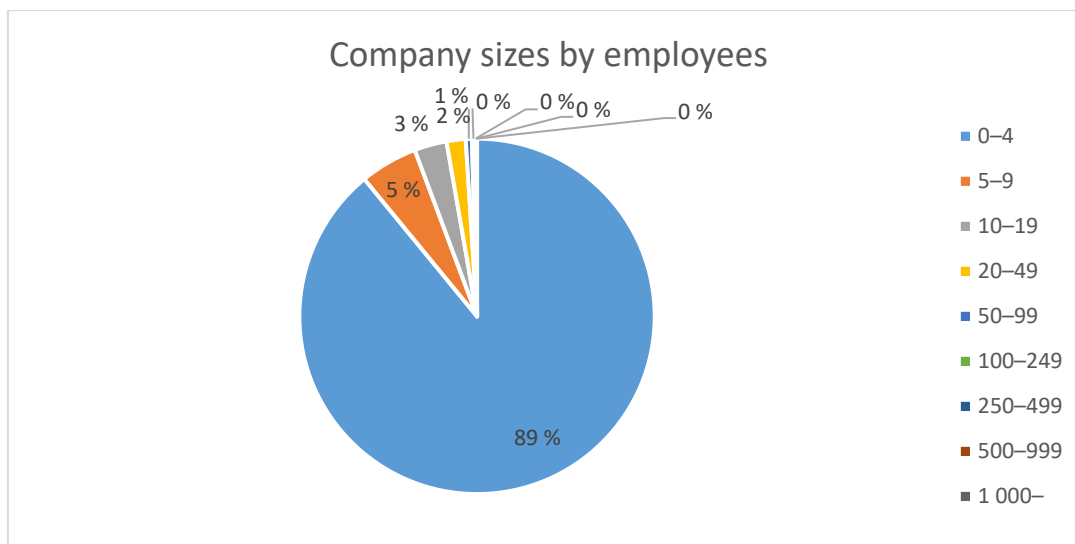


Figure 4 Companies by employee amounts (Statistics Finland 2020b)

Showcased in the Figure 2 are the statistics of company sizes in Finland. The companies are divided by the amount of their employees, which are seen in the legend, and represented in different colors. From the figure it can be seen that the most common company type in Finland is the micro company with one to four employees. The bigger company sizes are scarcer, with less than one percent in total from all companies. These companies are rounded down to zero in the chart.

3.3 Legal requirements for companies

The Act on Co-operation within Undertakings (334/2007) in Finnish law requires companies with 20 or more employees to have written staff policy that states the amount and structure of personnel, employment types and the amount of temporary contracts, estimation of the skills and changes in employee skill requirements in the company, how the elderly and employees in risk of work disability are taken into account and how the plans concerning employees are to be followed and implemented. If the company has 30 or more employees, the law requires a written employee training plan and equality plan. (Finlex 2020.)

All companies are also required by the Occupational Healthcare Act (1383/2001) to have a written occupational health activity plan and employee well-being plan planned together with the representative of the occupational health services. Companies must offer occupational health services to their employees. Occupational healthcare oversees evaluating the health risks and dangers in the workplace and supporting employee well-being as health professionals. Occupational healthcare will also offer information on well-being, work ergonomics, methods of promoting work abilities and performance. (Finlex, 2016.)

4 PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SMEs IN FINLAND

4.1 Research context

The thesis was done in cooperation with HEPA Europe. HEPA Europe is a WHO network in Europe, with a mission of advancing the health-enhancing physical activities, researches, and policies in the area. The network focuses on communication and sharing of knowledge, methods and experiences between researchers, politicians and practitioners and advancing healthy lifestyle in all aspects of human life from nutrition to transportation. (World Health Organization 2020.)

The data limitations, requirements, search method and key words were given to the author by a representative of HEPA Europe and were a part of a mapping study commissioned to HEPA Europe by WHO. The study: "Mapping and describing Workplace Physical Activity interventions, practices, programs and protocols for small-to-medium enterprises: A scoping review of grey literature", was conducted simultaneously in Spain, Belgium, and Finland. The study was carried out in Catalan, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, and Spanish. (LAB University of Applied Sciences 2020.) The author conducted the translation of required terms and the instructed Google searches for the study.

4.2 Research methods and phases of the study

The study was conducted in phases. The first phase was the translation of given terms to Finnish, followed by the curated Google search and compiling of results on an Excel sheet. To the Excel was collected the year of the campaign and duration, company name, main focus of the campaign or intervention, number of participants and results, if available. The third phase of the study was transferring the activities mentioned in the data to a separate sheet for comparison by year and promotion method.

4.2.1 Translation of terms

The first phase of the study was the translation of the given English terms to Finnish. The English search terms were given to the author by HEPA Europe for translation. The terms were translated with MOT dictionary and Finto MeSH dictionary after a meeting with specialists from LAB University of Applied Sciences library and search services. These two dictionaries were chosen as the base of the translation as the validity of the information and vocabulary was deemed trustworthy by these specialists. Both aforementioned dictionaries are used in higher education and contain translations for field and sector specific language.

The list of terms included names of common international public sectors, such as Mining and quarrying, that have an official translation listed in the Statistic Finland website. These sector titles were translated to their corresponding Finnish terms directly from the Statistic Finland lists. These translations include a column with the numerals of Standard Industrial Classification TOL2008 sectors.

With the translations, the nature of Finnish language had to be considered. Some of the listed search terms did not have an exact translation in the dictionaries, as Finnish language does not have prepositions, or the term does not translate directly to one word. An example of these type of terms listed was “sedentary behavior”. These terms were translated to their closest meaning with consultation and permission from the client. Another challenge in the translation process was the conjugation of Finnish language. The main body of the word in Finnish might change depending on the sentence structure and tense used. The full list of terms alongside their translations can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2.2 Scanning review of grey literature

The second phase of the study was the curated Google search with the translated terms. The search method was given by HEPA Europe with examples on how to arrange the search criteria and limitations. An example search query, used in the collection of data with search limitations was given as follows: "workplace" or business or industry and agriculture or forestry or fishing and program or intervention or initiative* or activiti* or campaign and improv* or promoti* and physical activity or exercise or active 2010..2020 filetype:pdf. In the search que the commands "", or, and, *... and pdf create separate search rules in Google. Any word in citations must be found as it is from the text. Words listed with or in between can be replaced with the following word. The search term “and” sets another term for Google to look for in the search while * is used to mark the main body of the word if it is believed that the word might appear in another tense or conjugation while searched. The search was narrowed to only include the first 100 results from each year.

The Google searches were conducted with one computer which user history and saved website cookies were erased between the performed searches. With Google search engine the previous searches and the cookies collected by the internet provider can affect the shown search results and the order in which the results are displayed. Websites with more traffic and popularity are also presented higher up in the results than those with lower visitation number. (Google 2020.)

The first searches did not bring up almost any data matching the limitations and search criteria. The material was first restricted to include only direct publications concerning or

from SMEs in pdf form. After consulting the thesis commissioner, the pdf limitation was removed in hope to increase the result amounts. The search criteria were later widened again to include publications from national organizations who have promoted or are currently promoting or leading a campaign on employee well-being. These changes were deemed necessary, yet valid choice as all publicly funded campaigns in Finland are required to publish the results of their work. The author did multiple searches in a ten-day frame with different search terms in April 2020.

4.3 Results

The data collection brought up 11 results of physical activity promotion. From these results only six qualified within the given limitation of small and medium-sized companies. The other five results were municipality-, and nationwide campaigns promoting physical activity and well-being within certain areas and target groups which included SMEs. These results were included in the data as it brought insight to activities created to support SMEs in Finland. One of the campaigns listed in the results was aimed in promoting SMEs overall well-being and productivity in the capital area of Finland.

Within the six qualified results, the publications varied from theses to newsletters and from sport campaigns to strategic well-being decisions. The publication years varied from 2010 to 2019. Of the six results, two were aimed for multiple companies at the same time. The first campaign was funded by UKK institute and had 12 SMEs participating in different types of well-being lectures, occupational health planning seminars and “Heiaheia-app” activity monitoring between the years 2013 – 2014. The second campaign, organized by Etelä-Savon Liikunta Oy and funded by Fit For Life initiative had 4 SMEs participating in lectures, personal training consultations and sport theme days between 2015 and 2017. The progress of the attendants was recorded twice a year.

When the two campaigns with multiple companies are counted in with the total results of companies, the research brought up information on 20 SMEs participating in different types of promotions or campaigns. The campaign goals were divided to promoting physical activity during working schedule, promoting physical activity outside of working schedule, reducing sitting time and active travel to and from work (Figure 5).

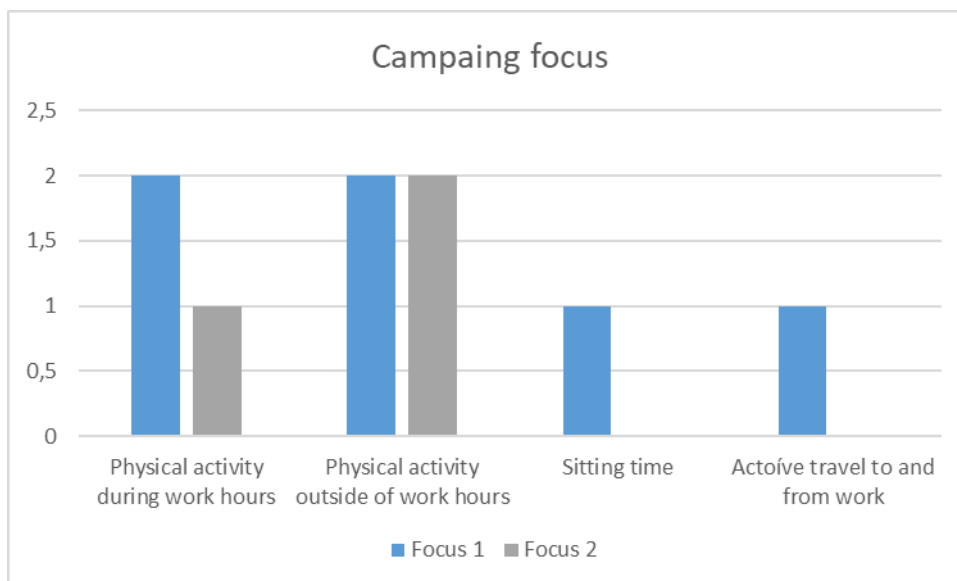


Figure 5 Campaign focus (n=6)

Figure 5 shows the divisions between the campaigns focus. Physical activity during the working schedule and physical activity outside the working schedule were the main area of focus for two campaigns. Reducing employees sitting time and active travel to and from the workplace were the main focus for one campaign each. Of the six qualified results three campaigns had two focus points. Promoting physical activity outside of working schedule was another focus point for two campaigns, while physical activity during working schedule was secondary focus point for one campaign.

One of the qualified results was an article concerning active travel. The article did not list any SMEs by name, but explained an ongoing campaign set up by a bike shop. The shop leases bikes to SMEs for minimum of two years. The service has been popular among local companies with 40 to 60 employees, who can bring the leased bike to the shop for repairs and maintenance as a part of the service.

One of the theses qualified as a result listed all the different ways the company had supported their employee's physical well-being. In this medium-sized company employee well-being was included in the company strategy and included active support towards wholesome well-being. The company grounds have a gym for the employees and contracts with local physiotherapists, gyms, and swimming halls. The company has its own sport teams that train twice a week.

The campaigns were divided to privately funded and publicly funded (Figure 6). Two of the six campaigns were publicly funded and organized in cooperation with sport clubs and organizations. These two campaigns had several participating SMEs and multiple focuses, meaning that 16 of the 20 companies mentioned were participating in a funded campaign.

One of the privately funded campaigns was developed and implemented in cooperation with a degree students' thesis, cutting the employee resources required from the company in planning and organizing.

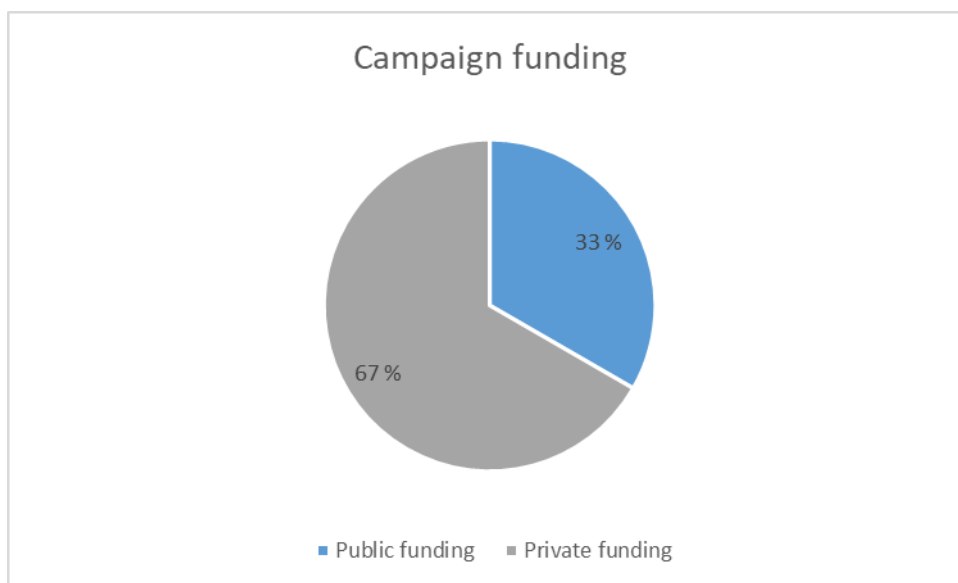


Figure 6 Division of funding (n=6)

Figure 6 shows the division between public and private funding of well-being campaigns by the result amounts. Four out of six results were independently funded, but the publicly funded campaigns had more participants.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of the results

The widened search criteria did not correlate with the quality of the results. Publications of grey literature concerning physical activity and employee well-being were mainly focused on companies with 300+ employees or different annual reports or action plans of municipalities and cities of Finland. The search brought up also a lot of sport organizations, who actively support and promote physical activity within their own community and area.

The data available does not correlate with the number of SMEs in Finland to generate valid comparisons or theories of the state of employee well-being in small and medium-sized companies. The data searches brought up a lot of initiatives and campaigns to promote physical activity within the age groups of 18 to 64, the main working age of Finnish demographic. These campaigns were organized by cities and municipalities, the public sector. Several of the results brought up in the Google search mentioned campaigns to promote employee well-being but did not match the thesis criteria of actions towards physical activity or the limitation of SME. These results were left out as they did not define the methods, ways or even what was meant to be achieved with the campaign. Clear goals set for improvement of physical activity and health are fairly easy to monitor, follow and implement. Employee well-being is a versatile subject as was brought forward in the theory. The work environment, atmosphere, challenges, and management are all aspects of well-being, for which the employees' health creates the base. With clear agenda, goals, and methods, implementing and communicating new procedures is more efficient.

The qualified campaigns primarily focused on promoting physical activity during- and outside of working hours. Supporting the employee's overall health, fits into the five steps of well-being created by Rauramo (2012, 7) presented in the theoretical part of this thesis. Exercising the recommended weekly quota for an adult, helps to maintain the individual's health and work ability. Motivating the employees to be physically active outside of work can be challenging. The company is legally required to have a well-being plan and occupational health services, but the employees are not required to follow the given instructions outside of work. Offering the employees flexibility and freedom in choosing of what type of activities they would like to do on their free time can motivate some to participate.

The results of the review state that the majority of SMEs who reported their actions, participated in publicly funded campaign promoting physical activity. Participating on an outside funded project cuts the financial costs for the company. Partaking in funded campaigns solves few of the challenges mentioned in the Henkilöstöliikuntabarometri 2019, mainly

the financial and employee assets. Then again, participating on campaigns organized outside of the company do require good communication between the company management and the organizer.

5.2 Points of interests

A discussion with the representative of HEPA Europe and LAB-University of Applied Sciences search specialists brought up the notion of internet visibility that should be considered when discussing small companies in modern Finland. Companies with less than 20 employees may not have their own traditional company website. Instead, smaller companies are most likely using social media to connect with their customers. This would explain the reduced search results with the pdf form limitation as the companies have no platform to publish, or need to create, open publications concerning their management and employee well-being. If the company has a traditional webpage, the public company information available often focuses on professional aspects such as the founding story, mission, and vision of said company.

The research also brought up a lot of articles and blogs of physical activity campaigns and sport days conducted by bigger companies. These publications advertised the companies' spirit, teamwork, and employee benefits, clearly aiming to create a positive image of the company in question. These results were often in the company's own webpages, as a part of their company introduction. These bigger companies have utilized employee well-being to be a part of their strategy.

Another viewpoint to the publicity of SMEs management decisions and actions could be in the culture of confidentiality in privately funded operations and campaigns. The development culture and strategies of companies might be reported directly to stakeholders and management instead of openly to the public. The transparency of efforts towards employee well-being was found to be more open in bigger companies whose annual reports described different actions implemented by the company through the years.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Answers to the research questions

The number of results of in the data collection did not correlate with the number of SMEs in Finland. Because of this, the answers given cannot be generalized to cover all SMEs. The following answers are true for the companies from which data was available.

From the analysis of the literature review and the collected data of well-being campaigns, targeted at, and implemented by SMEs following answers are presented. In order to answer the main research question, the given sub-questions of 'why the chosen methods were chosen' and 'what means do managers have in promoting employee activity', need to be resolved.

Based on the limited data obtained through the grey literature and the theories presented in the literature review managers can utilize different methods to promote physical activity in employees. The methods can vary from one company to another depending on the company's financial situation and work resources. All of the methods require a certain level of activity and interest from the manager to implement and activate the promotion methods. The methods include:

- managers own activity in co-operating with the occupational health services in planning the company's required well-being program and needs
- applying for development funds and outside organizations campaigns
- offering sport vouchers or credit
- communicating the existence of benefits clearly
- enabling versatile working environment
- enabling active travel to and from work with shower and locker room facilities

The main reasons behind the methods are mostly tied to employee resources, finances, and Finnish law. Planning the work environment and facilities can be expensive and time consuming but needs to be done only once. Companies are obliged by law to offer occupational health services and communicate employees sick-leaves and work accidents to the service provider so active co-operation and planning does not tie up too much extra employee resources.

From the answers to the presented sub-questions, answer to the main research question of 'what are the methods that companies have used to promote their employees' physical activity and well-being in small and medium-sized companies?' can be summarized. Small and medium-sized companies have co-operated with universities for creation of well-being

programs and actively participated in structural fund led physical activity campaigns to activate their employees to exercise during- and outside of working hours. Companies have also encouraged their employee's physical activity by supporting active travel.

6.2 Validity and reliability

For the research to be valid and reliable, the research results and processes need to be clearly accounted for and traceable. All partialities, affiliations and possible limitations should be considered when conducting the study. The research results, if the study was to be repeated, should remain constant. (O'Gorman & MacIntosh 2014, 88–89.)

The research for the thesis is based on the data collected by the author. The data consists of companies and organizations openly published information that is available for everyone in the internet. Public programs and funds are required to report of their progress and usage of funds and thus the information can be trusted to be correct. The chosen sources for the theoretical background were chosen carefully and keeping the topic in mind. The listed sources consist of books, peer reviewed medical article, and reliable electronic sources such as the official pages of the Finnish Olympic Committee, European Commission and Statistics Finland.

The translated terms used in the data collection were approved by the commissioner and translated with the help of two academic dictionaries. The authors mother tongue is Finnish, which ensured that there were no mistakes in the data collection caused by misunderstandings of the language nuances or problems in understanding written Finnish.

The author was not affiliated with any of the companies brought up in the data during the research, and none of the companies were contacted directly to collect information concerning the research topic. No outside influence has affected the collection and analysis of the data. Because the amount of data available, the results of the study cannot be generalized.

The results may differ if the research was conducted again as Google search engine aims to bring forward information it believes the user to look for based on cookie settings, previous searches, publication dates and visitor amounts of the webpages. The data searches were conducted with one computer, with the user history and saved cookies erased between conducted search attempts in to generate more reliable data.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

Further research to the topic could be done from the perspective of bigger companies. Is the communication of the well-being activities more public with bigger employee numbers? The further research could be also approached from international angle by comparing the methods of managing employee well-being and promotion of physical activity internationally, bringing forth new and different implementation methods and insights.

As the results brought up in the collection of data were limited, further research could also focus on the publicity and transparency of SMEs management systems and the reporting systems of employee well-being. What topics do SMEs publish to public and how are these chosen?

As the study focused on promotion of physical activity by the employer, further research could focus on the affects the inevitable changes to work environments and work methods will have in work well-being. With the rise in the popularity and necessity of teleworking, promotion of physical activity by the employer needs to change. How do these changes affect the future of work-wellbeing?

7 SUMMARY

The purpose of the thesis was to create an understanding of the different methods small and medium-sized companies have utilized to promote physical activity within their employees in Finland through 2010 to 2020. The study of what has been done to support employee well-being in SMEs in Finland with sub questions of 'how these methods have changed in the given time frame' and 'what methods the company management has to support their employees well-being' were analyzed through reviewing collected grey literature from public online sources. The thesis was done in cooperation with HEPA Europe.

The study was based on grey literature review with both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The research consisted of theoretical and empirical part. The theoretical part focused on employee well-being as a strategic benefit, five step model of employee well-being, and the recommended physical activity amounts for people aged 18 to 64. The theoretical part also defined the meaning, and current situation, of SMEs in Finland.

The empirical part started with an introduction of HEPA Europe and the background for the thesis. The introduction was followed by an explanation of the research method and the different stages of collecting the data for the review. The search criteria and method for the grey literature review were given to the author by the thesis commissioner. The part ends with the analysis of the finished data and notions on data quality and points of interest.

The thesis is concluded with a discussion of the results and answers to the research questions. The validity and reliability of the study were reviewed and suggestions for further research were given on the topics of promoting employee well-being and physical activity by employers, and the transparency of SMEs well-being initiatives. The final chapter reviewed the study process by summarizing the thesis.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. HEPA Europe - translated terms

Words marked with ' are to be emphasized in the Google search. Words marked with green or blue are to be emphasized in the search.

English	HEPA Europe Google search Vocabulary	Finnish	Muita merkityksiä/käännöksiä	Tilastokeskuksen luokitus	Käännöksen lähde
Workplace'		Työpaikka, työpiste		Pääluokan kirjain ja tasot	MOT Sanakirjasto
Working place		Työpaikka, työpiste, työmaa			MOT Sanakirjasto
Worksite		Työpaikka, työmaa			MOT Sanakirjasto
Workplace setting		Työympäristö, työskentelyn puitteet, työpiste	Work environment		
Working schedule		Työsuunnitelma	Työn aikataulu, vuorotyö		MOT Sanakirjasto
Office		Toimisto			MOT Sanakirjasto
Onsite		Paikan päällä, työ/tapahtuma tilassa			MOT Sanakirjasto
Industry'		Teollisuus			MOT Sanakirjasto
Business'		Kaupankäynti, bisnes, liiketoiminta			MOT Sanakirjasto
Small business'		Pienyrittäjä, pienyritykset			MOT Sanakirjasto
Mid-size business'/company		Keskikokoinen yritys, Pk-yritys			MOT Sanakirjasto
medium size business'/company		Keskikokoinen yritys, Pk-yritys			MOT Sanakirjasto
Enterprise		Yritys, yritys, hanke			MOT Sanakirjasto
Company		Yhtiö, yritys, firma			MOT Sanakirjasto
Organisation		Organisaatio, järjestö	Seura, yhdistys, säätiö, liike yhteisö		MOT Sanakirjasto
Employees'		Työntekijä, henkilöstö, henkilökunta			MOT Sanakirjasto
Workers'		Työntekijä, henkilöstö, henkilökunta			MOT Sanakirjasto
Workforce'		Työntekijä, henkilöstö, henkilökunta, työvoima			MOT Sanakirjasto
Staff		Henkilökunta, henkilöstö, työntekijät			MOT Sanakirjasto
Agriculture or forestry or fishing'		Maatalous, metsätalous ja kalatalous		A 01-03	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Mining or quarrying'		Kaivostointiminta tai louhintaa		B 05-09	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Manufacturing'		Teollisuus		C 10-33	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Electricity or gas or steam or air conditioning'		Sähkö-, kaasun- ja lämpöhuolto, jäähdytysliiketoiminta		D 35	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Water supply, sewage, waste management or remediation activities'		Vesihuolto, viemäri- ja jätevesihuolto, jätteenhoito ja muu ympäristön puhtaanapito		E 36-39	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Construction'		Rakentaminen		F 41-43	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Wholesale, retail trade or repair for motor vehicles or motorcycles'		Tukku- ja vähittäiskauppa; moottoriajoneuvojen ja moottoripyörien korjaus		G 45-47	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Transportation or storage'		Kuljetus ja varastointi		H 49-53	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Acommodation or food service activities'		Majoitus- ravitsemistoiminta		I 55-56	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Information or communication'		Informaatio ja viestintä		J 58-63	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Fiancial or insurance activities'		Rahoitus- ja vakuutus toiminta		K 64-66	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Real estate activities'		Kiinteistöalan toiminta		L 68	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Professional, scientific or technical activities'		Ammattilinen, tieteellinen ja tekninen toiminta		M 69-75	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Administrative or support service activities'		Hallinto- ja tukipalvelutoiminta		N 77-82	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Public administration, defence or compulsory social security'		Julkisen hallinto ja maanpuolustus; pakollinen sosiaalivakuutus		O 84	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Education'		Koulutus		P 85	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Human health or social work activities'		Terveytys- ja sosiaalipalvelut		Q 86-88	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Arts, entertainment or recreation'		Taiteet, viihde ja virkistys		R 90-93	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Other service activities'		Muu palvelutoiminta		S 94-96	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Activities of households'		Kotitalouksien toiminta työnantajina; kotitalouksien eriyttämätön toiminta tavaroiden ja palveluiden tuottamiseksi omaan käyttöön<		T 97-98	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Activities of extraterritorial organisations'		Kansainvälisten organisaatioiden ja toimielinten toiminta		U 99	Tilastokeskuksen toimialaluokitus 2008
Telework		Etätyö, etätyöskentely			MOT Sanakirjasto
Program		Ohjelma, suunnitelma, esitys			MOT Sanakirjasto
Intervention'		Interventio, väliintulo			MOT Sanakirjasto
Initiative'		Aloitekyky, aloite, aloitteellisuus			MOT Sanakirjasto
Activities'		Toimi, toimet, työt, toimenpiteet			MOT Sanakirjasto
Campaign'		Kampanja			MOT Sanakirjasto
Example'		Esimerkki, esikuva, malli			MOT Sanakirjasto
Case		Tapaus			MOT Sanakirjasto
Best practise		Paras käytäntö			Finto MeSH
Guideline		Suositus, ohjeistus, suuntaviiva, ohjenuora, ohje			MOT Sanakirjasto
Report		Selvitys, raportti, selonteko, lausunto			MOT Sanakirjasto
Assessment		Arvio, arviointi, käsitys			MOT Sanakirjasto
Protocol		Protokolla			MOT Sanakirjasto
Promoting'		Mainostaa, tukea, edistää, kannattaa, ajaa asiaa			MOT Sanakirjasto
Improve'		Parantaa, kohentaa, kehittää, edistää, edetä			MOT Sanakirjasto
Improvements		Parannuksia, kehitystä			MOT Sanakirjasto
Promotion		Edistäminen, promootio,			MOT Sanakirjasto
Engagement		Sitoutuminen, kosketuksissa johonkin, kiinnitys,			MOT Sanakirjasto
Reduce		Vähentää, pienentää, supistaa, leikata			MOT Sanakirjasto
Reducing		Alentaminen, supistuva			MOT Sanakirjasto
Physical activity'		Liikunta, liikuntaharjoitus/harjoittelu, urheilu, kuntoilu, fyysinen aktiivisuus, fyysinen harjoittelu, liikkuminen, liikuskelu			Finto MeSH
Physical fitness'		Fyysinen kunto, suorituskyky, fyysinen suorituskyky, kunto			Finto MeSH
Exercise'		Liikunta, liikuntaharjoitus/harjoittelu, kuntosuoritus, urheilu, kuntoilu, fyysinen aktiivisuus, fyysinen harjoittelu,			MOT Sanakirjasto
Occupational physical activity		Työssä liikkuminen, työliikunta	Työn fyysinen aktiivisuus		MOT Sanakirjasto
Walking		Kävely, kävelä			MOT Sanakirjasto
Active travel		Aktiivinen matkustus, työmatkaliikunta			
Health		Terveytys, terveydentila, vointi			MOT Sanakirjasto
Healthy		Terve, terveellinen			MOT Sanakirjasto
Wellness		Hyvinvointi			MOT Sanakirjasto
Physical inactivity		Fyysinen toimetttömyys, joutelaisuus	Inaktiivisuus, passiivisuus		
Sedentary		Istuva, vähän liikkuva			MOT Sanakirjasto
Sedentary behaviour		Passiivinen elämäntapa, vähäliikunnallinen elämäntyyli	Passiivinen elämäntapa		Finto MeSH
Sitting-time		Istumisen aika, istumiseen käytetty aika			
Sitting		Istua, istuminen, istumassa, istuen			MOT Sanakirjasto
Musculoskeletal problems		Tuki- ja liikuntaelinten ongelmat, tuki- ja liikuntaelinten ongelmat/ -elin ongelma			Finto MeSH
Obesity		Liikalihavuus,	Normaalipainosta poikkeava		Finto MeSH