The Sovereign New Zealand Wellbeing Index

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Research Goal

The goal of this research is to better understand the wellbeing of New Zealanders and how this is changing.

The Problem

There is very little data on New Zealander's wellbeing.
In order to have influence at a policy level, we need better data.

The Research

Specific Aims

- Develop an overall index of New Zealanders wellbeing.
- Determine the prevalence of wellbeing among different geographic locations and various demographic groups.
- Investigating the predictors and moderators of wellbeing among New Zealanders, and how these compare to internationally comparative samples.

Study Details

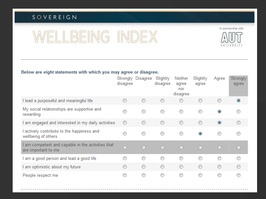
- A six year longitudinal study – three assessment points.
- September 2012 - a nationally representative sample of 10,009 (18+ years) individuals completed the survey.
- Online survey.
- 130 questions, about 19 minutes (median).
- Assesses psychological wellbeing, health and lifestyle, and socio-demographics:

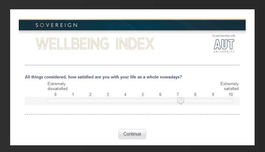
"The particular strength of the SWI is its capturing of how society is functioning as a whole, overtime, by focusing on the relationship between psychological wellbeing, and on health and lifestyle factors and outcomes"

- Questions were primarily drawn from Round 6 of the European Social Survey Personal and Social Wellbeing module, but additionally included scales such as the Flourishing Scale and strengths use scale.

Development

- A focus on online usability and engagement.

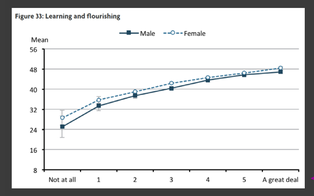


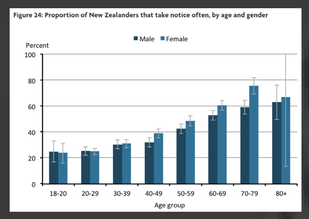


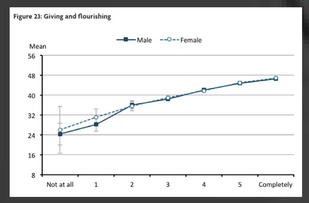
Challenges

- Establishing a multidisciplinary team, securing substantial funding, research design, epidemiology (representative sample).

www.mywellbeing.co.nz







Initial Findings

Wellbeing around New Zealand

- Using flourishing as a measure of wellbeing, older, female and wealthier New Zealanders had higher flourishing scores (no real differences for ethic groups or regions).
- Perceived social position was a powerful indicator of wellbeing – higher on the social ladder = higher wellbeing.

Five ways to wellbeing

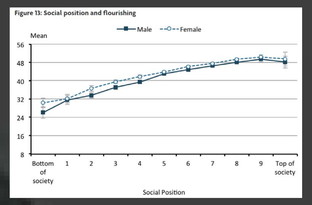
- People who socially connected with others (CONNECT), gave time and resources to others (GIVE), were able to appreciate and take notice of things around them (TAKE NOTICE), were learning new things in their life (KEEP LEARNING), and were physically active (BE ACTIVE) experienced higher levels of flourishing, life satisfaction, and happiness, and less depressed mood.

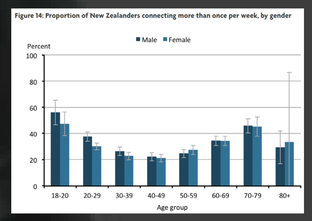
Super wellbeing

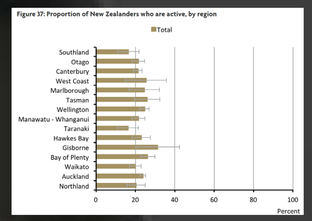
- We looked at the 25% of the population with the highest wellbeing scores and examined what factors defined this group from the rest of the population. This underpins the idea that psychological wealth and resources can be identified and public policy and action, and personal resources utilised to improve these determinants.
- Females, older, higher income, and higher social position New Zealanders were in the super wellbeing group.
- Connecting, Giving, Taking notice, Keeping learning, and Being active were all strongly associated with super wellbeing.
- Other health measures were also strongly associated with super wellbeing. These included better overall general health, non-smokers, exercisers and those with healthier diets and weights were all more likely to experience super wellbeing.

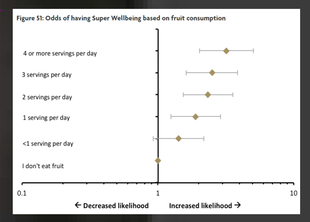
International comparisons

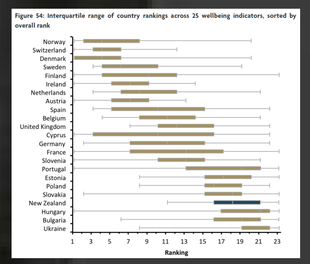
- When compared with 24 European countries using the same population measures, New Zealand consistently ranks near the bottom of the ranking in both Personal and Social Wellbeing.
- New Zealand ranks 17th in Personal Wellbeing, and ranks 22nd in Social Wellbeing.











Future Directions

- New Zealanders make choices everyday about their wellbeing. These are both personal choices as well as democratic choices about public policy and action at local and national levels. It is our vision that this index can help frame both personal choices and public policy and action in New Zealand.

If it isn't wellbeing for ourselves and others we are ultimately striving for, then what is it?

Executive overview report

Research Team

Professor Grant Schofield, Dr. Aaron Jarden, Dr. Scott Duncan, Dr. Mikki Williden, Lisa Mackay, Kate White, Julia McPhee, Grace Tuaiti, & Lucy Hone.

Acknowledgment

Thank you to the 10,000+ New Zealanders who participated in the first round of the Sovereign Wellbeing Index

IPPA abstract number: 324. Reference number: A-556-0327-00324.