Measuring PERMA in South Australia - and other reflections on measuring happy versus meaningful lives

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Saturday 1:30-4:30
7st April 2018

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Outline

Aims and expectations

Positive assessment

What is wellbeing?

Some models and frameworks

Some interesting research of ours related to ‘wellbeing’ (5 articles)

- Measuring PERMA+ in South Australia.
- Different types of wellbeing? A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing.
- Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers.
- Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing.
- Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers.

Applause or ridicule
Aims

• To play; to have fun, relax, be creative, learn and share ideas and opportunities. To provide the opportunity for relaxed networking.
• To learn more about ‘wellbeing’ and wellbeing measurement from wellbeing science, positive psychology, and interdisciplinary views on wellbeing.

Expectations

• Know more…
• Success will likely look like greater confusion, but also greater curiosity, about what ‘wellbeing’ is…
Wellbeing measurement in the morning – what was covered?
Positive Assessment

• In general, how happy or unhappy do you usually feel?

• What would you pay / give / do / sacrifice / commit to in order to be, on average, one point happier?

• Knowing how happy, knowing why, and knowing what happiness is (what makes up happiness).

• OECD guidelines for measuring subjective wellbeing.
Positive Introductions

- **Step 1:** Pair up with someone you don’t know.
- **Step 2:** In 2 minutes (1 minute each), tell a story – a thoughtful narrative with a beginning, middle and end – that illustrates when you are at your best.
- **Note:** Swap when you hear Aaron clap the first time after 1 minute, stop completely when you hear Aaron the second time after 2 minutes.
Key point: Wield your strengths – they are paths to engagement and enjoyment.

http://www.viacharacter.org

What strengths can you use to unpick what ‘wellbeing’ is? – this is my challenge to you…
What is Wellbeing?

• How would you describe wellbeing to a 10 year old?
• Wellbeing is….
• How would you describe to a 10 year old when you know that you have ‘wellbeing’, or even how you go about finding out?
What is wellbeing…

• Always good to get clear about **terms**…
• Because: no internationally agreed-upon definition of wellbeing currently exists (multi-faceted).
• Mental health, mental illness, wellbeing, wellness, health.
• Some definitions emphasise **feeling good**, while others stress meaning, purpose or **functioning well**. Also **flourishing** (high levels of wellbeing).
• The terms wellbeing, quality of life and happiness are often used interchangeably (esp by media)…
What is Wellbeing?

- General definitions, component definitions, focused definitions…

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggests three main groups into which the huge range of wellbeing definitions can be grouped:

- **General or global definitions**
  that do not detail the possible components of wellbeing.

- **Component definitions**
  that break down wellbeing into its constituent parts, dimensions or domains, or identify key characteristics considered essential to evaluate wellbeing.

- **Focused definitions**
  that either explicitly or implicitly refer to just one or a few components of wellbeing.8
What is Wellbeing?

General definitions...

**Key wellbeing term:**

**Wellbeing**

**Established definitions**

Most definitions focus on the perspective of the individual:

> “Wellbeing can be understood as how people feel and how they function both on a personal and social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole.”

How well someone’s life is going for them.

The following are key constructs of research:

Wellbeing consists of the nurturing of one or more of five elements: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (abbreviated as the acronym PERMA). These elements are the best approximation of what humans pursue for their own sake.

*Eudaimonic wellbeing* “focuses on meaning and self-realisation and defines wellbeing in terms of the degree to which a person is fully-functioning”. *Hedonic wellbeing* “focuses on happiness and defines wellbeing in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance”.
Cognitive model

• A useful **explanatory framework** – links between thoughts, feelings, physiology and behaviours.

• The fundamental interconnectedness of all things holistic... (all behaviour is communication).
Some main models and frameworks for wellbeing

- Fordyce lists 14 techniques as fundamentals:
  1. Keep busy and be more active.
  2. Spend more time socializing.
  3. Be productive at meaningful work.
  4. Get better organized and plan things out.
  5. Stop worrying.
  6. Lower your expectations and aspirations.
  7. Develop positive, optimistic thinking.
  8. Become present oriented.
  9. Work on a healthy personality.
 10. Develop an outgoing, social personality.
 11. Be yourself.
 12. Eliminate negative feelings and problems.
 13. Close relationships are the number one source of happiness.
 14. Put happiness as your most important priority.
### Frameworks and Models

**Keyes**
- **Flourishing**
  - *Emotional Wellbeing*
    - Positive affect (happy)
    - Positive affect (interested)
    - Life satisfaction
  - *Social Wellbeing*
    - Social contribution
    - Social integration
    - Social actualisation
    - Social acceptance
  - *Psychological Wellbeing*
    - Self-acceptance
    - Environmental mastery
    - Positive relationships
    - Personal growth
    - Autonomy
    - Purpose in life

**Huppert & So**
- **Flourishing**
  - *Positive Appraisal*
    - Positive emotion
  - *Positive Functioning*
    - Engagement
    - Competence
    - Meaning
    - Positive relationships
  - *Positive Characteristics*
    - Emotional stability
    - Vitality
    - Optimism
    - Resilience
    - Self-esteem

**Diener et al.**
- **Flourishing**
  - Purpose and meaning
  - Positive relationships
  - Engagement
  - Social contribution
  - Competence
  - Self-acceptance
  - Optimism
  - Self-esteem

**Seligman et al.**
- **Flourishing**
  - Positive emotion
  - Engagement
  - Positive relationships
  - Meaning and purpose
  - Accomplishment / competence
Frameworks and Models

- PERMA+
- 5 ways to wellbeing
- Ten keys to happier living
- 5 domains of functioning

Positive Emotion
Engagement
Relationships
Meaning
Accomplishment

Optimism
Physical Activity
Nutrition
Sleep

Ten keys to happier living

- Giving: Do things for others
- Relating: Connect with people
- Exercising: Take care of your body
- Appreciating: Notice the world around
- Trying Out: Keep learning new things

Direction
Resilience
Emotion
Acceptance
Meaning

- Have goals to look forward to
- Find ways to bounce back
- Take a positive approach
- Be comfortable with who you are
- Be part of something bigger
Pathways to wellbeing

- Step 1: Pair up with a different partner, get a pen ready, as well as a blank A4 page…
- Step 2: Raise a hand in the air when you're ready…
- Step 3: Without looking down at your blank page, and ONLY looking at your partner’s face, you have 1 minute to draw a portrait of your partner, starting on Aarons “go”!
- Step 4: When finished, sign your name, date it, and swap pictures with your partner…
Ways to Wellbeing

Pathways to wellbeing

Connect – Make connections with friends, family, colleagues and neighbours. When you build these connections they help enrich your life with new experiences and opportunities.

Be Active – Get moving. Walk, skip, run, dance – move your muscles. Exercise not only makes you feel good, it keeps you healthy. Pick a physical activity that you enjoy.

Take Notice – Be mindful. Be curious. Like a child, see the wonder and beauty of the world. Notice the things around you – the weather, the landscape, the mood and feelings of the people around you. In noticing you learn to appreciate the things that matter.

Keep Learning – We never stop learning. Keep trying something new – a new course you’ve been wanting to do or a more challenging task at work. Challenges keep us on our toes and increase our confidence and excitement in our day.

Give – Be generous with your time, your knowledge and your talents, giving to friends, family and even strangers. Be thankful, smile at people, and volunteer. Sharing to a wider audience gives you a greater reward than just doing things for yourself.
The point

• The point of this exercise by Nick Marks is that wellbeing can be supercharged by tapping multiple synergistic pathways…

• For our purpose today, the point is also:

“Does it make sense to think about what ‘wellbeing’ is without thinking about what builds and enables ‘wellbeing’?”
More Frameworks

Work wellbeing

Workplace environment
- Managerial style
  - Delegation
  - Participation
- Regulatory environment
  - Governance
  - Age discrimination
- Skill utilisation and variety
- Workload and workplace
- Identity / status / role
- Organisational-focused stress management
- Active environment
- Curative approaches
- Psychosocial interventions
- Stress management training
- Early detection
- Environment
- Effective delegation
- Better employee delegation
- Flexible work arrangements
- Job redesign

Work content
- Techno-stress
- Career development
- Organisational climate
- Technology
- Etc.

Economic environment
- Globalisation
- Economic outcomes

Work and life balance
- Work-life balance
- Home / family / community / leisure

Positive Wellbeing:
- Licitement
- Challenge
- Creativity
- Liberty
- Morality
- Wellbeing
- Flourishing
- (and unemployment is positively dangerous)

Negative Wellbeing:
- Nuisance
- Insolence
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Screen addiction
- Poor nutrition
- Substance abuse
- Lack of exercise

Work satisfaction
- Work-family conflict
- Social support and relationships
- Licences / Schedule
- Commuting
- Nutrition / exercise / sleep

Life satisfaction
- Active leisure
- Active ageing
- Social networks
- Access and cost of physical health care
- Environmental consequences
- Wellbeing consequences
- Reduced depression and anxiety
- Improved self-esteem and self-concept
- Facilitate social interaction
- Improved group psychological wellbeing and resilience
- Improved cognitive functioning

Organisational stress outcomes
- Absenteeism
- Turnover
- Employee cut-off from change
- Interpersonal conflict
- Violence
- Damage to reputation
- Productivity
- Decreased performance and productivity
- Decreased quality of products or service
- Loss of company experience
- Loss of intellectual capital

Person-focused stress management
- Substitution techniques
- Cognitive and emotional regulation
- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Training
- 2-way communication
- 3-way communication
- Spanning boundaries

Spontaneous
- Awareness
- Conflict resolution
- Time management
- Stress management
- Anger management
Me, We, Us

- Wellbeing flows through systems…


- Embedding change must be holistic and systemic. All organizations are complex and dynamic systems, not simple and linear.
Population wellbeing

Very hard to move, + do you want to?
Prevalence of Wellbeing and Mental Illness in a sample of 1210 South Australians.

1% | Metal Illness Flourishing

16% | Metal Illness Languishing

2% | Metal Illness Moderate Wellbeing

36% | Complete Mental Health

Flourishing No Mental Illness

Low levels of Psychological Distress

High levels of Psychological Distress

Low levels of Wellbeing

High levels of Wellbeing

Metal Wellbeing No Mental Illness

Languishing No Mental Illness

(Keyes 2002)
The bottom line

• Lack of definition of wellbeing makes deciding which model to base a wellbeing strategy upon, and which psychometric tool or tools to select for assessment, a conundrum for practitioners. These are compounding, and layered, challenges…
What are two key insights so far?

1. __________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________
Afternoon Coffee/Tea
Afternoon Tea
Quick Break

Yes but party.
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

What we did:

• Compared the wellbeing of a large South Australian sample to samples from Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and a Global sample.
  – SA sample, $n = 3,047$ (1180 mean, 1867 women), $Mage = 55$, $SD = 19.49$.
  – Health Omnibus Survey – face-to-face, Harrison Research – 156 questions.

• Used the PERMA Profiler (Butler & Kern).
  – Three questions for each of the PERMA domains and one question on overall wellbeing – 16 questions.
  – Did not use questions on loneliness, negative affect, or health-related questions ($1,000 each).
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

Why we did it:

• We wanted to take a whole state approach to measuring wellbeing; needed good baseline data.

• We wanted to follow Seligman’s recommendations from his 2013 report to build the State of Wellbeing.

• PERMA came out in 2012, and previous research has shown high levels of the elements of perma protect against negative emotions, improve resilience, reduce depression, improve life satisfaction, protect against physical illness, and lower levels of stress.

• Overall perma and life satisfaction correlate highly: $r = .83$

• Unlike general norms – like happiness and life satisfaction – the elements of PERMA can be learnt and built.
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

What we found:

More on the sample first:

• South Australia \( (n = 3,047) \) – face-to-face
• Global norms \( (n = 39,154) \) - online
• Australia/New Zealand \( (n = 4,205) \) - online
• United States \( (n = 18,408) \) - online
• United Kingdom \( (n = 2,317) \) - online
• South Australia \( (n = 1,972) \) - paper-based and online
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

What we found:

Low internal consistency for Engagement and Accomplishment domains in SA sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Accomplishment</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach's $\alpha$</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.94</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guttman's $\lambda_6$</td>
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<td>.61</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum split half ($\beta$)</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Split Half $\lambda_4$</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

What we found:

• SA higher on relationships, positive emotion, and meaning.
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

What we found:

- Age and socio-economic disadvantage relationships were not strong.
Measuring PERMA in South Australia

Some thoughts:

- High wellbeing may be due to:
  - Wellbeing literacy – since 2013.
  - Communities of positive practice (e.g., pos ed).
  - Sate of Wellbeing policy and strategy.
  - Now we are linking wellbeing and resilience ($r = .5$) – how can you build one without the other? Would you want one without the other?
  - A multi-faceted conceptualisation of wellbeing was well received by the media.
Different types of wellbeing?: A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing

What we did:

• We assessed the extent to which hedonia, operationalized as subjective wellbeing, and eudaimonia, operationalized as psychological wellbeing, represent distinct types of wellbeing.

• Used a large international sample to test whether hedonia (the experience of positive emotional states and satisfaction of desires) and eudaimonia (the presence of meaning and development of one’s potentials) represent 1 overarching wellbeing construct or 2 related dimensions.

• Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model-fit indices for the one-factor and two-factor models were compared to determine whether a one-factor or two-factor model of wellbeing best represented the data.
Different types of wellbeing?: A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing

What we did:

• Used subsamples of 7 geographical world regions, 109 countries, 16 languages, \((n = 7,617)\) – International Wellbeing Study.

• The total assessment battery contained 20 scales (235 items), which took participants an average of 29 minutes. Of these, 12 scales (159 items) were used for the present analyses.

• *Hedonia*: Satisfaction with Life Scale, The Subjective Happiness Scale, The Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale.

• *Eudaimonia*: The Scales of Psychological Wellbeing, Presence subscale of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire.

• *Others*: Orientations to Happiness, Adult Hope Scale, Gratitude Survey, Curiosity and Exploration Inventory-II, Grit Scale, Search subscale of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire, Rumination Scale, Loneliness Scale.
Different types of wellbeing?: A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing

Why we did it:

• The ability to meaningfully distinguish between types of wellbeing is debatable.

• There is questionable evidence for its (hedonia/eudaimonia) theoretical utility and empirical support – despite the popular distinction.

• Primary criticism is lack of discriminant validity between the two.

• “Before executives and policymakers allocate resources toward improving human wellbeing, a more comprehensive, scientifically based understanding of what exactly humans are striving for is needed”.

• “Empiricism without theory can be harmful to psychological science, but theory without empiricism can be equally harmful”.

Different types of wellbeing?: A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing

What we found:

• A latent correlation of .96 presented negligible evidence for the discriminant validity between Diener’s (1984) subjective wellbeing model of hedonia and Ryff’s (1989) psychological wellbeing model of eudaimonia. Hedonia and Eudaimonia share 92% of their variance.
Different types of wellbeing?: A cross-cultural examination of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing

What we found:

- Four other studies have found from .76 to .92. (more than .85 = poor)
- Identical analyses in subsamples of 7 geographical world regions revealed similar results around the globe.
- The validity of a psychological construct often involves showing distinct placement in a nomological network of related constructs. Hedonia and Eudaimonia—as measured in this study—showed little evidence to support distinct placement.
- **Conclusion**: A single overarching construct more accurately reflects hedonia and eudaimonia when measured as self-reported subjective and psychological wellbeing.
Some thoughts:
Maybe we have got it wrong?
Wittgenstein said: “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (Wittgenstein, 1958, S43).
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we did:

- Investigated New Zealand workers’ perspectives of wellbeing - specifically, how workers conceptualised wellbeing.

- Investigated two questions: one concerning workers’ understanding of the components of wellbeing, the other concerning the things workers do to promote their wellbeing (not the focus here).

  - Four studies surveyed whether workers’ conceptualisations of wellbeing are consistent with academic models of wellbeing, the different ways New Zealand workers promote individual wellbeing, and whether the concept of wellbeing is prototypically organized (that is, if not all instances of a concept share all of the features of a prototype).
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we did:

• PA involves ranking features (as either central or peripheral) rather than identifying critical features (deeming them necessary and sufficient).

• In order for a construct to demonstrate a prototype structure, two conditions must be met (Rosch, 1975).
  – First, individuals must be able to list components relevant to the concept and then reliably rate (agree upon) the centrality of these components to that concept.
  – Second, the centrality rating of each component should influence how individuals think about the concept.
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we did:

• Sample:
  – Study One – 130 workers (55% female), 66 lawyers, 64 teachers.

This is a study on what New Zealand workers think of when they consider the word wellbeing. For example, if you were asked to list the components and indicators of fear, you might write: possible danger occurs, attention is focused on the threat, the heart beats wildly, the person runs as fast as they can. In the current study, we are not interested in fear but in the characteristics of wellbeing. Imagine that you are explaining this term to someone who has no experience of wellbeing (adapted from Fehr & Russell, 1984 Study 6) and answer the following question: What, in your opinion, are the key components and indicators of wellbeing? Please list as many as you can.

– Have a go!

– The total number of responses generated was 952, comprising 231 different linguistic units. Participants generated an average of 7.4 linguistic units (5.7 for lawyers and 9.0 for teachers).
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

Why we did it:

• According to a qualitative study investigating the barriers to raising population wellbeing “the public’s responses to the term wellbeing are extremely mixed. Some feel that it is impenetrable and too abstract; some equate it with ‘feel-good’ products and services (skincare, aromatherapy); some link it to mental health problems” (Mahony, Thompson, & Seaford, 2011, p. 6). (a lot think it is wellness)

• No internationally agreed upon definition.

• Academics could be wrong – we wanted to understand lay-opinion on the construct of wellbeing. i.e., Wittgenstein

• The different models of wellbeing point to a prototype structure.
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we found:

• Study One - The coding procedure produced 27 components of wellbeing. Substantial variability appeared across responses, with no single component mentioned by all 130 participants.
- Work-life balance.
- Feeling valued – easy idea.
- Resilience.
- Low realisation of meaning.
- Only 3% suggested accomplishment/achievement (PERMA), and not central.
- Engagement also low.
- Physical health not in any wellbeing models – 52%.
  - 8.4 times greater odds of flourishing: good vs bad physical health.
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we found:

• Study Two:
  – 52 different teachers (86% female).
  – Rate centrality of 27 study one components.
  – See results previous slide.

In a previous study we asked people to list what they thought of as the key components of wellbeing. The most frequent responses are listed alphabetically below. Please read through the entire list and then rate how central (or important) you think each of the components is to the concept of wellbeing by circling a number between 1 and 8.

We would like you to think not only about your own experiences with wellbeing but the concept of wellbeing in general — what you think are its defining components. Don’t worry about why you think something is or isn’t central – and please don’t confer with colleagues!
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we found:

• Study Three:
  
  – We presented a different sample of workers \( n = 21; \) teachers with two scenarios of hypothetical individuals, one composed of components identified in Study Two as central to wellbeing, and one composed from components identified as peripheral.

  **Jack’s wellbeing:** Jack is really happy. Right now he feels he’s got the balance between home and work right in his new job: he’s finally managing to get home early enough to spend time with his family every night, and his boss’s recent praise shows his work is highly valued. He feels well supported by his new colleagues, and their comments on his positive attitude and obvious resilience have given him a real boost. What’s more the company nurse declared his physical health was in good shape last week.

  **Julie’s wellbeing:** Julie is fully engaged with life. Her new job has given her a greater sense of financial security, stress levels are lower than at her last company, plus she feels respected by clients. On the home front, she’s started helping out with her local community, which has given her a sense of accomplishment. The mindfulness podcast she’s been listening to actually seems to be paying dividends - she’s getting better at living in the present – combined with her strong faith, she’s feeling contentment.
Conceptualizations of wellbeing: Insights from a prototype analysis on New Zealand workers

What we found:

• Study Three:
  – Workers scored the central scenario higher than the peripheral scenario (Jack’s mean = 7.81; Julie’s mean = 6.52). The mean difference in scores was 1.29 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from .198 to 2.37.
  – The results confirm that wellbeing is prototypically structured.

Overall:

• Results indicated that New Zealand workers are less likely than academic researchers to consider the presence of achievement, engagement, and optimism as important for wellbeing.
• In contrast to current popular academic models, New Zealand workers viewed physical health, work-life balance, and feeling valued as central components of wellbeing.
• Nurses (completed).
• Intermediate school students (completed) – high vs low socio-economic.
• Medical students (just started).
• Paramedic students (just started).
• Chinese students (just starting).
Geelong Breathing

• **Breath One.** Take a deep breath in through your nose and fill your lungs with as much air as possible. As you are doing so, notice your physical body and any points of pain or tension. As you breath out slowly through your mouth, imagine you are pushing or releasing any tension away. Feel yourself sink into your chair or the floor if you are standing

• **Breath Two.** Take a deep breath in through your nose and fill your lungs with as much air as possible. Now as you breathe out think about what you are grateful for right at this very moment. Not what you are grateful for that has happened in the past, or looking towards the future, but right in this very moment think about one thing you are grateful for and exhale slowly. Say to yourself “Right now I am grateful for...”.

• **Breath Three.** Take a deep breath in through your nose and fill your lungs with as much air as possible. Now as you breathe out think about your frame of reference and what intentional state you want to be in right now. Do you intend to be kind? Do you intend to be open minded? Do you intend to be peaceful? Whatever intention you wish to have at this present moment, cultivate it when you exhale by saying to yourself “My intention right now is to be …”.

• Credit: This exercise was developed by Justin Robinson, Head of Positive Education at Geelong Grammer School in Australia.
Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing

What we did:

• We reviewed the literature on the most popular psychometric assessments of flourishing (high wellbeing), drawing together frequently used conceptualisations and operationalisations.

• Investigated the impact of 4 operational definitions found in the psychological literature on the prevalence of flourishing, using a large dataset containing sufficient variables.

• Used a large, nationally-stratified, representative (pegged to NZ census), random sample of 10,009 adults over the age of 18.
Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing

Why we did it:

- There are a multitude of different conceptual frameworks of wellbeing and flourishing.
- The presence of multiple measures of flourishing makes it necessary to compare and contrast these models and measures.
- “Not only do different researchers theorise and conceptualise flourishing in different ways, but also the categorical diagnosis of flourishing is dependent upon the various combinations of components, and researcher-determined thresholds, used in each operationalization”.
- This limits the usefulness of epidemiology – OECD call for consistent measurement approaches...
Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing

What we found:

• Substantial variation in prevalence rates according to the four different operationalisations:
  – Huppert and So (24%).
  – Keyes (39%).
  – Diener et al. (41%).
  – Seligman et al. (47%).

• Cross-tabulation agreement between models ranged from 74% to 81% - i.e., the models capture much of the same.
Measuring flourishing: The impact of operational definitions on the prevalence of high levels of wellbeing

Some thoughts:

• We need greater international collaboration and conceptualisation consensus when measuring wellbeing. Any volunteers?

• Michaelson and colleagues have identified eight benefits to measuring population wellbeing: to assess change over time; to review and evaluate policy decisions; to enable international comparisons; to assess subgroup differences; to identify future areas of need or opportunity; to evaluate the potential impact of policy proposals; to shape the content and delivery of policy; and to inform targeting of new policies according to population subgroups (Michaelson, Abdallah, Steuer, Thompson, & Marks, 2009).

• We suggest adding life satisfaction questions to whichever model / measure. Why back a horse when you don’t need to?
Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

What we did:

- Investigate if workers in 8 distinct occupational groups in New Zealand experienced wellbeing in the same way or if there were unique recipes for wellbeing according to occupational context.

- We examined and compared the prevalence of flourishing (a global wellbeing outcome) and job satisfaction (a specific contextual wellbeing outcome) amongst the occupational groups.

- Sample from the Sovereign NZ Wellbeing index: $n = 5,125$ that are in paid employment.
Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

Why we did it:

• We know quite a bit about employee health and ill-health, but not much about employee wellbeing. E.g., there are health differences in occupational hierarchy.

• There may be unique occupational contextual factors that influence wellbeing (e.g., caring people attracted to nursing).

• If wellbeing is contextually specific to different types of work, this provides insight into how to measure and build wellbeing in such contexts.

• Perhaps current wellbeing programs do not target the specific wellbeing needs of employees?

• Work-life balance: Work flexibility is highly valued.
Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

What we found:

• The prevalence of flourishing and job satisfaction varied significantly between occupational groups, in particular, between higher and lower status occupations.
  – e.g., largest difference in flourishing was between labours and managers (effect size .26).

• Meaning and purpose was most strongly associated with flourishing scores.
Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

- Meaning No 1 for all
- No 2 for all the rest

### Table A4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>1. Meaning and Purpose</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>[1.50, 2.83]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Self Esteem</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>[1.61, 1.87]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Satisfied with intimate relationships</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>[0.07, 0.42]</td>
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Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

What we found:

• Work-life balance was most strongly associated with job satisfaction scores (next page).
Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

- Work life balance No 1 for all – big betas!
Recipes for occupational wellbeing: An investigation of the associations with wellbeing in New Zealand workers

Some thoughts:

• Results of the analysis also reveal that the factors most strongly associated with flourishing (a global measure of wellbeing) differ to the factors most strongly associated with job satisfaction (a specific contextual wellbeing outcome).

• For instance, work-life balance was the strongest factor associated with job satisfaction across occupational groups, yet it was not strongly associated with flourishing for any occupational group. In contrast, meaning and purpose had strong associations with both flourishing and job satisfaction for most occupational groups. The results indicate that different factors may be associated with different aspects of wellbeing.
What are two more key insights from this research?

1. 

2. 


More…


