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## Social Wellbeing of Graduates: Exploring African Migrants' Perspectives in the United Arab Emirates

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### Abstract

*The “National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing” was launched by the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)<sup>7</sup> to initiate wellbeing, happiness, and positivity in the citizens’ lifestyles, thereby making the UAE among the top-five happiest countries in the world. Taking care of people’s needs by fostering their mental, emotional, and physical health is known as taking care of their wellbeing. This paper analyzes the meaning in life and the sources of meaning that predict the social wellbeing of African migrant students. The data were collected through an online survey submitted to a randomly selected sample of 400 students from five different universities across the UAE. Bivariate correlation considering each of the five dimensions of wellbeing was performed with the same predictors. The results confirm that most of the explanatory variables significantly correlated with the category of wellbeing. The findings of this research will encourage policymakers in the UAE to consider these inputs and to introduce the required initiatives to meet their vision of becoming one of the top-five happiest countries in the world.*

**Keywords:** Social Wellbeing, Meaning in Life, Migrants, Perspectives, Emotional Wellbeing, Sources of Meaning.

### The Research Context – A Cultural Perspective

Education and employment are the two most significant institutions for young people in our society (Besen-Cassino, 2014). The ability of students to transition from school to international universities is not always an easy task. Hence, the authorities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have prioritized the outlook on mental health among young people. The “National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing”, which was launched by the Ministry of Education in March 2021, aims to support students’ good character traits and their academic abilities. Unfortunately, many overseas students find it challenging to accomplish that aim completely because of tight social acceptance, social coherence, and other environmental factors, including academics, social and cultural differences, discrimination, financial stressors, and mental health concerns. Data on the cumulative effect of social wellbeing on positive elements of functioning such as psychological wellbeing (PWB) are notably scarce.

An expanding corpus of studies shows that having a purpose in life and living a life with meaning are basic human needs that have a significant impact on both psychological and physical health (Czekierda

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<sup>7</sup>UAE: United Arab Emirates

et al., 2017; Ejoke et al., 2022; Haugan, 2014; Homan & Boyatzis, 2010; Roepke et al., 2014; Steger et al., 2009; Vail & Routledge, 2020; Van der Heyden, 2015). Those who believe their lives have a purpose tend to live significantly longer and have healthier and happier lives than people who do not share this belief (Cohen, 2016; Hill & Turiano, 2014). The importance of meaning in life for people is being acknowledged, but experts have mostly disregarded how meaning in life affects the wellbeing of minority communities. We contend that meaning has significant social and economic ramifications in migrant student communities. One reason could be that it is daunting and stressful to relocate to a new nation with different customs, values, and social standards. Foreign students frequently experience difficulty adjusting to the new culture, which can result in feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and isolation.

Despite significant advancements, quantitative and qualitative data indicate that many students in the UAE continue to have physical, social, and emotional challenges both inside and outside the classroom. Some of the key issues are the loss of parental jobs, bullying, anxiety related to academic work, and unhealthy lifestyle choices such as lack of sleep, junk foods, and peer choices.

The foremost objective of this study was to identify the factors affecting the wellbeing of African immigrant (AI) students in the UAE. Other objectives were to determine meaning in life and the sources of meaning (order, self-actualization, self-transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness) and significantly predict the social wellbeing (social actualization, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration) of African migrant students in the UAE. The study also aimed to determine whether there are differences in the wellbeing of students across age and sex. Disparities in social wellbeing may have an impact on PWB; Ryff and Singer (2008) contend that social wellbeing status and age affect PWB. However, this is debatable in the relationship between social acceptance, social coherence, and PWB because it appears that self-transcendence does not have the same effect on wellbeing (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002). The goal of the current study was to determine whether AI students who are in a socially acceptable environment are affected in the same way. Another objective of this study was to determine whether there are differences between men and women. Prior empirical investigations discovered that only two of the components of PWB differed between men and women; all the other aspects were the same for both sexes (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Are meaning-making, sources of meaning, and wellbeing interrelated?

In summary, this research aimed to identify whether meaning in life has a statistically significant relationship with order, self-actualization, self-transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness. The study also aimed to identify whether meaning of life is related to social wellbeing (i.e., social actualization, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration). Overall, the main objective was to identify the various factors affecting the wellbeing of African migrant students in the UAE. The outcome of this study should assist the UAE government in implementing suitable programs to protect the emotional and social wellbeing of these students. The data should also be useful in training and helping students' emotional wellbeing in accordance with the need gaps identified by the study.

## **Literature Review**

It is vital to understand the social determinants of mental health and their impact on health. There is a dearth of research on their effects on mental health in this region. To gain background information on the impact of social wellbeing on mental health and wellbeing, pre-existing material was explored. In his research, Hareem Hyun (2017) explains the influence of a low social wellbeing position on the mental health of college students. He articulates that ignoring the social wellbeing determinants of mental health is akin to pulling out a garden weed without its roots. The weed will reappear if the root is left in place, much as inequities in mental health will persist if structural inequalities are left unaddressed.

The “Community Design for Wellbeing” program was introduced by the “National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing” in April 2019 to increase civic participation. The UAE government hopes to rank the nation among the world’s five happiest nations. According to the *World Happiness Report 2020* (Helliwell et al., 2020), the UAE maintained its first place among the Arab countries for the sixth consecutive year. His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum considers joy and optimism a way of life, a commitment of the government, and a spirit uniting the UAE society to improve human capital (Ministry of Cabinet Affairs & The Future, 2020).

According to Mehdinezhad (2012), wellbeing is characterized by the presence of a positive effect, the absence of a negative effect, and life satisfaction. However, it is very subjective and is based on personal experience, a person’s way of thinking, and his/her emotional condition. According to Majid et al. (2018), students who report positive wellbeing tend to be resilient, ready to confront challenges in life, resolve disagreements in a constructive way, and positively adjust to stressful or uncertain events. A growing body of literature (Gashi & Mojsoska-Blazevski, 2016) emphasizes the importance of how wellbeing affects a student’s mental health, quality of life, and motivation to learn.

Meaning making is the process through which people interpret, comprehend, and make sense of events in their lives (Park & Folkman, 1997). Researchers recognize that meaning in life is an important psychological need. People enjoy general and pleasant PWB more when it feels meaningful (e.g., Steger & Frazier, 2005). Moreover, meaning lowers the risk of depression, addiction, and suicide (Disabato et al., 2017). In addition, meaning in life favorably correlates with lifespan and good health (e.g., Czekierda et al., 2017).

According to research, meaning encourages the seeking of social ties. For instance, in a longitudinal study, Stavrova and Luhmann (2016) found that meaning in life positively correlated with how attached people felt towards their spouse/partner, family, and community initially and ten years later. Higher levels of meaning predicted a greater likelihood of future participation in voluntary associations and among single people, a greater likelihood of getting married. This provided even stronger evidence for the social motivational function of meaning, according to a second study by these researchers (Stavrova & Luhmann, 2016). These results are in line with laboratory research that demonstrates that when individuals reflect on personally significant, past social experiences, they become more driven to pursue social goals and more assured that they can resolve relationship issues (Abeyta et al., 2015).

Meaning in life is a resource that helps people deal with stress, uncertainty, anxiety, and trauma, and it may be crucial for maintaining social wellbeing (Trzebiński et al., 2020). It has been suggested that having a sense of purpose in life has numerous advantages for both psychological and physical health (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). According to research, the majority of people have at least some understanding of the sources of meaning since they can describe an archetypal meaningful existence and articulate the meaning in their own lives when prompted. We also know that the most common references to meaningful relationships are those with family and friends (e.g., Debats, 1999). Recently, Wissing et al. (2020) confirmed that family, interpersonal relations, spirituality/religion, and community/society are meaningful sources that provide meaning in life for Ghanaians and South Africans. Nonetheless, the importance and significance of specific relationships may vary depending on cultural context and life situatedness (Khumalo et al., 2012; Thomas et al., 2017). Delving deeper into what constitutes meaning and promotes wellbeing for African students in GULF countries is rare as far as we know. However, evidence has established that having a sense of purpose in life is good for wellbeing because it makes people happier (Cohen & Cairns, 2012), more satisfied with their lives (Kashdan & Steger, 2006), more positive (King et al., 2006), and less anxious, depressed, and ruminative (Debats et al., 1993; Steger et al., 2008).

In addition, studies have shown that the degree of significance of one’s sources of meaning and the degree of the commitment that one has to those sources have an impact on one’s general state of

wellbeing (Battista & Almond, 1973). According to research, on average, people cite six highly important sources of meaning (De Volger-Ebersole & Ebersole, 1985; Prager, 1996). Human relationships, creativity, personal development, relationship with nature, religiosity/spirituality, and social/ political beliefs are the six traits described in the research of O'Connor and Chamberlain (1996).

People who have a sense of meaning and purpose in life are better able to look past their current problems and comprehend the difficulties and challenges they face (Krause, 2003). Such realizations can support optimism and a fulfilling existence. For instance, researchers have discovered favorable relationships between optimism and meaningfulness in life in both older adults and cancer patients (e.g., Krause, 2003; Thompson & Pitts, 1993). Positive affect in university students is reliably predicted by meaning in life (Pan et al., 2008; Zika & Chamberlain, 1987).

Kessler and Essex (1982) proved that psychological anguish is more prevalent among people with a lower socioeconomic standing. A substantial body of research conducted in Western countries explains the impact of physical health, personality, life events, financial level, and culture on PWB. A comparison of individualistic and collectivistic cultures demonstrates that the Eastern culture appreciates other parts of PWB such as pleasant relationships with others, whereas the Western culture values self-oriented aspects of psychological wellbeing such as self-acceptance and autonomy. Furthermore, the research explains that determining people's life experiences and their interpretation of these events provide useful ways of understanding human differences.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is typically defined as an influential factor in individual wellbeing and is usually defined in terms of occupation, income, and education. According to Pearlin (1989), a person's wellbeing can be significantly affected by the social arrangements and structures of their lives and the recurring experiences that they have with these social elements. People with higher levels of education suffer lower levels of psychophysiological distress (Kessler & Essex, 1982; Ross & Mirowsky, 1989). Education is one of the social elements that influences physical wellbeing and PWB. People with poor socioeconomic levels may experience psychological issues, most likely because they lack the ability to handle stressful situations such as parent bereavement, illness, unemployment, and academic failure. According to Lynch and Hunter (1997), the socioeconomic position of the parent directly influences the health and social behavior of these people.

In such circumstances, meaning making becomes vital for optimal health functioning (Park & Folkman, 1997). According to the meaning-making model, when faced with stressful circumstances, people tend to address them by reevaluating the circumstances and looking for a more optimistic perspective of the circumstances and their implications (Park & Ai, 2006). Although there are some contradictions (e.g., Bonanno et al., 2005), the results of numerous studies suggest that meaning making is advantageous for psychological adjustment (Park & Park, 2016). The meaning-making process allows people to reframe their negative experiences more positively (Sears et al., 2003). In fact, Ejoke et al. (2022) found that meaning making alleviates stress and contributes to the promotion of wellbeing in the African migrant population. They stress in their scoping review that a lack of meaning-making may lead to the loss of cultural and spiritual identities and the loss of a sense of control of the world, creating intense distress among the migrant population (Ejoke et al., 2022).

To promote the wellbeing of African migrant students in the UAE, it is essential to address their emotional, physical, and psychological needs. Based on the supporting literature, it is argued that meaning-making and socioeconomic wellbeing are important elements of resilience.

Despite the outstanding body of scholarly work that is undoubtedly essential to the informed discussion regarding AI students, there is a paucity of research that examines the requirements of this demographic from a human rights perspective. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

**H1:** *There is a significant relationship between age, meaning in life, sources of meaning, (order, self-actualization, self-*

*transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness), and the social wellbeing of African migrant students in the UAE.*

**H2:** *Meaning in life and sources of meaning significantly predict the social wellbeing (social actualization, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration) of African migrant students in the UAE.*

**H3:** *Sex and nationality have a significant influence on social wellbeing among students in the UAE.*

## Methodology

The study employed the quantitative method of survey research. Since 2018, 1 694 students from 70 countries have registered in the UAE's higher education institutions with scholarship programs, including 650 female students. Among them were 725 African male and female students from various Emirati universities. In this study, these African students were considered AI students in the UAE. Purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015) was the most convenient method for selecting the respondents and accepting all hypotheses. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of our University. Moreover, the research respondents were provided with sufficient information to decide regarding their participation in the research, and informed consent was obtained before sending the questionnaire.

## Sample Results

Table 1 below presents the socio-demographics of the respondents.

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographics of Respondents (N = 400).

Variable	Category	Frequency
Age	Mean age (24.28 years)	
	SD (5.75)	
Sex	Male	160 (40.0)
	Female	240 (60.0)
Educational Qualification	Diplom	59(14.7)
	BSc	261(65.3)
	Postgraduate	80(20.0)
Country of Origin	Kenya	11(2.8)
	Somalia	56(14.0)
	Nigeria	37(9.3)
	Ethiopia	21(5.3)
	United Kingdom	5(1.3)
	Sudan	26(6.8)
	The Gambia	5(1.3)
	Ghana	11(2.8)
	Senegal	5(1.3)
	Niger	21(5.3)
	Angola	11(2.8)
	South Africa	5(1.3)
	Uganda	78(19.5)
	Egypt	5(1.3)
	Tunisia	32(8.0)
	Morocco	21(5.3)
	Cameroon	27(6.8)
	Libya	11(2.8)
	Algeria	11(2.8)

Duration of stay in host country	1–6 years	7–11 years	316(79.0)
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Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample. The mean age of the respondents was 24.28 years ( $SD = 5.75$ ). It was observed that females represented 60% of the sample while males represented 40%. Their educational qualifications showed that 14.7% had a diploma, the majority (65.3%) had a BSc, and 20% had postgraduate education. Respondents' countries of origin revealed the following: 2.8% were from Kenya, 14% were from Somalia, 9.3% were from Nigeria, 5.3% were from Ethiopia, 1.3% were from the United Kingdom, 6.8% were from Sudan, 1.3% were from The Gambia, 2.8% were from Ghana, 1.3% were from Senegal, 5.3% were from Niger, 2.8% were from Angola, 1.3% were from South Africa, 19.5% were from Uganda, 1.3% were from Egypt, 8% were from Tunisia, 5.3% were from Morocco, 6.8% were from Cameroon, 2.8% were from Libya, and 2.8% were from Algeria. Respondents' duration of stay in the host country demonstrated that 79% have stayed between one year and six years while 21% have stayed between seven years and eleven years.

## Procedure

In the present study, to ensure the ability to read and understand the questionnaire, 50 migrant students from our University with different nationalities, different ages, and different educational qualifications completed the questionnaire in a pilot study. In total, 37 complete and suitable questionnaires were returned, and the survey was modified accordingly for use in the current study. The data collection process was conducted over four months, from October 2022 to January 2023. Having gained prior Institutional Review Board approval, web links were created to collect the data online.

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, the need for which was previously emphasized by Podsakoff, and Organ (1986) and Podsakoff et al. (2003). After numerous follow-up contacts, a total number of 450 questionnaires were received with a response rate of 69.3%. However, after filtering the collected questionnaires, 400 were found suitable for final data analysis, representing 66% of the total targeted number of questionnaires.

## Measures

Demographic data on sex, age, educational qualification, duration of stay in host country, and country of origin were obtained from the study respondents through a demographic questionnaire.

### *Social Wellbeing Scale Short-Form (Keyes, 1998)*

The Social Wellbeing Scale Short-Form (SWS-SF) is a 15-item scale that measures five aspects of how people perceive their social functioning. A six-point Likert scale measuring agreement is used for the response. Social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, and social coherence are the dimensions of the scales, and each is assessed using three items. According to Keyes (1998), social integration is the quality of an individual's relationship with their community and society together with their sense of belonging. Social coherence is the perception of a well-organized social system with persistent elements. Having positive opinions of others and feeling comfortable around them is referred to as social acceptability; this broad category is an assessment of society based on the traits and characteristics of other individuals. Social contribution is about feeling important, effective, and valuable in society as a member, and social actualization believes, institutions and people are assisting people in achieving their potential in society. Reliability of the scale was established in the present study, and the Cronbach's alpha was .084.

### *Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006)*



A 10-item survey that measures two aspects of meaning in life, the presence of meaning (how much respondents feel their lives have purpose) and the search for meaning (how much respondents strive to find meaning and understanding in their lives), was employed to gather information from the respondents. Respondents rated each statement on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being 'Absolutely True' and 7 being 'Not at all True' (Absolutely Untrue). The Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .910.

### ***Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Schnell, 2009, 2010)***

A total of 151 items make up the Sources of Meaning and Meaning in Life (SoMe) questionnaire. The questionnaire offers a precise evaluation of both meaningfulness and crisis of meaning and enables a highly differentiated measurement of the 26 sources of meaning. The response options range from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' with a score of 0 to 5. The scale has four categories (1) Self-transcendence: The act of committing to goals that go beyond one's present needs; (2) Self-actualization: Making use of, enhancing, and pushing one's abilities; (3) Order: Maintaining moral principles, common sense, decency, and the tried-and-tested; and (4) Wellbeing and Relatedness: Developing and taking delight in life's joys in solitude and with others. The Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .995.

## **Results**

**H1:** *There is a significant relationship between age, meaning in life, sources of meaning, (order, self-actualization, self-transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness) and the social wellbeing of African migrant students in the UAE.*

This hypothesis was tested using zero-order correlation, which helped to determine the direction (+/-) and strength (weak/strong) of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Sources of meaning had four dimensions (order, self-actualization, self-transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness). Social wellbeing had five dimensions (social actualization, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration).

**Table 2:** Mean, Standard Deviation, and Relationships Among Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	26.72	7.20	--										
2. Meaning in life	52.15	10.13	.189	--									
3. Order	87.05	16.04	-.032	.539**	--								
4. Self-actualization	152.81	28.14	.004	.515**	.966**	--							
5. Self-transcendence	122.92	24.16	.032	.525**	.936**	.959**	--						
6. Wellbeing & relatedness	148.52	27.89	-.012	.526**	.967**	.970**	.948**	--					
7. Social Actualization	9.19	9.19	-.068	-.227	-.356**	-.391**	-.443**	-.416**	--				
8. Social Contribution	9.25	2.72	-.115	-.180	-.127	-.095	-.141	-.156	.183	--			
9. Social Acceptance	8.36	8.36	-.123	-.387**	-.175	-.159	-.191	-.202	.258*	.453**	--		
10. Social Coherence	9.09	3.07	-.043	-.414**	-.168	-.146	-.161	-.200	.153	.469**	.781**	--	
11. Social Integration	8.75	2.97	-.001	-.310**	-.179	-.106	-.151	-.182	.236*	.370**	.659**	.733**	--

**Note:** \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SD- standard deviations

The bivariate correlation results in Table 2 show that meaning in life has a statistically significant relationship with order ( $r = .54$ ,  $p < .01$ ), self-actualization ( $r = .51$ ,  $p < .01$ ), self-transcendence ( $r = .53$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and wellbeing and relatedness ( $r = .53$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Meaning in life has an inverse significant relationship with social acceptance ( $r = -.39$ ,  $p < .01$ ), social coherence ( $r = -.41$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and social integration ( $r = -.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Order significantly correlated with self-actualization ( $r = .97$ ,  $p < .01$ ), self-transcendence ( $r = .94$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and wellbeing and relatedness ( $r = .97$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and significantly but negatively correlated with social

actualization ( $r = -.36, p < .01$ ).

Moreover, there was a statistically significant association between self-actualization and self-transcendence ( $r = .96, p < .01$ ), self-actualization, and wellbeing and relatedness ( $r = .97, p < .01$ ) and a significant negative correlation between self-actualization and social actualization ( $r = -.39, p < .01$ ).

Self-transcendence also had a significant relationship with wellbeing and relatedness ( $r = .95, p < .01$ ) but a significant negative relationship with social actualization ( $r = -.44, p < .01$ ).

Wellbeing and relatedness had a significant negative relationship with social actualization ( $r = -.42, p < .01$ ).

Social actualization significantly correlated with social acceptance ( $r = .26, p < .05$ ) and social integration ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ). Social contribution significantly correlated with social acceptance ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ), social coherence ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ), and social integration ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). Furthermore, social acceptance significantly correlated with social coherence ( $r = .78, p < .01$ ) and social integration ( $r = .66, p < .01$ ). Lastly, social coherence significantly correlated with social integration ( $r = .73, p < .01$ ).

*H2: Meaning in life and sources of meaning significantly predict the social wellbeing (social actualization, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration) of African migrant students in the UAE.*

This was tested using path analysis generated from Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS). Only variables with an established relationship (through zero-order correlation) were included in the analysis. The results are contained in Figure 2 and Table 3.

**Table 3:** Summary Table of the Direct Effect of Meaning in Life and Sources of Meaning on Social Wellbeing.

			$\beta$	SE	CR	p
Social actualization	<---	Order	.79	.050	1.79	.07
Social actualization	<---	Self-actualization	.36	.03	.69	.50
Social actualization	<---	Self-transcendence	-.77	.03	-2.10	.04
Social actualization	<---	Wellbeing and relatedness	-.80	.03	-1.65	.10
Social acceptance	<---	Meaning in life	-.39	.02	-3.61	***
Social coherence	<---	Meaning in life	-.41	.03	-3.91	***
Social integration	<---	Meaning in life	-.31	.03	-2.80	.01

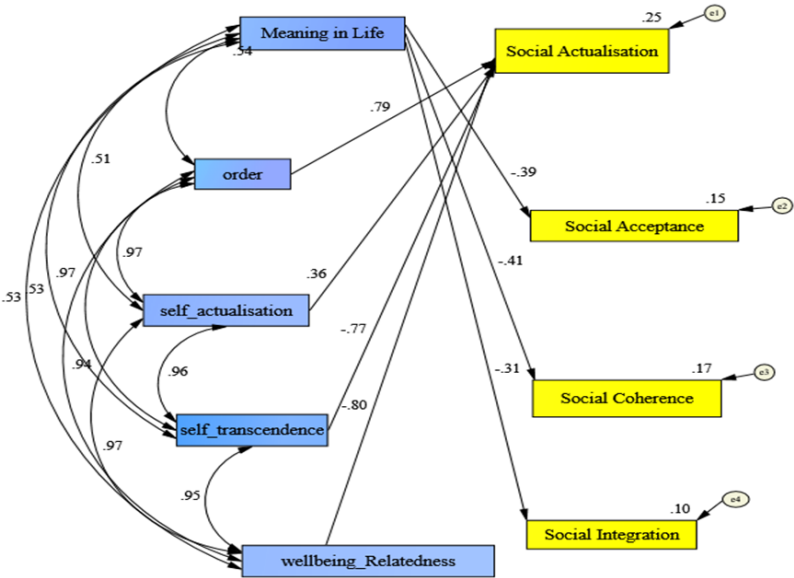
The results show that when order (source of meaning) improves by 1 standard deviation, social actualization (social wellbeing) improves by .79 standard deviation. When self-actualization (source of meaning) goes up by 1 standard deviation, social actualization (social wellbeing) improves by .36 standard deviation. When self-transcendence (source of meaning) improves by 1 standard deviation, social actualization (social wellbeing) goes down by .77 standard deviation. In addition, when wellbeing and relatedness (source of meaning) improves by 1 standard deviation, social actualization (social wellbeing) goes down by .80 standard deviation. Furthermore, when meaning in life improves by 1 standard deviation, social acceptance (social wellbeing) goes down by .39 standard deviation, social coherence (social wellbeing) goes down by .41 standard deviation and social integration (social wellbeing) goes down by .31 standard deviation. Order, self-actualization, self-transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness account for 25% variations in social actualization. Meaning in life accounts for 15% variation in social acceptance, 17% variation in social coherence, and 10% variation in social integration.

**H3:** *Sex and nationality will have a significant influence on social wellbeing among students in the UAE.*



This was tested using a t-test for independent measure and one-way ANOVA. The results are presented below in Table 4.

**Figure 2:** Direct Path of Meaning in Life, Sources of Meaning, And Social Wellbeing.



**Table 4:** Summary Table Showing the Influence of Sex and Nationality on Social Wellbeing.

DV	Sex	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Social wellbeing	Male	30	46.73	9.60	1.50	.493
	Female	45	43.24	10.01		
Social wellbeing	Sum of squares		df	Mean square	F	p
	Between Groups		2338.523	18	129.91	1.46 .139
	Within groups		4968.757	56	88.72	
	Total		7307.280	74		

The result of the t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in the social wellbeing between the male and female students  $t(73) = 1.50, p > .05$ . This implies that being a male or female student does not account for any significant difference in social wellbeing. In addition, there was no significant influence of nationality on the social wellbeing of migrant UAE students ( $F[18, 56] = 1.46, p > .05$ ).

## Discussion and Conclusion

The current research examined the various psychosocial factors that predicted the overall social wellbeing of African migrant students in the UAE. Examining the meaning and purpose of one's life can help migrants and others to adjust psychologically to a new environment. It is concluded that meaning in life and all four dimensions of sources of meaning (order, self-actualization, self-transcendence, and wellbeing and relatedness) are significantly correlated with social wellbeing. Meaning in life and sources of meaning significantly predict the social wellbeing (social actualization, social contribution, social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration) of African migrant students in the UAE. This result is supported by the studies of McLean and Mansfield (2010) and Sutin et al. (2010). It appears that those who report meaning making generally fare better psychologically than those who do not.

In this study, sources of meaning and self-actualization are significantly related to the student's life. The current research revealed that meaning derived from order (i.e., one's values, practicality, and decency), self-actualization (i.e., the ability to engage in challenging tasks and the fostering of one's capacities), self-transcendence (i.e., commitment to goals beyond one's immediate need), and wellbeing and relatedness (i.e., engaging and enjoying life's pleasures in privacy and relatedness) facilitated the promotion of wellbeing. These four sources were highly endorsed by the sample, indicating that they are salient domains of meaning that are predictably related to the achievement of greater social wellbeing in African migrant students living and studying in the UAE. This finding is consistent with prior studies (Schnel, 2009, 2010; Wissing et al., 2020), which found a connection between sources of meaning and wellbeing. The findings indicated that sources of meaning need to be culturally meaningful to the individual before they can have a positive influence on their wellbeing, particularly in their specific contextual situatedness. This finding is not surprising because the sample comprised African migrants whose meaning constructions are determined through a satisfactory relationship with the ecosystem, including healthy communal living, positive family relationships, spirituality/religion, ancestral connections, and achievement (Mbiti, 1991; Wissing et al., 2020). Moreover, positive emotions and relationships constitute wellbeing for African people (Greenaway et al., 2018; Wissing et al., 2021).

Maslow held the notion that struggle is essential to human growth. "We must learn to enjoy the pains of the higher life and of creation, or real issues, rather than pseudo-problems," (Maslow, 1996, p. 22). In other words, experiencing true happiness necessarily implies challenges. He added that it is natural for people to seek improvement, and it is human nature for people to move beyond a position of contentment (Maslow, 1996). Maslow argues that self-actualizing individuals happily embrace life's difficulties and that these hardships are in fact magnificent in comparison with the true miseries of boredom, loneliness, and an empty life (Maslow, 1996).

Furthermore, the present study showed that meaning in life predicted social wellbeing. However, the sample endorsed only the domains of social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration. Therefore, it seems that meaning originating from the remaining two domains of social wellbeing, social actualization and social contribution, is not significant to migrant students in the UAE. A sense of self-acceptance, self-efficacy, social coherence, and social integration are important domains for achieving social wellbeing (Martela & Steger, 2016). The fact that meaning in life predicted social acceptance, social coherence, and social integration in the African sample in the present study was expected. It is consistent with research that found meaning to predict wellbeing positively (Keyes, 1998; Mbiti, 1991). Being an African sample, a positive relationship with the community and society is critical in promoting positive wellbeing. A sense of belonging, trust, and integration into the community is important for an African person. This finding supports the research of Ejoke et al. (2022), which revealed that a sense of belonging, and integration are critical factors for integration and adaptation to the host environment. These aspects enable people to believe that they have control over their lives, particularly their interactions and immediate environment. In this situation, it is reasonable that those with strong self-acceptance, social coherence, and social integration would likely have higher levels of wellbeing.

The current study did not observe any significant difference in social wellbeing based on sex or nationality. In a recent study, meaning making was found to be positively correlated with PWB among late teenage boys but not among early adolescent boys, which aligns with the findings of McLean et al. (2010). The construction of more coherent and emotionally expressive narratives is linked to better levels of wellbeing, according to research on expressive writing with adults; however, further analysis of this effect suggests that males may gain more than females (Smyth, 1998), and writing about unpleasant circumstances such as bereavement may have the opposite effect on wellbeing. I personally believe that Wong's, P. T. P. (1998) Implicit theories of meaningful life is quite practical, as he mentioned, generativity is the source of meaning that is most closely linked to meaningfulness.

Furthermore, generativity is the most reliable indicator of meaningfulness when compared to all other sources of meaning. Given that generativity is a really self-transcending commitment, these results support the idea that dedicating oneself to goals beyond one's immediate needs can have a meaningful impact. Consequently, it can be said that while there are many different methods to find meaning in life, having the capacity and the desire to transcend oneself will increase the likelihood of doing so and which is the truth.

The current research findings support the UAE government's mission of happiness and its goal to increase happiness scores among the people living in the country. Such studies will allow counselors and mental health professionals to incorporate meaning-making and sources of meaning into a cognitive behavioral model to help their clients. However, the present researchers communicated very little about how this should come to fruition in the migrant student's life. Moreover, the findings of this study support the country's larger goal of being among the top-five happiest countries in the world. As the UAE continues to develop happiness initiatives, it is critical to consider top-notch graduate programs in positive psychology across all universities in order to make it easier for both employees and employers to focus on happiness. Higher education as a prerequisite for employment in happiness roles would guarantee that the UAE's vision for happiness is executed effectively and sustainably. Additionally, this would guarantee that happiness permeates society on all levels, including students and migrants from different countries who can also act as catalysts for this social change.

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## Conflict of Interest

All authors declare no conflicts of interest. The research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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