



Peace of Mind and Family Wellbeing: Uncovering Perceptions of Wellbeing in Indian Expatriate Managers in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract: Wellbeing is perceived in various ways by different populations. Although there is now a surge in research on wellbeing in non-Western populations, the perceptions of Indians, more specifically, expatriate managers, is not well represented. This study explored how Indian expatriate managers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) perceive wellbeing from personal and professional lenses in a bid to discover its composition, as well as how it might be augmented in workplace settings. A total of 18 Indian expatriate managers took part in semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The results highlighted the importance of physical health and self-care, self-efficacy, work-life balance, organizational and social support. Noteworthy were also the notions of family wellbeing and peace of mind, two poorly explored, yet emerging constructs in the wellbeing literature. Our findings highlight how much more there is to know about wellbeing from non-Western lenses to make positive psychology a more relevant science for all parts of the globe. We end this paper with suggestions for improving family wellbeing, peace of mind, and other workplace dimensions.

المخلص: أظهر البحث عبر الثقافات أن الرفاهية يمكن أن تُدرك بطرق متنوعة من قبل مجموعات سكانية مختلفة. على الرغم من وجود زيادة كبيرة في الأبحاث حول رفاهية السكان غير الغربيين، إلا أن الأدلة التجريبية على تصورات رفاهية الهنود المغتربين ضئيلة. تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيف ينظر مديرو المغتربين الهنود في الإمارات العربية المتحدة إلى الرفاهية من خلال العدسات الشخصية والمهنية. تمت دعوة 18 مديرًا مغتربًا هنديًا للمشاركة في مقابلات شبه منظمة. استخدم التحليل الموضوعي لتحليل البيانات. أبرزت النتائج أهمية الصحة البدنية والرعاية الذاتية، والكفاءة الذاتية، وراحة البال، والتوازن بين العمل والحياة، والدعم التنظيمي والاجتماعي، ورفاهية الأسرة. قد تستفيد المؤسسات والحكومة الإماراتية من نتائج هذه الدراسة عند التفكير في التدخلات واقتراحها لتحسين رفاهية المديرين الهنود الذين يشكلون عرقياً أكبر نسبة من السكان المغتربين العاملين في الإمارات العربية المتحدة. كما يمكن أن تلهم نتائجنا مزيداً من الدراسات التي تتمحور حول الرفاهية من المناطق التي لم يتم البحث عنها جيداً في العالم وتوسيع وإثراء أدبيات علم النفس الإيجابي من خلال القيام بذلك.

Keywords: wellbeing; Indian expatriate managers; United Arab Emirates; positive psychology

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‘Wellbeing’ is a broadly used term that underscores optimal life experiences and functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It is frequently debated whether a universally agreed-upon definition can be reached (Dodge et al., 2012; Lent, 2004); however, it is agreed that wellbeing is important and how people experience it may differ based on culture, nationality, ethnicity and other factors (Omosehin & Smith, 2019; Veenhoven, 2012). Globally, wellbeing has garnered significant interest with many countries establishing their own wellbeing indicators as a benchmark of social progress (Biswas-Diener et al., 2015, Helliwell et al., 2020). For example, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government institutionalised a national programme for happiness and wellbeing in March 2016 (Happiness - The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2020) with a vision to emerge as one of the happiest countries in the world. Still, while several wellbeing models and theories have been proposed over the years (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Fredrickson, 2001; Keyes, 2005; Lambert et al., 2015; Seligman, 2018), it remains an amorphous concept, particularly from a non-Western lens (Abdullahi et al., 2020; Tse, 2017). Yet, more can be learned about its composition and how it can be augmented across a range of contexts, like the workplace, given its influence in the overall wellbeing of individuals (i.e., Krause, 2014; Poplavskaya & Karabchuk, 2018). Accordingly, this study explores the Indian expatriate manager’s general perceptions of wellbeing with an aim to contribute to the development of organizational strategies in the UAE.

Employee and Managerial Wellbeing

Whether in a supervisory role as a manager or a singular employee, attention to the wellbeing of individuals in the workplace has grown in recent years, and certainly during the pandemic. Yet, how employee wellbeing is defined remains unclear and limited consensus on its meaning and measurement remain (Sender et al., 2021). For instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO, n.d.) defines employee wellbeing as an aggregation of the physical and social environment, as well as health and safety. Irrespective of its definition, the CIPD’s (2021) latest health and wellbeing survey shows a strong relationship between absenteeism and employee mental health, while a range of studies also show that employee wellbeing and happiness – terms used interchangeably in this paper (McGillivray & Clarke, 2007) - have positive effects on productivity and contribute to the competitive advantage of organizations (Bellet et al., 2020; Krekel et al., 2019; Nielsen et al., 2017; Robertson & Cooper, 2011; Schulte & Vainio, 2010).

Several variables have been explored as contributors towards employee wellbeing and happiness. These include physical fitness and self-care offerings in the form of exercise and yoga (Casioppo, 2020; Hendrickx & van der Ouderaa, 2010; Kadariya et al., 2019; Ivtzan & Papantoniou, 2014), mechanisms to ensure work-life balance (Clark, 2000; Haider et al., 2018; Shams & Kadow, 2019), as well as flexible work arrangements such as hybrid work from home models, particularly for women who generally have the burden of child or parent care (Christensen et al., 2020). Job characteristics like greater autonomy (Clausen et al., 2021; Wheatley, 2017), the ability to engage in job crafting (Peral & Geldenhuys, 2016; Slemp et al., 2015; Svicher & Di Fabio, 2021) and as well as receiving better feedback (Holman & Axtell, 2016) have also been addressed. Organizational



factors show the detrimental impact of low socio-economic status and perceptions of being denied humanity (Sainz et al., 2021), while economic stressors such as unemployment, under-employment, job insecurity, inadequate health insurance and pay, diminish subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction and peace of mind (Bouzari & Karatepe, 2018; Boyce et al., 2010; De Witte et al., 2015; Haushofer et al., 2020; Judge et al., 2010; Probst et al., 2018; Shoss, 2017; Tran et al., 2017). Indian studies specifically showed that employees identified positive organizational cultures, a supportive social network, effective leadership, work life balance, physical wellness, purpose and good working conditions as contributing factors (Jaiswal & Arun, 2020; Khatri & Gupta, 2019).

Personal variables also influence wellbeing. Levels of resilience, perceived job and organisational fit, as well as emotional, attitudinal and cognitive processes have been identified as playing a role (Cunningham et al., 2008). More recently, a host of studies have suggested that personality plays a role in both workplace and personal wellbeing (Herr et al., 2021; Evans, Brewis et al., 2021; Soto, 2015), along with job satisfaction (Heller et al., 2002; Templer, 2012), engagement (Young et al., 2018), adjustment to COVID related work from home arrangements (Evans, Meyers et al., 2021), and perceptions of the workplace and its leadership (Villaume & Hasson, 2017). Existing levels of subjective wellbeing are also influential: studies find that happier employees overall are more likely to find satisfaction at work as well (Bowling et al., 2010; Weziak-Bialowolska et al., 2020). Self-efficacy, the belief in one's abilities to exert control over one's actions, motivation and environment, has also been noted (Bandura, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Heslin & Klehe, 2006; Hortop et al., 2013).

More pertinently, managers and organisations themselves have also been the subject of inquiry (Choi et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2019; Gilbreath & Benson, 2004; Martin et al., 2018; Nielsen et al., 2017; Skakon et al., 2010; van Dierendonck et al., 2004; Wieneke et al., 2019). Often the reason why people leave otherwise good jobs, managerial behaviours are central to employee wellbeing and turnover (Reina et al., 2018): approaches promoting wellbeing include relationship building, cultural sensitivity, having family-friendly policies, showing concern for welfare of employees, as well as acts of benevolence, appreciation and altruism (Manganelli et al., 2018; Matthews et al., 2014; Newton, 2019; Stocker et al., 2014; Yukl, 2013). When managers were more cognizant of employee motivation levels and able to structure elements of their work environment (i.e., job design, interpersonal relationships, compensation) accordingly, their psychological needs were more easily met and both autonomy and wellbeing were possible (Gomez-Baya & Lucia-Casademunt, 2018; Manganelli et al., 2018). Ethical and empowering leadership was also a contributor (Kaffashpoor & Sadeghian, 2020; Premchandran & Priyadarshi, 2018).

The wellbeing of employees in positions of management adds additional complexity. Tending to the wellbeing of their teams, managers often neglect their own and pay a price in terms of burnout or illness (Jolly et al., 2021; Lanaj & Jennings, 2020; Lederer et al., 2017; Liao et al., 2021; Zwingmann et al., 2016). Further, their levels of stress and wellbeing influence that of their employees via emotional contagion, as well as indirect pressures they pass on from above (Skakon et al., 2010). At the same time, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, studies showed how managers, through their resilience and adaptive personalities, helped mitigate stress and engage in effective crisis management and contingency planning (Bajaba et al., 2021; Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021). Their mutual role in building wellbeing for others, as well as themselves, is critical for all.



Perceptions of Wellbeing: Does Culture Matter?

While wellbeing in the workplace is influenced by many factors, culture may also shape it. Perceptions of wellbeing may be rooted in social constructions and collective beliefs (Dalziel et al., 2019; Joshanloo et al., 2021; Kangmennaang & Elliott, 2019; Lambert et al., 2020; Rojas & Veenhoven, 2013), as well as differences in social norms, values and the appropriateness of feelings around wellbeing and happiness (Diener et al., 2003, 2017; Joshanloo & Weijers, 2013; Suh et al., 2018). For example, Suh (2000) suggested that for Western cultures, the attainment and expression of personal happiness are most coveted, while East Asians on the other hand, seek connectedness, belonging and social harmony. In exploring definitions of happiness from the dictionaries of 30 countries around the world, Oishi et al. (2013) found that while some cultures equated happiness with good fortune and external conditions, others defined it as internally derived positive emotions. In Asian cultures, the concept of peace of mind reflects an internal state of harmony and feeling that varied aspects of life are well managed, in balance and under control (Lee et al., 2013), while a state of peace constituting low arousal positive affect such as calmness, serenity, harmony and balance (Tsai et al., 2006), are also common. Indeed, a Gallup study found that 72% of adults from 116 countries preferred a calm life over an exciting one (Crabtree & Lai, 2021), more commonly preferred in the West.

The contributors to wellbeing may also be affected by culture. For example, family ties as well as family wellbeing in Eastern and more collectivist cultures have been identified as a contributor to individual wellbeing (Davis & Williamson, 2020; Funk, 2012; Karakas et al., 2004), and in some cases, valued more highly (Krys et al., 2021). Indians for example, took international migration decisions only after considering repercussions on their parents and extended family (Gupta et al., 2012; Kou et al., 2017). The latter finding aligns with studies showing that social, community, workplace and neighbourhood supports also matter (Aikawa & Kleyman, 2021; Craig & Kuykendall, 2019; Loayza-Rivas & Fernández-Castro, 2020; McDonnell & Sianko, 2021). These factors, particularly those that stem from cultural and personality differences are increasingly being explored to create tailored interventions to support workplace wellbeing (Abdullahi et al., 2020), especially as culture plays a moderating role in manager's wellbeing promoting behaviours owing to their impact on personal values, attitudes, behaviours, and practices (Chin, 2013; Schragle-Law et al., 2007).

Indian Expatriates in the UAE

Expatriation is both stressful and rewarding (Haslberger & Brewster, 2008; Hendriks, 2015; Hendriks & Bartram, 2018). Studies have shown that for white collar expatriation, stressors include communication difficulties, workplace cultural differences, family and spouse adjustment, daily life demands, social relationships, financial obligations and social inequality (Atiyah, 1996; Dang et al., 2021; Doki et al., 2018; Kumra et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021). At the same time, it brings many benefits, such as more challenging and interesting work opportunities and professional growth, better income, a diversity of relationships, travel, and experiences not otherwise obtainable elsewhere (Kogan et al., 2018). For others, it brings greater subjective wellbeing: Hendricks et al. (2018) estimated that the life satisfaction of expatriates and migrants rose on average 0.47 points (of 10) five years onwards. Additional changes have made expatriation more attractive. Recent developments have seen the working week in the UAE be shortened to 4.5 (or 4 in Sharjah) days, with additional



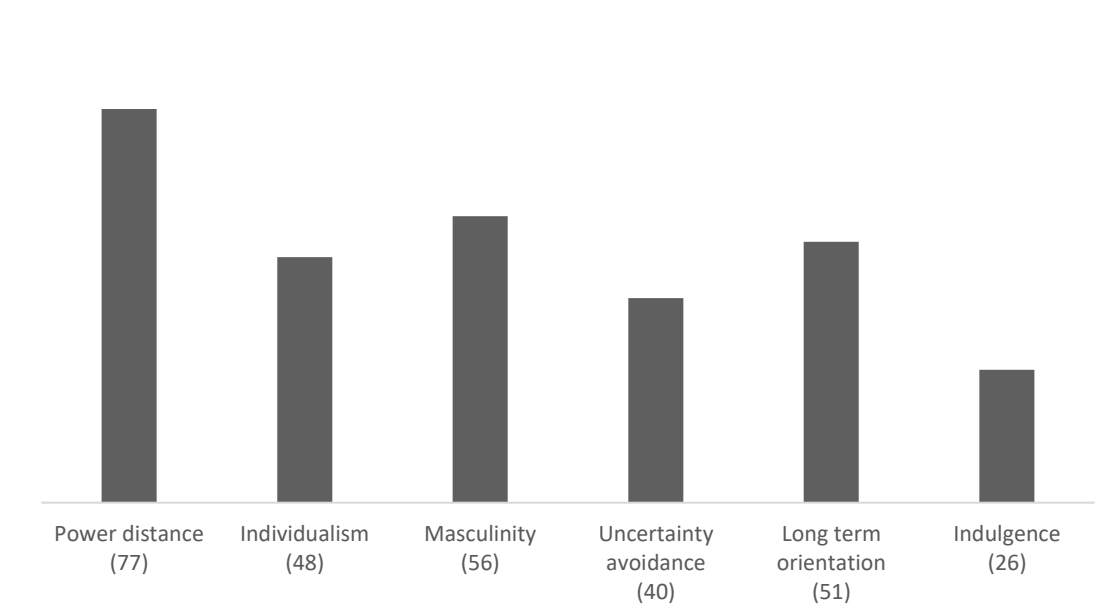
changes to the eligibility criteria for long-term residence visas (Golden Visa - Long-Term Residence Visas in the UAE - The Official Portal of the UAE Government, n.d.). This has improved conditions as working hours were previously long (Benuyenah & Pandya, 2020; Karim, 2020) and blue-collar workers earning below a certain salary could not sponsor their families (Haak-Saheem & Brewster, 2017).

Indian expatriates comprise the largest percentage (27%) of the working population in the UAE; in Dubai alone, they account for half of the population (Dubai Population 2021, n.d.; United Arab Emirates Population Statistics, 2021). In describing Indian culture (Figure 1), Hofstede's (2001) framework underscores six cultural dimensions, namely, power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation and indulgence. Indians rank high on power distance, indicating an admiration for hierarchy in both society and organizations and with a score of 48, Indians hold collectivist and individualistic traits (Sinha et al., 2001). The collectivist side constitutes a tendency to belong to a larger social framework where individuals are driven by the group's greater good. The individualistic side is represented by the dominant Indian philosophy of '*samsara*', where the onus of future births and life situations relies upon the actions of individuals today (Rao, 2002).

Family cohesion and interdependence are also prized (Chadda & Sinha Deb, 2013; Davis & Williamson, 2020; Kōu et al., 2017) and individuals take social cues and are influenced by their family, extended family, neighbors, work groups and wider networks. Such scores also impact work dynamics. For instance, Bealer and Bhanugopan (2014) found that Indian expatriate managers in the UAE displayed more authoritative leadership styles compared to their Emirati counterparts, while Indian employees favor autocratic managers and view them as powerful and competent (Abdulla et al., 2011; Gopalan & Rivera, 1997).

Figure 1

Hofstede (2011) Framework - India





The Present Study

While positive psychology and wellbeing research is growing globally (Hendriks et al., 2019), conceptualizations of wellbeing from non-Western collectivist cultures, like the Indian expatriate working community in the UAE, remain ill explored (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Tse, 2017). Moreover, given the multicultural make-up of the UAE and that an expatriate adjustment process is needed to succeed (AlMazrouei et al., 2016; Haak-Saheem & Brewster, 2017), results can inform the wellbeing strategies operationalised by organisations and enrich the literature.

Participants

A total of 18 Indian expatriate managers were recruited through the first author's personal social media and word of mouth. The inclusion criteria for participating in this study included identifying as an Indian manager, being a resident of the UAE, and employed. The sample reflected a range of industries, roles, years spent in the country, and ages (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant details

Number	Male/Female	Number of years in UAE
1	M	37
2	F	26
3	F	20
4	F	20
5	F	19
6	F	18
7	M	18
8	F	17
9	M	16
10	F	15
11	M	14
12	M	12
13	F	12
14	M	8
15	M	6.5
16	M	5
17	M	4
18	M	3

Method

As the aim of this study was to explore perceptions of wellbeing, a qualitative approach using Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2014) was selected. TA involves reading through a



set of data collected through interviews or focus groups and identifying inherent patterns and themes. A semi structured interview with a mix of open and close ended questions ensured that participants had flexibility in answering without digressing from the objectives of the study. Questions were broad, primarily asking: what does wellbeing mean to you? Participants were not instructed to respond from a personal or workplace perspective; they were free to define it as they wished. The University of East London (UK) ethics committee approved this research.

Data Analysis

An inductive TA approach was used to analyse the data. An inductive approach entails a bottom-up technique and is guided by what is in the data. The researchers became familiar with the data and ideas were marked in bold for coding (Boyatzis, 1998). Codes were systematically labelled being mindful of interesting and similar features across the entire data set. They were then collated into possible themes and carefully studied for patterns of meaning. Themes were then reviewed and refined to six overarching themes. The data within each theme was coherent, distinct, identifiable and had an overall story to tell, concluding the core analysis. As there were many comments, only those most representative of each theme are included here.

Results

Participants reported a range of perceptions, which gave rise to six themes, namely: Physical Health & Self-Care, Self-Efficacy, Peace of Mind, Work-Life Balance, Support, and Family Wellbeing. Support included the subthemes of Organisational and Managerial Support as well as Social and Community Support. Each of these is explored below (Table 2).

Table 2

Identified themes

Theme	Description
Physical Health & Self-Care Self-Efficacy	Physical fitness, nutrition, sleep, mindfulness activities Self-confidence, autonomy, competence, motivation, perceived control, mastery, stress management
Peace of Mind	Harmony, stability, contentment, adaptability, lack of financial obligations, wellbeing of loved ones
Work-life balance	Boundaries for professional and personal life, ability to prioritise things based on their importance
Organisational & managerial support	Safety, job security, flexible work arrangements, financial security, empowerment, appreciation, trust, recognition, acceptance
Social & community support Family Wellbeing	Support from family, friends, society and community Physical and financial health of the family, filial responsibilities of giving back, paying it forward to parents



Physical Health and Self Care

Participants expressed the ability to maintain good physical health as an important aspect of wellbeing. They suggested that physical fitness was a prerequisite for a healthy body and mind. Efforts in self-care such as adequate sleep and practicing yoga were highlighted as ways of enhancing one's level of wellbeing. As an example, 'What I would like to do is get good sleep as much as possible, eat well, eat on time, do some sort of exercise. Some basic stuff, just do that because that goes a long way in making sure you remain as productive as possible, and your personal well-being is taken care of' [Participant 3, Line 18]. Another participant offered an example where holistic nutrition helped her to become a better manager at work and a more patient mother at home. 'I think I put a lot of focus on my nutrition because, um, what has happened is I realised, over a period of the past few years that my physical health is actually most important for my emotional and mental wellbeing' [Participant 8, Line 5].

Self-Efficacy

Participants reported that self-confidence, feelings of competence, control, autonomous motivation, the ability to make an impact, and mastery, were reflective of their wellbeing. These perceptions highlighted notions of self-efficacy. As stated by one participant, 'For me wellbeing is about being confident, being mentally able to carry out the tasks that I need to do. Being balanced in life and being able to think logically, rationally for my personal and professional matters' [Participant 10, Line 3]. Another stated, 'for me, wellbeing is the overall culmination of how a person feels about themselves, and you know what is expected and what they're able to deliver' [Participant 12, Line 4].

Peace of Mind

The notion of having "peace of mind" was a salient dimension of wellbeing as expressed by the majority of participants. One of the female participants stated, 'For me wellbeing is peace of mind. Peace of mind is when I sleep at night, I don't have like a 1000 things running in my head. Peace of mind is when I know someone really close to me or the people I really love are OK' [Participant 5, Line 7]. Another participant revealed, 'Yeah, I guess well-being means being happy, happy with your life. I mean, in a nutshell, wellbeing is, Winning the lottery should not change anything in your life. You know, you have to have that peace of mind in terms of what you are doing, where you are in your life and where you'd like to go' [Participant 1, Line 5].

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance and the ability of participants to separate work from their personal life was also reported. A participant suggested how the UAE, in its bid to be competitive, begets job stressors for managers. 'Yeah, I think my definition of wellbeing in the UAE is simple work-life balance. The UAE thrives on always being ahead of the curve. But that also means that the people who are kind of driving that get impacted, because everything, all achievements are through people, right? I mean, they don't happen by themselves' [Participant 11, Line 3]. Another participant stated, 'I think for me very simply, uh, getting a very, uh, healthy work-life balance. I mean, I wouldn't say like, I wouldn't



go like too overboard with it, but getting a healthy work-life balance is the first thing that defines wellbeing for me' [Participant 18, Line 8].

Organisational & Managerial Support

Feeling safe, empowered, appreciated, trusted, recognised, secure, positively challenged and accepted, formed a part of wellbeing perceptions, with participants also expressing gratitude for being gainfully employed during an economic downturn. Flexible work arrangements, physical safety and job security assumed significance owing to the implications of the pandemic. Participants stated that adequate health insurance was critical, i.e., 'XYZ did not change anyone's sort of salary and health benefits because of COVID, XYZ did not release anyone in the last couple of months. So that way it gives people that feeling of comfort that the company appreciates them' [Participant 1, Line 27]. Another stated, 'You've got to maintain a balance as a manager [...]it's very important to know what's happening in an employee's personal life, what their background is, what their foundation is [...], treating people with compassion and humanity and giving them flexibility is important for their wellbeing, to develop that person and to enable them to give their best' [Participant 12, Line 16].

Social & Community Support

Participants noted that a majority of Indian expatriate blue collar workers in the UAE were not accompanied by their families and would benefit from social and community support, i.e., "In this part of the world a lot of our team members are living here without their family, so their needs are unique compared to the others with families. Especially during COVID, they felt isolated and had no one to turn to. They need to have avenues for socialising and a supportive community, be it at the workplace or outside to take care of their wellbeing" [Participant 4, Line 35]. Even for Indian expatriate managers with families, social and community support was necessary. Participants stated that their physical environmental, quality of neighbourhood and community support were indicative of their wellbeing, as were friendships. A female participant shared, 'I think well-being is also derived from your community or the place you're living in. Is it a good place to live in or do you have the right people around you? Are they nurturing you?' [Participant 2, Line 5].

Family Wellbeing

Family wellbeing was ascribed by participants as a contributory factor towards their wellbeing. As revealed by one participant, 'When you take care of your family members' wellbeing, it also impacts your own well-being. So, it is a symbiotic kind of relationship wherein you take care of them and that allows you to be able to be in a better space for yourself' [Participant 6, Line 7]. The absence of adverse physical health and financial conditions on family also assured wellbeing. One participant saw her family's wellbeing as her responsibility and associated it to her own in the form of giving back and paying it forward. 'It's a circle of life at 35. I have started seeing my parents as children or I feel the need to take care of them. [...] Probably it's also the Indian culture and tradition that you interfere a lot in your immediate family's well-being. If my parents are getting old, and if they're going to have health issues, I'm not going to be happy about it. [...] It's just that it's my time to give back to them so, just counting all the things that they may have wanted to do but did not, and I feel like I take it as my responsibility to see that those things are fulfilled [...]' [Participant 5, Line 12].



Discussion

Our findings revealed and reflected a number of themes commonly found in the literature, including physical health and self-care (Casioppo, 2020; Hendrickx & van der Ouderaa, 2010; Ivztan & Papantoniou, 2014; Kadariya et al., 2019), self-efficacy (Heslin & Klehe, 2006; Hortop et al., 2013), work-life balance (Clark, 2000; Haider et al., 2018; Shams & Kadow, 2019), and organizational and social support (Aikawa & Kleyman, 2021; Choi et al., 2017; Craig & Kuykendall, 2019; Cooper et al., 2019; Gilbreath & Benson, 2004; Martin et al., 2018; McDonnell & Sianko, 2021; Skakon et al., 2010; Stocker et al., 2014; Wieneke et al., 2019). At the same time, our analysis showed family wellbeing and peace of mind as areas of divergence with the literature.

While the role of family contributing to one's wellbeing has been identified (i.e., Davis & Williamson, 2020; Karakas et al., 2004; Kōu et al., 2017), the notion of family wellbeing as a construct has been less well represented in the literature. A Pakistani study by Arif et al. (2012) exploring the growing role of women in the workforce and the resulting (im)balance in the home, used the term to describe family harmony and a feeling of it being stable, reliable, and unified. Other conceptualizations construe family wellbeing through the lens of economic and health policy (e.g., D'Ambruso et al., 2019; Zimmerman, 2013), or focus on children's development and wellbeing within the family, versus the unit as a whole and how it interacts to produce wellbeing across generations (e.g., Prime et al., 2020). Other studies have conceptualized the term, but from the lens of the nuclear family (i.e., Karakas et al., 2004), as opposed to extended family compositions more commonly seen in collective societies.

Recently, the term "family wellbeing" has appeared in the mainstream (i.e., Western) literature (e.g., den Dulk & Swanberg, 2021), a move which seems to have been brought to the fore as a result of the pandemic's 'work from home' demands. This global event may have served to prioritize family wellbeing in a way not previously seen, but also inadvertently shed light on the fact that for many collective societies, family wellbeing has always been a priority and more can be learned by exploring this notion from non-Western samples. Greater inquiry into this notion from a positive psychology lens, not only for diversity's sake, but because family relationships in themselves are a major contributor to wellbeing (Thomas et al., 2017) are imperative. More importantly, our results suggest that notions of family wellbeing, like individual wellbeing, may differ by culture and not directly align with its Western definitions.

Our analysis also unearthed the notion of peace of mind, although a cursory exploration in the literature shows little mention of it. Peace of mind (PoM) was introduced by Lee et al. (2013) in a bid to operationalize and measure the construct in the Chinese culture. Defined as low-arousal positive affect marked by a balanced state of mind, PoM was positively correlated with life satisfaction and positive affect, and negatively correlated with negative affect, anxiety and depression. The construct has been explored in a few studies since. One, in a study on dreams, sleep and wellbeing, with PoM specifically selected given its absence in the Western literature (Sikka et al., 2018), with another (Datu, 2017) finding it was positively associated with academic achievement in the Phillipines. A study on Pakistani employees (Anjum et al., 2014) explored its association with psychological resources on employee performance, while Xi et al. (2021) defined it as an emotional state marked by self control and dependent on social support during emotionally demanding times.



Yu et al. (2020) also showed that when basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, relatedness, competence) were met, PoM was predicted, but more for Chinese students than American students.

Our findings are noteworthy as they elicited a poorly explored construct: peace of mind. While a few Western studies have noted and identified alternative and expanded definitions of wellbeing as including aspects of inner peace (i.e., Delle Fave et al., 2011, 2016), harmony in life (e.g., Kjell et al., 2016) and other construals close to it, little research has been conducted on this emerging construct to date. In the Indian context, similar constructs have been noted: 'peace', an internal state unperturbed by external conditions (Gaur, 2017), and 'inner peace', a state of being mentally and spiritually fit with the ability to stay calm in times of discord (Madhumita, 2020). As peace and harmony tend to be more prevalent in Eastern societies and more collectivist cultures (Gaur, 2017; Joshanloo, 2014; Joshanloo et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2013; Sikka et al., 2018; Yu et al., 2021), the notion of peace of mind, expressed by our participants, appears to be one way in which culturally specific notions of wellbeing manifest themselves.

Implications for UAE-Based Organizations and Government

Wellbeing in the workplace is the responsibility of organizations and individuals; yet, there is also a role to play for governments in developing employee centric policies (Schulte et al., 2015). As the role of family wellbeing was prevalent, adjusting legal structures to more easily sponsor families seems ideal. Yet, as our findings show, the notion of family is not limited to children, but parents as well. To build managers' wellbeing, parent, spouse and children need to be considered (Gupta et al., 2012; Kou et al., 2017; Matthews et al., 2014). Sponsorship schemes that are based not on salary, but on family ties with organizations acting as guarantors may better satisfy legal requirements in the UAE than at present. Organizations may also reconsider visa and benefits packages to include larger housing, elderly care, and family healthcare insurance with coverage limits for families as a whole versus individuals alone. This would give peace of mind for families, but also secure the wellbeing of managers, and potentially lower turnover and raise workplace commitment.

Second, work-life balance and a supportive organisational and community framework to support peace of mind and family wellbeing are needed (Atiyah, 1996; Gupta et al., 2012; Haslberger & Brewster, 2008). Organizations can encourage a healthy balance by mandating that work-related communication should only be within defined working hours. Granting exceptional leave for memorable family events such as marriages of close relatives or circumstances such as the death of loved ones, can promote family cohesion and work-life balance. Remote work options for periods of time are another way companies can offer flexibility around holiday travel and encourage family time. Apportioning a fixed number of paid hours per week/month in lieu of an employee's family responsibilities such as taking care of a sick child, spouse or parent can relieve stress. Frameworks that promote diversity, equity and inclusion can further support wellbeing by embracing and encouraging the uniqueness of each employee and can be honored by ensuring employees are sensitized and regularly trained on topics such as diversity in gender, culture, and ethnicity.

Third, mandatory training for managers on the antecedents of employee wellbeing, ways to both support and build it in themselves and their teams, as well as how to identify workplace stressors could have a lasting impact on workplace wellbeing and employee productivity (CIPD, 2021; Sakuraya et al., 2020). Our study signaled a need to identify wellbeing as a shared value and not an



individual, team or organization's responsibility alone. HR training for managers on the correlates of wellbeing, i.e., physical, economic, emotional, and social factors can lead to more satisfied workforces. This is especially the case for low-wage workers (i.e., Busch et al., 2017; Sorensen et al., 2019). Managers must also become competent in addressing expatriation issues (Wang et al., 2021).

Finally, the UAE government can play a contributory role in community support and high-quality social relationships through its programs and policies. Some of these could be to continue designing inclusive public spaces, parks and neighborhoods that are elderly and child-friendly, as well as promoting healthy family dynamics by preventing and treating family related violence (Diener et al., 2018). Greater opportunities for social interaction through active transportation options, like walking, biking, and public transport, indeed becoming a more frequent reality in the country, are additional routes for wellbeing.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study provided valuable insight into Indian expatriate managers' perceptions of wellbeing, the findings were based on a small sample and are not representative of the whole community. The first author is also an Indian expatriate manager in the UAE. Her understanding of wellbeing could have impacted the manner in which the findings were understood, although the two authors worked to ensure objectivity in our findings. Further, this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have influenced our findings as local studies show significant stress and socio-economic challenges during this time (Al Dhaheri et al., 2021; Uvais et al., 2020).

Relative to the literature, the notion of family wellbeing appears less commonly than other themes; however, while this notion may be more prevalent in collectivist nations and population groups, it raises important questions. Is family wellbeing and its relative absence in the literature a by-product of the questions asked in surveys; that is, if researchers included it more often, would it be more commonly identified as a contributor to wellbeing? More importantly, if organizations themselves considered it a contributing factor, would employees give themselves permission to also identify it as important? Perhaps what appears to be a cultural value is merely a reflection of workplace norms which omit the family as a condition of workplace wellbeing.

For the future, it would also be of interest to compare managerial perceptions of wellbeing with those of their employees for areas of overlap and divergence in order to establish more congruent policies and practises. More importantly, to further validate our findings, as well as provide more evidence for the notion of peace of mind, future studies can use the PoM Scale (Lee et al., 2013), as well as more commonly used measures (i.e., Satisfaction with Life, Positive/Negative Affect, Meaning in Life, etc.), to further determine this construct's areas of convergence and divergence with the established literature. This is in line with calls in the field for more research in non-Western contexts, more specifically relying on qualitative methodologies such as this one (Hefferon et al., 2017; Rich, 2017), as well as research on low arousal affect (Pressman & Cross, 2018). Further defining this construct in other populations, like the one presented here, can also inform the development of interventions to support peace of mind and family wellbeing as opposed to individual wellbeing more commonly seen in Western contexts. Failing to uncover and validate alternative conceptualizations of wellbeing can only maintain the dominant Western notion as normative. This has the effect of rendering positive psychology as a whole less effective as it does not



capture wellbeing in ways that significant portions of the world understand and experience it across their everyday situations, settings and social groups.

Conclusion

In line with the ILO's (n.d.) definition of employee wellbeing as an aggregation of the physical and social environment, including the health and safety of employees, our exploration revealed physical, mental, and social aspects of wellbeing and offers a nuanced view of wellbeing perceptions from an Indian socio-cultural context. Physical health and self-care, self-efficacy, peace of mind, work-life balance, organizational and social support, and family wellbeing were found to be indicative of wellbeing. While most of these themes are aligned with the existing literature, peace of mind and family wellbeing were unique. Positive psychology and wellbeing may be the scientific study of human flourishing and what makes life worth living, but the results of this study posit that we need to look beyond the extant literature and ask better, broader, more all-encompassing questions to uncover the range of wellbeing possibilities across the globe for a more representative science that applies and is useful to everyone.

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