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An Exploration of Minimum Wage Increases During the Pandemic.

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Abstract

This study explores potential links between successive (2020, then 2021) incremental minimum wage (MW) increases and subjective wellbeing and organisational commitment of both MW workers (MW group) and those paid just above them (AMW group), in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Narratives were collected from 39 participants through a survey using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ).

In the negative incidents, wage compression was a frequent source of dissatisfaction for above minimum wage (AMW) workers, who were unhappy with the increase for MW workers. Analysis of the positive critical incidents revealed that despite wage compression, working together during the Covid-19 pandemic reportedly helped to forge shared social identities and relationships between both groups, contributing to organisational commitment and social connectedness during the pandemic. Critical for this buffer, further analysis of the positive and negative incidents revealed, was whether the organization treated its workers supportively with reasonable workloads and health and safety conditions.

MSQ scores further demonstrated that MW workers had marginally higher extrinsic job satisfaction than AMW workers, and supported the positive findings for teamwork and commitment, while scores were broadly equivocal regarding job dissatisfaction overall. As a whole, these findings support social identity theory where people that are part of an in-group experienced higher subjective wellbeing. Negative behavioural outcomes linked to relative deprivation factors (such as inter-group hostility) were not apparent as a result of wage compression factors in these groups, which was potentially due to a positive shared social identity that developed through working together during the pandemic. This may have outweighed any detrimental effects otherwise occurring through negative social comparisons.

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Thank you to the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRNZ), who generously advertised my research link on LinkedIn when recruiting participants, and to the unions E Tū and Public Service Association (PSA), who provided access to participants via their media platforms. Thanks also for the friendly and supportive network of other Massey graduate students set up by Stu that met regularly over Zoom video calls to share their knowledge, support and enthusiasm - a great community!

It is important to acknowledge that this thesis very nearly did not happen, and certainly it is well overdue by a few years. Rewritten several times due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, with each lockdown setting me back significantly, it needed to be adapted multiple times. This, combined with a significantly increasing workload over the past years and the important responsibility of being a single parent, meant that this project was delayed, on and off, since conception. Work commitments and personal life nearly saw me give up on it altogether, and I cannot thank the team at Massey University, particularly Stu and Jane, for their understanding around my sporadic "disappearances" as well as unequivocal support each time that I sheepishly resurfaced. I regret that the timing of this research has not been anywhere close to the intended timeframe and will not have the positive impact originally intended as a

result, but I'm eternally grateful for the understanding and belief in me that enabled its completion.

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Acronyms List

Above Minimum Wage	AMW
Critical Incident Technique	CIT
Human Resources Institute of New Zealand	HRNZ
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act	IC&A
International Labour Organisation	ILO
Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand	LWMAN
Minimum Wage	MW
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	MBIE

Chapter One: Introduction

In 1894, Aotearoa New Zealand became the first country in the world to introduce a national MW through the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (IC&A), designed by the Minister of Labour to address industrial conflict and fallout from the failed trans-Tasman Maritime strike of 1890 (Bateman, 2018; Ministry for Culture & heritage, 2022). With the IC&A eventually being superseded by the Industrial Relations Act 1974, New Zealand's MW has since been reviewed and increased incrementally annually to address national poverty, with the country maintaining one of the highest MW levels in the OECD (OECD Stats, 2022). New Zealand is thus traditionally a relatively progressive and interesting context in which to study the psychology of MW increases.

Adding to this relevance, however, MW rates in New Zealand only increased between 1.9% and 3.3% annually between 2010 and 2017, and the country's Labour-led government highlighted the failure of legislation and weak employment law in protecting low-income earners from poverty in 2017. Emphasising the statistic of 40% of children living in poverty at that time, despite living in "working families" (Lacy, 2018; Haigh, 2017), the government pledged to address in-work poverty by increasing MW from NZD15.75 per hour incrementally to NZD20.00 per hour by the year 2021 (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), 2018). Since 2018, MW increases have essentially doubled in percentages from previous increases, with annual MW rate rises ranging from 4.8% to 6.7%, with the initial $1.20 per hour increase in 2019 (an increase of 7.3%) heralded as the biggest increase in history globally (Bateman, 2018). The question therefore arises as to what it might have delivered in everyday work-life terms for New Zealand employees earning on or about the MW.

When employers were asked about the impact a potential NZD1.00 per hour increase would have on businesses, many said that they would consider reducing staff numbers,

cutting hours, and would hold higher expectations when hiring to try to get more out of staff with their rising wage bill. With significant MW increases since 2017, organisations may have steadily lessened the pay gaps between MW workers and higher skilled staff in order to absorb growing labour costs. The government also doubled sick leave entitlements in 2021 (MBIE, 2020), potentially creating additional pressure on business finances during the pandemic. The government's official impact statement in the Minimum Wage Review (2020) considered the potential outcomes on businesses of the planned increase and proposed that businesses could choose to mitigate the extra costs by delaying or avoiding wage increases for those just above the MW (MBIE, 2020). If businesses adopted this proposed strategy, research on wage inequality suggests that reducing pay scales for (AMW) workers within organisations would result in high levels of job dissatisfaction, lower productivity and decreased organisational commitment for those usually paid higher than MW rates (Gross, Guo, & Charness, 2015; Jiang, Probst & Benson, 2014; Day, 2012). This highlights the need to consider how AMW groups were impacted by the mandated increase; would they have positive outcomes as a result of the higher MW increase, or would the pay gap between them and their MW coworkers be reduced? This research will examine the experience of this group in this context.

While legal MWs have increased more markedly on an annual basis when compared with previous MW percentages, they still remain significantly lower than living wage estimations. A living wage is defined by the Living Wage Movement Aotearoa New Zealand (LWMANZ https://www.livingwage.org.nz/) as "the minimum income required enabling people to meet basic family needs, and also participate in society as active citizens," albeit in a modest way. This differs from the MW which is a government mandated rate, and is not a requirement, but rather a choice taken by organisations wanting to provide employees with an income that enables modest living, and better wellbeing than MW provides

(Familycentre.org, 2020). The proposed national living wage in 2022 was identified as NZD23.65 per hour and was effective from September 2021. The living wage is calculated through comprehensive assessments of national income averages including costs of living and family size (two adults, two dependent children and 1.5 full-time incomes) to estimate the minimum income sufficient to meet basic needs and allow dignity and wellbeing (Familycentre.org, 2020). With the living wage still at least NZD2.20 higher than the increased minimum wages for 2020, 2021 and 2022, minimum wage rates at the time of this study may therefore be inadequate in terms of providing workers with more than fundamental living necessities at best and are unlikely to contribute significantly to low-income worker's wellbeing (as were initially intended).

In April 2020 when another NZD1.20 hourly increase was due (taking MW to NZD18.20 per hour) New Zealand was at the onset of the first national lockdown due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. Despite broad resistance and criticism from opposition political parties, vocal organisations and public opinion (McCullough, 2021), the government stood by their commitment to increase MW to NZD 20.00 per hour by 2021. A time of significant financial uncertainty for many with businesses facing temporary or even permanent closures, concerns ran high around risks of Covid-19 negatively altering the economic situation in New Zealand as in many other parts of the world (MBIE 2020). The government at the time was committed to making wellbeing the centrepiece of its reforms, including in labour markets and wages as outlined in Labour's 2020 Election Manifesto (Labour Party, 2020).

Social protection can be defined as a set of policies or programs typically established by governments or external, independent bodies such as the World Food Programme (WFP), designed to provide protection to vulnerable populations, reducing significant health risks during times of crisis and addressing poverty (Ecker, Alderman, Comstock, Headey, Mahrt,

& Pradesha, 2023). A key factor of successful social protection relies on government access to resources to support income security and healthcare in a time of crisis, and social protection initiatives can range from broad government institutional provisions such as unemployment or sickness benefits, to food vouchers or subsidised access to healthcare.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, when business temporarily closed during the lockdown in New Zealand, many people would have been forced to take pay-cuts where employers were unable to cover staff costs. To counter this, the government offered wage subsidies through Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) which covered up to 80% of worker's ordinary pay, with employers recommended to cover the remaining 20% if they were able. The government also provided companies experiencing significant revenue loss the ability to keep running through funding, in order to support the economy longer term.

At the onset of the pandemic, the social protection measures provided by New Zealand's government enabled a greater sense of resilience among workers, as outlined by Sibley, Greaves, Satherley, Wilson, Overall, Lee, and Barlow (2020). Social protection initiatives have been known to positively impact resilience in the face of a crisis and can reduce the effects of shock (Osabohien, Jaaffar, Ibrahim, Usman, Igharo, & Oyekanmi, 2024). In Africa, where poverty, a lack of infrastructure and food scarcity are common social problems, the Covid-19 pandemic intensified these issues into life-threatening emergencies. An African study by Osabohien et al. (2024) found that social protection provided through government interventions such as cash transfers, food assistance programs, health care services, and social insurance programs mitigated the fears of people faced with food insecurities resulting from the pandemic. It is possible that participants in this study will reflect positively on the New Zealand government's social protection measures which enabled many to continue to support families throughout the lockdowns, however some may have been working and not received wage subsidies as a result. It is anticipated that

participant narratives will provide insight into their perspectives of social protection measures during the Covid-19 crisis.

MW increase announcements are typically met with apprehension from small businesses and larger employer representative groups such as Employers and Manufacturers Association (McCullough, 2021). Despite fears around impacted profits through rising labour costs, risks of redundancies necessitated by economic pressure, and reduced market competitiveness resulting from price increases intended to mitigate costs, New Zealand's economic climate has historically demonstrated minimal negative organisational impact or increases in unemployment caused by staff turnover (Alinaghi, Creedy, & Gemmell, 2020). Rather, it has been largely demonstrated that the pros generally outweigh the cons where MW increases are concerned, with increased average household incomes contributing to economic growth with comparatively low negative employment effects (e.g. Pacheco, 2007).

Early research in 2020 demonstrated that the increase would help boost the economy despite the uncertainty of Covid's longer-term effects (Alinaghi et al., 2020). The April 2020 increase was strongly advocated by NZ government as benefitting many MW workers by reducing poverty, including those classified as "essential workers" who would keep vital services operating and contribute to economic stability (MBIE, 2020). Working in frontline roles during New Zealand's lockdowns with increased risk of Covid exposure, essential workers encompassed a broad range of professions such as cleaners, healthcare, and supermarket staff who were considered to provide crucial functions that ensured basic needs around health, food and safety were met (Trnka, Long, Aikman, Appleton, Davies, Deckert, Fehoko, Holroyd, Jivraj, Laws, Martin-Anatias, Roguski, Simpson, Sterling, & Tunufa'i, 2021). Indeed, at a global level, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations (UN) had been calling for such recognition of frontline workers, in their world of work report for 2023 (ILO, 2023).

A full year later in April 2021, the pandemic was still considered a major threat to the New Zealand public and economy, with the government response requiring yet further lockdowns and placing additional financial strain on many sectors unable to operate due to restrictions. Significant debate once again surrounded the MW increase which reached the government's long forecasted promise of NZD20.00 per hour by 2021 (MBIE 2020).

Navigating the new territory of uncertainty both financially and psychologically due to the pandemic, the resilience of the New Zealand public was tested, and there has been no simple measure to assess the effectiveness of the MW increase on worker's wellbeing. Many MW workers and those marginally above are New Zealand's frontline or essential workers in healthcare, supermarkets, and childcare, and have been working in higher-risk circumstances during the pandemic (Habibi, Prickett, Fletcher, & Chapple., 2021). For all low-income earners, particularly front-line workers who carried on working through lockdowns, organisational care and protection may have been an important factor in alleviating the stress experienced, this research also considers whether the effects differed between these two groups.

While initial research since the onset of Covid-19 explored resilience and wellbeing in both broad and organisational contexts during the pandemic (e.g. Sibley et al., 2020; Kuntz, 2021), none have specifically looked at the experience of low-income groups. In addition, none have considered the effects of the MW increases within the New Zealand Covid-19 context, despite these being significant in terms of historical economic and situational distinctiveness. Rather than looking at the impact of the higher MW increase on poverty and wellbeing outcomes from a discrete economic and quantitative viewpoint, as is more common in MW and wellbeing research, this study sought the narratives of the people directly impacted by the incremental increases themselves through a narrative-discursive

approach, enabling a better understanding of the lived experience of MW workers and those just above it from a phenomenological perspective.

While the threats of the pandemic have significantly dissipated since 2021, employee wellbeing and commitment are important aspects to address for businesses looking to strengthen positive company cultures and increase employee engagement and productivity to support economic growth through greater organisational performance. This is of particular importance to Human Resource (HR) professionals, who emphasise both the profit and sustainability aspects of business, balancing this against developing positive organisational culture and performance, while ensuring employee wellbeing (Matthewman, Rose, & Hetherington, 2009). The increases in April 2021 and 2022 following the global pandemic may have raised additional challenges for HR practitioners, particularly where wage compression may occur.

My viewpoint as a researcher for this topic stems from over 10 years of experience working in a human resource role for an organisation within the manufacturing and technology sector in New Zealand. I currently hold a senior HR role with exposure to both remuneration and wage reviews, as well as a significant portion of recruitment for the manufacturing group. Recruitment in this area entails interviewing many applicants who fall within the socio-economic group for this research, many candidates come from MW roles (or just above) and are often very candid when discussing their experiences and perceived treatment at their previous companies. My position holds responsibility for facilitating remuneration reviews and ensuring that the company meets obligations such as adherence to MW requirements while maintaining equity across roles and avoiding wage compression.

As such, I have had exposure over the years to multiple people's perceptions around MW rates and the annual increases. When the global pandemic in 2020 and 2021 significantly impacted on all staff members' wellbeing, I was deeply involved in

communications with people across the business, discussed options with at-risk staff that could not work from home, responded to people's doubt and fears regarding the impacts of Covid-19, and ensured the essential workforce in my own organisation had clarity and safety in the workplace during the great uncertainty the pandemic brought. The reduced workforce resulted in compression of workload; fewer employees meant lower productivity, however this caused higher pressure on workers, which inevitably increased stress and impacted worker wellbeing.

It is important to note that, while my work experience has enabled me to gain sufficient insight into the complexities and interplay of MW increases and wellbeing from those on MW and just above to initiate the research, all participants in this study are completely unconnected and unknown to me, hailing from diverse backgrounds that are not related in any way to me, my employer, industry connections or experience. I fully acknowledge that my prior perspectives and worldviews (such as my identity and belief-system) are salient in the context of this research, and my analysis of participants' narratives stems to some degree from my own social constructions and personal context. I have taken a reflexive approach throughout this research and am mindful of the need to relate interpretations to known theoretical frameworks, which are discussed next in the literature review (Chapter Two).

Chapter Two – Critical Literature Review

Many theories can be drawn upon in examining worker's wellbeing and experience in the context of MW increases and the Covid-19 pandemic, and while others are referenced in this research, Relative Deprivation theory (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Starr & Williams Jr., 1949), Social Identity theory (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) and Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) underpinned the initial research questions. These theories and how they relate to this research are outlined in this section to provide a framework that explains some factors of participant's described experiences.

2.1 Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative deprivation theory (Stouffer et al., 1949) describes the perception of a discrepancy between an individual's status and a relevant other, resulting in a sense of disadvantage. When individuals believe they are entitled to a reward (such as higher pay) in comparison with others in less favourable conditions, and then see those others receive an unexpected reward, they feel highly dissatisfied, even if their own situation remains more favourable overall. Relative deprivation theory predicts that just AMW workers who were previously paid significantly higher on their organisation's pay-scales may react adversely to the MW increase even in a pandemic, if the larger increase for MW workers meant that the pay gap between MW and AMW workers were to decrease.

In an organisational context, this could result in disengagement at work and decreased job satisfaction, as well as generally reduced subjective wellbeing (Reyes-Garcia, Angelsen, Shively, & Minkin, 2019; Liu & Wang, 2017, Alesina, Di Tella, & MacCulloch 2004). This indicates that AMW workers may have been less engaged than MW workers and had lower work satisfaction and subjective wellbeing as a result of the increase, which was expected to be signalled in narratives responding to critical incident questions.

Moreover, relative deprivation with low-income earners has been linked to increased hostility or anger in response to perceived unfairness at work (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017). This hostility is particularly directed towards the perceived source of disadvantage, but also to neutral parties, as established by Greitemeyer and Sagioglou who utilised a control condition in their experiment where participants learned they had a comparable discretionary income to similar others. Relative deprivation can even lead to interpersonal aggression, whether verbal aggression (e.g. insults, sarcasm or threats), relational aggression, (such as gossiping, antagonism or bullying tactics), and in extreme cases even physical violence (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017). In the context of this study, AMW workers could have developed significant hostility towards MW coworkers, potentially resulting in negative behaviours or even bullying in work environments where these two groups collaborated.

Research on wealth inequality and links with interpersonal hostility examined relative deprivation effects with both mid and high-income earners (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017), and found that hostility was greater in those perceiving themselves to be from lower-income groups when compared with those in mid-range groups, while people perceiving they were in the mid-range had comparatively low aggression towards those with higher income status. Gretemeyer and Sagioglou noted that increasing wealth inequality is a strong determinant of increased hostility in response to relative deprivation in lower socioeconomic groups such as both MW and AMW workers. This demonstrates the strong potential for those paid marginally more than MW workers in this research to experience negative subjective wellbeing from the decreasing pay gap, and for MW workers to experience increased negative or bullying behaviours from AMW coworkers reacting to relative deprivation effects.

This research will thus consider if relative deprivation effects are encountered in terms of hostility from previously higher paid AMW workers towards MW workers whose

wages were increased despite the period of great uncertainty, where job security and incomes were largely threatened.

2.2 Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) contends that people compare themselves against others as a method of obtaining information where there are no objective "yardsticks" against which to evaluate themselves against. However, there are emotional consequences to wellbeing where comparisons are unfavourable, and these are theorised to also impact resilience, as well as organisational commitment (Jiang et al., 2014). When individuals believe that they are in a more negative situation than they feel is justified when compared with other individuals or groups in work environments, they experience dissatisfaction (Jiang et al., 2014). This research could therefore demonstrate that MW workers feel lower satisfaction with their jobs than their higher-paid counterparts.

Downward social comparison often occurs when people seek to feel better about their own social standing, which can have a positive effect on subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction (Futing Lao, 2021). Upward comparisons to those perceived as higher status, whether through achievements, abilities or status through measures such as pay, can lead to low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy (Festinger, 1954). Downward comparisons, would include, in theory, AMW workers comparing themselves against MW employees they work with for example, according to social comparison theory could feel superior or have a more positive self-image and identity. This is known to boost wellbeing and happiness, resulting in motivation and productivity within a work environment (Futing Lao, 2021).

Negative social comparisons can have the opposite effect, however. Following this principle, Social Comparison theory additionally predicts that workers just above the MW may not appreciate others catching up to their own wage, which could result in intergroup conflict where competition over resources is perceived (Sherif, 1966; Festinger, 1954). For

businesses for example, higher wage costs as a result of the mandated increases could mean less available funds to provide pay increases for other staff, resulting in negative social comparisons and dissatisfaction between groups.

The effects of income inequality have been studied according to implications for social context and change, acknowledging human capabilities theory where individuals aim to “flourish”, or achieve wellbeing and live fulfilling lives which cannot be achieved through increased income alone (Hasan, 2019). In this context, reducing income inequality is therefore not solely reliant on an individual’s improved financial circumstances, but enhancing social environments where opportunities are increased for everyone, providing better capabilities or choice through policies or investments in public resources such as better transport and social services. This research could highlight the impacts of social support through mechanisms such as wage subsidies for MW workers and those above.

Hasan’s 2019 research highlights how income inequality negatively affects wellbeing and is linked to differing social mechanisms such as marginal utility of income, where the value of a dollar is higher for a poor person than a wealthy one. Perceptions of unfairness result in negative comparisons with others most relevant to themselves and cause social tensions between people within common in-groups (Reyes-Garcia et al., 2019). Conversely, for individuals making upward comparisons to groups to which they aspire to be part, social comparisons can result in increased optimism.

When MW increases went ahead during the Covid-19 pandemic despite the New Zealand lockdown signalling economic disruption and uncertainty for the future, it is possible that MW workers experienced increased optimism and confidence, which could have positively impacted their wellbeing. Conversely, those earning AMW could have faced additional stress as a result of cognitions around perceived threats to their status. However, it is also possible that MW staff facing uncertainty around potential job loss may have felt more

vulnerable or disadvantaged than co-workers who were paid only slightly higher rates, due to factors such as skill level, or experience relative to pay.

2.3 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity theory (Tajfel &Turner, 1979) is a framework that explains how people derive their sense of identity, and self-esteem from the social groups they associate with, such as their family, working groups, social class or sports teams, as a collective identity. This occurs through three key stages: social categorisation, social identification and social comparison (as outlined above). In social categorisation, individuals categorise themselves through concepts such as role (e.g. daughter, or nurse), nationality, or gender for example, to define a collective group they belong to. Once categorised, individuals assume the identity of the group, conforming to the group norms, adopting typical behaviours and attitudes that are characteristic of the group. People can belong to multiple social identities, and any identity could be central to a person at any given time (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Social comparison occurs where individuals compare their group (in-group) to other groups (out-groups), which can lead to positive bias towards in-groups, and negative bias towards out-groups. Strong social identities can enhance group cohesion and solidarity, where members of a group are likely to work together for a common goal, and cooperate or support one another, say at work (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In workplaces, social identity can be either a positive or negative influence on employees' conduct, depending on the dynamics of the group, or the normalised behaviours and attitudes that a group adopts (Matthewman et al., 2009). For example, social identity theory suggests that work stress is more likely to arise when role-specific goals are blocked, as individual's self-concepts can be highly aligned with their work identity (Tajfel &Turner, 1979). When this identity is threatened, stress increases. It is also theorised that the level of pressure is heightened when we are highly committed to the role or organisation (Reilly,

1994). Social identity at work can be conceptualised as a collective identity, where employees feel "part of a greater whole", and are psychologically connected to organisations, work teams and even supervisors, reflecting affinity with the behaviours that have normed within that group (Meyer, Becker, & Van Dick, 2006). Social Identity theory predicts that people will make social comparisons that enable a social identity, making identity a process of inclusion as well as exclusion.

Identity can serve as a base for organisational commitment, or detract from it. Meyer et al. (2006) propose that social identity at work can be distinguished from employee commitment in several ways, comprising two key forms of employee attachment: motivations, and behaviour. This holds relevance for variations of employment models, as building strong collective identification with leadership may be important for developing a type of "indirect commitment" that drives positive behaviours to achieve project-based goals, for example. However, organisational commitment may require deeper "structure" identity, such as employee identification with the larger company "group", or value-based identities resulting in longer term, affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2006).

In addition, social identity theory predicts that external threats, and superordinate goals (Sherif et al., 1961) such as standing against a pandemic, can help to create a sense of oneness between groups; in this case, potentially between workers paid at, versus those remunerated just above, the MW. This was reinforced by the findings of Sibley et al. (2020) who in the early stages of the New Zealand lockdown found social connectedness and a sense of community increased resilience, consistent with Social Identity Theory. In this project, the context of the pandemic could mean that MW workers form a social identity with work colleagues, where social connections are stronger through working together while others are in isolation during lockdown.

An additional question this research considers is whether negative wellbeing was in some way mitigated by the sense of oneness experienced in the face of the pandemic, as suggested by social identity theory and reinforced by the findings of Sibley et al (2020), and what impact MW increases had, if any.

2.4 Subjective Wellbeing

Wellbeing has been widely researched and is often referred to simply as life satisfaction or happiness, however it is a multi-dimensional concept that encompasses broad aspects of an individual's social context (Jia & Smith, 2016). Martin Seligman's theory of wellbeing identifies five key aspects, positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning and accomplishment as contributors to individual "flourishing", or the "experience of life going well" (O'Connor, Prebble, & Waterworth, 2024). In work contexts for example, subjective wellbeing relates to job satisfaction and a sense of fulfilment, and can translate into an employee's engagement, positive attitudes and behaviours in a work environment.

The wellbeing of individuals has traditionally been measured statistically within economic contexts in terms of GDP, with higher wellbeing linked to higher incomes and in terms of economic productivity. However, statistical approaches to measure wellbeing are shifting, with growing interest in individuals' subjective perceptions of wellbeing (Jia & Smith, 2016). Subjective wellbeing in New Zealand was measured by Jia and Smith (2016) who identified three core concepts of wellbeing: life evaluation, based on cognitive assessments of positive affect, such as happiness, or sadness, and measures of eudaimonia, a Greek word that refers to "flourishing", and is often used to describe aspects of psychological wellbeing that relate to meaning or purpose, and locus of control (Delle Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick, & Wissing, 2011). Originating in ancient Greek philosophy, eudaimonia refers to actualisation, or the pursuit of a meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling life, which contrasts with hedonia; which describes maximising pleasant experiences and minimising

unpleasant ones, or simply the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain (Della Fave et al., 2011). Eudaimonic well-being in a work context relates to intrinsic factors such as a sense of purpose or satisfaction through achievement, pursuit of meaningful goals, fulfilment of potential and opportunities for personal growth or development (Rothausen & Henderson, 2019). Hedonic aspects can relate to extrinsic or job-related aspects such as working conditions (physical or environmental aspects), pay, satisfaction with the job itself, or supervisor support or guidance. Described by Rothausen and Henderson as "meaning-based job-related well-being", eudaimonic aspects at work relate to broader outcomes of satisfaction than job satisfaction alone, they extend to the impact of jobs on worker's world environments, their sense of purpose, impact on family or life situation and even community. While exploring subjective wellbeing in relation to the MW increases in this research, both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of job satisfaction will be considered.

Subjective wellbeing has commonly been measured as a "general level of happiness" since 1930 using printed rating scales based on self-reports (Capic & Cummins, 2018). Psychology research examining happiness flourished following the rise of positive psychology and demonstrated a significant shift away from the traditional and dominant disease model with its focus on illness, depression or negative mental health to more positive psychological states (Fisher, 2010). The construct of happiness is often divided by either eudaimonic or hedonic conceptualisations, although in measurement they are largely found to be correlated. Eudaimonic happiness often explores conceptions such as fulfilment, a sense of meaning, purpose or achievement, whereas hedonic perspectives view happiness as positive emotions or feelings of satisfaction (Fisher, 2010).

Happiness at work, or a sense of work satisfaction is often based on multiple factors rather than dependent on salary alone. Previous research has indicated that happiness does not rely solely on the amount of actual income earned, so much as people's sense of value when

comparing themselves to others in similar social groups, both upward and downward (Liao, 2021). In essence, in conditions where inequality differences were not high, social comparison effects became less meaningful. Liao used social comparison theory to evaluate happiness against income inequality, and while the research did not focus on lower socioeconomic groups such as MW and slightly above, findings demonstrated that significant income inequality between two groups resulted in more prominent effects of happiness for those making downward comparisons to those with greater income differences.

In her review of happiness at work, Fisher (2010) examined how happiness had been defined and measured, as well as the antecedents and consequences of happiness. In defining happiness at work, Fisher looks at the transient, unit (e.g., company) and person levels, to ascertain the aspects of happiness at multiple levels. Transient factors include any event which can temporarily impact wellbeing or happiness; the relative instability of mood means that the construct of happiness can be a fleeting emotion but is generally found to be stable at the person or unit level (Fisher, 2010, Capic & Cummins, 2018). This stability has also been linked to resilience (Tomyn & Weinberg, 2018). Resilience has been defined in multiple ways and is often referred to as an adaptive process in psychological terms, however, is listed in the Collins dictionary as “an ability to recover easily and quickly from shock, illness, hardship etc; irrepressible” when used in relation to people (HarperCollins, 2007). For MW workers and those marginally above, the context of the pandemic would likely influence individual’s resilience, and also job satisfaction.

This research explores both eudaimonic and hedonic aspects of happiness when exploring subjective wellbeing of both MW workers and those paid marginally above within their work environment, in MW reactions to ME increments during a pandemic. For many MW workers in frontline roles in the pandemic which would have been highly stressful, it is also possible that employee narratives will reflect stronger themes around subjective

wellbeing during the Covid-19 crisis regardless of pay, and how this was handled by organisations.

2.5 Resilience

Resilience in psychological terms is often linked to mental flexibility, or positive adaptation, and is considered to require resources of some kind to aid recovery or adjustment to negative or stressful situations (Cummins & Wooden, 2014). Walter Cannon (1871 -1945) defined homeostasis as the self-regulation process by which stability is maintained while adjusting to changing conditions. Subjective Wellbeing Homeostasis theory proposes that people strive for a balanced equilibrium in both physiological and psychological states, adapting to a set point, or optimal level, that is determined genetically (Cummins & Wooden, 2014).

Examining both subjective wellbeing and resilience using homeostasis theory, Cummins & Wooden (2014) hypothesised that positive cognitive buffers such as self-esteem and perceived control helped to maintain homeostasis and therefore subjective wellbeing, with intimate relationships and income noted as the strongest external buffers against stressful events. MW increases have previously been found to raise life satisfaction and positively affect happiness of low-income workers in the US (Kuroki, 2017) which suggests that the MW increases at the onset of the pandemic could have increased MW worker's resilience to better cope with the stressful event. For AMW who received increases theoretically resilience would be improved as well, however for those receiving no pay increase at that time, this could have had the opposite effect.

Braveman, Cubbin, Egerter, Williams & Pamuk (2010) examined the effects of socioeconomic disparities on health and observed that poverty results in structural inadequacies such as access to childcare and transportation needs, and environmental factors which contribute to mental stress, all of which were linked with poor health outcomes. Even

intermediate-level income earners were found to have poorer mental health and resilience than the wealthiest and most educated people when examining national data in the USA, so the impact on MW workers faced with a pandemic would have potentially created significant stress.

Sibley et al., (2020) studied resilience in the earlier stages of New Zealand's pandemic and found that increased institutional trust and national attachment bolstered public adherence to national guidelines. Despite these positive findings however, there was broad media criticism of the government's stringent lockdown restrictions for businesses which were predicted to significantly impact the economy (Withers, 2020). Social protection measures taken to mitigate the risks of the pandemic heavily relied on increased institutional trust and were strengthened through a sense of community as found by Sibley et al (2020), however this study did not specifically examine the wellbeing of MW workers, or those paid just above, in that context.

In reviewing the earlier research around MW increases buffering against stressful events, and the experience of people's increased resilience during the initial stages of the pandemic, the possibility was raised that MW workers and slightly above could exhibit positive experiences and satisfaction in relation to their work environments and increased income in this study. In addition, when MW was increased at the onset of the lockdown, and many other workers faced job loss or reduced hours rather than increases, what effects did the broader MW increases have on their sense of institutional trust and resilience? The research will explore whether the MW increase at the onset of the pandemic provided a buffering effect for MW workers, and if resilience and increased confidence as demonstrated in response to social protection measures. For both MW workers and those above that received increased pay, this could be demonstrated through stronger organisational commitment and

2.6 Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment can be defined as an employee's psychological attachment to an organisation and their resulting willingness to adhere to regulations and perform at their best to achieve organisational goals (Asiedu, Sarfo & Adjei, 2014). Organisational commitment arises where workers feel they have stability, and believe they experience fairness in the workplace and with compensation (Organ, 2018).

Three types of organisational commitment have been identified by Allen and Meyer (1990); affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to an organisation and encompasses how an employee identifies with the company values and fulfils organisational requirements. Typically, affective commitment is linked with intrinsic factors of job satisfaction and is a predictor of good performance. Continuance commitment refers to a sense of being bound to an organisation and is associated with perceived risks or costs if they were to leave; this can be negatively correlated with job performance (Matthewman et al., 2009). Normative commitment entails a sense of obligation to stay with an organisation, a moral dimension that can result from feeling a responsibility or expectation to repay special treatment of some kind (such as specialised training), but this is largely considered to be influenced by an individual trait or disposition (Bateman & Strasser, 1984, as cited by Matthewman et al., 2009). Longer term employees who have developed normative commitment may feel a sense of duty to working during the pandemic to pay back perceived company investments, while continuance committed employees could feel a sense of risk to leave, given widespread job insecurities arising from the economic downturn. MW workers and above with affective commitment could respond positively to working during the crisis, particularly if emotions ran higher among coworkers, and a sense of feeling of being valued by the organisation increased.

A sense of being valued for work contribution is important for organisational commitment and positive work behaviours (Gavino, Wayne, & Erdogan, 2012). Where workers perceive that employers care about their wellbeing, employees are more likely to feel an obligation to return the positive treatment through engaging in positive organisational behaviours; working hard to achieve goals and deadlines, and exhibiting a cooperative and positive manner towards coworkers (Jiang et al., 2014).

Employee commitment has been positively linked to job satisfaction and is associated with many favourable Organisational Citizenship Behaviours such as helpfulness and conscientiousness (Organ, 2018), while also positively impacting employee punctuality, performance, preventing controllable absenteeism, and reducing turnover (Neelam et al., 2015). In high anxiety environments such as the pandemic, research indicates that strong organisational commitment could in fact moderate the impact of stress, which is inversely related to commitment. These conclusions imply that the stress for frontline workers could be mitigated for participants in this research where organisational commitment is strong.

Research has demonstrated that employee's emotional attachment to an organisation is a strong element in driving positive employee behaviours, and organisational identity (how an employee identifies with their company, employer, or work) is a strong determinant in organisational commitment (Afshari et al., 2019). In an Australian research project exploring the role of identity in organisational commitment within a manufacturing company, Afshari et al. found that while work characteristics and organisational support were valuable to employees in building commitment, these were more likely to positively impact commitment if they were associated with the ways employees identified with the collective elements of their occupation, or role (Afshari et al., 2019). Organisational commitment is an important dimension in this research; how it relates to MW worker's resilience in the context of the pandemic, and also what impact MW increases had on organisational commitment for MW

workers, and those paid slightly above, who may not receive any increase, and potentially feel less valued as a result. As well as prompting negative organisational behaviours such as reduced effort with subsequent poor performance, perceived unfairness in the workplace can increase psychological stress, and decrease organisational commitment (Jiang et al., 2014), which may be evident in participant narratives.

Research has also demonstrated that cognitions about fairness in the work environment, including aspects relating to procedural even-handedness and fairness of pay are important predictors of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (Organ, 2018). It is possible that perceptions around fairness of pay will be more prominent following the MW increases, which could result in increased Organisational Citizenship Behaviours and higher organisational commitment among participants. This in turn could result in greater wellbeing and resilience among MW employees where affective commitment exists but might have the opposite effect for workers paid marginally above - particularly if their wages remain the same, or the gap between their pay and MW earners decreases. For AMW earning higher than MW due to longer tenure in their roles, continuance commitment may apply, where they stay due to a perceived lack of alternatives for similar pay. With the gap between MW and above closing, this could instead reduce organisational commitment for the higher paid group, and result in turnover.

2.7 Wage Compression

Wage compression refers to decreases in the difference between the wages of employees in similar roles within an organization or an economy (Ehrenberg, Smith, & Hallock, 2021). It is often a result of policies or market conditions that either raise the lower end of the wage bracket or limit the growth at the higher end, such as collective bargaining agreements, or efforts to reduce income inequality regardless of skill or experience.

Wage compression can occur when mandated MW increases result in companies paying lower rate workers a greater wage premium without applying comparative increases across other pay grades, often closing the pay gap between low skilled workers and higher skilled or more experienced workers (Hollister, 2004). These relatively small wage gaps can result in negative social comparisons, a phenomenon that occurs when individuals evaluate themselves against others who they perceive to be better off than they are, resulting in feelings of inadequacy, or lowered self-esteem (Festinger, 1954).

While social comparisons occur in any group, key determinants are similarity, proximity and the degree of interaction, therefore work environments where staff perform similar duties and may have varying skills and experience, questions around fairness can easily arise (Cobb & Stevens, 2017). Negative social comparisons can be very costly for organisations; individual motivation is influenced by perceptions of fairness or inequality, resulting in lower engagement and counter-productive behaviours in organisations.

One potential ramification of wage compression is to create a sense of inequity, which occurs when individuals perceive that the balance of their input and resulting outcomes are less favourable than that of others' comparative input and outcomes (Adams & Jacobsen, 1964). Like Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory, Adams' theory of inequity stipulates that thoughts (or cognitions) of inequity causes cognitive dissonance, a sense of uneasiness or discomfort prompting individuals to undertake "corrective" behaviours such as reducing their effort, or seeking additional rewards or outcomes that provide greater cognitive consistency (Lawler & O'Gara, 1967). According to equity theory, workers evaluate fairness of pay according to degrees of effort or skill, with perceived fair rewards increasing job satisfaction, positive attitudes, and productivity (Day, 2012).

The Labour and Immigration Research Centre in New Zealand explored employer's perspectives of MW increases in 2010 using a qualitative approach (Houghton, 2012). While

increases at this time were typically only between NZD 0.25 – 0.50 cents per hour, feedback from employers indicated that particularly where unequal increases resulted in wage compression, staff paid AMW felt worse off when relativity was not maintained. While employers reported a desire to maintain relativities out of a sense of "fairness", many confirmed that in remuneration reviews not all employee rates were adjusted, and most were not increased at the same percentage as MW, resulting in "a flattening effect" (Houghton, 2012). When considering this organisational approach to reduce wage costs despite relatively low increases, it seems reasonable to assume similar consequences with even higher mandated MW increases. Therefore, I decided to explore the experience of AMW workers, who were potentially less likely to receive pay increases in line with what represented higher MW growth compared to previous years.

Wage compression was considered likely in this research given the significant MW increase during the pandemic, and more so where the economy suffered from business closures during lockdowns, and even essential business revenue was largely affected. For organisations that maintained structural pay differences for workers according to skill or experience, the margins would have been costly to maintain. The analysis undertaken for this research looked for examples of wage compression, with the potential for participant narratives to reveal a sense of inequity or injustice in the AMW group.

2.8 Research Objectives

This research investigates the subjective wellbeing of MW workers in relation to the significantly greater incremental increases in 2020 and 2021, where the government reached the forecasted goal of NZD20.00 per hour by 2021. Based o a comprehensive review of relevant literature, the study explores whether and how the MW increases may have impacted low-income workers subjective wellbeing in terms of emotional wellbeing, organisational commitment and resilience in the face of the pandemic.

Specifically, this research explores the following questions:

- Did the increase help MW earners?
- Were relative deprivation effects experienced by those paid just AMW?
- What was the impact (if any) of the increase on organisational commitment among both wage groups?
- How do perceptions of social protection compare between workers paid MW, and those paid just above; and
- What impact did MW increases have on subjective wellbeing and resilience of both paid groups during the pandemic?

Chapter Three – Method

This chapter aims to provide a clear step by step outline of the research methodology employed in this research, including an outline of the research design, data collection and thematic analysis process.

3.1 Participants

The informant base for this study comprised a mix of both MW workers, and workers paid AMW, and up to living wage; this was outlined in advertising, the information sheet and the survey itself as being from NZD18.90 on 1 April 2020, up to the Living Wage NZD22.10 on 1st April 2021 (see Appendices A, B, C and D). Eligibility criteria included living in New Zealand and having been in the same work role for a minimum of one year.

After removing incomplete data, the participant population consisted of 14 MW workers and 25 AMW workers from diverse industries and roles including healthcare workers, supermarket staff, seafood processing workers, nail technicians, fast food, manufacturing, retail and warehouse staff. Diversity of participants was achieved with a broad range of ages ranging from 23 – 55 years old, gender and ethnicity (see Tables 1 and 2 below).

Table 1 illustrates participant characteristics of MW workers earning NZD20.00 per hour, while Table 2 outlines participant characteristics of those earning AMW, and up to Living wage rates (of NZD22.10 per hour) in 2021.

Table 1:
Minimum Wage Participant Characteristics

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years in role	Industry of work
23	Other	Māori	1	Manufacturing
23	Female	Indian	2	Retail
25	Female	Chinese	2	Retail
28	Male	Vietnamese	2	Hospitality
29	Male	Māori	5	Youth Worker
42	Male	NZ European	4	Cleaning
49	Female	Niuean	5	Hospitality
	Male	Indian	5	Security

Female	Vietnamese	2	Fast Food
Male	Vietnamese	2	Fast Food
Female	Vietnamese	2	Hospitality
Male	Vietnamese	4	Hospitality
Male	Vietnamese	3	Hospitality
Male	NZ European	4	Retail

Table 2
Above Minimum Wage Participant Characteristics

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Years in role	Industry of work
21	Female	Vietnamese	2	Supermarket
23	Male	NZ European	1	Retail
23	Male	Vietnamese	2	Hospitality
26	Male	NZ European /Māori	1	Transportation
28	Female	Vietnamese	2	Retail
28	Female	Vietnamese	1	Healthcare
28	Female	Vietnamese	5	Nails technician
29	Male	Vietnamese	3	Manufacturing
29	Female	Vietnamese	3	Seafood processing
30	Female	Vietnamese	2	Hospitality
32	Female	Asian	2	Retail
36	Male	Indian	5	Retail
37	Female	Asian	2	Manufacturing
38	Female	NZ European	1	Healthcare
38	Female	NZ European /Māori	5	Child injury prevention
41	Female	Vietnamese	1	Hiring equipment
42	Male	Asian	5	Cleaning
46	Male	Vietnamese	2	Construction
54	Female	NZ European	2	Healthcare
55	Male	NZ European	5	Manufacturing
64	Female	NZ European	5	Healthcare
	Female	NZ European	3	Healthcare
	Female	NZ European	5	Healthcare
	Female	Vietnamese	1	Hospitality
	Female	Vietnamese	1	Hospitality

3.2 Procedure

This proposal underwent a risk assessment and was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC Northern) in May 2021. Key ethical considerations for this research were autonomy, confidentiality, avoidance of harm and cultural responsiveness.

The benefits of undertaking this study were considered as well as risks, with the research intending to further an understanding of the benefits of MW increases for MW workers and their wellbeing as well as organisational commitment. This could potentially support further MW increase goals by demonstrating positive impacts on individual's resilience and ability to deal with stressful events (such as the 2020 ad 2021 lockdowns that coincided with MW increases). Increasing knowledge around the subjective experience of lower paid workers in relation to pay structures and organisational commitment could be beneficial by raising awareness at the executive level of potentially unforeseen pressures on staff wellbeing, which can negatively impact productivity and engagement.

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary, and Koha, which is a te reo Māori (the indigenous language of New Zealand) word meaning gift, or contribution, was paid in thanks for the time that participants gave to the research. It was made clear to participants that they could withdraw at will during the questionnaire, and that no questions were compulsory. The questions were intentionally positively framed and therefore unlikely to cause negative feelings, however contact details were also provided at the end of the survey for appropriate free or low-cost counselling services in the unexpected event that stress, or harm was experienced. Examples include the National Telehealth service, Youthline, Depression.org and the Mental Health Foundation.

All files were stored digitally, including personal email addresses (where provided to receive gift cards) on spreadsheets with password protection to maintain privacy. Texts were collated anonymously according to key wage group categorisation information and sorted manually via Excel according to classifications of themes without use of a software system, as the data set was small enough for this to be manageable. Sorting through the data and thematising this manually enabled greater familiarisation with the narratives which also helped with developing interpretation.

Anonymity and confidentiality were provided to all participants, and also any other individuals, organisations or businesses that were named in the data. The research purpose was described to all participants in advance, and participants were offered the opportunity to receive a summary of the research on conclusion. Informed consent was obtained in conjunction with information about the study, which included contact details for both researcher and research supervisor (Appendix C).

Sampling of both low-income participant groups was achieved with the assistance of senior officials at the union E Tū, which is te reo Māori that translates to "Stand Tall", taken from a Māori Waiata (song) that represents the collective strength in standing up in support for equality and fairness for workers.

The biggest private sector union in New Zealand, E Tū was established in 2015, providing members across six industries with workplace representation and legal and political aid in efforts to fight for fair pay and work conditions. With a focus on manufacturing and food industries as well as communications, community support and public and commercial services, E Tū enabled anonymous access to a broad spectrum of both MW workers and those paid up to the living wage, providing direct access to this study's advertising via their social media platforms (see Appendix A).

Despite this assistance with access to eligible participants and the advertised chance to win one of five NZD50 gift cards, eliciting participants was particularly challenging with no responses over the projected one-month period. Discussions with E Tū representatives indicated that the length of the survey was a potential issue. They explained that uptake of surveys by members was always low, but typically there was better participation with fewer questions. In addition, the chance to "win" vouchers was not sufficient, as there was no clear guarantee of receiving this in return for the time provided.

To gain a broader reach of participants, social media advertising was placed on Facebook community groups across several areas of South, North, West and East Auckland, and also Christchurch and Tauranga where regional group admin's approved membership to the researcher. Unfortunately, the accessibility of social media meant the research link was accessible to scammers. After a month of advertising, it was apparent that foreign bots trawling public forums had accessed the link, resulting in large numbers of false "respondents" that were traceable to locations outside of New Zealand, and no usable data. This prompted deactivation and a substantial review of the survey, and the implementation of additional screening security measures to ensure that people outside of New Zealand were unable to access the survey. Once these measures were in place and with the intention of minimising risk of cyber-abuse, physical advertising was placed on supermarket notice boards in Whangarei and Auckland; disappointingly, survey uptake was still limited.

In considering the rationale for this, the pandemic undoubtedly impacted people's willingness to participate, with New Zealand's population still cautioned to minimise public interactions to avoid Covid-19 exposure. However, it was also conjectured that the length of survey in relation to perceived benefit of participation was inadequate. To counter this, a request for additional funding was approved to enable payments of NZD20.00 Koha for all participants (see Appendix B) in thanks for participation, and advertising recommenced in November 2022.

The researcher contacted the Public Service Association (PSA) union who are New Zealand's largest public sector union, in November, who also advertised through their media channels. Ultimately, however, the majority of participant engagement was achieved through snowball sampling, or word-of-mouth endorsement. Each NZD20.00 GiftPay card sent electronically to participants included a message of thanks for participation and encouraged

people to share the link with friends, family or colleagues who might also be eligible to participate in the research.

3.3 Measures

The main instrument to measure subjective wellbeing of MW and AMW workers was a questionnaire to obtain critical incidents (Flanaghan, 1954). Quantitative data were also captured via the questionnaire using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al., 1967).

Flanagan's (1954) Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used in a questionnaire format sent electronically using Qualtrics SPSS surveys. The CIT questions were designed to obtain participant's narratives regarding aspects of their wellbeing in relation to their experiences with the MW increases during the pandemic. Participants were assured there were no right or wrong answers, and to take their time to encourage richness of responses.

General instructions were provided at the outset of the questionnaire, before personal information was collected including the eligibility criteria for completing the survey. Ineligible participants were screened out automatically via the electronic survey if they did not meet criteria, e.g., if they were employed for less than one year (minimum) in their role, and were not in one of the core employment groups: a worker who has earned MW for the past year, a worker who has earned AMW, but less than the living wage (or NZD22.10 per hour) for the past year, or an HR professional who works with employees that include MW workers and above.

Demographic questions followed which were not a pre-requisite for survey completion, these included job title, industry of employment, age, gender, and ethnicity. The critical incident questions followed.

3.4 Critical Incident Questions

The following questions were designed to prompt participants to recollect experiences that would potentially invoke rich or descriptive responses in line with Flanagan's (1954) theory:

- Thinking back over the last year, please recall a time when you were particularly satisfied with your pay. Please describe that experience.
- Thinking back over the last year, please recall a time you recall you felt less satisfied with your pay. Please describe that experience.
- Thinking back over previous minimum wage increases, in what way have the increases in 2020 and 2021 positively affected you or others you work with?
- Thinking back over previous minimum wage increases, in what way (if any) have the increases in 2020 and 2021 been less positive for you or others you work with?
- Please consider your positive experiences with your current employer in the past year, and specifically, with how you and other employees were treated when faced with the pandemic and lockdown(s).
- Please consider your less positive experiences with your current employer in the past year, and specifically, with how you and other employees were treated when faced with the pandemic and lockdown(s).
- Please recall an occasion you felt valued for your contribution at work in the last year. Please describe your experience.
- Please recall an occasion you may have felt under-valued for your contribution at work in the last year.

- The last minimum wage increase on 1st April 2020 occurred during the early stages of the first lockdown in New Zealand and was broadly publicised in media. Please describe how that affected you, if at all.

3.5 Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)

Developed in 1967 by Weiss et al., the MSQ measures both intrinsic and extrinsic components of general satisfaction at work including interpersonal aspects, promotion, supervision, the work itself and the pay (Guion, 1978). It has a five-point rating scale for 20 facets of satisfaction based on broad empirical research and is projected to provide reliable scores, have construct validity and be extensively normed (Guion, 1978).

This study incorporated both eudaimonic and hedonic components of happiness by measuring job and life satisfaction through use of the MSQ (Weiss et al., 1967). In addition, intrinsic and extrinsic components of general satisfaction at work were analysed through use of the MSQ (Weiss et al., 1967) to evaluate differences and similarities between these groups. Extrinsic satisfaction refers to happiness with external aspects of the job that are outside factors relating to the actual work itself, such as remuneration, management, and general working conditions. Intrinsic satisfaction elements relate to internal aspects of work such as a sense of control, achievement, or opportunities for personal development. These factors are measured through twenty questions in the MSQ. Nine questions reflect extrinsic sentiments (questions 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 &19, listed below), and 11 represent intrinsic statements (questions 1, 2, 3, 4 ,7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16 & 20, also listed below). Participants select from the ratings below for each question, which is later scored according to the following numerical values:

- Very Satisfied - 5
- Satisfied - 4
- Neutral - 3
- Dissatisfied - 2
- Very Dissatisfied – 1

Table 3 below lists all 20 questions from the MSQ, sorted into extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction questions. In the questionnaire, each question listed below is preceded by: “On my present job, this is how I feel about ...”

Table 3:
Questions from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ).

MSQ number	MSQ - Extrinsic Satisfaction Questions
5	The way my boss handles his/her workers
6	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions
8	The way my job provides for steady employment
12	The way company policies are put into practice
13	My pay and the amount of work I do
14	The chances for advancement on this job
17	The working conditions
18	The way my co-workers get along with each other
19	The praise I get for doing a good job
	MSQ - Intrinsic Satisfaction Questions
1	Being able to keep busy all the time
2	The chance to work alone on the job
3	The chance to do different things from time to time
4	The chance to be "somebody" in the community
7	Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience
9	The chance to do things for other people
10	The chance to tell people what to do
11	The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities
15	The freedom to use my own judgement
16	The chance to try my own methods of doing the job
20	The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job

MSQ scores were triangulated with the critical incident material to ascertain whether lower scores amongst higher paid workers were reflected in more negative incidents about relative deprivation in this same group. Results were also examined to triangulate the findings of subjective wellbeing and happiness alongside the qualitative material and examine similarities and inconsistencies between data sets.

3.6 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a relatively flexible paradigm used for qualitative analysis within psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A method for analysing and reporting themes within and across a data set, thematic coding can be successfully used across both essentialist and constructionist paradigms within psychology, making it a useful method where there is

no “single truth” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Constructivist grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that aims to explore social processes through categories that *emerge* from the data as opposed to preconceived classifications (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007), while producing a plausible and practical theory of the phenomena.

Known as “thematizing meanings” (Holloway and Todres, 2003, as cited by Braun & Clarke, 2006) coding qualitative material is in part an outcome of the analytic process that occurs while working with the data and codes, as well as based in extant themes conceived at least in part prior to viewing the texts. Analysing themes as they emerged from the data enabled an inductive approach throughout the analysis phase without the need to adhere only to a predefined coding theme.

It is important to note that both coding criteria and thematic development during the analysis were a result of both the researcher’s theoretical and conceptual framework which intersected with the data, comprising both an interpretive and subjective element (Willig & Stainton, 2017). Repeated reading of the data and reflexivity are essential factors outlined by Braun & Clarke, who emphasise the importance of deep engagement and reflection, as well as a systematic approach over coding accuracy, outlined in their 15-point checklist of criteria “for good thematic analysis” (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Ultimately, a six-phase analytic process was undertaken when approaching thematic analysis of the qualitative material to help structure the process as recommended and outlined by Willig & Stainton (2017). Analytical phases commenced with in-depth familiarisation with the data, reading and rereading the narratives and recognising patterns as well as continuing to ask questions of the material, and continually making notes of observations to which to refer, in a process that is both iterative and recursive. Notes were taken as the dataset was sorted in Excel according to MW or AMW group material to better identify themes, as well as analyse differences and commonalities between these groups. Early themes

that emerged from the data were written down by the researcher as they were identified and were better defined and filtered during the second detailed phase, coding.

Coding of themes was achieved by initially highlighting and colour-coding similar responses, and it was soon apparent that these were aligned with some of the projected themes that were hypothesised prior to undertaking the research. These themes were initially identified and categorised in terms of relevance to Relative Deprivation, Wage Compression, Subjective Wellbeing, Social Protection, Resilience and Organisational Commitment, and Equity, however it soon became apparent that while these theoretical constructs were highly relevant to multiple aspects of the narratives, the incidents could not be demarcated solely by these concepts.

The third phase, theme development, meant re-examining the text data while forming categories and actively establishing and identifying patterns (Willig & Stainton, 2017), while remaining oriented to the research questions to ensure relevance (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ultimately, development of themes from the data was an inductive process, with the underpinning theories guiding interpretation of the data (Braun et al., 2015). The initial colour-coding of themes according to theories provided a robust basis for theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) where texts were later considered in terms of wage compression, subjective wellbeing, resilience, and organisational commitment through participant perspectives based in the studies' underlying theories (outlined in Chapter 2). While Content Analysing texts for these themes, any similar or patterned responses and meaning were considered and interpreted, before being sorted into relevant columns using Excel.

From there, the fourth step ensured that narratives in each column were again reviewed for alternative or "new" prospective themes, before identifying the core or exemplar narratives that stood out for significance within the emergent themes and highlighting them.

This fourth phase, reviewing and defining the themes was described by Willig & Stainton (2017) as a quality control exercise, where a final review process ensures relevance to the research questions, and if the dataset themes have captured sufficient meaning to tell a story.

A visual, thematic map was created as themes emerged, using the highlighted narratives as headings to help centralise and organise the data in the fifth phase, theme definition. The further classification and analysis entailed in this approach necessitated extensive immersion in the data before the final stage; organising data into a structured table for clarity and writing this report to communicate the narratives and findings. This comprehensive and repetitive data revision aligned with recommendations of Braun & Clarke (2006), who emphasised that considerable familiarisation with the data through coding and re-reading transcripts is an essential step to ensure the analysis has been approached in a purposeful and thorough manner.

Themes are outlined in Chapter Four next, as well as an outline of the data obtained from the MSQ. Narratives were sorted according to themes and are outlined according to individual MW and AMW sections in the following chapter.

Chapter Four: Findings

Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) and constructivist grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007) were used to analyse and code the qualitative material (Chapter 3). Initially it had been hoped to content analyse the critical incidents separately from each other (separately in Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4), and separately from the questions about wider work conditions (in Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8 and Q9) about organizational culture, climate and context. In the event however, participants' responses to the questions as a whole tended to spill over into each other, and thus proved too difficult to keep separated without creating artifices.

One example of the spillover between critical incidents is given below. The MW Fast Food Worker (like others) answered the question "Thinking back over the last year, please recall a time when you were particularly satisfied with your pay" (Q1) with a negative response. It was expected that a more positive response would be elicited. The participant also offered information around organizational context that had been the researcher's intended focus in Q4: "Please consider your less-positive experiences with your current employer in the past year, and specifically, with how you and other employees were treated when faced with the pandemic and lockdown(s)".

"My story happened after when [the pandemic] lockdown ends and the drive through was open. It was chaos and I was working nonstop under stress. And my manager came and asked me to make burger quicker when I was doing my best cause the car line was so long feels like forever. Then we got told how the burger was not fresh enough and got told off for it. I had to do multi tasks and dealing with some bad customer swore at me on those lockdown ends day too."

(MW Fast food worker, Vietnamese female, age unknown, parenthesis added)

The next critical incident question was "Thinking back over the last year, please recall a time you recall you felt less satisfied with your pay." Here again, another participant described their experience of having reduced hours due to pandemic restrictions, but focused

more on the fear of exposure to Covid-19, and the additional health and safety factors they faced, i.e. on organisational climate and context:

"Working in a Managed Isolation Facility.
Wearing PPE gear every day, security checks, health checks and fortnightly covid tests.
Afraid and hoping not to get the covid virus and spreading to family friends and the community. Work hours dropped from 40 hours to 24 contracted hours.
Not being able to work if you have flu cold like symptoms and have no sick leave or annual leave."
(MW Hospitality worker, Niuean female, 49 years old)

Given the repeated spillover between answers for discrete questions and in broad accord with Braun and Clarke (2006), the narratives for all nine questions were combined into one text for each participant. These were first analysed across all 39 participants in the entire final sample (Chapter 3). This analysis of both main wage groups, across all 9 questions aboveQ1-9), yielded four meta-themes, which were consistent across both groups.

Each of the themes are captured below, with brief general descriptions:

Table 4
Four themes from MW and AMW participant narratives, with example sub-themes

MW Themes			
Theme 1: Little change	*Theme 2: Unfair pay*	*Theme 3: At risk*	*Theme 4: Valued contribution*
Only marginal impact from pay increases, whether positive or negative	Very dissatisfied with pay	Felt unsafe due to Covid or unmanageable workloads, pay not enough to buffer this	Felt appreciated at work, either due to pay increase or other factors, despite pay increase

From Table 4, two of the four themes broadly concerned wages, and the remaining two themes spoke to organizational culture and climate. In order to explore these meta themes more closely, the sample was therefore split into two sub-groups, MW and AMW, and the analysis repeated for each specific group, using the protocol in Braun et al.(above).

Minimum Wage Worker Themes

Themes for MW participants are presented in Table 5. From Table 5, there were four sub-themes under the first theme, "Little change."

Table 5
Four themes from MW participant narratives, with example sub-themes

MW Themes			
Theme 1: Little change	*Theme 2: Unfair pay*	*Theme 3: At Risk*	*Theme 4: Valued contribution*
• Pleasantly surprised to receive the increase, but it didn't make much difference	• Not paid enough to be disrespected by customers	• Pay not enough for Covid risks during lockdowns	• Company supportive during crisis, low pay but showed value through protection
• Wage subsidy a huge help, small impact from MW increase	• Expected to work any hours on call, pay insufficient	• Mental and physical strain, unmanageable workloads while paid MW	• Recognition - Management acknowledged contribution from staff (through rewards or praise)
• Positive at first, before higher rates of inflation	• Made to work harder, no breaks, unfair pay for expectations	• Insufficient training to cope with new environment, pay the same	• Good teamwork / management (social connections more important than pay)
• MW has never been enough, not before, not enough now	• Pay not enough for skill or experience	• Unsafe work environment during pandemic	• Whanau / people grateful for worker's contribution in pandemic – doing it for them

Pleasantly surprised to receive the increase, but it didn't make much difference

From Table 5, the first sub-theme under "Little change", was that after an initial pleasant surprise, the MW increase did not make much difference. An illustrative quote of this initial fillip, but soon after relative lack of noticeable difference was in response to Q1:

> *"I was really surprised, because that means I can actually maybe buy things, better food, more money to pay my rent. So, I was **a bit happy. But now, I just feel very nonchalant** about it."*
>
> (MW Hospitality worker, Vietnamese male, age unknown, emphasis added)

Wage subsidy a huge help, small impact from MW increase

By comparison with the wage increase, the government wage subsidy was felt to be more noticeable, as indicated in the second sub-theme in Table 5, as described by the following illustrative quotation.

"Not much positive change (following MW increase). The wage subsidy was a huge help."
(MW Retail worker, Indian female, 23 years old)

Positive at first, before higher rates of inflation

As indicated in the third theme of column one of Table 5, MW participants noted how rising costs and inflation made any benefit from the increase a moot point, and while they were appreciative to get an increase in pay at all, the positive impact of MW was superseded, or negated by rising inflation. One MW retail worker was grateful for the increased ability to meet costs for standard items:

"As the minimum wage increases, so does the price of utilities and groceries. It really doesn't make much of a difference to a common man's life. Initially, I was happy to hear about the increase. But a couple of months later, buying a 3-dollar bag of onions for 5 dollars simply cause of inflation and pandemic effects, doesn't make me feel any better nor increase my standard of living in any way."
(MW Retail worker, Indian female, 23 years old)

MW has never been enough; not before, not enough now

The fourth sub-theme in Table 5 was on the adequacy of the MW in general. Reflected in participant's comments was a long-term dissatisfaction with MW. The following narrative summarises this:

"Pay has never been enough to afford a good and healthy lifestyle."
(MW Security Industry worker, Indian male, age unknown)

Not paid enough to be disrespected by customers

Moving to the right column in Table 5, the second theme was "Unfair pay", which encapsulated participant's references to dissatisfaction with their pay on the basis that it was not a fair compensation for their work. Six Participant narratives expressed dissatisfaction with work conditions that felt incongruent with the rates of pay received in relation to output or skill, reflecting "Unfair pay", as in the example from the first sub-theme below:

"During black Friday sale, the wages we got paid aren't enough for all the craziness!"
(MW Retail worker, Chinese female, 25 years old)

Expected to work any hours on call, pay insufficient

This sense of unfairness was largely reflected within MW narratives, with participants expressing disappointment and frustration towards pay being insufficient for employer's unreasonable expectations around working hours as below:

"After all, I worked a 12hours shift and got ask to clock out on time cause they was not willing to pay us more and want us to do quicker when all the orders kept coming constantly. Anyways, so I clocked out and stay another 2 hours with my supervisor to clean up unpaid, so I got pay minimum wages for long hours and working extra unpaid. I am disappointed but I needed a job and money to my babies."
(MW Fast food worker, Vietnamese female, age unknown)

Made to work harder, no breaks, unfair pay for expectations

Essential workers who continued to work during the lockdown also expressed the unfairness of their pay in the context of working while others were not, but also having to work harder, where often staff numbers were reduced, and they were left to "pick up the slack". One MW worker articulates this in the third sub-theme, who responded to the question asking for a positive experience with their recollection of feeling mentally and physically strained:

"Positive... there's not much there at the moment, staff leaving scared and not satisfied with the contracted hours. Not many work colleagues attended work during the lockdown. Employer only cared about what the owner wants and not the employees. Mentally and physically it's a big strain."
(MW Hospitality worker, Niuean female, 49 years old)

Pay not enough for skill or experience

For other MW participants the sense of "unfair pay" stemmed from a sense of futility, or perceived inability to progress in their roles or advance pay despite tenure, seniority or skill. One example from the fourth sub-theme succinctly illustrates this:

"The more experience I got in the workforce I was still getting paid the same".
(MW Youth worker, Māori male, 29 years old)

Theme 3, "At Risk" emerged through multiple references towards fears for health and safety, whether referencing unmanageable workloads, insufficient health and safety protocols or training, and exposure to Covid during the pandemic. Many participants described feeling unfairly put at risk at work and generally being unsafe, and pay was considered insufficient for the detrimental conditions or danger.

Pay not enough for Covid risks during lockdowns

The fear of exposure to Covid-19 during the pandemic was illustrated by one MW hospitality worker with the following narrative:

"Wearing PPE gear every day, security checks, health checks and fortnightly covid tests. Afraid and hoping not to get the covid virus and spreading to family friends and the community."
(MW Hospitality worker, Niuean female, 49 years old)

Mental and physical strain, unmanageable workloads while paid MW

Dissatisfaction with pay in response to Q2 was referred to by another participant who described excessive workloads and feeling mentally and physically strained in their environment:

"I was overworked almost 24/7, I was working in an environment where it is so hot, it is hard to breathe while being insulted by the manager for not being positive about it. So even with the increased pay promise, that time where I got it, I was not satisfied because it felt like a slap in the face. It is not worth it."
(MW Hospitality worker, Vietnamese male, age unknown)

Insufficient training to cope with new environment, pay the same

For essential workers, the pandemic environment brought strict new regulations to manage the risks of Covid-19 transmission, which were particularly high for those working in hotels, which during the pandemic were turned into managed isolation facilities for people who arrived in New Zealand and were quarantined. This is described by one MW worker below:

"Almost half of my department left due to a lot of new rules and restrictions. Having a positive case was a toll on our staff due to not understanding protocols and standards of having rooms blocked till it has been fully cleaned by MOH and safe to enter and clean. We

have been doing training that's more for the health industry. Some employees don't even understand more than half of what they are reading and training for."
(MW Hospitality worker, Niuean female, 49 years old)

Unsafe work environment during pandemic

Other workers simply felt at risk due to working during the pandemic when others were isolating, unrelated to pay. An example below highlights this perception while also demonstrating the drive for the greater good:

"We were treated fairly, sometimes we questioned ourselves why we were at work with all these restrictions, but we just carried on working with our whanau that were in more need of help than ourselves."
(MW Youth worker, Māori male, 29 years old)

The example above highlights the sense that many had of providing a valuable contribution, which was communicated in several ways within narratives in Theme 4, "Valued contribution", which is extrapolated in the sub-themes below.

Company supportive during crisis, low pay but showed value through protection

Many MW workers were grateful to the protection they were provided by employers, making them feel safe during the crisis, which they took as feeling valued. This support in relation to the pay is simply summarised in the example below:

"Good company, bad pay"
(MW Retail worker, NZ European female, age unknown)

Recognition - Management acknowledged contribution from staff (through rewards or praise)

Other MW workers felt valued through management's acknowledgement of their work, whether this was through tangible rewards (other than pay) or praise:

"When the manager bought us drinks after work as the rewards for a super busy day."
(MW Retail worker, Chinese female, 25 years old)

Good teamwork / management (social connections more important than pay)

Social connection was reflected as a contributor in MW narratives describing how they felt valued through management recognition and also supportive teamwork. The following example from the third sub-theme illustrates this:

"I got some compliments for my hard work. Other staffs were friendly and supportive if I needed them"
(MW Hospitality worker, Vietnamese male, 28 years old)

Whanau / people grateful for worker's contribution in pandemic – "doing it for them"

The following selection from the fourth sub-theme describes two social identities with "family" and "the team", referring to appreciation from whanau for them and their work social group during the pandemic:

"Being able to see our whanau smiling when we can meet their needs and them saying that they were so grateful to me us and the team for helping them in this pandemic."
(MW Youth worker, Māori male, 29 years old)

Conclusions from the MW narratives will be discussed in further detail following exploration of the AMW themes below.

Above Minimum Wage Worker Themes

The themes for the AMW group were categorised according to the same meta-themes, however there were subtle differences in the contexts of AMW narratives from the MW cohort, as many of these respondents did not receive pay rises when MW was increased. The sub-themes in the table below describe their responses and examples are provided to illustrate these findings in the following section.

Table 6
Four themes from AMW participant narratives, with example sub-themes

AMW Themes			
Theme 1: Little change	*Theme 2: Unfair pay*	*Theme 3: At risk*	*Theme 4: Valued contribution*
• MW increase meant nothing to AMW, little or no increase	• The gap between MW and AMW keeps decreasing	• Reduced work hours to balance pay increases	• Company supportive during crisis, low pay but showed value through protection
• Less job opportunities for AMW workers	• Not enough difference in pay for qualifications / skill level / experience as MW workers	• Disparity between workers health and safety for pay	• Recognition - Management acknowledged contribution from staff (through rewards or praise)
• Covid to blame for small change to pay	• Working over and above pay grade as have better skills / work ethic than reflected in pay	• Covid-19 risk – insufficient H&S measures for Covid	• Good teamwork / management (social connections more important than pay)
• Cost of living increase outweighs any pay increase	• Not enough opportunity to advance	• Working through lockdown, not isolating	• Pride in own work / contribution

As seen in Table 6 above, there were four sub-themes under the first theme, "Little change."

MW increase meant nothing to AMW, little or no increase

While some AMW participants referred to being satisfied with receiving a small increase in pay, others explained they had not received pay increases at all. For many AMW participants the MW increase provided little change to their experience.

"The increases in minimum wage led to the increases of other goods and service. I haven't felt that it has brought any positive effects.

It's only good for people who's on minimum wage because they can get a pay rise."
(AMW Healthcare Worker, Vietnamese female, 28 years old)

Less job opportunities for AMW workers

One AMW participant referred to the MW increase negatively impacting job opportunities, noting that some employers would avoid hiring, presumably in an effort to keep costs down. This indicates relative deprivation effects, as illustrated in the following quote:

"Some jobs don't need skill and be worth to pay less than minimum wage. And that employers will try to not employ for these positions. Somehow it has less job opportunities for people. Cost of living increase outweighs any pay increase."
(AMW Hiring Equipment worker, Vietnamese female, 41 years old)

Covid to blame for small change in pay

Similar to MW participants, the AMW group referred to Covid impacts in response to multiple critical incident questions. While pay increases were not mandatory for this group, many felt that Covid-19 was to blame for impacting companies' ability to increase their wages, as in the following example.

"It was after the change of Minimum wage. I got a little pay rise but not as much as the rise of Minimum Wage. I felt unsatisfied but as the business has not been doing well with border closed and no tourists, I could not ask too much. Rent and all the bills have gone up so I have ended up having less saving."
(AMW Retail worker, Vietnamese female, 28 years old)

Cost of living increase outweighs any pay increase

AMW workers referred to inflation and rising costs preventing positive change in any real terms based on the increases (if they did receive increases), across multiple critical incident questions. One example below summarises this:

"Minimum wage increases which means living cost such as petrol, rent, groceries and clothes also increases. There was nothing in the increases that we can benefit from."
(AMW Hospitality Worker, Vietnamese female, 30 years old)

The second theme for AMW workers reflected a sense of unfairness in their pay, like Theme 2, "Unfair pay", as outlined for MW workers, however dissatisfaction with pay in

the narratives for the AMW group tended to focus more on wage compression factors, as outlined in the first sub-theme below.

The gap between MW and AMW keeps decreasing

For some AMW workers experiencing wage compression, a higher MW increase when their own pay had not been adjusted in comparison meant that any financial advantage they had previously experienced was now lessened, resulting in a perception of unfairness.

"I like it as I can increase my income. However, I feel like it's a bit unfair for some employee who already earn the similar amount before the increase but now everyone earn the same as them and their employer wouldn't want to increase for them."
(AMW Supermarket worker, Vietnamese female, 21 years old)

Not enough difference in pay for qualifications / skill level / experience as MW workers

In the second sub-theme, similar to the first example above, AMW workers felt their pay was unfair due to wage compression effects, but this was despite their higher skill level in comparison to MW workers. This discrepancy was highlighted in the following narrative from one presumably qualified AMW participant:

"It shortened the gap between people who's on minimum wage and people who got paid a bit higher than minimum wage.
I feel it's unfair for people who studied for the certificates/degrees, but their wage is not much higher than those who didn't study."
(AMW Healthcare worker, Vietnamese female, 28 years old)

Working over and above pay grade as have better skills / work ethic than reflected in pay

Some AMW workers felt their pay was unfair solely based on their role's responsibilities or expectations, particularly where there were skill requirements as expressed by one healthcare worker from the third sub-theme:

"Every fortnight I am less satisfied with my pay. I do not believe I/ we are paid an appropriate rate for the skills that are required for the job I do."
(AMW Healthcare worker, NZ European female, age unknown)

Not enough opportunity to advance

Other AMW worker narratives referred to having more skill or experience than their coworkers, or MW counterparts. For some AMW workers who had ambitions of progression in their roles, the desire to advance had felt futile, as referred to by one participant below:

"I realized I could do more than what I was assigned to the job, but I have to stay for certain period before I could apply for new job. This period is when I feel less satisfied with the pay."
(AMW Hiring Equipment worker, Vietnamese female, 41 years old)

Theme 3, "At risk" was very similar in sub-theme to the MW group, where participants described feeling vulnerable to health and safety factors such as unmanageable workloads or exposure to public during Covid-19.

Reduced work hours to balance pay increases

The first sub-theme refers to employers recouping some costs of increased wage bills through reducing employee work hours, essentially meaning that staff need to work harder to earn their pay because of their increases. This is exemplified in the following narrative:

"When we receive more pay our employer reduces our hours of work, resulting in unmanageable workloads."
(AMW Healthcare worker, NZ European female, 64 years old)

Disparity between workers' health and safety for pay

This second sub-theme describes how other employers failed to consider their worker's wellbeing while navigating additional work demands, with AMW workers such as the seafood processing worker below sharing stories of untenable workloads that had also been evident with the MW group in Theme 2.

"Some weeks we had to work up to 65hrs. Good salary, however, we felt exhausted, risking our health and wasting our time as it's not a work-life balance. Foreign workers are treated unfairly."
(AMW Seafood processing worker, Vietnamese female, 29 years old)

Covid-19 risk – insufficient H&S measures for Covid

As many participants were frontline workers, the risks of the pandemic were referred to by AMW workers in a similar way to the MW group. AMW workers also noted a sense of disparity with safety protocols expected from them, when managers did not adhere to the same standards:

"One thing I didn't like was that some people in the management didn't follow 2 metre rules and sometimes they even didn't wear masks! How awful is that when they always asked us to put it on and they didn't do it sometimes."
(AMW Manufacturing worker, Vietnamese male, 29 years old)

Working through lockdown, not isolating

Perceptions of frontline workers around those isolating at home while they worked were varied, either feeling positive that they were contributing to society, or being happy for the freedom to be "out" and earning more, as opposed to isolating at home, or in some cases being resentful of those able to stay home, on subsidies. One participant was particularly angry that they were working during lockdown while others were home isolating, and subsidised:

"Some people who didn't work got paid a wage subsidy. Shouldn't they have their own personal savings, or insurance? that's so unfair... everything there's a lockdown I.e. 3 months in the last year, I'm still working 80 hours a week while everyone else is on an all-expenses paid holiday by guess who ME 😠😠"
(AMW Worker, NZ European - Māori male, 26 years old)

Narratives for AMW workers that were categorised under the fourth theme, "Valued contribution" held many similarities to those of MW workers, as reflected in the identical descriptions for the first three sub-themes in both tables. The first sub-theme from Table 5 is below.

Company supportive during crisis, low pay but showed value through protection

Company support was expressed in AMW narratives as arising from receiving additional work hours to boost pay, while others simply felt protected due to having ongoing employment. During the pandemic, where there was significant uncertainty, job stability was

likely considered more valuable than ever. When workers felt employers went above and beyond was particularly reflected as appreciation, as described in the following narrative:

"The current employer tried to pay full for everyone during the lockdown, even he has no income for 2 weeks of lockdown. As an office administrator, I know how costly to run a business in New Zealand and it is absolutely a big effort from my Boss."
(AMW Hiring Equipment worker, Vietnamese female, 41 years old)

Recognition - Management acknowledged contribution from staff (through rewards or praise)

Rewards and recognition were highlighted by the AMW workers in terms of feeling valued for their contribution, and like MW workers, these were typically not financially substantial incentives, but clear acknowledgement of their input, and expressions of gratitude.

"When I am invited to the Christmas party and personally thanked for my contribution by my boss. I also got sent a bag of goodies every Christmas as a thank you."
(AMW Supermarket worker, Vietnamese female, 21 years old)

Good teamwork / management (social connections more important than pay)

AMW workers referred to social connections with colleagues in response to positive critical incidents, similarly to MW participants. One referred to feeling valued from being part of a team achieving their goal, below:

"When I completed a construction, I felt happy. I felt valued as I contributed to make the work done."
(AMW Construction worker, Vietnamese male, 46 years old)

Pride in own work / contribution

The fourth sub-theme in "Valued contribution" for AMW workers was the main point of difference to the MW group, due to participants expressing having pride in their own work without this relating specifically to a sense of pride from receiving gratitude for their contributions from whanau or the public. AMW participants also referred to their own innate work ethic when addressing their satisfaction with their roles. This is illustrated in the following narrative:

"I noticed that some bins had been broken a bit at the corners so it's not really safe as it may hurt people when they carry them. After that we got provided new bins and the broken ones were thrown away or disposed. I feel I did something good for the workers and the company too!"
(AMW Manufacturing worker, Vietnamese male, 29 years old)

The similarities and differences between MW and AMW groups will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter. Below are the thematic maps created during the analysis outlining core themes and descriptions for both MW and AMW groups, followed by an outline of findings from the MSQ.

Figure 1. Thematic Map – Minimum Wage Workers

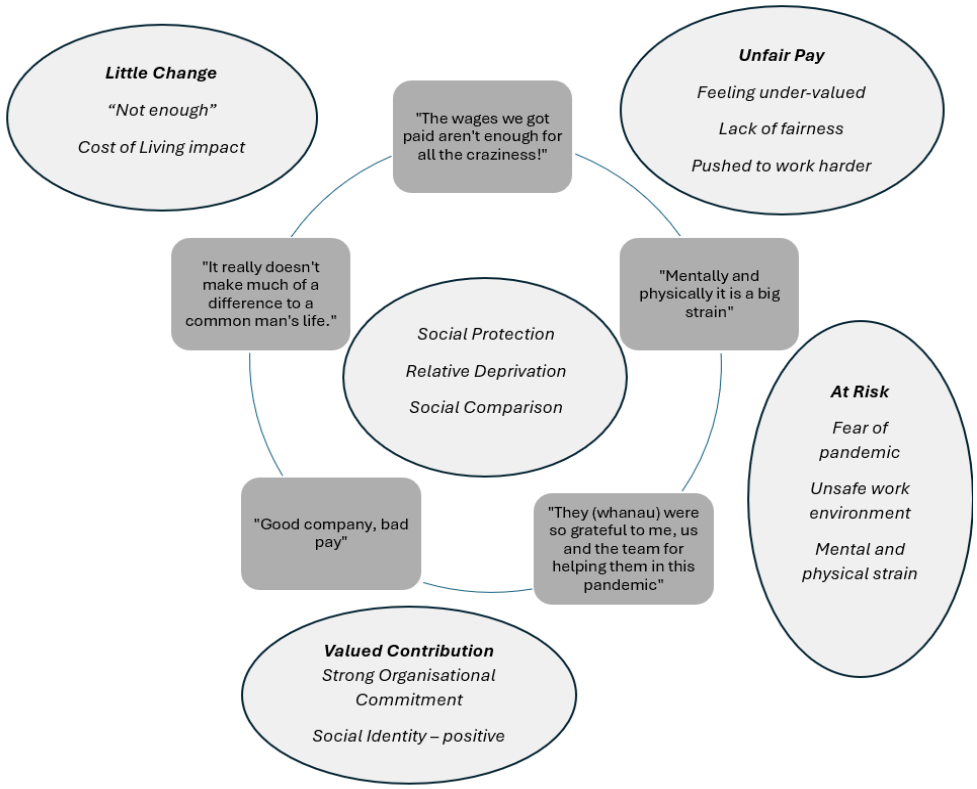
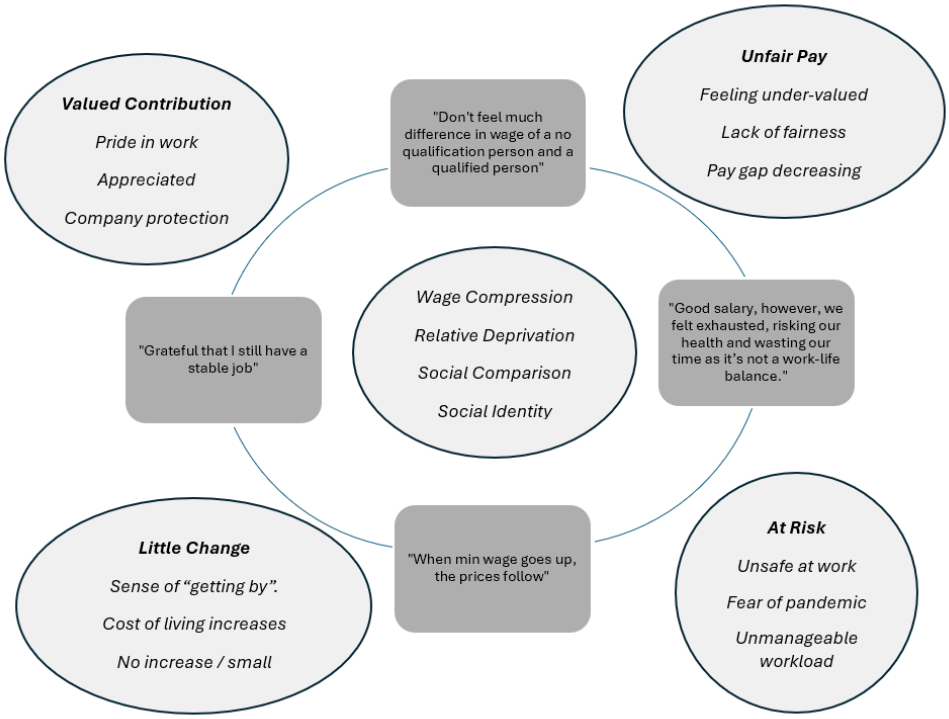


Figure 2. Thematic Map – Above Minimum Wage Workers



Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

MSQ data were scored according to the Manual for Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss etal.,1967). This manual outlines a process to analyse scores at the level of items, and separately according to intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. This more qualitative form of scoring was suited to this thesis, and the item-level protocol was therefore followed in this chapter, in accordance with the exploratory ethos of the thesis outlined in Chapters 1 and 2. Table 5 below lists scores from the 'extrinsic' items from the MSQ, with both MW and AMW mean scores per question. All raw data are presented in Appendix F, along with overall intrinsic and extrinsic scores.

Five participants did not respond to the MSQ, leaving an analysable sample of *n*=12 MW and *n*=22 AMW participants, outlined in Table 7 below. As shown in Chapter 3 (3.4, Measures) a Likert-type item scale was used to obtain scores of (dis)satisfaction, with

participants responding to each of the questions above according to a range of satisfaction from “Very Satisfied”, to “Very Dissatisfied”. Each response was weighted as below.

- Very Satisfied - 5
- Satisfied - 4
- Neutral - 3
- Dissatisfied - 2
- Very Dissatisfied - 1

Table 7:
Mean Score per Item - Extrinsic Satisfaction Items

MSQ number “On my present job, this is how I feel about ...”	MSQ - Extrinsic Satisfaction Questions	MW Scores (*n*=12)	AMW Scores *(n=22)*
5	The way my boss handles his/her workers	2.4 (1.1)	2.9 (1.1)
6	The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	2.3 (1.6)	2.5 (1.2)
8	The way my job provides for steady employment	2.5 (1.6)	3.7 (1.1)
12	The way company policies are put into practice	3.1 (1.3)	2.6 (1.4)
13	*My pay and the amount of work I do*	2.4 (0.8)	2.1 (1.4)
14	The chances for advancement on this job	2.4 (1.2)	2.2 (1.4)
17	The working conditions	2.9 (1.4)	3.0 (1.4)
18	The way my co-workers get along with each other	3.8 (1.7)	3.1 (1.6)
19	The praise I get for doing a good job	3.3 (1.4)	2.6 (1.5)
	MEAN	2.8 (0.5)	2.7 (0.5)

Note. The values represent means, with standard deviations in parentheses.

The mean scores in Table 7 did not show any clear obvious systematic difference in extrinsic satisfaction items across the two pay groups, and standard deviations were mostly around the mid-point. On six out of nine items, MW participants were, a little surprisingly, more satisfied with extrinsic aspects of their jobs than AMW workers. However, both sets of item mean scores are close to the mid-point. On the one item directly linked to pay (italicised in Table 7), the score for the MW group was higher. However, across the items as a whole, as indicated by the overall mean scores per item, both pay groups were, qualitatively speaking, DIS-satisfied.

Intrinsic satisfaction data for both groups are summarised in Table 8 below, with mean scores per question and overall mean score per group across all 11 items.

Table 8:
Mean Score per Item - Intrinsic Satisfaction Items

MSQ number "On my present job, this is how I feel about ..."	MSQ - Intrinsic Satisfaction Questions	MW Scores (*n*=12)	AMW Scores (*n=22)*
1	Being able to keep busy all the time	3.3 (0.7)	3.4 (1.2)
2	The chance to work alone on the job	3.4 (1.2)	3.5 (1.2)
3	The chance to do different things from time to time	2.9 (1.4)	3.3 (1.2)
4	The chance to be "somebody" in the community	2.9 (0.9)	3.0 (1.3)
7	Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	3.0 (1.2)	3.7 (0.8)
9	The chance to do things for other people	3.5 (1.0)	3.7 (0.9)
10	The chance to tell people what to do	3.2 (1.1)	3.0 (0.9)
11	The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	2.8 (1.4)	2.8 (1.6)
15	The freedom to use my own judgement	2.8 (1.2)	2.7 (1.4)
16	The chance to try my own methods of doing the job	2.4 (1.7)	3.0 (1.5)
20	The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	2.9 (1.7)	3.0 (1.5)
	MEAN	3.0 (0.3)	3.2 (0.3)

Note. The values represent means, with standard deviations in parentheses.

Notably, the standard deviations appear to be relatively moderate and concentrated around the mid-point values for both groups according to both tables, demonstrating consistency and limited variability.

From Table 8, on eight out of 11 items, the AMW scores higher than the MW group. Scores on average however were again at the mid-point, for both pay groups. Once again, therefore, the quantitative data were equivocal – there were no clear signs of difference, qualitatively or quantitatively, between the two pay groups.

These findings therefore appeared to be at variance with the qualitative analyses of responses, which found that AMW participants were largely unhappy with the MW wage increase awarded to the MW group. With an increase of NZD1.20 per hour in 2019, 2020 and again in 2021, MW increases represented a significant rise in rate over a 3-year period. While this research did not collect information on who did or did not receive increases in line with MW rate rises among the AMW group, at least 10 participants noted they did not receive an increase at the time of the MW increase, and two participants mentioned being paid marginally over MW rates by only 70 cents, or 40 cents per hour at the time of the latest increase. Despite the larger MW increases in 2020 and 2021, MW rates remained at least

NZD2.20 per hour lower than Living wage rates for the same period, which is a significant gap for low-paid workers, and according to calculations by the Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit, represents the core difference between "getting by" and living with dignity.

These findings are further discussed in Chapter five below.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Pattern of findings

With respect to the Minimum wage increases over the time period of this study, participants in both pay groups expressed sentiments of futility, such as "*It (MW) really doesn't make much of a difference to a common man's life",* while others pointed to the increased cost of living in parallel, preventing MW increases from having much positive impact. Such findings would indicate that any satisfaction boost from pay would be more hedonic (and extrinsic) than eudaimonic (and intrinsic). This interpretation would be consistent with the MSQ findings, in which the MW were marginally more satisfied with pay (on the Extrinsic item for pay), and across 5/8 other Extrinsic items; whilst both groups were equivocal on Intrinsic items generally.

At the same time, the qualitative analyses of text indicated, clearly, that the AMW group were not happy with the increment in wage awarded to the MW group. Similarly, both groups mentioned the importance of wider organizational support, and what it meant to them, as well as relative gratification from the government wage subsidy, during the pandemic. Indeed, it was the government support that clearly outweighed the organisational support in this research, with many references to the wage subsidy as a positive experience.

Pandemic is a 'strong situation' of adversity, and showing support to workers during such crises would have a similarly strong impact. Thus, minor differences in wage, along with any relatively ephemeral fillips to extrinsic satisfaction from them, could have been rendered less salient for wider work satisfaction. In other words, keeping one's job and basic wage, during a major crisis, trumped relative deprivation.

Links to Theory

This outcome connects to theories such as poverty trap theory, which explores the concept of individuals feeling stuck in a cycle of poverty, due to financial limitations, as well as social and psychological factors (Shah, Mullainathan & Shafir, 2012). As these factors can

perpetuate generationally, rather than this being due to characteristics of people living in poverty, Shah et al (2012) propose that poverty can be maintained by behavioural mechanisms that emerge in response to scarcity conditions. A lack of available resources makes each expense feel more critical or urgent, resulting in a neglect of other costs. A scarcity mindset is not linked to poverty circumstances alone but relates to having too little of anything; for people who are exceptionally busy or time-poor, for example, a focus on deadlines is greater than for those who have a lot of spare time. In this vein, for people with limited funds, greater focus instead goes to important expenses such as high costs of food and paying grocery bills, resulting in less available focus for other needs, such as utility bills (e.g., power). This neglect can subsequently result in additional unplanned costs like reconnection fees being incurred, further adding to debt and perpetuating the poverty cycle (Shah et al., 2012).

Martin Seligman's 1975 work on cognitive and behavioural factors relating to poverty describes learned helplessness; how people living in scarcity can feel powerless to change their circumstances due to ongoing inability to change their outcomes as a result of the poverty trap. Ultimately, this leads to low wellbeing and a lack of motivation to seek out better outcomes (Seligman, 1975). The findings of this research indicate that both MW and AMW workers who were paid beneath the national living wage are essentially caught in a poverty trap, defined in economic terms as the inability to escape poverty due to a combination of lack of social resources like education, or access to credit (Becker, 1994).

Relative Deprivation

Relative deprivation theory (Stouffer et al., 1949) suggested that AMW workers experiencing wage compression would have feelings of anger and resentment towards MW workers receiving the increase, or even their work environment in general. Relative deprivation effects such as hostility have been linked to low-income earners in previous

studies where there is a sense of inequality (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017). In their research on social change and relative deprivation within studies in Mongolia and South Africa, however, de Sablonnière et al. (2015) suggested that while discontent can stem from negative comparisons to individuals and groups during times of stability, in times of a crisis group status can moderate relative deprivation effects.

Relative deprivation was clearly highlighted among AMW narratives, however there was more generally a consensus of dissatisfaction between both groups that simply put, their pay was unfair, both prior to the MW increases and pandemic, and after. As one MW worker succinctly explains: "*minimum pay is never satisfying"*.

Relative deprivation is known to result in interpersonal aggression, with negativity or hostility at times directed to neutral parties, but principally towards the perceived cause of injustice. In this study, AMW narratives were negative about wage compression effects and the inequity this caused, however inter-group hostility was not a significant factor. AMW workers expressed resentment towards the outcome of the decreasing wage gap as being unfair, rather than through hostility towards MW workers. One AMW worker who reportedly had no increase commented, "*Some of people working with me has pay rise which is good for them*", illustrating this point.

Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) states that people compare themselves against others to gauge their own value, and a negative comparison can often adversely impact wellbeing. In this study, both the narratives and synchronicity of the MSQ data indicate that MW and AMW participants likely saw themselves as part of the same social in-group, probably as wage differences between the two cohorts were not extreme, particularly following the MW increase. Both groups are categorized as low-income earners, being at or under Living wage measures, and work across similar industries, as well as largely filling

essential worker roles during the pandemic while other workers isolated at home. A shared social identity appeared to exist between MW and AMW groups working together during the pandemic, resulting in a sense of solidarity and support (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This positive outcome from social comparison aligns with the tenets of social identity theory (Sherif et al., 1961), where people that feel they "belong", or are part of an in-group, experience higher subjective wellbeing.

Social Identity Theory

Perceptions of inequity may largely depend on our points of comparison; however social phenomena or significant events are known to also impact subjective wellbeing and perceptions of social mobility (Schneider, 2016). Many New Zealanders developed a social identity around national membership in the earlier stages of the pandemic, and this was also referenced in texts around supporting the community by frontline workers in this research. A strong sense of community helped to build a broader social group, largely developed by Labour government's leader Jacinda Ardern who repeatedly spoke to New Zealand's "team of 5 million" as a metaphor to stay strong in the face of Covid-19. This became a call to New Zealanders to unite and adhere to the restrictions during the lockdown.

This sense of promoted unity relied on the superordinate identity as New Zealanders to largely foster cooperation during the pandemic (McLeod, 2023), and was referred to in early studies (Sibley et al, 2020) who studied resilience and wellbeing in New Zealand in the early stages of the pandemic. They found that the sense of oneness that occurred was an important factor in alleviating stress, and increased individual's resilience, consistent with social identity theory (Sherif et al., 1961).

However, social identity theory also posits that where resources are perceived as limited, such as in Muzafer Sherif's famous Robbers Cave experiment in the 1950's, competition can become increasingly hostile, and people focus not solely on the resources at

stake but as a product of competing identities (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). For MW and AMW workers in this study, income was conceivably a limited resource, as well as job security in the pandemic where many organisations were reducing staff numbers or working hours to save costs. Despite this, evidence of social identity appeared in this research more through narratives referencing satisfaction that arose from positive identity at work, and expressions of gratification with teamwork and cooperation, aligning with MSQ results.

Subjective Wellbeing

Findings illustrate that MW increases did not significantly boost subjective wellbeing of MW workers and those above during the pandemic; rather, it was highlighted as making little change. Unfair pay was instead a greater focus for both groups, which negatively impacted participant wellbeing. For many, this was largely due to the unreasonable expectations of employers, some of whom responded to the additional costs of MW by reducing staff numbers, that then resulted in unmanageable workloads.

One MW worker described the excessive strain this approach caused them: "*I recall doing double shifts, and knowing I was exhausting myself and only making $20.40 for every hour was really difficult. It made the second shift increasingly harder to work to the best of my abilities."*

For essential workers employed during the ongoing pandemic, group association appeared to have had a positive impact on wellbeing and resilience, through an established positive social identity (McLeod, 2023). Some participants' wellbeing was demonstrated in narratives as a sense of purpose or meaningfulness gained through the collective efforts during the pandemic, in line with the findings of Sibley et al. (2020), particularly noticeably in theme 4, "Valued contribution".

The lack of employee protection provided by companies was described by MW and AMW participants as demonstrating a clear lack of care or appreciation for their efforts,

leaving them feeling undervalued. Conversely, where participants described employer initiatives that positively addressed health and safety risks, they described greater satisfaction with their employers, outlined in some narratives relating to feeling valued. For others, the sense of being valued was ostensibly derived from a sense of pride or innate satisfaction in their own work or productivity, in line with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020), which focuses on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation behind human behaviour.

Self-Determination Theory outlines three psychological needs, autonomy, competence and relatedness, and how the fulfilment of these core needs through rewards such as recognition or more tangible items like pay can result in individual's enhanced sense of value, increasing their motivation, wellbeing and performance in a work environment (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This intrinsic sense of purpose, or eudaimonic wellbeing in relation to work was evidenced in many MW and AMW narratives in terms of occasions they felt recognised for their contributions by whanau, ("family" in te reo Māori) coworkers or even the wider public during the pandemic, which is consistent with the findings of Rothausen and Henderson (2019). In addition, several texts reflected opportunities for growth and meaningful contribution in line with eudaimonic wellbeing.

Resilience

Kuntz (2021) examined broad psychosocial risks during the global Covid pandemic in New Zealand and called to organisations to provide better support to employees for recovery and resilience within a disaster or crisis-context. The findings in Kuntz' research emphasised the provision of a safety culture, including communication and social support as a greater way to mitigate perceived threats and stress in the work environment during a crisis, however pay was not researched as a potentially mitigating factor.

Health and safety hazards were a particular factor increasing dissatisfaction at work for both MW and MW participants, which likely was heightened given the emerging

environment of the Covid-19 crisis. Unfortunately, the narratives throughout this study indicate that pay increases for low socio-economic groups such as MW workers and above did not positively impact resilience or a sense of wellbeing during Covid in any significant way, often as a direct result of overlooked health and safety measures.

Kuntz' (2021) research investigated the ways that organisations were able to build resilience in employees in the aftermath of Covid-19 by interviewing staff who worked throughout the pandemic examining job stressors or demands, and these were largely focussed on feeling unsafe at work, as found in this study, as well as job insecurity, communication and managerial support. An example of the additional stress brought by job insecurity during the pandemic was described by one AMW worker: "*I'm sad that some of my colleague has been fired due to long lockdown. It was really stressful for all of us."*

In a post-Covid study in Vietnam, healthcare workers were found to have low job motivation after the pandemic, in addition to there being a deficit of skilled healthcare workers following mass resignations (Thanh et al., 2023). Low income and increased work demands were reasons cited by over 9000 staff who resigned in late 2021 and 2022 in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, which was a particularly challenging environment in Vietnam with overwhelming numbers of Covid-19 cases. For workers who remained employed, Thanh et al (2023) identified income disparity as the primary factor driving low job motivation. Notably, non-financial factors were also highlighted as particularly influencing lower job motivation, specifically limitations in medical tools and equipment, and insufficient protective equipment for workers resulting in perceptions of poor and unsafe working conditions (Thanh et al, 2023).

Thanh et al's (2023) findings on dissatisfaction with unsafe working conditions impacting worker wellbeing and resilience are consistent with the themes provided in this research, some of whom were also in healthcare settings within New Zealand during the

pandemic. One healthcare worker summarised this sentiment in response to being asked to recall a time of being less satisfied with pay: *"Constantly dissatisfied with the pay given the importance of the role and the liability involved"*.

Organisational Commitment

Many MW workers and above expressed feeling valued by their employers as a result of receiving praise or acknowledgement of their contribution, and appreciation through rewards such as gifts or drinks after work. Research on the link between effort and rewards is abundant, with well-known theories such as Skinner's Reinforcement Theory (1953) outlining how positive reinforcement through both tangible and nonphysical rewards (such as praise or recognition) encourages positive behaviours.

Organisational commitment was demonstrated in both MW and AMW narratives where appreciation was conveyed by employers through reinforcement factors or even affective commitment, however more respondents in both groups expressed continuance commitment, where the fear of leaving during the instability of the pandemic outweighed the risks of leaving. There were more examples of feeling undervalued than valued, mostly through a lack of care for health and safety, and the unmanageable workloads described throughout Theme 3 "At risk", and outlined above in the section on resilience. Prior to undertaking this research, it was conjectured that wage compression would negatively impact AMW organisational commitment and there was evidence of this in the narratives, as well as MSQ results.

Overall, social protection measures such as the wage subsidies from the government were cited as having greater positive impact than organisational factors in this research, and the adverse environment of the pandemic highlighted deficiencies in organisational protection measures among lower paid staff, diminishing organisational commitment for both MW workers and above.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Implications

The overall findings of this research demonstrate that the MW increases in 2020 and 2021 were not sufficient in resolving inequities for low-socioeconomic groups who are paid beneath the living wage. Poverty is a larger societal problem that was particularly exacerbated during the pandemic, where cost of living increases and uncertainty placed additional stress on low-paid groups. Widespread job-cuts and unemployment factored into fears of job loss, which resulted in a poverty trap mindset.

While social identity and sense of unity were positive factors supporting wellbeing and resilience to some degree, these impacts were overwhelmingly negated by dissatisfaction with pay for both MW and AMW workers, as apparent in both the text data and MSQ results. For many, the wage subsidies were cited as being more helpful than the MW increase, indicating that government support had higher impact on worker wellbeing than organisational commitment or company support.

Wage compression resulted in additional relative deprivation for AMW workers, increasing dissatisfaction and reducing organisational commitment, in line with research describing how wage compression results in lower engagement and counter-productive work behaviours (Cobb & Stevens, 2017). Equity theory outlines how perceptions of fairness increase positive attitudes and efficiency, as well as job satisfaction (Day, 2012), which explains how perceptions of inequity have a detrimental effect on an individual's work satisfaction and performance. Inequity was a strong theme for both MW workers and above in this research, and the impacts on job dissatisfaction were clearly shown in both narratives and MSQ.

Low organisational protection was commonly cited as cause for significant dissatisfaction with both MW and those marginally above, particularly when combined with unfair pay, indicating that low-paid employees would at minimum benefit from increased

organisational focus on building health and safety and wellbeing initiatives within the workplace. This should involve consultations with staff on how to improve their environments, particularly from a health and safety perspective, and ensuring that employee health and happiness is prioritised through adherence to breaks, hours worked and adequate staff numbers for workload.

Finally, if paying employees a living wage is out of reach for organisations, implementing remuneration strategies that promote fairness and transparency around compensation for those paid minimum wage rates and marginally above would ultimately drive greater subjective wellbeing and organisational commitment, and drive higher engagement and satisfaction among employees.

Reflections

Initially, this study also intended to gain the input of HR professionals working with both MW workers and those up to Living Wage to make comparisons between perspectives from both the workers themselves and at the organisational level. Unfortunately, no HR professionals responded to the survey, despite the generous assistance of Human Resources New Zealand (HRNZ) who promoted the survey throughout their social media platforms. It is possible that the timing was particularly poor for this group, given the additional workload within the HR function during the pandemic, or perhaps this was simply an outcome of survey fatigue (Gnanapragasam, Hodson, Smith, Greenberg, Rubin, & Wessely, 2022).

As an alternative way to contrast the perspectives from broader HR professionals, consultation was held with two peers from other industries. With limited external perspectives available however, the researcher's own opinion was largely used to gauge discrepancies between perspectives at the organisational level of the impacts of MW increases on employee wellbeing. This analysis was arguably possible due to 10 years' experience working within the HR profession, and all efforts for impartiality were made.

Despite this, it must be acknowledged that texts were examined predominantly through the researcher's lens, which was inevitably embedded within their own social contexts and worldview.

The review of literature focussing on MW impact on wellbeing demonstrated that the subjective wellbeing of MW workers has not been widely explored in the context of the increases themselves. Typically, MW and wellbeing research takes a largely statistical approach that focuses on economic outcomes and measurable constructs such as levels of employment, increased consumer spending through GDP calculations (Helliwell, 2018; Smith, 2015). However, interest in subjective wellbeing in relation to poverty research is increasing. Wherever possible, articles that came from a New Zealand or Australasian geographical perspective were favoured for this research.

When researching literature on the effects of wage compression, particularly from a social psychological standpoint, this was largely (although not exclusively) confined to economic and business journals, again with some notable exceptions that are referenced throughout this thesis. Elements of potential psychological responses to wage compression from MW increases were reviewed in terms of well-known and accepted theories such as Relative Deprivation theory (Stouffer et al, 1949), Social Identity theory (Sherif et al., 1961) and Social Comparison theory (Festinger, 1954). Qualitative research was prioritised for all constructs where possible, but generally the literature review encompassed a broad section of international and local research on general economic factors rather than solely MW research due to a combination of availability of options, relatedness, and significance to this research.

The additional curveball of the pandemic meant staying abreast with current research outcomes, and the burgeoning body of work relating to resilience and wellbeing in the face of widespread effects of Covid-19. Future research in this field would almost certainly yield different results, as this was undertaken in the unique context of the pandemic in New

Zealand. It is possible that the effects of relative deprivation would have been stronger for example, if there was not a wider sense of social unity, and the lower costs of living may have meant the financial impacts of the higher MW increase would have potentially had greater effect on participants.

For future research, a larger sample would be beneficial, in addition to collection of additional demographic data to better analyse differences, such as tenure as well as exact amount differences in pay and increases. In addition, focussing on more pay-diverse groups to compare with MW workers, such as those paid Living wage as opposed to the marginal differences in this research, would provide two more distinct cohorts for analysis.

Footnote

It is important to note that in some instances minor corrections have been made to spelling and grammar of participant narratives for the sake of this report. In addition, some excerpts are taken from larger bodies of text for simplicity. The researcher has considered any minor adjustments made with the greatest care and caution to ensure truth and accuracy according to the participant's intended stories, however it is important to acknowledge that this action could be conceived as an alteration of information. For full disclosure and clarity, the original texts complete with minor typos, grammatical or spelling errors can be reviewed in the theme list (Appendix E).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Advertising – July 2021

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

Did Minimum Wage Increases Impact Wellbeing and Organisational Commitment?

Research Invitation

The purpose of this research is to explore how the changes in minimum wage increases were received by workers affected by these changes themselves, across a range of wage levels

If you have been in the same role for a minimum of one year and are either a minimum wage worker or paid between minimum wage and the Living wage ($22.10 per hour), we would welcome your participation in this NZ based study.

We aim to have a diverse group of respondents and as such welcome people from all cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds to be involved.

Koha

In appreciation of your time, all participants will be provided the opportunity to participate in a prize draw at the end of the survey, where there will be **50 x $20.00 supermarket vouchers to be won**.

Winners will be randomly selected following the close of the survey and will be notified to claim their vouchers.

Further details relating to this research are provided in the attached information sheet. Please circulate to any suitable people who may be interested in participating in this study.

The link to the questionnaire can be accessed by using the link or scanning the QR code below.

https://massey.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8Jn3gvaYZUVXx6m

Many thanks for your time!

Appendix B

Advertising – November 2021

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND



Minimum Wage & Wellbeing Survey

Student Research Invitation

Participants receive a $20 GiftPay voucher

Thanks to everyone who has participated in the survey so far!

I'm looking for additional people to share their stories about their experiences as Minimum Wage workers and above (Living Wage) in the last year or more. This research explores how the changes in minimum wage increases were received by workers affected by these changes themselves, across a range of wage levels. It forms part of my Master's thesis/report in the School of Psychology and School of Management at Massey University.

If you meet the eligibility criteria below, please click on the survey link for further information and to complete the survey which should take around 15 minutes. I very much appreciate your participation in this research.

Kind regards,

Erin Kernohan

Email: Erin.Kernohan.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Phone: [redacted]

To take part in this survey, you will need to be:

- based in New Zealand for a minimum of one year
- employed in the same role for a minimum of one year
- **paid between *$18.90 and $22.75 per hour**

** Minimum wage rate in April 2020 – up to Living Wage rates from September 2021*

Link to the survey: https://massey.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9nkWN6V98H2aiAC



Every valid participant will receive a **$20 GiftPay voucher** by email (within 2 weeks of survey completion). GiftPay vouchers can be used at many major retailers, see the full list here: Redemption Options - GiftPay

Participation is confidential and anonymous. Email addresses will be collected for delivery of GiftPay vouchers only.

Please feel free to share this link with friends, family or colleagues that meet the criteria. As soon as the target number of surveys is reached, the survey will close, so it is first in first served for the GiftPay vouchers!

Appendix C

Participant Information Sheet

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

Did Minimum Wage Increases Impact Wellbeing and Organizational Commitment?

Researcher Introduction

Erin Kernohan is the student conducting this research for a thesis at the conclusion of a Master of Science degree in Psychology. The academic supervisors are Professor Stuart Carr from the School of Psychology, and co-supervisor Professor Jane Parker from the School of Management at Massey University.

Background

This study explores the experience of workers as the Minimum Wage increased in the last year, to better understand what worked and what didn't, and inform policy to provide better outcomes for workers.

Who can participate?

This is a New Zealand study, and we are inviting all workers paid minimum wage and up to Living wage ($22.75 per hour) to share their stories. To take part in the survey, you will need to have been employed in the same role for a minimum of one year to participate.

- All workers paid between $18.90 and $22.75 per hour from 1st April 2020

Koha
In appreciation for your participation and time, you will receive a $20.00 GiftPay card of your choice from a range of major retail stores. Once you have completed this survey you will be given the option to enter and will receive an online URL for your chosen GiftPay card by email.

What is involved?
There are three sections to this online questionnaire. The first section asks a few demographic questions, followed by questions asking about your own experience with Minimum Wage increases in the last year. Finally, there is a quick survey of how happy you are at work.

Your rights as a Participant

This information is provided to inform your decision to participate in this research. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study (prior to completing the questionnaire);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If you decide to participate, completion and submission of the questionnaire implies your consent.

The questionnaire is anonymous to protect your privacy. Any information inadvertently provided in answers you submit that identify an organisation, yourself or another person will be coded to protect anonymity and confidentiality and will not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher. Data resulting from this research will be securely stored by the researcher in password protected files on a private computer for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.

Research findings will be published in a thesis for assessment. Findings will be shared with E Tū, Unite and HRNZ on request. The research may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific conferences in New Zealand and overseas. A summary of findings will be provided to you on request, in appreciation of your contribution to this research.

Project Contacts

Researcher**:** Erin Kernohan email: Erin.Kernohan.1@uni.massey.ac.nz
Supervisor**:** Dr. Stuart Carr email: S.C.Carr@Massey.ac.nz

Please contact us if you have any questions about this research.

Massey University School of Psychology – Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
Palmerston North, New Zealand
T +64 6 3569-099 ext 85071 : W psychology.massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee:
Northern, Application NOR 21/17.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Fiona Te Momo,
Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern,
telephone 09 414 0800 x 43347, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

Please Note:

Completion of the questionnaire following your review of this information implies consent.

Appendix D

(Follows Information Sheet)

Online Survey

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

Did Minimum Wage Increases Impact Wellbeing and Organizational Commitment?

General Instructions for completing the Questionnaire (Please read carefully)

- All the information provided in this form is anonymous, and in confidence and will only be used for the purposes of this study
- Please do not use organisations or people's names when answering the questionnaire
- Any names provided inadvertently will be removed from the final report
- There are no right or wrong answers, please answer honestly and with the best response that suits you
- You can decline to answer any questions you don't want to answer
- If you are unsure of any question and would like clarification, please contact the researcher (contact details on the Information Sheet)
- Completion of this questionnaire implies consent to take part in the study

There are three sections to this questionnaire.

The first section asks for personal information for socio-demographic data collection. This information is collated for statistical relevance only and is kept entirely anonymous and confidential.

The second section has five open-ended questions, asking you to recall specific times, feelings or events relating to your wages, employment and experience during the lockdown period. Please describe these events, providing as much detail and information as you are comfortable to share.

The third section is a Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, which has 20 statements relating to your job for you to rate according to how satisfied with you are. There are five ratings ranging from "Very Dissatisfied", to "Very Satisfied".

Section 1: Personal Information

Please respond by selecting or filling in the relevant answer.

Note – Eligibility for this research entails being employed in the same role for a minimum of one year, and meeting one of the three criteria below. Anyone less than the minimum one year requirement in their role, or not able to select one of the employment groups below will not be eligible, and will be directed to the end of the questionnaire.

How long have you worked in your current role?

- Less than one year
- One year
- Two years
- Three years
- Four years
- Over four years

Please select the employment group that describes you (in your main role of employment, if you hold more than one):

- A worker who has earned minimum wage for the past year
- A worker who has earned above minimum wage but less than Living wage ($22.10) for the past year
- An HR professional who works with employees that include minimum wage workers and above

[NB: A survey tool will direct HR Professionals to a separate Section 2 with different questions, marked "HR Professionals Only", below Section 3]

What is your job title?
[____]

What industry do you work in?

- Agricultural, Forestry & Fishing
- Mining
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Communications, Electric, Gas and Sanitary service
- Wholesale Trade
- Hospitality
- Retail
- Healthcare
- Cleaning
- Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
- Other (please specify)

What is your current age?

[____]

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (please specify)
- Prefer not to say

Which ethnic group/s do you belong to? (Please select all that apply)

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Māori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian
- Other (please specify)

[Minimum Wage Workers and up to Living Wage]

Section 2 Open-ended Questions

Please review the five questions below and consider them before answering each one.

Take as much time to respond as you are comfortable with, remembering that there are no right or wrong answers.

We would like as much information as you are willing to share about your feelings, memories, events or experiences, as all information will be helpful to further understanding of people's experiences in relation to Minimum Wage and wellbeing, and organisational commitment.

1. Thinking back over the last year, please recall a time when you were particularly satisfied with your pay, and a time you recall you felt less satisfied. Please describe those experiences.

2. Please consider your positive and possibly less-positive experiences with your current employer in the past year, and specifically, with how you and other employees were treated when faced with the pandemic and lockdown(s). Please describe these experiences.

3. Please recall an occasion you felt valued for your contribution at work in the last year, and, if possible, perhaps another time you may have felt under-valued. Please describe your experiences.

4. The last minimum wage increase on 1st April 2020 occurred during the early stages of the first lockdown in New Zealand and was broadly publicised in media. Please describe how that affected you, if at all.

5. Thinking back over previous minimum wage increases, in what way have the increases in 2020 and 2021 positively affected you or others you work with, and in what ways (if any) have they been less positive?

[Critical Incident Technique References: Flanagan, 1954, Graybill et al., 2017, Butterfield et al., 2009]

Section 3: Job Satisfaction

[Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire – short-form]

This section is designed to evaluate how satisfied you are with your present job, what things you are satisfied with, and what things you are not satisfied with.

The following statements are about your present job.

Please read each statement carefully, and **decide how satisfied you feel about the aspect of your job** described by the statement.

Keeping the statement in mind:

- If you feel that your job gives you more than you expected, check the box under **"Very Sat." (Very Satisfied);**

- If you feel that your job gives you **what you expected,** check the box under **"Sat." (Satisfied);**
- If you **cannot make up your mind** whether or not the job gives you what you expected, check the box under **"N" (Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied);**
- If you feel that your job gives you **less than you expected,** check the box under **"Dissat." (Dissatisfied);**
- If you feel that your job gives you **much less than you expected,** check the box under **"Very Dissat." (Very Dissatisfied).**

  Please remember to keep the statement in mind when deciding **how satisfied you feel about that aspect of your job.**

  Do this for **all** statements; please answer every item from this section.
  Be frank and honest, to give a true picture of your feelings about your **present job.**

*Ask yourself: How **satisfied** am I with this aspect of my job?*

***Very Sat.** means I am very satisfied with this aspect of my job.*

***Sat.** means I am satisfied with this aspect of my job.*

***N** means I can't decide whether I am satisfied or not with this aspect of my job.*

***Dissat.** means I am dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.*

On my present job, this is how I feel about....	Very Dissat.	Dissat.	N	Sat.	Very Sat.
1. Being able to keep busy all the time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The chance to work alone on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The chance to do different things from time to time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The way my job provides for steady employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The chance to do things for other people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The chance to tell people what to do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The way company policies are put into proactice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. My pay and the amount of work I do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The chances for advancement on this job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The freedom to use my own judgement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. The chance to try my own methos of doing the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. The way my co-workers get along with each other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. The praise I get for doing a good job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix E

Narratives Per Theme (Not adapted)

Little Change	**(Futility, Poverty)**
MW	AMW
"It really doesn't make much of a difference to a common man's life."	**"When minimum wage goes up, the prices follow"**
To be honest, there were no moments last year when I was satisfied with my pay. the last time I was satisfied with my pay was 2 years ago when the week before that time I was working on public holiday so generally the pay will have to be increased. So by the time I got the pay, I was quite satisfied. But now, I just feel very nonchalant about it. I guess maybe because I wanted more than that but I just hate my job so much that even the increase pay for holiday work was not worth it in the end. I been working there for 3 years now and I been doing the same thing over and over again while overworking myself to the point where I dont even check my bank account to check if i receive my pay or not weekly	The increases in minimum wage lead to the increases of other goods and service. I haven't felt that it has brought any positive effects. It's only good for people who's on minimum wage because they can get a pay rise.
When minimum living wage was increased. A few extra dollars goes a long way, especially for a single parent and paying rent and weekly essentials.	Only not much increase in salary despite nearly 3 years working with them
Not much. Wage subsidy was a huge help. *(MW in media effects)*	I didn't affect me too much coz minimum wage increases which mean living cost increases too. But one small issue is that I might pay a little bit extra income tax.
I guess not being able to help pay employees more since having less pay is a problem, especially when you have a family. I thought that while in lockdown we would be able to recruit easier but he have not done it yet. It been 6 months and yet still no new employees even in lockdown	When it was locked down, the good side is I paid less than normally - because I stayed at home and take care my child, and saved school fee
i was really surprised, because that means i can actually maybe buy things, better food, more money to pay my rent. So i was a bit happy	Minimum wage increases which means living cost such as petrol, rent, groceries and clothes also increases. There was nothing in the increases that we can benefit from.

As a student, it helped me pay for transportation I was struggling to pay for.	Some jobs don't need skill and be worth to pay less than minimum wage. And that employers will try to not employ for these position. Somehow it has less job opportunities for people
They minimum wages went up same with gas and supermarket prices	The Pay Equity Settlement was life changing for care and support workers. Sadly, cleaners and kitchen hands did not receive it and are still struggling
Yes, it has positively affected us	As I mentioned above, when min wage goes up, the prices follow so I dont feel much difference between earning old pay rate or new one after the increase.
We got extra $100 every week luckily.	I don't think the increases have positively affected me or anybody else.
Extra $25-30 to bring home after tax	I don't see the positive affect. When salary increased, it cause the price increased (in order to cover for the additional cost) and at the result higher inflation. I'm not affected by minimum wage increased and so are other I work with
It was really good at first, I had more spare money to spend on food and was able to save up more.	By some ways, other goods and stuffs increase following, also the house rent, too. They firstly unchanged, then when no one observed, they increase
As the minimum wage increases, so does the price of utilities and groceries. It really doesn't make much of a difference to a common man's life. Initially, I was happy to hear about the increase. But a couple of months later, buying a 3 dollar bag of onions for 5 dollars simply cause of inflation and pandemic effects, doesn't make me feel any better nor increase my standard of living in any way.	The house rent went up, food and gas became more expensive (especially during lockdowns). We earned more but also spent more.
food prices went up	Minimum wage increased make the living cost increase as well. I didn't get my salary increased so I'm not really happy

The living situation here in nz is not as cheap as it use to be	My rent and many essential items also increased, so there was no benefit in real terms
Pay has never been enough to afford good and healthy lifestyle	My Covid-19 leave was 80% of my normal wage. I had to survive on $320 per week.
No I did not feel satisfied at all but I have to secure my job	
Has effected massively especially with the living here in nz increasing every year	
They offered me to become a supervisor but I have kids so I said I can't take more responsibilities.	
It was ok still had work	
my partner paid are still the same when he worked in his company for 10 years. And the person just started work in company already reach the same paid with him cause of minimum wages.	
20 years with company , came back from Aussie , minion wage in my position	
Just know with my experience that i would be able to jump uo in the scale of pay increase but stayed at minimum wage	

Unfair Pay	
MW	AMW
"The wages we got paid aren't enough for all the craziness!"	**"Don’t feel much difference in wage of a no qualification person and a qualified person"**
After all, I worked a 12hours shift and got ask to clock out on time cause they was not willing to pay us more and want us to do quicker when all the orders kept coming constantly. Anyways, so I clocked out and stay another 2 hours with my supervisor to clean up unpaid so I got pay minimum wages for long hours and working extra unpaid. I am disappointed but I needed a job and money to my babies.	Constantly dissatisfied with the pay given the importance of the role and the liability involved
I worked as a waiter at the food court at Commercial Bay. I had no break time and always got pushed to speed up. I had no paid leave	When I know people coming later to do the same role earning almost the same as my pay even though they don't have as much experience as me
During black friday sale, the wages we got paid arent enough for all the craziness	When I knew the kitchen hand staff pay rate same as me. I am working for more than a year, have qualification and experienced. But my pay rate are the same with the guy wash the dishes with no qualification

It was Christmas, so obviously it is going to be busy. I mean, covid is still happening so I was expecting less customers but I was dead wrong, it is still as crowded as 2 years ago. Even with the promise of increased pay for working on Christmas, it was not enough to keep me satisfied. And unlike other country, New Zealand is summer during Christmas, so it is bound to be hot, and what is worst is the air conditioner does not work properly. So during Christmas, I was overworked almost 24/7, I was working in a environment where it is so hot, it is hard to breathe while being insulted by the manager for not being positive about it. So even with the increased pay promise, that time where I got it, I was not satisfied because it felt like a slap in the face. it is not worth it	I realized I could do more than what I was assigned to the job, but I have to stay for certain period before I could apply for new job. This period is when I feel less satisfied with the pay
They didn't agree for me to cancel my shift when my babies got sick. They sent me a warning letter.	Everyday I start early and often don't take my rest breaks due to the overwhelming workload. I always receive excellent appraisals but only receive pay increases that the union negotiates in our Collective Agreement.
They called me to come in for work anytime they short on people when I am just a part-time worker and expecting me to say yes all the time and still minimum wages only.	This is more common than not. Constantly being asked to do specialized work or provide training to other staff when its outside of my scope and not paid accordingly because I'm the only one within the organization with the knowledge and relevant skills
I was not supported to get wage subsidy during the first lockdown in March 2020. I quit the job. Now I work at another company	It shorten the gap between people who's on minimum wage and people who got paid a bit higher than minimum wage. I feel it's unfair for people who studied for the certificates/degrees but their wage is not much higher than those who didn't study.
When we got back to work after the first lockdown, our hours got cut short	I feel not satisfied to not be paid overtime hourly rate when working on Saturday and Sunday. Although there is work occasionally on the weekend but workers deserve a better rate on these days, otherwise I prefer to stay at home rather than go to work.
During the busy period, everyone is grumpy and that we often didn't have time to take lunch breaks or any rest breaks	After I graduated and gained experience, I don't feel much difference in wage of a no qualification person and a qualified person

Hi there, my name is {Redacted} and I am working in {Redacted} with minimum wages as a sandwich maker. My story happened after when lockdown ends and the drive through was open. It was chaos and I was working nonstop under stress. And my manager came and asked me to make burger quicker when I was doing my best cause the car line was so long feels like forever. Then we got told how the burger was not fresh enough and got told off for it. I have to do multi tasks and dealing with some bad customer swore at me on those lockdown ends day too.	It hasn't made a difference, we have not had a wage increase so the gap between minimum wage and current pay rate is decreasing
As above explains.. Almost half of my department left due to a lot of new rules and restrictions. Having a positive case was a toll on our staff due to not understanding protocols and standards of having rooms blocked till it has been fully cleaned by MOH and safe to enter and clean. We have been doing training that's more for the health industry. Some employees don't even understand more than half of what they are reading and training for.	For me, no. However, some employees got a bigger increase on their rate than the increase of min wage so yes, it was good for them.
Later lockdowns, they asked us to come to work for online orders. We didn't have many orders- still were asked to be in store. I didn't see the point of going to a store and wasting my time, simply sitting there.	I like it as I can increase my income. However, I feel like it's a bit unfair for some employee who already earn the similar amount before the increase but now everyone earn the same as them and their employer wouldn't want to increase for them.
The more expirence i got in the workforce i was still getting paid the same	At level 3, some senior staffs were called to come to work and obviously, on top of the subsidy wage, they got paid extra for the hours they worked. While the others and I had to stay home and only got paid subsidy wage.
I was paid the minimum wage even though I put in extra hours of work as well as provided additional recruitment skillset.	I also work in a take away restaurant. I received less funded money from there because the owner said the government just supports that. I know it is not true because the cleaning job is full paid by government funded; but I need two jobs so I just asked, no more
No appreciation for work I do	During level 3 the restaurant opened for takeout. I been worked like normal 5-6 hours per day but still received subsidy but some of staffs stay home not come to work and still have subsidy that make me felt not fair and have a question why I need to work not them ?

when my manager said to me: you are replaceable *(felt undervalued)*	Minimum wage increased and lockdown affected the business so my boss cut down the number of employees. The workload is more as less people doing the job but the pay is still the same
they dont value there staff	I didn't have any pay rise even though I take more jobs and responsibilities at work now. Workload is tremendous and staffs are leaving. All the stress was on the ones who stay
After I hit 1 year. Clearly, I was committed and performed the same responsibilities as the manager. But pay remains the same only cause of the title.	Every year I get closer to the MW.
To be honest, there were no moments last year when I was satisfied with my pay. the last time I was satisfied with my pay was 2 years ago when the week before that time I was working on public holiday so generally the pay will have to be increased. So by the time I got the pay, I was quite satisfied. But now, I just feel very nonchalant about it. I guess maybe because I wanted more than that but I just hate my job so much that even the increase pay for holiday work was not worth it in the end. I been working there for 3 years now and I been doing the same thing over and over again while overworking myself to the point where I dont even check my bank account to check if i receive my pay or not weekly	The increases in minimum wage lead to the increases of other goods and service. I haven't felt that it has brought any positive effects. It's only good for people who's on minimum wage because they can get a pay rise.
	Some of us have been cut down on working hours so that the employer can save some cost
	Minimum wage increased make the living cost increase as well. I didn't get my salary increased so I'm not really happy
	I have explained above with the one who already earn similarly to the increased minimum wage before the increase
	Our pay equity settlement in healthcare seemed worthless because my hourly rate was so close to minimum wage.
	I recall doing double shifts, and knowing I was exhausting myself and only making $20.40 for every hour was really difficult. It made the second shift increasingly harder to work to the best of my abilities.
	What I have contribute at work, I'm deserved to be in higher position and get higher pay. When compare my salary with what I contribute, I feel less valued

	My contribution was non valued . Overtime and done well but i didnt get benefits .
	This survey is so funny. My supervisor and manager value me by not speaking to me.
	Not really *(felt valued)*, but I have never received any compliments for my hard-work.
	Expected to do work from outside of our region

At Risk

MW	AMW
"Mentally and physically it is a big strain"	*"Good salary, however, we felt exhausted, risking our health and wasting our time as it's not a work-life balance"*
Working in a Managed Isolation Facility. Wearing Ppe gear everyday, security checks, health checks and fortnightly covid tests. Afraid and hoping not to get the covid virus and spreading to family friends and the community. Work hours dropped from 40 hours to 24 contracted hours. Not being able to work if you have flu cold like symptoms and have no sick leave or annual leave.	One thing I didnt like was that some people in the management didnt follow 2 metre rule and sometimes they even didnt wear masks! How awful is that when they always asked us to put it on and they didnt do it sometimes.
Positive.. there's not much there at the moment staff leaving scared and not satisfied with the contracted hours. Not many work colleagues attended work during the lockdown. Employer only cared about what the owner wants and not the employees. Mentally and physically it's a big strain.	There is no less positive experience with the current employer but less-positive experience with the Government where they put lockdown in place so rush which impact to business, especially plans we already put in place. It leave us in sudden change that we have no other back-up plan
they handled the whole lockdown poorly	It actually didnt affect me as although my pay rose a bit but I felt that the price for food and accommodation did, too! In addition, at that time I didnt care much about the min wage at all as all my attention was put on Covid situation.

As above explains.. Almost half of my department left due to a lot of new rules and restrictions. Having a positive case was a toll on our staff due to not understanding protocols and standards of having rooms blocked till it has been fully cleaned by MOH and safe to enter and clean. We have been doing training that's more for the health industry. Some employees don't even understand more than half of what they are reading and training for.	Some people who didn't work got paid a wage subsidy. Shouldn't they have their own personal savings, or insurance? that's so unfair... everything there's a lockdown I.e. 3 months in the last year, I'm still working 80hpurs a week while everyone else is on a all expenses paid holiday by guess who ME 😠😠
	Our pay equity settlement in healthcare seemed worthless because my hourly rate was so close to minimum wage. Some weeks we had to work up to 65hrs. Good salary, however, we felt exhausted, risking our health and wasting our time as it's not a work-life balance. Foreign workers are treated unfairly. As we get closer to being on minimum wage the desire to work harder or be more efficient is less I'm sad that some of my colleage has been fired due to long lockdown. It was really stressful for all of us Long hours, insufficient PPE gear, no positive feedback or support Again, I'm working... and other people have got a bullshit excuse such as their health to stay away from work. While I'm outside working risking my health, as a young and healthy for effectively nothing. What makes them so special... I say no work no pay... and guess who doesn't have work now after company restructure... people who don't want to work When we receive more pay our employer reduces our hours of work,resulting in unmanageable workloads
Valued Contribution	**Positive company /social protection**
MW	AMW
They (whanau) were so grateful to me, us and the team for helping them in this pandemic	**"Grateful that I still have a stable job even during lockdown"**

We were treated fairly sometimes we questioned ourselves why we were at work with all these restrictions but we just carried on working with our whanau that were in more need of help then ourselves	My employer treated us quite fairly and tried to give us more working hours so that we can have a little bit more money on top of the wage subsidies.
We were paid a subsidy during the first lockdowns.	The current employer tried to pay full for everyone during the lockdown, even he has no income for 2 weeks of lockdown. As an office administrator, I know how costly to run a business in New Zealand and it is absolutely a big effort from my Boss
the only positive thing is that he treated us the same way that he did before the pandemic. No freaking out or ranting about how the business is making very little money. Everyone is still talking like how they used to before covid. it is a surprise but it is sure a nice surprise	The company gave us, people who worked during lockdowns, some gift vouchers as a thankgiving. We also have Barbeque at lunchtime, free icecream boxes, free meat packs, etc. in some special occasions (Christmas, Easter,…)
The employer was clear and paid us the subsidy correctly	My manager paid me compliment and acknowledged my contribution, and try to help me with my work visa.
Good subsidy, still have the job to work.	We were treated pretty well. The employers provided masks and always reminded us to follow 2 metre rule as well as other rules to against Covid. When it came to lockdown, the company only allowed selected employees to go to work while the rest stayed at home and still got paid 80% their actual wage. That's excellent!
Great company , has supported us , 30 years experience ?	They know who I am so they let's me do anything I think is right. During lockdown we are closed. No income but have a lot of bills employee still need to pay. Im lucky when still have a subsidy and that enough for me to living without spending my savings.
Employer good , we all survived , nearly	When I am invited to the christmas party and personally thank for my contribution by my boss. I also got sent a bag of goodies every christmas as a thank you.
it was christmas last year, my head chef thanked me for sticking by them at the end of the year	I always try hard and step beyond my duty to make it work better for employer. Since I take the current position, I help to cut cost for company by sourcing better suppliers, help to put system in place and keep things organized in clear operational procedure. My employer recognizes my contribution and it make me feel valued at work

When the manager bought us drinks after work as the rewards for a super busy day	Hard work . Good service for clients . Made them be happy .
Good company , bad pay	Sometimes when the machine broke down, we need to wait for the engineer to come fix it. Meanwhile, we still get paid for the standing time. Although it was stated in the contract but sometimes I still get a bit guilty as I did nothing but still get paid for it.
I guess in everyway, everyone can afford more things, they were able to pay rent without worrying too much about money. my sous chef was able to buy himself a new phone and my head chef as well. it really affect everyone in my workplace positively because they were really happy	I noticed that some bins had been broken a bit at the corners so it's not really safe as it may hurt people when they carry them. After that we got provided new bins and the broken ones were thrown away or disposed. I feel I did something good for the workers and the company too!
Everyone corporate well	From my clients who appreciated seeing a happy friendly face, during a scary unknown time
	After working 1 year, I got promoted to 2IC with a pay rise. Still working hard for the manager role.
Good company, bad pay I had a particular interest in recruitment. My regional manager saw my potential and gave me projects to do for the company.	The parents in the kindergarten where I clean talk to me normally and friendly, also the manager, too
When i first got into the job just stoked that i could get a job that i love doing	When we are out of lock down and retail can open again, we were working super hard with long hours shift and lots of customer to serve
Being able to see our whanau smiling when we can meet their needs and them saying that they were so grateful to me us and the team for helping them in this pandemic	When busy time I can served 5-6 tables at a time Or make a new dish that customers like it and order a lot
When rooms are cleaned and ready for next arrivals. (*Felt Valued)*	When I completed a construction I felt happy. I felt valued as I contributed to make the work done.
When we first went back down to level 3, the plan to reopen the store was not very successful.	Im the one stay longest in one new bay of the factory. I support the team as role as suppervisor there.
Served thousands of people their first take away after 5-6 weeks in level 4 *(FELT VALUED)*	I felt it didn't make any change to me as I was paid $22 per hour at that time.

I got some compliments for my hard work. Other staffs were friendly and supportive if I needed them	I always try hard and step beyond my duty to make it work better for employer. Since I take the current position, I help to cut cost for company by sourcing better suppliers, help to put system in place and keep things organized in clear operational procedure. My employer recognizes my contribution and it make me feel valued at work
It boosted my morale and will to come to work.	no difference.
	I do my job for satisfaction
In a quiet night with a few drive through (happy with wage)	I know a lot of my colleagues and myself included work more hours now and do feel more valued at work
When I was stocking shelves on a quiet day and I was just chilling and still getting paid	I noticed that some bins had been broken a bit at the corners so it's not really safe as it may hurt people when they carry them. After that we got provided new bins and the broken ones were thrown away or disposed. I feel I did something good for the workers and the company too!
	I got paid more during lockdown, not much but it was still really helpful during that tough time.
	It actually didnt affect me as although my pay rose a bit but I felt that the price for food and accommodation did, too! In addition, at that time I didnt care much about the min wage at all as all my attention was put on Covid situation.
	My employee is fine. He pay me the subsidy package.
	I feel grateful that I still have a stable job even during lockdown
	Getting a end of year gift from my employer was really nice.
	they always give us the chances to work at least 40hrs

Appendix F

MW Participants – MSQ Intrinsic Data

MSQ1	MSQ2	MSQ3	MSQ4	MSQ7	MSQ9	MSQ10	MSQ11	MSQ15	MSQ16	MSQ20
3	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	4	5	2
3	3	3	1	4	4	4	4	3		
3	3	4	3	2	4	4	2	3	4	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	5
3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	3
3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	1	1
4	5	4	3	2	4	2	4	3	4	3
2	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
4	5	5	4	2	5	4	2	1	1	4
4	4		4	3	4	5	1	1	1	5
3	2	2	2	5	3	3	1	4	2	3
4	4	3	2	4	2	3	4	4	2	3

AMW Participants – MSQ Intrinsic Data

MSQ1	MSQ2	MSQ3	MSQ4	MSQ7	MSQ9	MSQ10	MSQ11	MSQ15	MSQ16	MSQ20
3	4	3	1	2	4	3	2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	4
1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
4	4	3	4	4	4	3	5	2	4	4
5	3	5	3	5	4	4	5	5	5	4
4	4	5	5	3	5	3	5	3	4	5
4	3	4	4	3	4	3				
4	5	3	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	4
3	5	4	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	3
4	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	4
4	4	4	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	2
4	2	1	4	4	4	4				
4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4
4	3	4	3	3	4	5	4	3	3	4
1	4	4	2	3	4	3		4	4	5
4	3	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4	2	2	2	4	3	2	2	2	3	3
4	5	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	4	3
4	5	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	4
2	3	4	5	4	4	2	3	3	4	3
4	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	3

MW Participants – MSQ Extrinsic Data

MSQ5	MSQ6	MSQ8	MSQ12	MSQ13	MSQ14	MSQ17	MSQ18	MSQ19
2	1	2	2	3	3	2	4	2
3			4	2		4		4
2	4	2	2	2	4	4	5	5
5	5	4	5	3	4	5	5	5
3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	3
3	2	2	3	4	2	1	1	1
2	3	4	4	2	3	4	5	3
2	1	1	4	2	1	2	4	2
3	3	4	4	3	3	1	5	3
1	1		1	1	3	4	5	5
1	1	3	1	2	1	1	5	2
2	4	4	3	2	2	3	3	4

AMW Participants – MSQ Extrinsic Data

MSQ5	MSQ6	MSQ8	MSQ12	MSQ13	MSQ14	MSQ17	MSQ18	MSQ19
1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	3	2	1	2	4	3	2
1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	3	1	1	2	2	2	4
3	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	4
4	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	5
3	3	4						
2	3	5	3	4	2	3	4	3
4	3	5	2	3	1	4	5	4
4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
3	3	4	3	1	3	4	4	2
4	4	2						
4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	4
4		4	4	4	4	4	5	4
4	3	4	4	2	4	3	2	2
4	1	3	4	2	2	3	4	2
3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
2	2	5	2	2	3	3	4	2
4	2	4	4	3	3	5	4	4
3	2	4	3	2	1	3	4	4
2	2	4	3	1	1	3	3	2