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Pathways to Well-being: Exploring Harmony in Life, Peace of Mind, Happiness Strategies, and other Psychological Factors

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Abstract

The present research aimed to study the relationship between harmony in life, peace of mind, happiness-increasing strategies, psychological flexibility, psychological richness and comprehensive well-being measures, including mental well-being and general well-being. The study was conducted on 581 participants. Mental well-being and general well-being exhibited significant positive correlations with harmony in life, peace of mind, happiness-increasing strategies, psychological flexibility, and psychological richness. The results of the stepwise regression analysis indicate that harmony in life, peace of mind, psychological richness, and five happiness-increasing strategies, including strategies relating to social interaction, instrumental goal pursuit, self-directed, active leisure, and passive leisure significantly predicted mental well-being, while peace of mind, psychological richness, harmony in life, and four happiness-increasing strategies, namely instrumental goal pursuit, social interaction, prevented activities, and passive leisure significantly predicted general well-being. Further, harmony in life and peace of mind were the strongest predictors of mental well-being and general well-being, respectively. These findings provide valuable insights into the contribution of these factors in enhancing well-being and emphasize the importance of including Eastern conceptions of well-being, such as harmony of life and peace of mind.

Keywords: Mental well-being, general well-being, peace of mind, harmony in life, psychological flexibility, psychological richness, happiness-increasing strategies

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Introduction

A general understanding in psychological literature is that a variety of conflicting forces influence the majority of our ideas, emotions, and actions. The same rationale has been applied to the ideas of wellbeing and happiness, where a multitude of factors seem to interact and influence the wellbeing of an individual (Ridner et al., 2016; Hill et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2022). These range from individual level factors like psychological capital and emotional intelligence, to social factors like close relationships and community support (Colomeischi, 2015; Hill et al., 2023). Although there is a plethora of research aimed at understanding the determinants of wellbeing, there are considerable gaps in the existing literature. The objectives of this study, thus, endeavour to address three key issues in the existing research. Firstly, considering most studies in psychology are conducted among Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) samples, the significance of constructs and ideas based on the Eastern perspectives has not been sufficiently explored. The consideration of variables emerging from Eastern literature on wellbeing is essential to gain a deeper and more holistic understanding of the determinants of wellbeing. Secondly, the importance of intentional activities that maintain or enhance happiness have been found to be a significant predictor of subjective happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005b; Lyubomirsky, 2008). The significance of positive emotions in promoting wellbeing has consistently been highlighted in the existing literature; thus, examining the role of happiness-increasing strategies in predicting wellbeing among Indian samples may lead to newer insights regarding the determinants of well-being among non-WEIRD samples. Finally, recent literature has highlighted the importance of adaptive functioning in coping with stress, and eventually well-being (Dawson & Golijani-Moghaddam, 2020; Tindle et al., 2022). Therefore, the inclusion of mechanisms that potentially lead to better adaptive functioning may also provide a unique perspective into the determinants of well-being. Thus, the objectives of this study adopt a three-pronged approach to examine the role of the following three sets of predictors: (1) eastern concepts related to wellbeing, namely harmony in life and peace of mind; (2) intentional activities for enhancing wellbeing, i.e. happiness-increasing strategies; (3) constructs that enhance wellbeing by contributing towards adaptive functioning, including psychological flexibility and psychological richness.

Models of Wellbeing

Wellbeing has largely been viewed as a multi-dimensional concept that includes physiological, psychological, and social aspects (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Delle Fave et al., 2010). While there is no standardized definition of wellbeing (Ong et al., 2021), much of the literature in positive psychology focuses on two distinct frameworks of wellbeing, namely the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives (Waterman, 1993; Delle Fave et al., 2010). The hedonic view of wellbeing includes the study of positive emotions and subjective evaluation of life and defines subjective wellbeing (SWB) as comprising more positive affect, less negative affect, and life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999; Diener, 2000; Delle Fave et al., 2010). Additionally, the eudaimonic perspective of wellbeing focuses on "engagement with existential challenges of life" (Keyes et al., 2002, p. 1007). Stemming from the eudaimonic perspective, Ryff (1989) postulated a six-factor model of psychological wellbeing (PWB), which includes "self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth" (p. 1071). However, the division of wellbeing into hedonic and eudaimonic conceptualizations has prompted efforts to formulate frameworks that integrate these two perspectives (Delle Fave et al., 2011).

Stemming from a lack of consensus regarding the definition of wellbeing, a variety of dimensions have been highlighted across wellbeing instruments (Linton et al., 2016). Consequently, there have been efforts toward developing tools that adopt a more comprehensive framework for assessing well-being (Longo et al., 2017). For instance, Tennant et al. (2007) developed the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), which comprises 14 items assessing both hedonic and eudaimonic facets of wellbeing. The WEMWBS was originally developed as an attempt to encapsulate a wider conceptualization of wellbeing, which includes "affective-emotional aspects, cognitive-evaluative dimensions, and psychological functioning" (p. 2), in a short form such that it could be used in population-level surveys (Tennant et al., 2007). Since the WEMWBS was developed with the aim of monitoring public health using population-level surveys, the scale only includes items that were endorsed as being related to mental wellbeing by the general population in the UK. Thus, the WEMWBS as a measure of wellbeing specifically focuses on positive aspects of mental health, including aspects relating to both hedonic and eudaimonic frameworks, positive functioning, and satisfying interpersonal relations. More recently, Longo et al. (2017) developed the Scale of General Wellbeing (SGWB), based on the literature that supports a unified conceptualization of wellbeing as a single general factor. They conceptualized the general factor as "a collection of relatively stable subjective feelings and evaluations, which represent symptoms of good mental health" (p. 149). Longo et al. (2017) proposed the SGWB as a global measure of wellbeing constituting 14 distinct health-related constructs that were commonly included in the conceptualization of wellbeing, which include "happiness, vitality, calmness, optimism, involvement, self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-worth, competence, development, purpose, significance, congruence, and connection" (Longo et al., 2017; p. 31). Although both the WEMWBS and SGWB were developed to widen the scope of wellbeing assessment, the WEMWBS primarily focuses on the affective and cognitive aspects of positive functioning. The SGWB, on the other hand, broadens the scope further by including a more holistic assessment of wellbeing covering 14 distinct domains. This study, thus, endeavours to tap into a more holistic assessment of the predictors of wellbeing, by incorporating measures of both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing.

Determinants of Wellbeing

As mentioned earlier, this study adopts a three-pronged approach to examine the role of the following as predictors of wellbeing: (1) eastern concepts related to wellbeing, which are

harmony in life and peace of mind; (2) intentional activities, which are happiness-increasing strategies; and (3) variables that may enhance adaptive coping and functioning, which are psychological flexibility and psychological richness.

The importance of highlighting cultural differences in the conceptualizations of wellbeing has consistently been emphasized (Delle Fave et al., 2010, 2016; Singh et al., 2016; Singh & Bandhopadhyay, 2021). Cultural worldviews may profoundly influence how an individual perceives and pursues wellbeing, thus, acknowledging the role of socio-cultural factors is essential for both advancing research and for developing effective intervention programs. Cross-cultural differences in the conceptualization of wellbeing stem from the differences in how the 'self' is defined across cultures; for instance, eastern traditions view the concept of self as being "a small part of the collective and the cosmos" (Joshanloo, 2014, p. 482), thus, the eastern conceptualizations of wellbeing majorly focus on selflessness, adjusting to the surrounding environment, and interpersonal harmony (Joshanloo, 2014; Kitayama et al., 2007). In contrast, the concept of self as per the western traditions is primarily based on the principles of individualism; thus, the western conceptualizations of wellbeing primarily include autonomy, personal control, and environmental mastery (Joshanloo, 2014). Hence, this study aims to explore the role of harmony in life (HIL) and peace of mind (PoM), constructs that predominantly feature in discussions of wellbeing in Eastern cultures (Delle Fave et al., 2016). Acknowledging an overemphasis on satisfaction with life, Kjell et al. (2015) proposed the concept of HIL as a distinct cognitive component, which complements the evaluative processes involved within the SWB framework. Kjell et al. (2015) define HIL as a "holistic worldview that incorporates a balanced and flexible approach to personal wellbeing that takes into account social and environmental contexts" (p. 894). In contrast, the concept of PoM has its roots in Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, and has been defined as encompassing calm and serene states of mind (Lee et al., 2013). Given the variation in the Western and Eastern perspectives of wellbeing, examining the association between Eastern concepts relating to wellbeing, particularly HIL and PoM, and dimensions of wellbeing highlighted in Western cultures is imperative.

Additionally, happiness and subjective wellbeing have been central topics of research in positive psychology since its inception. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005a, b) highlighted the significance of 'intentional activities' as an important determinant of happiness, wherein they defined intentional activities as "discrete actions or practices in which people can choose to engage" (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005b, p. 118). Happiness-increasing strategies (HIS) have been described as intentional or purposeful behaviours that maintain or increase the level of subjective happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2008). Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) outlined eight categories of HIS, namely Social Affiliation, Partying and Clubbing, Mental Control, Instrumental Goal Pursuit, Passive Leisure, Active Leisure, Religion, and Direct Attempts. HIS have been highlighted as an important predictor of happiness and life satisfaction (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) and measures of subjective and psychological wellbeing (Nima et al., 2012; Roth et al., 2023). The significance of HIS in enhancing wellbeing could be explained by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions proposed by Fredrickson (1998), which postulates that positive emotions generate cognition and action spiral loops moving upwards and eventually leading to an increase in emotional wellbeing (Altınsoy & Aypay, 2023). Therefore, HIS may play a significant role in promoting wellbeing.

Now in its third decade, positive psychology as a field has evolved and broadened with regards to its methodology, assumptions, and empirical focus (Lomas et al., 2021; Wissing, 2022). The second wave of positive psychology prompted the need to acknowledge the dialectical nature of flourishing and wellbeing, which also includes understanding the negative process and experiences that may potentially be conducive to promoting wellbeing (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016). Moreover, recent evidence focusing on coping mechanisms has highlighted the significance of psychological flexibility (PF) in influencing how an individual copes with stressful events (Dawson & Golijani-Moghaddam, 2020; Tindle et al., 2022). Stemming from the Acceptance and Commitment therapy framework proposed by Hayes et al. (1999), PF is considered to include a wide span of human abilities, for instance, "to recognize and adapt to various situational demands; shift mindsets or behavioural repertoires when these strategies compromise personal or social functioning; maintain balance among important life domains; and be aware, open, and committed to behaviours that are congruent with deeply held values" (Kashdan & Rottenber, 2010, p. 865). PF has been found to exhibit an association with adaptive emotional and regulatory responses to stressful life events (Kashdan et al., 2020) and with positive aspects of wellbeing (e.g., Marshal & Brockman, 2016; Imani et al., 2017; Howell & Demuynck, 2021; Browne et al., 2022). Thus, PF may enhance wellbeing by contributing toward adaptive functioning. Additionally, Oishi and colleagues (Oishi et al., 2019; Besser & Oishi, 2020a; Oishi et al., 2020b) recently suggested a tripartite model of a good life, constituting of a happy life, meaningful life, and psychological rich life. A psychologically rich life has been described as a life comprising of a variety of interesting, novel, and perspective-changing experiences (Besser & Oishi, 2020a; Oishi et al., 2020b). Psychological richness (PR) has been found to be related to openness to experience and sensation seeking (Oishi et al., 2019). Further, Kashdan and Silvia (2009) suggest that individuals that depict a tendency to be curious and to be willing to embrace the novel, uncertain, and challenging experiences associated with daily life may be more likely to experience wellbeing, particularly eudaimonic wellbeing. Although the research focusing on PR is still in its nascent stages, , PR and PF together may foster wellbeing by enhancing adaptive coping and functioning. PF may enable an individual to adapt to situational complexities and PR may further enable them to explore novel and challenging experiences, thus, empowering them to deal with the highs and lows of daily life.

Method

This study is part of a larger project comprising two studies, with the initial study aimed at establishing the psychometric properties and factorial validity of the Happiness Increasing

Strategies Scale developed by Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) for both the original English version and a Hindi-translated adaptation. As opposed to the original scale developed by Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006), the authors validated a brief 36-item version with an 8-factor structure of Happiness-Increasing Strategies Scale (H-ISS) which exhibited robust psychometric properties in the Indian context (Singh et al., 2025).
The aim of this study is to examine the correlates and predictors of mental wellbeing and general wellbeing.

Participants

The sample constituted a total of 581 participants, wherein 291 responded in English and 290 responded in Hindi, counted as two samples. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 65, with a mean age of 23.73 years of Sample 1 and 20.97 years for Sample 2. Table 1 displays the details regarding the participant characteristics for both Samples 1 and 2.

Measures

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale: To evaluate an individual's mental wellbeing during the preceding weeks, Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS; Tennant et al., 2007) was utilized. The scale consisted of 14 items. The scale assesses various aspects of mental wellbeing, including positive affect, satisfying interpersonal relationships, and psychological functioning. Previous research on the scale demonstrated favourable temporal and internal consistency. Specifically, the scale showed a one-week temporal consistency of r = .83 and an internal consistency coefficient of α = .89 (Tennant et al., 2007). The alpha coefficient of the present study was found to be .90.

General Wellbeing: To measure general wellbeing, the shorter version of the Scale of General Wellbeing (SGWB; Longo et al., 2017) was utilized. The SGWB operationalizes wellbeing as a unidimensional hierarchical construct, called general wellbeing, which constitutes 14 distinct lower order

Tab. 1. Demographic details of the participants

	Sample 1		Sample 2	
Demographic Variables	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Total participants	291		290	
Gender				
Males	145	49.8	216	74.5
Females	143	49.1	74	25.5
Prefer not to say	3	1.1	0	0
Age				
18 to 25 years	244	83.8	282	97.2
26 to 45 years	35	12	5	1.7
46 to 65 years	12	4.1	3	1
Educational qualification				
School	15	5.2	5	1.72
Undergraduate	211	72.5	273	94.1
Post-graduate (M.A., M.Phil., PhD)	65	22.3	12	4.1
Marital status				
Single	265	91.1	284	97.9
Married	26	8.9	6	2.1
Religion				
Hinduism	240	82.5	263	90.7
Christianity	9	3.1	0	0
Sikhism	12	4.1	6	2.1
Buddhism	0	0	2	0.7
Islam	10	3.4	17	5.9
Others	6	2.1	1	0.3
Not reported	14	4.8	1	0.3
Occupation				
Business	8	2.7	3	1
Student	219	75.3	278	95.9
Service	41	14.1	3	1
Unemployed	9	3.1	3	1
Other	14	4.8	3	1
Family type				
Joint family	76	26.1	115	39.7
Nuclear family	203	69.8	172	59.3
Living alone	12	4.1	3	1
Family income per month				
Less than 50,000	95	32.6	148	51
50,000-1,00,000	57	19.6	76	26.2
1,00,000-5,00,000	87	29.9	29	10
More than 5,00,000	22	7.6	10	3.5
Not reported	30	10.3	27	9.3
Area of residence				
Urban	255	87.6	236	81.4
Rural	36	12.4	54	18.6

constructs, which encompass various aspects of wellbeing, including purpose, vitality, competence, and significance, among others. Longo et al. (2017) reported internal consistency reliability for the scale, with an alpha coefficient of α = .86. The alpha coefficient of the present study was found to be .92.

Harmony in Life Scale: The 5-item Harmony in Life Scale (HILS; Kjell et al., 2016) measures cognitive evaluations of life that emphasize on a balanced and flexible perspective toward an individual's personal wellbeing. Kjell et al. (2016) reported a temporal consistency coefficient of .77 and an internal consistency of α = .90 for the scale. The alpha coefficient of the present study was found to be .85.

Peace of Mind Scale: The Peace of Mind Scale (Lee et al., 2013) is a measure of the "internal state of peacefulness and harmony" (p. 571). Originally consisting of seven items, a revalidation study conducted by Singh et al. (2016b) in India identified low corrected item-total correlations for items 5 ("It is difficult for me to feel settled") and 7 ("I feel anxious and uneasy in my mind"). Consequently, these two items were excluded from the scale in the present study, resulting in a revalidated version comprising five items. Singh et al. (2016b) reported an alpha coefficient of .78. The internal consistency of the present study was found to be .89.

Happiness-Increasing Strategies Scale: To assess strategies for enhancing happiness, a shorter version of the Happiness-Increasing Strategies Scale (H-ISS) (Singh et al., 2025) was used. The original H-ISS was initially created by Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) and had 55 items. Subsequently a validated version of 36-item was utilised, comprising eight factors namely, Social Interaction (SI), Instrumental Goal Pursuit (IGL), Going Out (GO), Prevented Activities (PA), Active Leisure (AL), Religion and Mental Control (R & MC), Self-directed (SD) and Passive Leisure (PL). Before adapting the scale to the Indian context, two items were excluded namely "Drink alcohol" and "Taking illegal drugs," due to their potential illegality and inconsistency with Indian socio-cultural norms. The authors found satisfactory internal consistency for the eight clusters, with alpha values ranging from α = .58 to .83.

Psychological Flexibility Questionnaire: PF was assessed using the 20-item Psychological Flexibility Questionnaire (PFQ; Ben-Itzhak et al., 2014). The PFQ measures five factors of PF: positive perception of change, characterization of oneself as flexible, self-characterization as open and innovative, perception of reality as dynamic and changing, and perception of reality as multifaceted. However, item number 1 was excluded from the final analysis due to inadequate psychometric properties i.e., item correlation <.2. In the original study by Ben-Itzhak et al. (2014), the PFQ demonstrated high internal consistency reliability (α = .918). In the present study, the alpha coefficient for the 19-item measure was found to be .92.

Psychologically Rich Life Questionnaire: The Psychologically Rich Life Questionnaire (PRLQ; Oishi et al., 2019) is a one-dimensional assessment of PR. In the original study by Oishi et al. (2019), the PRLQ demonstrated high internal consistency reliability (α =.93). The alpha coefficient of the present study was found to be .90.

Instrument Translation and Validation Process

Except for H-ISS, PRLQ, and PFQ, which were originally developed in English, all other scales namely WEMWBS, SGWB, HILS, and PoM have previously been translated to Hindi and have been validated among Indian samples. The translation of the scales into Hindi was conducted by bilingual experts, followed by a back-translation into English to ensure the accuracy of the translated version. The final translated versions were verified and approved by the first author and two bilingual experts before data collection, which was carried out using Google Forms.

Validation of the Scales in the Indian Context

The scales that were already translated to Hindi (i.e., WEMWBS, SGWB, HILS, and PoM) demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties when used with Indian participants The English version of the WEMWBS has consistently been used as a measure of mental wellbeing among Indian samples (For example, Kaur & Sultana, 2015; Padhy et al., 2015; Singhal et al., 2018; Grover et al., 2020; Ahuja et al., 2021; Gupta et al., 2022). Additionally, Singh and Raina (2020) and Grover and Dua (2021) validated the Hindi version of WEMWBS, utilized in studies with Indian adolescents (Singh & Raina, 2020; Shukla et al., 2022) and teachers (Pandey et al., 2021). The SGWB underwent revalidation among Indian undergraduate students (Tan et al., 2021), while its Hindi version was validated with Indian college students (Singh & Bandhopadhyay, 2021). The original PoM scale has been used in Indian settings to study spiritual programs (Pandya, 2016), meditation (Pandya, 2020), and yoga (Chandran & Unniraman, 2019). Singh et al. (2016a) validated the original HILS version and both Hindi versions of HILS and PoM scales. Moreover, Singh & Bandhopadhyay (2021) employed all four scales among Indian undergraduate students, reaffirming the validation of the Hindi versions of these scales.

Additionally, the psychometric properties of the Hindi-translated scales (H-ISS, PRLQ, and PFQ) were explored in the Indian setting, as these measures have not been explored in the Indian context before. The psychometric properties of these scales have been discussed in the subsequent sections.

Data Collection

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling methods. These included online recruitment, in-person approaches, and using social contacts. Colleges in the Delhi-NCR area were also approached. Participants who agreed to participate completed a Google form survey in classroom settings under the supervision of the research team. Participants were assured their responses would remain confidential and they could withdraw at any time. Given the diversity with regards to the languages spoken in India, it is common practice to follow a bilingual medium of instruction in the Indian educational system, including examinations at various levels ranging from school board examinations to national level competitive examinations, with the primary

instructions given mainly in Hindi and in English (Chandra, 2003; Khanna & Singh, 2016). Therefore, the Google form was available in both English and Hindi, consisting of the consent form, socio-demographic form, and the selected measures. The interested and consenting participants could choose to respond in either of the languages depending on their preference. Out of 581 participants, 291 responded in English, and 290 responded in Hindi.

Statistical Analysis

The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29.0 and LISREL 8.8. to evaluate the psychometric properties of the scales using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), descriptive analysis, correlation analysis (Pearson product moment correlation), and stepwise regression analysis to examine whether HIL, PoM, HIS, PF, and PR significantly predicted the dependent measures, which are mental wellbeing and general wellbeing.

Results

Data collection in the present study involved the use of both English and Hindi forms for all variables. A t-test was conducted to examine the difference between the Hindi and English samples, and the results indicated no significant difference in any dependent or predictor variable, as expected. As a result, the data from both forms were combined for further analysis.

The present study involved the translation of H-ISS, PRLQ, and PFQ into Hindi for the first time. The CFA conducted on the sample revealed a moderate fit for these translated measures. Fit indices for both the English and Hindi versions of PRLQ and PFQ are presented in Table 2. Additionally, H-ISS demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties as detailed by (Singh et al., 2025) with a 36-item version accounting for 56.53% of the variance.

Table 3 displays the mean, SD, correlation matrix, and Cronbach's alpha values, and correlation coefficients between the dependent variables and the predictor variables included in the study. As per the results, both HIL and PoM reported significant positive correlations with mental and general wellbeing, with correlation coefficients ranging between .60 to .69 ($p < .01$). Further, all eight HIS reported significant positive correlations with both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing. The correlation coefficients ranged between .20 (PL) to .53 (SI) and .16 (PL) to .48 (SI) for mental wellbeing and general wellbeing ($p < .01$), respectively. Lastly, both PF and PR exhibited significant positive correlations with both mental and general wellbeing, with correlation coefficients ranging between .43 to .63 ($p < .01$).

Additionally, the results of the stepwise regression analysis (see Tables 4 and 5) revealed that HIL, PoM, five HIS (SD, SI, AL, IGL, and PL), PF, and PR accounted for 65% of the total variance in mental wellbeing, while general wellbeing

Tab. 2. Goodness of Fit statistics for tests for the factorial validity of the Psychological Flexibility (PF) Scale and Psychologically Rich Life Questionnaire (PRLQ) - English and Hindi Sample

	χ^2 (df)	df	p value	χ^2 /df	RMSEA	CFI	GFI	AGFI	NFI
PF (English)	603.60	170	< .001	3.55	.09	.96	.83	.79	.94
PF (Hindi)	350.87	170	< .001	2.06	.06	.98	.89	.87	.96
PRLQ (English)	160.02	54	< .001	2.96	.08	.97	.92	.88	.96
PRLQ (Hindi)	267.01	54	< .001	4.94	.12	.95	.87	.81	.94

Note: Acceptable level for goodness of fit indices: $\chi^2 > .05$ (MacLean & Gray, 1998); $\chi^2/df \leq 5$ (Podsakoff et al., 2003); *RMSEA* < .08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999); *CFI* ≥ .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999); *GFI* ≥ .85 (Sica & Ghisi, 2007); *AGFI* ≥ .80 (Sica & Ghisi, 2007); *NFI* ≥ .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)

Tab. 3. Mean, S.D., Cronbach's Alpha, Correlation matrix of the selected constructs

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. HIL	24.06	5.38	(.85)													
2. PoM	16.40	4.56	.60**	(.89)												
3. SI	31.41	4.97	.47**	.34**	(.83)											
4. IGP	19.50	3.62	.44**	.29**	.59**	(.83)										
5. GO	15.19	3.78	.14**	.28**	.33**	.16**	(.76)									
6. PA	12.01	3.18	.23**	.25**	.28**	.31**	.36**	(.70)								
7. AL	10.51	2.39	.31**	.35**	.42**	.42**	.32**	.42**	(.70)							
8. R&MC	13.43	2.97	.24**	.28**	.46**	.40**	.38**	.36**	.36**	(.61)						
9. SD	14.57	2.72	.44**	.39**	.51**	.56**	.27**	.34**	.42**	.45**	(.64)					
10. PL	10.97	1.97	.23**	.13**	.35**	.32**	.27**	.09*	.17**	.27**	.32**	(.58)				
11. PF	86.56	16.01	.48**	.36**	.53**	.47**	.11**	.19**	.31**	.26**	.45**	.28**	(.92)			
12. PR	58.6	12.21	.68**	.41**	.52**	.50**	.21**	.31**	.35**	.32**	.38**	.29**	.56**	(.90)		
13. WEMWBS	49.98	9.31	.65**	.63**	.53**	.51**	.24**	.30**	.44**	.37**	.52**	.20**	.53**	.63**	(.90)	
14. SGWB	49.68	9.92	.65**	.69**	.48**	.45**	.21**	.22**	.37**	.31**	.42**	.16**	.43**	.57**	.71**	(.92)

*Note. PF= Psychological Flexibility; SI= Social Interaction; IGP=Instrumental Goal Pursuit; GO= Going Out; PA= Prevented Activities; AL= Active Leisure; R&MC= Religion & Mental Control; SD= Self-directed; PL= Passive Leisure; PR= Psychological Richness; WEMWBS= Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing; HIL= Harmony in Life; PoM= Peace of Mind; SGWB= Subjective Wellbeing. Cronbach's alpha values appear in bold and in parentheses. **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed).*

was significantly predicted by HIL, PoM, four HIS (IGL, SI, PL, and PA), and PR, accounting for 62% of the total variance in general wellbeing. Specifically focusing on the role of Eastern concepts related to wellbeing, both HIL and PoM significantly predicted mental wellbeing and general wellbeing, wherein HIL and PoM emerged as the most influential factors in explaining the variance in mental wellbeing and general wellbeing, respectively. Regarding the role of HIS, strategies focusing on SD, SI, AL, IGP, and PL, significantly predicted mental wellbeing, while strategies relating to IGP, SI, PL, and PA significantly predicted general wellbeing. Finally, both PF and PR significantly predicted mental wellbeing, whereas only PR significantly predicted general wellbeing; thus, confirming the importance of factors that enable adaptive functioning.

Discussion

The objectives of this study centred upon examining the role of the following three sets of variables as predictors of mental wellbeing and general wellbeing: (1) eastern concepts related to wellbeing, which are HIL and PoM; (2) intentional activities, which are HIS; and (3) variables that may enhance adaptive coping and functioning, which include PF and PR. The following subsections entail a detailed discussion of the significance of each of these three sets of variables as predictors of mental wellbeing and general wellbeing.

Role of Harmony in Life and Peace of Mind

The results of stepwise regression analysis revealed that HIL and PoM emerged as significant predictors of both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing. HIL emerged as the most influential predictor of mental wellbeing, accounting for 44% variance, followed by PoM, which explained an additional 8.6% of the variance in the scores on mental wellbeing. On the other hand, PoM was found to be the most influential predictor of general wellbeing, accounting for 47% of the variance, whereas HIL accounted for only 2% of the variance in the scores on general wellbeing. These results corroborate past findings underlining the significance of HIL and PoM. For instance, Smith et al. (2019) posited that there is a positive relationship between HIL and subjective wellbeing. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2014) examined the relationship between HIL and wellbeing and found that individuals who reported higher levels of HIL also reported higher levels of wellbeing. These studies highlight the significance of achieving balance and coherence between various aspects of life in contributing to greater wellbeing. In addition, past findings examining the role of PoM suggest that PoM significantly predicted measures of anxiety and depression, i.e. measures of mental ill-being (Lee et al., 2013) and depicted an association with enhanced affect regulation, which is considered a prerequisite for better subjective wellbeing Sikka et al. (2018). These findings, therefore, reaffirm support for the significance of concepts stemming from the Eastern perspectives on wellbeing.

However, given that PoM was developed as a measure of affective wellbeing, one would expect PoM to predict mental wellbeing more significantly than general wellbeing. However, these counter-intuitive results could be attributed to the similarities in the operationalisation of these constructs. Lee et al. (2013) defined PoM "as the extent to which one experiences inner peace and harmony" (p. 575) and they developed the PoM scale to assess how often an individual experiences internal peace in daily life. PoM and general wellbeing may share similarities with regards to their focus on experiencing a sense

Tab. 4. Stepwise regression analysis predicting Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)

Variable	R2	R2 change	Beta	SE beta	p-value
HIL	.44	.44	1.15	.67	.001
PoM	.53	.086	.75	.37	.001
PR	.59	.06	.25	.33	.001
SD	.62	.031	.69	.2	.001
SI	.63	.01	.24	.13	.001
AL	.63	.006	.35	.09	.002
PF	.64	.005	.054	.09	.005
IGP	.64	.003	.20	.08	.026
PL	.65	.003	-.30	-.06	.021

Note. HIL= Harmony in Life; PoM= Peace of Mind; PR= Psychological Richness; SD= Self-directed; SI= Social Interaction; AL= Active Leisure; PF= Psychological Flexibility; IGP=Instrumental Goal Pursuit; PL= Passive Leisure

Tab. 5. Stepwise regression analysis predicting Scale of General Wellbeing (SGWB)

Variable	R2	R2 change	Beta	SE beta	p-value
PoM	.47	.472	1.49	.69	.001
PR	.57	.102	0.28	.35	.001
IGP	.59	.019	.44	.16	.001
HIL	.61	.014	.34	.18	.001
SI	.61	.005	.18	.09	.009
PL	.62	.004	-.34	-.07	.016
PA	.62	.003	-.18	-.06	.041

Note. PoM= Peace of Mind; PR= Psychological Richness; IGP=Instrumental Goal Pursuit; HIL= Harmony in Life; SI= Social Interaction; PL= Passive Leisure; PA= Prevented Activities

of peace and calmness within one self, a sense of self-acceptance, and sense of peace and harmony with the way an individual chooses to live their life. Thus, the frequency of experiencing a sense of internal peace and harmony may explain why PoM emerged as the strongest predictor of general wellbeing. Further, HIL as a concept encourages a holistic worldview that also includes an evaluation of the social and environmental context of an individual (Kjell et al., 2016, p. 894). Similarly, the WEMWBS as a measure of mental wellbeing encapsulates aspects relating to positive affect, satisfying interpersonal relations, and positive functioning. Hence, the shared emphasis of HIL and WEMWBS on the social context and cognitive evaluative aspects may explain why HIL emerged as the most significant predictor of mental wellbeing. Nevertheless, these findings highlight the need to further explore the significance of HIL and PoM in promoting wellbeing.

Role of Happiness-Increasing Strategies

Amongst the eight HIS, strategies involving SD, SI, AL, IGP, and PL significantly predicted mental wellbeing, accounting for approximately 5% of the variance in mental wellbeing. Similarly, strategies involving IGP, SI, PL, and PA significantly predicted general wellbeing, accounting for approximately 3% of the variance in general wellbeing. Self-directed (SD) strategies were found to be the strongest predictor of mental wellbeing, accounting for 3% of the variance in mental wellbeing. SD strategies involve strategies directed towards the self, such as exercising self-control, lowering stress levels, and enjoying quiet times. Past findings have highlighted the role of SD activities in promoting wellbeing. For instance, Girang et al. (2020) noted that students experienced lower stress levels when exposed to pleasant, green environments on the university campus. Additionally, they reported increased opportunities for self-reflection and social interaction in such settings. Similarly, Kelley et al. (2017) illustrated that high-risk students, when given the chance to engage in a six-week indoor plant care program, exhibited reduced stress levels. Furthermore, they developed a lasting interest in cultivating plants as a recreational pursuit. In addition, strategies relating to Instrumental Goal Pursuit (IGP), which include strategies focusing on actively working towards achieving specific goals, were found to be the strongest predictor of general wellbeing, accounting for 2% of the variance in scores on general wellbeing. Strategies pertaining to IGP were also found to significantly predict mental wellbeing. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005a) proposed that happy individuals are more likely to actively pursue new goals due to their frequent positive moods and possess past skills and resources developed during previous pleasant moods, contributing to their success. The positive beta coefficients indicate that a preference for engaging in IGP was associated with higher scores on both mental and general wellbeing, further emphasizing the significance of engaging in active pursuit of goals as contributing towards promoting wellbeing.

Strategies pertaining to Social Interaction (SI) significantly predicted both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing. The importance of social connectedness has consistently been highlighted in the existing literature. For instance, Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010) found that social isolation and loneliness can lead to lower levels of wellbeing and an increased risk of mental health issues. Additionally, Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015) found that having social connections and supportive relationships could improve wellbeing and reduce mortality rates. House et al. (1988) also discovered that individuals with larger social networks and frequent social interactions typically reported higher levels of wellbeing. Diener and Seligman (2002) further emphasized the importance of social relationships in promoting wellbeing, concluding that social support and positive social interactions contribute significantly to life satisfaction and happiness. These studies demonstrate the significant impact of social interaction on wellbeing, highlighting the significance of maintaining social connections and engaging in positive social interactions. Similarly, strategies relating to Active Leisure (AL) significantly predicted mental wellbeing. Strategies focusing on AL involve engaging in recreational activities that require effort and participation (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005a). Several studies provide evidence supporting the relationship between happiness and engagement in activities. For example, cross-sectional investigations by Veenhoven (1994) and Burger and Caldwell (2000) found that happy and satisfied individuals reported higher frequencies of activities in general. Okun et al. (1984) conducted a meta-analysis of 556 sources focusing on older adults and found a positive association between happiness and the frequency of social activities, regardless of the type of activity or activity partner. Similarly, Wong and Csikszentmihalyi (1991) found that positive affect reported during different times of the day was associated with feeling alert, being with friends, and engaging in various leisure activities like sports, socializing, and hobbies.

Lastly, strategies involving Passive Leisure (PL) negatively predicted both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing and strategies involving Prevented Activities (PA) negatively predicted general wellbeing. Strategies pertaining to PL, such as watching television and surfing the internet, typically do not include activities that involve the exertion of efforts or proactive engagement. As per the results, PL exhibited an inverse relationship with both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing, with beta coefficients of -.06 and -.07 for mental wellbeing and general wellbeing, respectively. Consistent with these findings, past research, aimed at exploring the effects of different types of leisure activities on children's overall health and happiness, found that there was a positive relationship between AL and wellbeing, whereas PL was negatively correlated to wellbeing (Holder et al., 2009). Similarly, Csikszentmihalyi and Hunter (2003) found that teenagers' happiness varied across leisure activities, with wellbeing increasing during active leisure, like sports, and decreasing during passive leisure, like solitary reading. Moreover, research by Parfitt et al. (2009) indicated a positive relationship between physical activity and children's wellbeing, whereas sedentary behaviour, as shown by Ussher et al. (2007), was negatively related to adolescents' wellbeing. In addition, strategies involving PA involve activities, such as studying, reading, and writing in a journal, that are avoided to avoid negative emotions when pursuing happiness. Strategies involving PA negatively predicted general wellbeing; thus, suggesting that adopting prevention-focused self-regulation strategies may inhibit general wellbeing, while a promotion-

focused strategy may enhance general wellbeing. Although collectivistic cultures are considered to be prevention-focused rather than promotion-focused (Lalwani et al., 2009; Kung et al., 2016), existing evidence also suggests that preventing behaviour tends to increase with age (Paulsen et al., 2012). Given that our sample predominantly comprised younger adults, with ages ranging between 18 to 25 years, which may explain the inverse relationship between strategies involving PA and general wellbeing.

The relationship between happiness and engagement in activities may vary significantly across different cultural backgrounds. For instance, cultural differences may influence how individuals engage in goal pursuit and leisure activities. Research indicates that Western cultures often emphasize individualism and personal achievement, which may lead to a greater focus on instrumental goal pursuit. Conversely, Eastern cultures, which may prioritize collectivism and social harmony, could see active leisure as a means of fostering community connections and relational wellbeing (Triandis, 2001; Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, programs designed to enhance wellbeing could benefit from this understanding by incorporating culturally relevant practices. For example, considering that SI emerged as a predictor of both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing, initiatives that promote community-based activities and collective goal setting could be particularly effective in promoting wellbeing in Eastern contexts.

Role of Psychological Flexibility and Psychological Richness

The findings regarding the role of PF and PR suggest that PR significantly predicted both mental wellbeing and general wellbeing, while PF only significantly predicted mental wellbeing. PR accounted for 6% of the variance in mental wellbeing and 10% variance in general wellbeing; thus, emphasizing the importance of engaging in diverse and perspective changing activities in enhancing wellbeing. Consistent with these findings, Oishi et al. (2021) found that PR was linked to unusual and challenging experiences, such as studying abroad, which may foster personal growth and resilience. These findings also align with the broader literature indicating that varied experiences contribute to a richer life narrative, thereby enhancing emotional regulation and life satisfaction (Keng et al., 2011). By participating in novel and interesting activities, individuals can cultivate a sense of purpose and engagement, ultimately promoting their overall wellbeing.

PF, characterized by adaptive coping strategies and openness to change, was also found to significantly contribute to mental wellbeing, albeit to a lesser extent. Individuals who exhibited higher levels of PF demonstrated enhanced mental wellbeing. This emphasizes the importance of flexibility and adaptability in navigating life's challenges and maintaining psychological wellbeing. Consistent with these results, past findings suggest that PF is associated with positive psychological outcomes, including enhanced wellbeing and reduced levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Bardeen et al., 2014; Francis et al., 2016; Tyndall et al., 2020). Conversely, individuals with lower levels of PF may experience difficulties regulating their emotions and behaviours, leading to psychological distress (Masuda & Tully, 2012). PF has also been found to be associated with positive aspects of wellbeing (e.g., Marshal & Brockman, 2016; Imani et al., 2017; Howell & Demuynck, 2021; Browne et al., 2022), and an increase in PF has been found to reduce psychological distress and promote wellbeing (e.g., Wersebe et al., 2018; Puolakanaho et al., 2020). Although past findings highlight the significance of PF in understanding and promoting mental wellbeing, there is a need to further confirm the relevance of PF in promoting wellbeing among Eastern contexts.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

While the findings of this research offer valuable insights, it is imperative to consider these findings within the context of their limitations. Given that the findings of this research are based on a correlation survey, there is a need to further explore the causal relationships between the predictor variables and wellbeing outcomes to gain a deeper understanding of their impact. Further, the use of convenience sampling for participant recruitment raises concerns about the representativeness of the sample, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the sample predominantly consisted of students, unmarried individuals, Hindus, and urban residents, which may not fully capture the diversity of the population. Future research endeavours should aim for more diverse samples, including individuals from different socio-demographic backgrounds, to better understand the influence of various factors on wellbeing. Specifically, investigating how factors differ across age groups, including middle-aged and older adults, could provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of wellbeing across the lifespan. Future research aimed at examining the role of moderating factors such as gender, cultural values, regulatory focus, and social support may also help in ascertaining the conditions under which these variables may have a stronger influence on wellbeing.

Conclusion

This research offers valuable insights into the role of harmony in life and peace of mind as Eastern concepts related to wellbeing, strategies aimed at enhancing happiness, and psychological flexibility and psychological richness, as factors contributing toward wellbeing by enabling adaptive functioning. Although there have been recent efforts to acknowledge non-Western centric perspectives on happiness and wellbeing, particularly with the advent of the second and third waves of positive psychology (Lomas et al., 2024). For instance, Wong (2011) proposed the concept of chaironic happiness, which he defined as "feeling blessed and fortunate because of a sense of awe, gratitude, and oneness with nature or God" (p. 70); thus, emphasising on the significance of spirituality for attaining happiness and wellbeing. The findings of this study further extend this line of literature by outlining subtle cultural differences in the experience and pursuit of wellbeing and reiterating the need to include Eastern perspectives in the wellbeing literature, which may also aid in developing culturally relevant programs aimed at enhancing wellbeing.

Ethical Approval
Despite not having formal institutional ethics approval, all procedures involving human participants in this research were in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its subsequent amendments. Written informed consent/assent was obtained from all participants, stating confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of their participation in the research. Given that this study was a cross-sectional survey, which is typically exempt from Institute Ethics Committee approval under 45 CFR 46.101(b) Categories of Exempt Human Subjects Research. Further, the data was collected anonymously, ensuring that participants were not identified directly or through any identifiers linked to them. Consent to Participate: Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their inclusion in the study.

Data Availability Statement
The data that support the findings of this study will be shared upon reasonable request to researchers who provide a methodologically sound proposal and obtain approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee.

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KS contributed to the study conception and design, writing—review & editing, and supervision. SM and NN contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data and in the writing of the first draft. DC contributed to the data collection. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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