

The International Wellbeing Study: New and stronger paths to wellbeing

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Persian - Roya Rad

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Czech - Alena Slezackova

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Kirsi Tirri (Finland)

People involved

Participants

Study details

- Looks in depth at peoples' wellbeing from around the world, particularly psychological aspects that contribute to wellbeing, and how wellbeing changes over time.
 - 208 questions (18 main scales); average 29 min's
 - Five consecutive online assessments; every third month for a year, then yearly...
 - 16 languages (English, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Persian, French, Norwegian, Finnish, Portuguese, German, Dutch, Slovak, Hungarian, Czech and Slovene); more coming hopefully (Maori, Japanese)...
 - Participants (16+years)
 - Three participant benefits
 - Draws for vouchers, online wellbeing courses, wellbeing report

Study details

- Three interconnected projects:
 - Assessment study (The International Wellbeing Study)
 - Online wellbeing intervention studies (savouring, general wellbeing interventions)
 - Further assessment study (values, CAPP strengths, height, weight, sleep, A & D, exercise, nutrition, health problems, children, pets, technology, commuting, religion, accommodation, trust, crime, travel, etc)



International Wellbeing Study

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Researchers have devoted decades to understanding what leads some people to be healthier than others. However, most people have only studied disease and disorder and failed to also address strengths and wellbeing. In this study, we want to look at what is going wrong and what is going right in different people from around the world. We want to capture the entire picture of what it means to be healthy and most importantly, track people to understand how they change over time. This is the first study of its kind to look in depth at people's wellbeing from around the world. If you chose to participate, you'll be helping us to answer some of the most tantalising questions that our society faces today!

The study began in March 2009, is open to the general population, has sixteen assessment points in total each three months apart, and ends in March 2013 (March 2012 is the last date of entry into the study). Participants are required to complete five consecutive assessments (i.e., over one year).

International Wellbeing Study

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Select Language ▾



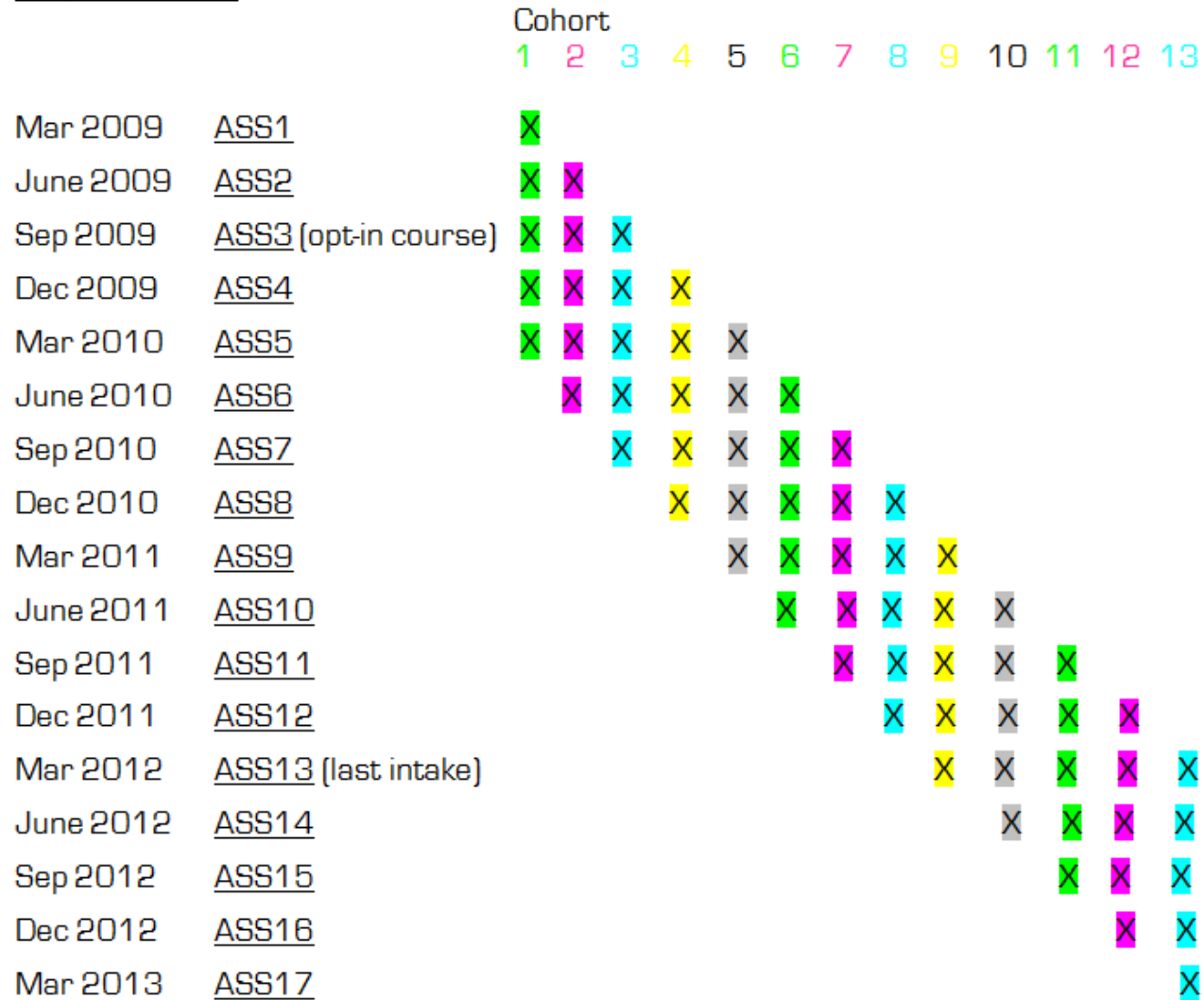
Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	A little disagree	Don't know	A little agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I like most parts of my personality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The demands of everyday life often get me down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Study details

Measures:	<i>n</i> = 208
▪ Scales of Psychological Wellbeing	18
▪ Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale	15
▪ Strengths Use and Current Knowledge Scale	10
▪ Subjective Happiness Scale	4
▪ Orientations to Happiness	18
▪ Adult Hope Scale	12
▪ Happiness Measures	4
▪ Gratitude Survey	6
▪ Curiosity and Exploration Inventory – II	10
▪ Grit scale	17
▪ Meaning in Life Questionnaire	10
▪ Positive Life Events	5
▪ Ways of Savouring Scale	20
▪ Savouring Beliefs Scale	5
▪ Control Beliefs Scale	4
▪ Negative Life Events	5
▪ Rumination	6
▪ CESD - Depression Scale	20
▪ Other Questions (flow, mindfulness, values, time use, etc)	12
▪ Demographic Questions	7

Project timeline



Study details

- Some (relatively) unique aspects:
 - Collaborative nature (specific cohorts: e.g., yoga, philosophers, migrants, dentists, gym members, mental health support workers)
 - Cheap cost
 - Use of technology - scalability
 - Longitudinal design
 - Controls for + & - events
 - Open source data
 - Evolving/expanding research (further assessment study)
 - Norm new scales (SUCK, CAPP Implicit, etc)
 - For others to test new intervention programs

Development

- Core researchers (6), and a team of strengths:
 - Positive psychology wiz kid, longitudinal analysis guru, funding genius, experienced old research head, comedian & sceptic, and me...
- A little helps from your friends...
 - Dianne Vella-Brodrick
 - Denise Quinlan
 - Many others provided valuable input during developmet...

Challenges

- Languages
 - Developing a good method via trial and error
 - Back translations, expectations across cultures
 - Google translate
- Collaborating
 - Win-win's via democratic decisions, compromise, & frequent communication
 - Be clear on ownership of intellectual property, data access, sharing, and authorship

Challenges

- Design
 - Participant engagement (long questionnaire), and reducing drop out
 - To control for major confounders or modifiers of psychological wellbeing – such as physical health
- Moving forward
 - Gain representative samples (i.e., non self-selecting)
 - More males
 - More representative languages
 - More of various country samples
 - Automation
 - Funding

Feedback

- Negative Feedback
 - “I just now started the questionnaire but have given up deciding there are too many better things to do in life, like filling in my tax return, than completing this marathon task”
 - “Never in the history of social science have so many questions been asked in such a long and such a boring questionnaire; and then to have to do it again! (psychology professor)”
 - “The sample of people who complete this questionnaire twice must surely be drawn from a population of people whose mental lives are so impoverished they can find no more stimulating way of occupying their time”

Feedback

- Positive Feedback

- “This is an impressive study: it is a) international, b) longitudinal, c) uses 20 scales of known reliability & validity, and d) invites interesting sub-samples. Giving those who recruit sub-samples the opportunity to analyze their data opens up avenues of discovery no single team of researchers could anticipate. Anyone who would criticize this study simply because it relies a lot on self-report does not appreciate the sophistication of what you are undertaking”
- “One of the most ambitious endeavours to understand the trajectories of wellbeing in meaningful contexts around the globe”

Initial findings

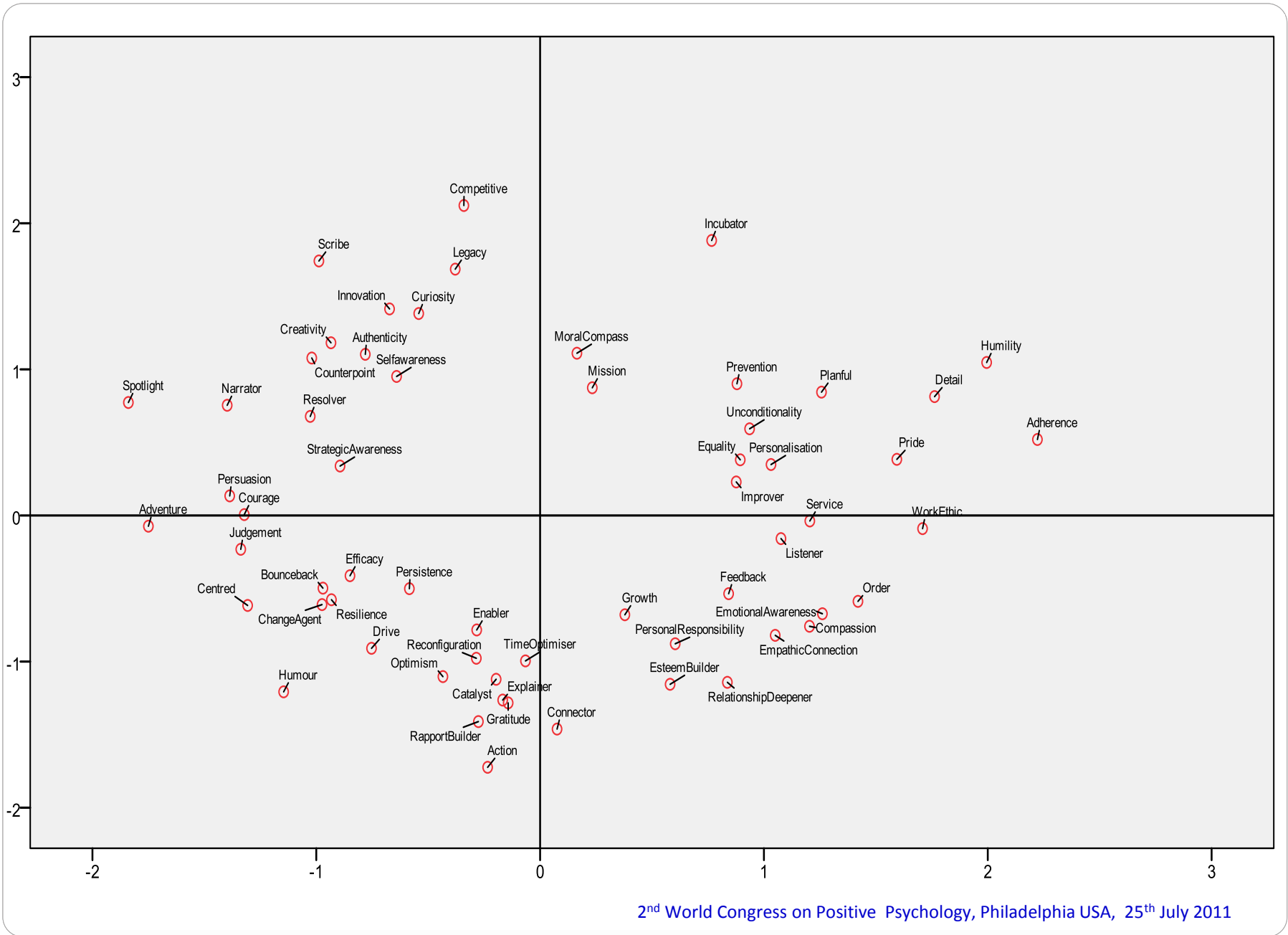
- Mountainous data-set
 - Intake One (March 2009) had 980 English participants, * 208 questions = 203,840 data points.
 - About 8,000 participants * 208 questions = 1,644,000 data points for their Time One assessment.

Example findings: General

- Example findings:
 - What is the best predictor of wellbeing? (Strengths, meaning in life, hope, gratitude, curiosity, grit, values, time use, savouring, positive events, friendships, purpose, growth mindset, being in flow, etc?)
 - The questions themselves may be an intervention?
 - Depressed - dissatisfied with time use ($-.500^{**}$), and not living in alignment with their values ($-.549^{**}$) – (stronger than hope)

Example findings: Specific

- Example strengths findings:
 - Strengths Use, not Strengths Knowledge, correlates positively with wellbeing, and negatively with depressed mood (-.346**)
 - % time using strengths associated with self-acceptance (.459**), happiness (.456**), % time happy (.425**), grit (.477**), meaning in life (.420**), being in flow (.465**), satisfaction with time use (.455**), and living alignment with values (.450**).
 - Strengths use associated with self-acceptance (.502**), control of the environment (.437**), present life satisfaction (.417**), future life satisfaction (.411**), happiness (.492**), engagement (.425**), hope agency (.653**), hope pathways (.568**), % time happy (.404**), being curious – stretching (.469**), grit (.514**), meaning in life (.474**), flow (.470**), satisfaction with time use (.441**), and living alignment with values (.438**).
 - Strengths knowledge associated with autonomy (.409**)





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