

Singapore Mental Wellbeing Scales for Children & Youth

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WHO's Definition

- The positive dimension of mental health is stressed in WHO's definition of health as contained in its constitution:
 - ***"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."***



What is Mental Wellbeing?

- Mental Wellbeing is the continuous process of growing and thriving in an individual. (Ryff, 2001)
- This would include being able to manage in their environment (e.g. school, home). (Keyes, 1995)





- Historically, illness-centric measures such as the SDQ, have been used to assess the impact of positive mental health programs.
- Need for a more relevant set of indicators to measure positive mental wellbeing.

Objectives of the Study

- To develop a psychometrically valid instrument that measures mental wellbeing in children and youth.
- Understand what is mental wellbeing in children and youths.



Qualitative (Phase 1)

“Understanding Mental Wellbeing”

- Interviewed *parents, teachers, counselors*, children and adolescents (n=98) on what is good mental wellbeing.
- Leading to prototypes of scale items.
- Main themes reported:
 - *Relationships* among family, friends and teachers.
 - *Managing task*-based expectations at home and in school.
 - *Managing emotions* at home and in school.

Mental Wellbeing Scales* for Children & Youth

Domains & Sample Items

Children 6-12 yrs (25 items)

Positive Functioning

- I pay attention in class
- I listen to my parents
- I remember my daily lessons
- I listen to others when they are talking
- I do not stay angry or sad for long
- I like going to school
- When talking and in group activities, I take turns to participate
- When I fail, I try to do better
- When I fail, I cry out
- I can follow a timetable
- I can do my schoolwork
- I like to learn

Emotional Intelligence

- I feel relaxed
- I feel happy with myself
- I think my parents love me
- When I feel sad, I am able to make myself feel better
- I am comfortable with myself
- I am able to ask my parents for help
- When I am bullied, I am able to get help.

Social Intelligence

- I like eating with friends
- I like playing with friends
- I talk to my friends when I am happy or sad
- I talk to my parents when I am happy or sad
- I am able to ask my friends for help
- I am able to help my friends

Youth 13-17 yrs (30 items)

Positive Functioning

- I finish my homework and assignments on time
- I make good decisions
- I follow school rules and regulations without difficulty
- I am respectful to my elders
- I do not play too much computer and other games
- I think with reasons

Emotional Intelligence

- I am happy most of the time
- When I fall, I pick myself up
- I can get help when I need it
- I do not bottle up when I feel sad or angry
- I have a spiritual life
- I do not feel big ups and downs
- I can face reality
- I do not dwell on negative emotions
- I can cope with stress
- I am of good physical health generally

Social Intelligence

- I talk to my family about my feelings
- I talk to my friends about my feelings
- I enjoy being with family and friends
- I talk to friends when stressed.
- I can coordinate with others when I am doing group projects
- I consult with my parents and teachers when making major decisions

Self-Esteem

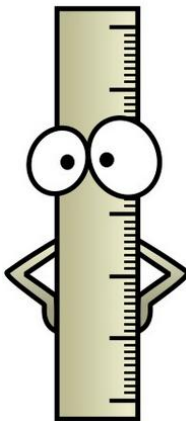
- I learn to make myself a better person
- I have many interests
- I enjoy learning
- If I put in effort, I can be the person I want to be
- I feel comfortable about myself
- I accept myself
- I enjoy helping others
- I strive to fulfil my potential

*Both scales measured on a frequency Likert of 1(Very Rarely) ----5(Very Frequently); self reported over the past 4 weeks.

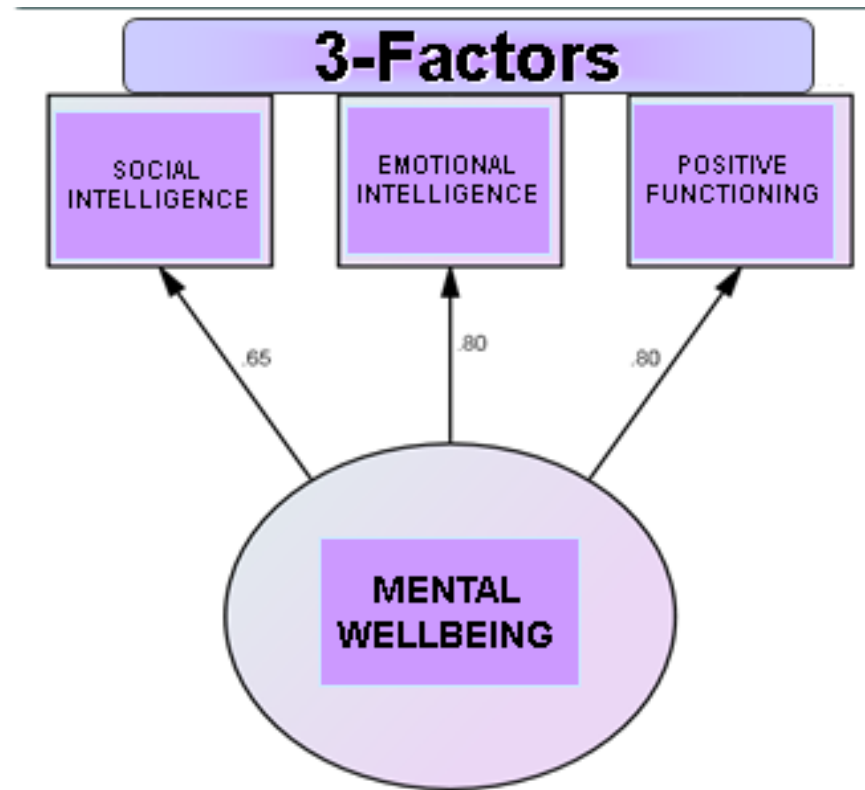
Quantitative (Phase 2) – Scores

“Interpreting Mental Wellbeing”

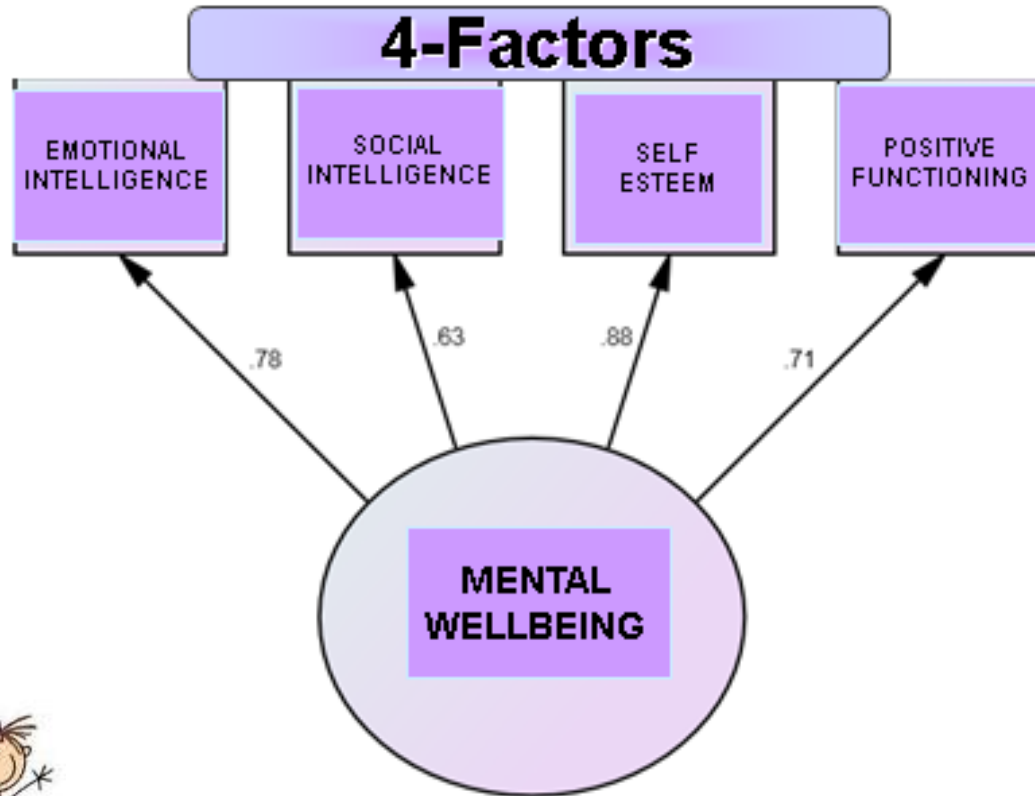
- n=2019 among Primary and Secondary School students and n=600 parents for validating self and parental reports with other scales.
- A mean MWB score is derived from the average of all the items in the scale out of a possible score of 1.00 and 5.00.
- On a scale from 1 to 5, scores between 3.00 and 5.00 are considered good. A cluster of positive scorers is typical of wellbeing measures.
- An individual with good mental wellbeing is able to:
 - **manage his emotions,**
 - **function positively,**
 - **have good relationships, and**
 - **have good self-esteem**








3-Factors of MWB in Children



4-Factors of MWB in Youths



Mental Wellbeing Domains of Children, Youth, and Adults

Asian Mental Wellbeing Domains / Developmental stages	Emotional Intelligence 	Social Intelligence 	Self Esteem 	Resilience 	Cognitive Efficacy 
Childhood	✓	✓	Positive Functioning		
Adolescence	✓	✓	✓	Positive Functioning	
Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Psychosocial Development of Child to Adolescent

Asian Mental Wellbeing Domains / Developmental stages	Asian self-esteem	Social Intelligence	Emotion Intelligence	Resilience	Cognitive Efficacy
Adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of self becomes stronger • More independent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships guide emotions • Learns to work with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing different kinds of emotions • Different strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple coping styles • Accepting situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More realistic expectations • Enhanced working memory
Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separation from parents • Awareness of emotions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of others' emotions • Impact of one's emotion on others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing different kinds of emotions • Different strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple coping styles • Aware of how situations affect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good working memory • Sense of self

Executive Functioning (Decision-Making)



Increasing Mental Wellbeing in Children & Youths

- Transferring mental wellbeing skills to parents, counsellors through:
 - Awareness
 - Literacy
 - Self-Efficacy



Helping with counselling work

- An understanding of the presenting 'strengths'.
- Concrete domains and specific behaviours
- Can be a common ground for communication with parents.



Implications for Counselling

- A useful pre-post instrument for assessing effectiveness of strengths-based intervention.
- An understanding of what mental wellbeing means locally.



Conclusion

- The tool and developmental study has yielded concrete behaviours and dimensions of mental wellbeing.
- HPB is now developing guides and programs to incorporate the findings and tool.

Thank you

