

WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure v2.0

Organisational Wellbeing & Performance
Study



Acknowledgements

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- Professor Chua Hong Choon, *CEO, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital & Yishun Hospital*
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- Professor Niki Ellis, *Occupational and Public Health Physician*
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- Clarence Ti, *Deputy President, National University of Singapore*

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WorkWell Leaders

WorkWell Leaders (WWL), a registered charity and Institution of a Public Character in Singapore, is dedicated to transforming workplace culture by placing mental health and employee wellbeing at the core of business leadership. Bringing together C-suite leaders across sectors, WWL drives collective action and thought leadership to build healthier, more human-centric organisations. It has reached thousands of leaders nationwide and regionally and its community of members now represent over 185,000 employees in Singapore alone.

Learn more at <https://www.workwellleaders.org/>

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Foreword

Singapore's success story has always been grounded in its people. With nearly 70% of residents aged 15 and above participating in the workforce ¹, a reflection of how integral work is to our society, human capital remains the nation's most vital asset. Globally, the way we care for and develop this workforce has become more than a social responsibility—it is an economic and strategic imperative.

Even as the average number of hours worked per week has been on a downward trend ², Singapore still holds the dubious honour of being the most overworked country in the Asia-Pacific region ³. The demands of work continue to be unrelenting, which underscores a pressing need for more effective strategies to create a thriving workforce and society.

This urgency is echoed at the national level. The launch of the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy by the Singapore Government in 2023 was a pivotal step that signalled for the first time, a whole-of-society commitment to addressing mental health as a critical social concern ⁴. It reflects a growing recognition that mental wellbeing cannot be siloed—it must be integrated into the systems we live and work within. Working individuals stand out as the most consequential segment for change, as improvements in their mental health and wellbeing directly benefit their families and communities.

In recent years, discussions on wellbeing in the workplace have evolved beyond a purely moral consideration to become a business imperative. A growing body of research points to a significant return on investment when employees experience better wellbeing ^{5,6}. However, a gap in our understanding remains. The specific mechanisms—actions, strategies and leadership behaviours—that drive this impact are poorly understood.

Compounding this challenge is the lack of conceptual clarity in the field. Research on wellbeing in the workplace has long been mired in a conceptual jungle, with terms like 'employee wellbeing', 'worker wellbeing' and 'wellbeing at work' often used interchangeably despite their distinct meanings. In particular, the concept of organisational wellbeing has received scant attention. When it is discussed, it is often mischaracterised as the sum of individual wellbeing, overlooking the fact that organisations are composed of interdependent building blocks: individuals, teams and leaders.

Crucially, the effectiveness of traditional wellbeing interventions, such as confidential counselling, yoga classes and wellbeing apps, is increasingly being questioned ⁷ even as more funds are being channelled into these programmes ⁸. Meanwhile, changes in global standards, regulations and legislation reflect a growing consensus on the need for structured approaches to wellbeing in the workplace. The rise of sustainability and responsibility reporting has likewise positioned organisational wellbeing as a crucial element of responsible and sustainable business practices.

Together, these developments make it clear that wellbeing must transition from a peripheral HR function to a strategic priority championed by the highest echelons of leadership.

Founded in 2018, WorkWell Leaders (WWL) is the only Singapore-based non-profit collective of CEOs and leaders to champion mental health and organisational wellbeing as a strategic and leadership priority to benefit employees, communities and society. WWL began with a bold intuition: that organisational wellbeing is central to leadership and business sustainability.

Over the past six years, WWL has engaged over 3,300 CEOs and their teams through leadership-focused forums, community advocacy events and the national WorkWell Leaders Awards. Today, WWL brings together almost 80 member organisations, representing over 187,000 employees in Singapore.

Now, with the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure, we move from intuition to actionable insight. In an unprecedented undertaking, the study examines over 200 factors to definitively pinpoint the specific drivers of organisational wellbeing and performance. The findings are striking and the message is clear: behaviours, not programmes, drive organisational wellbeing and performance. With this insight, we move with intention towards impact.

Beyond enriching academic discourse, the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure provides organisations with a first-of-its-kind, science-backed roadmap to invest in wellbeing with greater intention and confidence. While grounded in local research, the implications of the study extend far beyond the borders of Singapore.

As a collaboration between WorkWell Leaders, a collective of forward-thinking leaders across multinational companies, and the National University of Singapore, a world-renowned institution, this White Paper embodies our shared ambition to contribute to global thought leadership while staying deeply rooted in the realities of our region.

This White Paper is just the beginning of a long, ongoing effort to lift wellbeing to the top of organisational agendas everywhere. We recognise fully that the impact of this study may take time to materialise, but we stay steadfast in our pursuit of lasting change. The

ideas shared in this White Paper are intended to be living and responsive, shaped by ongoing research, practitioner feedback and the evolving needs of our society.

Through this process of continuous learning, we will keep pushing the boundaries of research and practice alike. In this spirit of growth and collaboration, let us commit to building a future where wellbeing is not an afterthought, but a cornerstone of how we work, lead and succeed.

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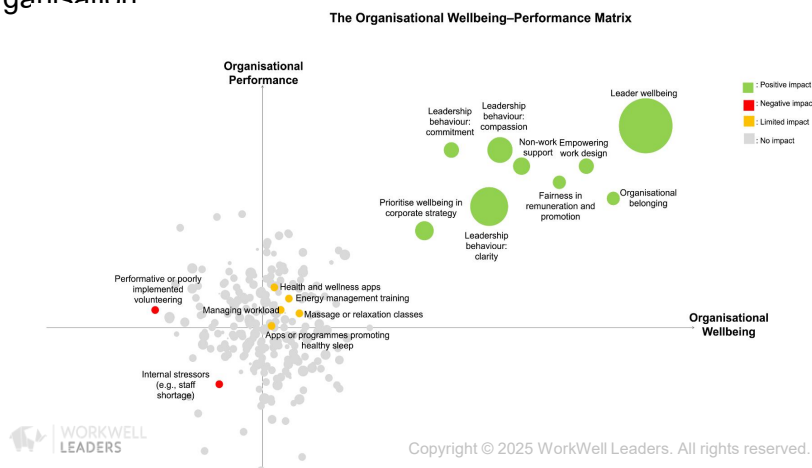


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Executive Summary

As CEOs and Boards worldwide look to the future, the question is not whether to invest in the wellbeing of workers, but how to do so in ways that are consequential. The WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure is the first comprehensive and large-scale study to pinpoint the most influential drivers of both organisational wellbeing and performance. It examines over 200 factors spanning more than 40 categories, from personal characteristics and leadership behaviours to organisational strategies and societal pressures. In doing so, it does not just confirm that wellbeing affects the bottom line; it reveals how and where it matters most.

Notably, the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure departs from traditional approaches that centre on individual-level constructs like employee or worker wellbeing. Instead, it focuses on organisational wellbeing, the collective state that emerges from the interconnected wellbeing of its core components: individuals, teams and leaders. This multi-level approach fills a major gap as existing research often overlooks the complex ways wellbeing is experienced across an organisation



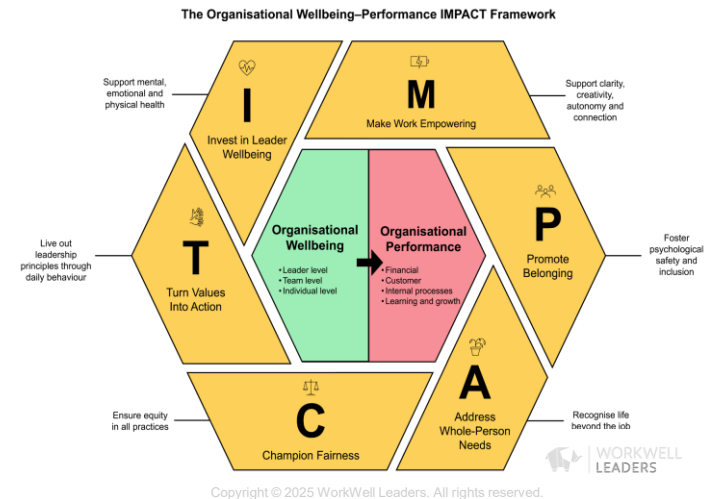
This White Paper reveals several critical insights:

- **Investing in wellbeing is not just the right thing to do; it is a smart business move.** Of over 200 factors explored, organisational wellbeing emerged as the single most important driver of organisational performance.
- **To be well is to lead well.** The wellbeing of leaders is the most influential driver of organisational wellbeing, and the third most influential driver of organisational performance. Leader wellbeing is 56 times more effective in shaping organisational wellbeing than stress management and resilience programmes. It is also 11 times more effective in shaping organisational performance than employee participation in stress management or resilience programmes, and four times more effective than wellbeing apps. CEOs and Boards must **invest in leader wellbeing**.
- **It is not about how much people work; it is about whether the work works for them.** To foster organisational wellbeing, work must be intentionally designed to be empowering. Providing clarity around roles and responsibilities is 120 times more impactful for organisational wellbeing than simply managing workload or time pressure. Likewise, ensuring that employees have a chance to use a variety of skills is 119 times more effective than just keeping workloads manageable. CEOs and Boards must **make work empowering**.

- **Belonging beats remuneration.** Fostering psychological safety—especially by allowing employees to be their authentic selves at work—is nine times more effective at enhancing organisational wellbeing than offering performance bonuses. CEOs and Boards must **promote belonging**.
- **Supporting the whole person creates a win-win situation.** Providing support for employees beyond the workplace—such as for caregiving, personal development, retirement planning and bereavement—boosts organisational wellbeing profoundly. Specifically, it is 19 times more effective than stress management classes, and 17 times more effective than wellbeing apps in shaping organisational wellbeing. When it comes to performance, it outperforms stress management classes by 6.5 times and wellbeing apps by two times. CEOs and Boards must **address whole-person needs**.
- **Equity matters more than perks.** Ensuring perceptions of fairness in pay and promotions is six times more impactful than providing commuter benefits in fostering wellbeing, and 46 times more effective than unlimited leave in driving performance. CEOs and Boards **must champion fairness**.
- **What leaders do matters more than what they value.** While leaders may espouse important values such as compassion, courage, commitment and clarity, it is the enactment of these values through day-to-day behaviours that has real impact. Practising compassion, for example, has almost six times as much impact on organisational wellbeing as compared to merely expressing it. CEOs and Boards **must translate values into action**.

Backed by these insights, the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure provides a clear mandate for a paradigm shift in how CEOs and Boards approach wellbeing. It not only identifies what works, but also dispels common myths about the effectiveness of popular but lower-impact solutions like wellbeing apps and programmes.

Moving from insight to impact requires a clear roadmap. To guide this shift, we introduce the Organisational Wellbeing–Performance IMPACT framework—a universally applicable tool for CEOs and Boards worldwide.



The message is clear:

CEOs and Boards must put organisational wellbeing at the heart of performance as the foundation of their leadership ethos. This is a non-negotiable leadership imperative, not a task to delegate to HR—and it begins with leaders modelling wellbeing in their own lives.

1. Background and Context

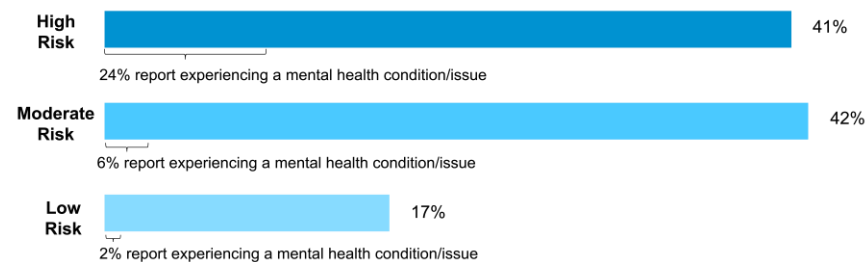


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1.1 The Global Crisis of Wellbeing in the Workplace

The mental health of workers in Singapore is under immense strain. According to the September 2024 edition of the TELUS Mental Health Index ⁹, Singapore's mental health score has dipped to 61.6, a decline of 1.3 points from April 2024. This marks a notable reversal after two years of modest but steady improvements.

Further analysis paints a concerning picture: 41% of workers fall into the high-risk category, 42% into the moderate-risk category and 17% into the low-risk category ⁹. Within these groups, 24% of individuals in the high-risk category, 6% in the moderate-risk category and 2% in the low-risk category report experiencing a mental health condition or issue ⁹.



Source: TELUS Health (2024)

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Globally, the picture is no less troubling. Data from the World Health Organisation showed that approximately 15% of working-age adults worldwide had a mental disorder in 2019 ¹⁰. The 2024 Gallup State of the Global Workplace report revealed a decline in employee wellbeing globally in 2023, denoting a setback after multiple years of steady gains ¹¹. Together, these sobering statistics point to a systemic issue—one that demands urgent, coordinated and evidence-based responses at both organisational and policy levels.

1.2 The Business Case for Wellbeing

Forward-thinking leaders are increasingly recognising employee wellbeing as a competitive edge ^{12,13}. In particular, in a climate of increasing unpredictability—where external factors like global economic shifts ¹⁴, supply chain disruptions ^{15,16} and rapid technological advancements ¹⁷ constrain long-term planning—prioritising internal wellbeing presents a reliable pathway to strategic differentiation.

The business case for this is compelling and extends well beyond improved employee retention and engagement ^{18–20}. Estimates from the McKinsey Health Institute suggest that enhancing wellbeing in the workplace could generate up to \$11.7 trillion in economic value globally ²¹. Research from Oxford University shows that companies with strong wellbeing ratings consistently outperform major market indices such as the S&P 500, Nasdaq 100 and Dow Jones ⁶. In Singapore, a survey of over 500 companies reveals an impressive return of \$5.60 for every \$1 invested in workplace adjustments ²².

On the flip side, the cost of inaction is steep. Symptoms related to anxiety and depression cost Singapore nearly S\$16 billion a year, which translates to approximately 2.9% of its gross domestic product (GDP) ²³. This begs the question: how can Singapore reclaim this loss of 2.9% and redirect it towards enhancing the bottom line of its organisations?

1.3 Beyond Surface-Level Solutions: Limitations of Existing Approaches

Historically, wellbeing initiatives in the workplace were a nice-to-have that existed largely for optics and reputation management. Organisations would adopt such initiatives largely to project an image of care and responsibility to investors, shareholders or consumers rather than to provide meaningful support to employees ²⁴. Often termed ‘wellbeing washing’, this approach involves deploying superficial wellbeing initiatives as a marketing ploy rather than a genuine investment in employees’ mental, emotional and physical health ²⁴.

Over the years, employers across both public and private sectors have grown more attuned to the importance of promoting mental health in the workplace ²⁵. Today, interventions such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), peer support networks and training on stress management are standard offerings in many organisations. However, the effectiveness of such interventions is now facing growing scrutiny ^{26,27}.

An Oxford study involving 46,336 workers observed that individual-level workplace wellbeing interventions, such as mindfulness classes and wellbeing apps, had minimal impact on wellbeing. There can be a variety of reasons ²⁸. First, these interventions place the onus of wellbeing squarely on the employee. Such an approach neglects the systemic organisational factors that contribute to stress in the first place. Second, many of these interventions are put in place under the assumption that employees require “fixing”. This perspective overlooks the integral role of organisational culture and leadership in fostering a healthy work environment. Third, participation in these interventions usually adds to employees’ already demanding workloads, thus exacerbating rather than alleviating stress.

Ultimately, though vital, traditional interventions to promote wellbeing like EAPs, peer support networks or group bonding activities, tend to address problems only after they arise. Notably, companies are beginning to realise the problems with this reactive approach and are shifting towards proactive strategies, like providing training in mental health literacy and tracking mental health metrics ²⁹.

Today, interventions such as Employee Assistance Programmes, peer support networks and training on stress management are standard offerings in many organisations. However, though vital, such interventions tend to address problems only after they arise. Companies are beginning to realise the problems with this reactive approach and are shifting towards proactive strategies, like providing training in mental health literacy and tracking mental health metrics.

1.4 Catalysts for Deepening Organisational Wellbeing

Changes in legislation and regulatory frameworks have galvanised companies into moving beyond superficial efforts and integrating wellbeing into their organisational fabric³⁰. New international standards such as ISO 45003:2021 and ISO 45004:2024 provide frameworks for managing psychosocial risks in the workplace. More governments are formalising flexible work arrangement policies³¹, mandating employers to offer options that support mental health and life demands.

At the same time, expectations regarding sustainability and responsibility reporting are evolving to encompass wellbeing, not just within the social domain³², but also under environmental and governance considerations⁸. Companies are also starting to incorporate wellbeing metrics into inclusion and belonging audits and to engage employee resource groups (ERGs) in shaping wellbeing strategies^{33,34}. Collectively, these developments indicate greater recognition that wellbeing in the workplace should never be a peripheral issue, but a fundamental pillar of sustained organisational success.



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1.5 The Critical Role of Leadership

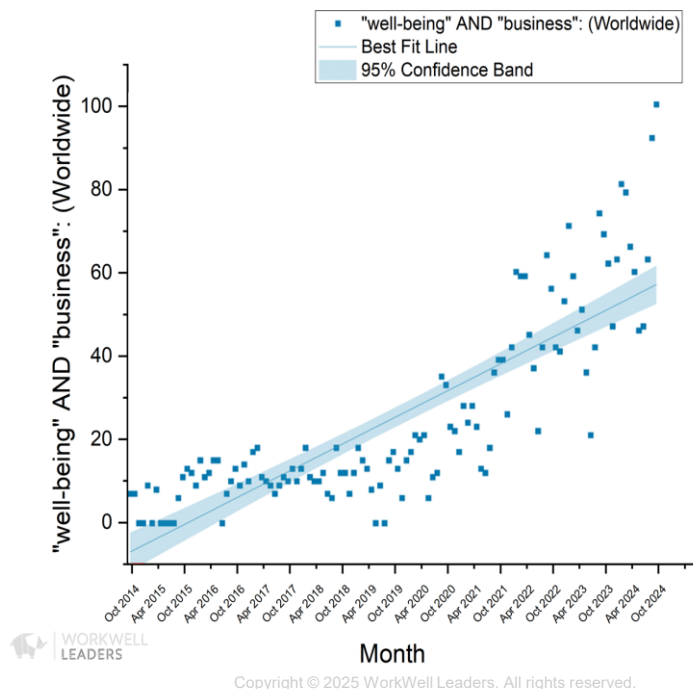
HR practitioners in Singapore are among the most proactive in promoting workplace wellbeing compared to their regional counterparts ²⁹. However, the utilisation rate of wellbeing resources remains among the lowest in the ASEAN region ²⁹. This disconnect underscores the need for wellbeing to be championed beyond HR and embedded at the leadership level. At present, 64% of organisations in the ASEAN region provide mental health and wellbeing training for executives and managers. Only 34% discuss mental health at the board level, while 51% integrate wellbeing into their core purpose and strategy ²⁹. Just 39% of organisations factor mental health criteria into leadership evaluations ²⁹.

While the role of leadership in promoting wellbeing is of utmost importance, the wellbeing of leaders themselves warrants equal consideration. The 2024 State of Workplace Empathy Study by Businessolver uncovered that 55% of CEOs experienced a mental health issue in the past year ³⁵. This underlines the reality that the very individuals tasked with fostering healthy workplaces are themselves susceptible to mental health challenges. Such issues can deplete a leader's cognitive and emotional resources, thus jeopardising their ability to lead effectively and nurture a thriving environment for employees ³⁶.

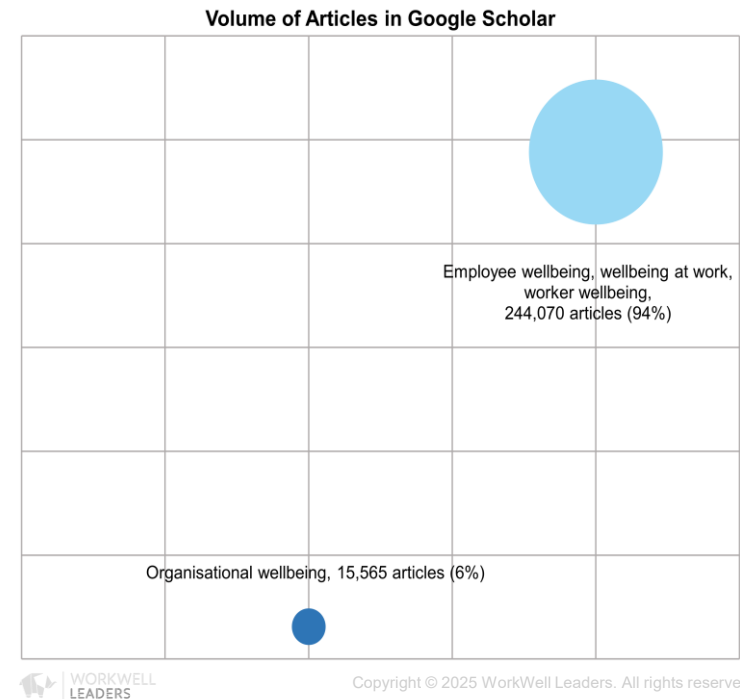
1.6 Shifting Gears: From Employee to Organisational Wellbeing

Literature on wellbeing in the workplace setting has been characterised as a “conceptual jungle”³⁷. This is largely because terms like ‘employee wellbeing’, ‘worker wellbeing’, ‘wellbeing at work’ and ‘organisational wellbeing’ are used interchangeably despite their distinct meanings. Organisational wellbeing, in particular, distinguishes itself from these other terms by shifting the focus from the individual to the organisation as a whole³⁸.

Public interest in organisational wellbeing has risen steadily over the years. Specifically, the number of Google searches on the topic increased 19-fold between 2014 and 2024.



Notwithstanding this burgeoning interest, organisational wellbeing remains under-explored in research. A review of articles on Google Scholar reveals that only 6% of articles tackle this concept. Furthermore, the few that have done so often fall into the trap of treating it as the aggregate of individual wellbeing^{38,39}—a fundamentally flawed premise. Organisational wellbeing is a complex, multi-layered construct that encompasses not just individual employees, but also teams and leaders.



Note: The selected search terms accounted for variations in spelling, including regional differences (e.g., *organisational*, *organizational*) as well as hyphenated (e.g., *well-being*) and non-hyphenated (e.g., *wellbeing*) forms.

1.7 WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure

The WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure was conceived as part of WorkWell Leaders' broader contribution to national, regional and global workplace wellbeing efforts. Unlike previous research that focused on isolated components—such as the effectiveness of individual-level programmes or the impact of leadership styles—this study adopts a systems-informed approach grounded in positive psychology. Systems-informed positive psychology holds that individuals exist in dynamic, interdependent relationships with themselves, others and their environment. This sense of interconnectedness—or 'inter-being'—emphasises that one's existence is shaped by the broader systems in which one is situated ⁴⁰.

For the first time in Singapore, the Asia-Pacific region and potentially globally, this study examines the interplay of a wide range of factors, including leader wellbeing, leadership behaviours, work design, organisational culture and broader macro-level influences. In doing so, it moves beyond a narrow focus on the individual to offer a more holistic understanding of the organisation as a system. Crucially, rather than assessing each factor in isolation, the study explores how multiple elements interact to influence both organisational wellbeing and performance. This integrated perspective frames wellbeing not as a collection of standalone initiatives, but as part of a coordinated set of drivers collectively shaping organisational outcomes.

Organisational wellbeing is not simply the sum of individual employee experiences. Rather, it is the convergence of wellbeing across three interdependent levels: the individual, team and leader. These levels form the foundational pillars of any organisation, each contributing uniquely and collectively to the organisation's overall state of wellbeing.

This conceptualisation marks a fundamental shift by reframing wellbeing not as a matter of personal coping or self-care, but as an organisational condition determined by systemic factors.

The PERMA+4 framework—encompassing positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, physical health, mindset, environment and economic security—provides the basis for measuring wellbeing at each level ^{39,41}. This approach directly addresses a key gap in existing scholarship: the lack of systems-level frameworks that account for the multidimensional nature of wellbeing in the workplace.



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Organisational performance can be understood through four perspectives ⁴². The Financial perspective includes measures of profit generation, sales growth and market share. The Customer perspective focuses on customer and client satisfaction, marketing effectiveness and product or service quality. The Internal Processes perspective covers innovation and development, organisational wellbeing, employee relations and management–employee relations. Finally, the Learning and Growth perspective assesses talent attraction and employee retention.

This structure allows for a balanced and multidimensional assessment of how the organisation is performing across key strategic areas.



At its core, the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure seeks to answer three questions:



Does enhancing organisational wellbeing lead to tangible improvements in organisational performance?



What are the most influential drivers—whether at the individual, leadership, organisational or external level—of organisational wellbeing?



Which leadership factors have the greatest impact on organisational wellbeing?

The WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure comes on the back of over a century of progress in work-related wellbeing. From the establishment of the International Labour Organisation in 1919 to the introduction of global frameworks like ISO 45001 and the WHO Guidelines on Mental Health at Work, efforts to safeguard and enhance employee wellbeing have evolved in response to various social, economic and health phenomena. Figure 1 highlights pivotal moments that have influenced the global understanding of wellbeing at work, culminating in the launch of the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure—the first science-backed, systems-level study of the drivers of organisational wellbeing.

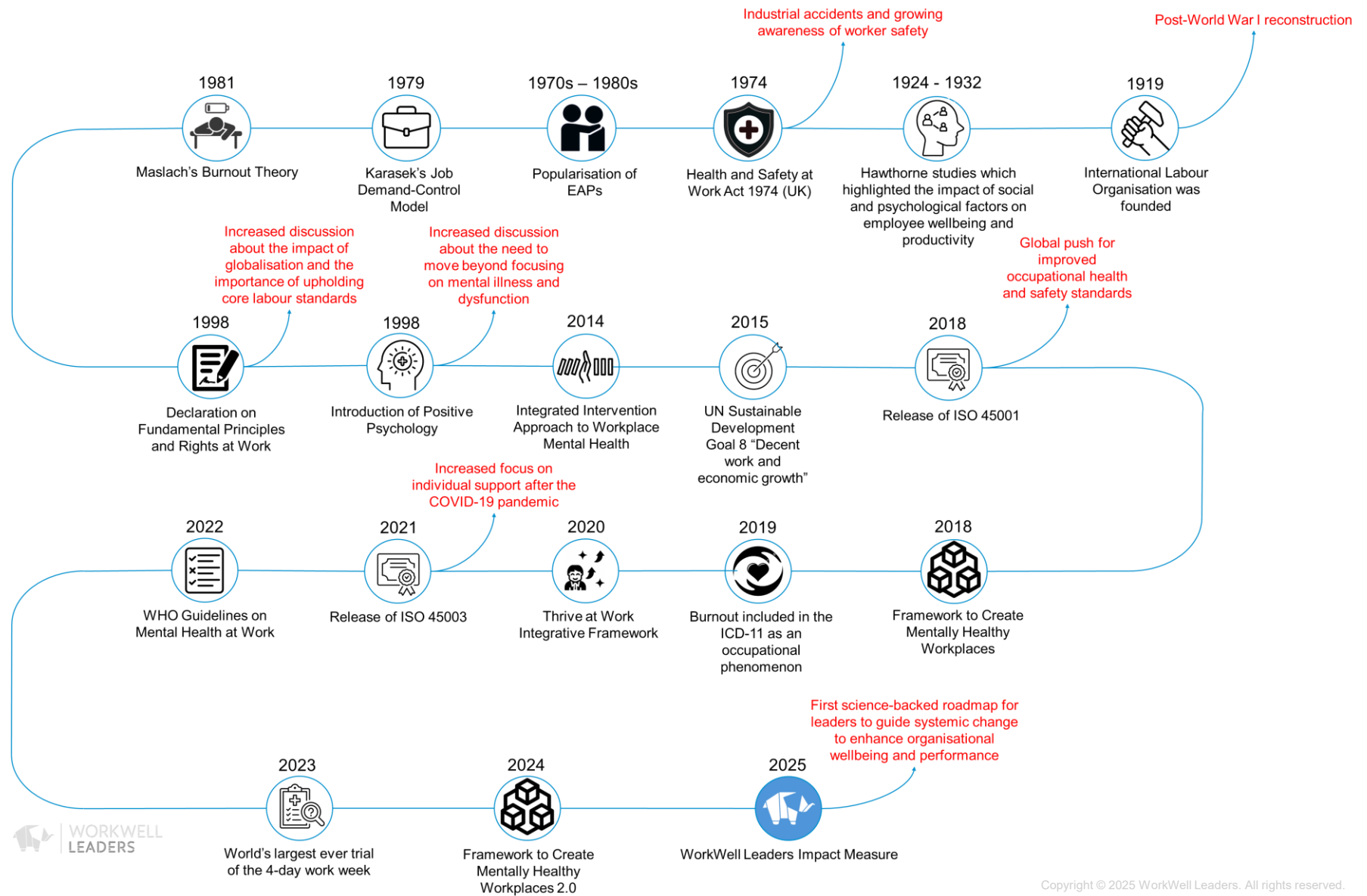


Figure 1. Pivotal moments that have shaped the global understanding of wellbeing in the workplace.
Sources are provided at the end of the References chapter.

2. Project Approach and Methodology



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The WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure was developed through four key phases.



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2.1 Pre-Phase 1: Ideation and Fundraising

To initiate the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure, an extensive ideation phase was undertaken to fine-tune the purpose and scope of the study. This involved the development of a primary methodology to ensure a rigorous and meaningful approach.

A dedicated WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure Working Group was convened to provide diverse expertise and perspectives. This group comprised key stakeholders from across the ecosystem, including public sector leaders responsible for workplace mental health, international experts in organisational design as well as representatives from academia and the private sector.

Throughout this phase, the Working Group played a critical role in refining the primary hypothesis and shaping the overall direction of the study. This ensured the design remained robust, relevant and aligned with the goal of advancing organisational wellbeing and leadership impact.

Targeted fundraising was also carried out to secure the necessary resources for implementation.

2.2 Phase 1: Knowledge Synthesis of Public and Expert Sources

Phase 1 involved synthesising existing knowledge on wellbeing in the context of work, drawing from both academic and grey literature published both locally and internationally. The goal was to develop a strong foundational understanding of current developments, emerging trends and dominant narratives in the field. During this process, particular attention was paid to identifying certain gaps in existing literature. These gaps informed the design of a model blueprint in Phase 2.

Identified Gap and Research Need	Model Response
The need to move beyond the 'individualist fallacy' in research on organisational wellbeing	The model takes a systems-informed approach, viewing organisational wellbeing as a product of the wellbeing of individuals, teams and leaders.
The need to expand research on leadership in relation to wellbeing	The model enriches existing research by incorporating a set of 'Leadership-Level Factors' including leaders' values/practices, personal wellbeing and work design. This approach recognises the critical role leaders play in driving both organisational wellbeing and organisational performance.
The need to embed wellbeing in strategy and not just programmes	The model addresses emphasises the role of 'Organisational-Level Factors', including the integration of wellbeing into organisational purpose and corporate strategy. Meanwhile, programmes are treated as baseline organisational characteristics rather than as primary drivers of organisational wellbeing.
The need to look at the whole person rather than just the employee	The model includes 'Individual-Level Factors', focusing specifically on 'Life Acts', which refers to the provision of targeted support for employees in areas of their lives beyond the traditional work environment.
The need to examine the impact of external forces on wellbeing	The model incorporates 'External Factors', such as macroeconomic uncertainty and technological advancements, recognising their impact on an organisational outcomes and overall wellbeing.
The need to recognise that wellbeing cannot be addressed through a one-size-fits-all approach	The model is designed to be context-sensitive, accounting for variations in organisational characteristics such as size and sector, thereby allowing for the development of more tailored wellbeing strategies.

2.3 Phase 2: Development of Organisational Wellbeing Model Blueprint

Building on insights distilled from both local and international sources in Phase 1, this phase focused on developing a model blueprint that would inform the design of the survey.

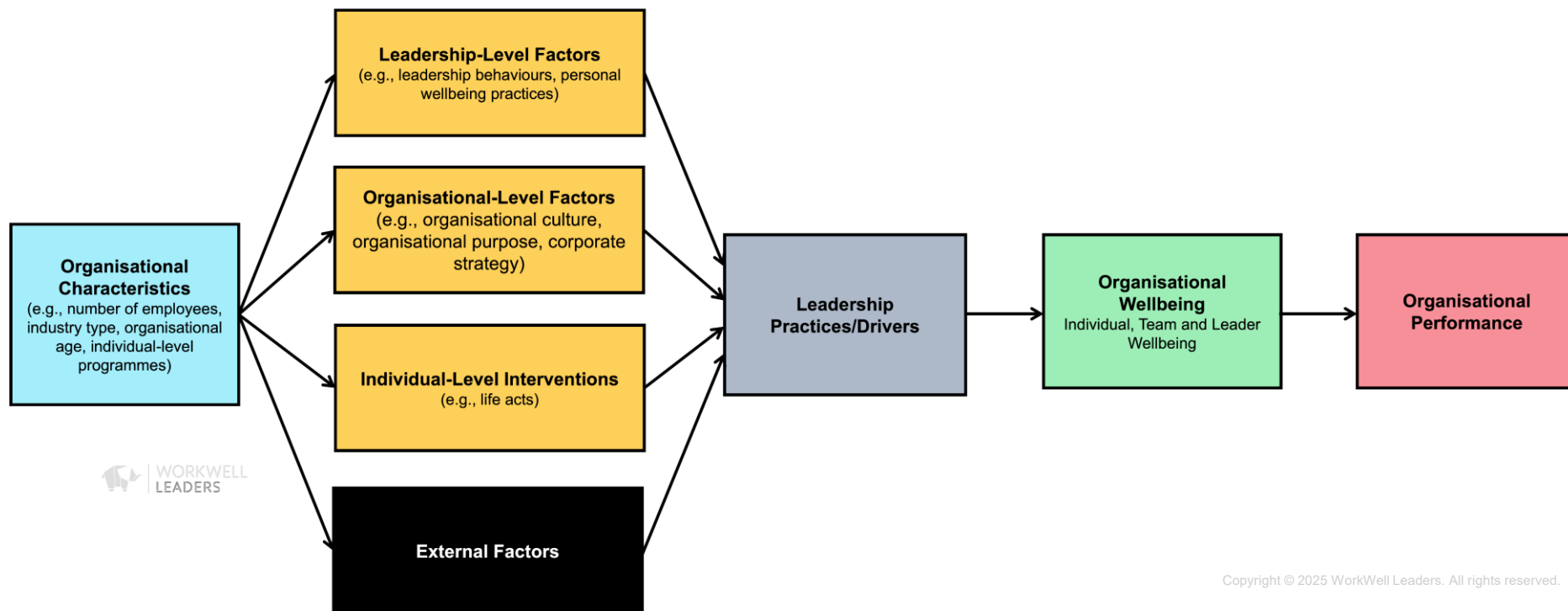




Photo: Jason Goodman

During Phase 2, the co-leads of the project conducted a workshop at the Global Mental Health (GMH) in Asia 2025 Symposium, hosted by the SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute. This workshop presented an opportunity to test a component of the survey, the Leadership Value-Practice Alignment Framework, on 40 participants from the mental health sector across the Asia-Pacific region. The positive feedback garnered from attendees confirmed the validity of the construct. Further details on the workshop activities and feedback are in Appendix 1.



2.4 Phase 3: Survey Covering Over 200 Factors Across More than 40 Categories

Phase 3 involved the design and deployment of a national survey. This survey incorporated a blend of well-established and newly developed scales. To facilitate detailed analysis across different segments, participants were recruited from a range of organisational contexts, including large enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and workplaces with both blue-collar and white-collar employees. A total of 2,481 responses were included in the final analysis. The survey was organised into five sections. In total, over 200 factors across more than 40 categories were examined. Appendix 2 contains additional information on the constructs covered.

Section	Focus Area	Factors
1	Organisational Characteristics	Organisation size, type, industry, structure, employee's role, management level, department, work arrangements, presence of wellbeing policies and performance metrics
2	Leadership-Level Factors	Leadership values, leadership practices and leaders' personal wellbeing
3	Organisational Wellbeing	Individual, team and leader wellbeing
4	Organisational Performance	Product/service/programme quality, product/service/programme innovation, employee attraction, employee retention, customer/client satisfaction, management–employee relations, employee–employee relations, organisational well-being, marketing, sales growth, profitability, market share
5	Organisational-Level Factors, Individual-Level Factors	Organisational-Level Factors: Organisational belonging, perceived fairness, stigma towards mental illness in the workplace, quiet quitting, organisational purpose, corporate strategy, organisational stress
		Individual-Level Factors (Life Acts): Provision of support across caregiving, pet care, financial literacy, retirement planning, bereavement and grief, health and wellness, personal development
6	External Factors	Macroeconomic uncertainty, social movements, technological advancements, geopolitical instability, legislative changes, global standards and compliance requirements, investor sentiment, market competitiveness
7	Demographic Factors	Age, gender, race, religion, marital status, personal income, educational background

Organisational and Demographic Diversity of Sample

The survey respondent pool represented a robust and diverse cross-section of Singapore's working population.

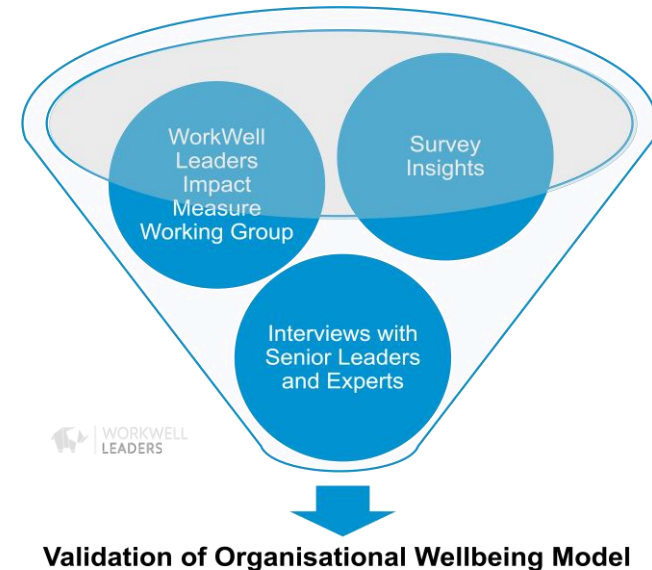
Organisationally, participants were well represented across different levels of management, organisational size, types of workforce and industry, resulting in a balanced and inclusive sample. The sample also included individuals from organisations with both local and international operations, making the findings relevant beyond Singapore.

Demographically, the sample closely approximated national distributions across key characteristics such as age, gender and race, ensuring the insights are representative of the broader Singapore populace.

Further details on the organisational and demographic breakdown can be found in Appendix 3.

2.5 Phase 4: Model Validation Using Survey Insights and Expert Opinions

The model blueprint was validated through both survey insights and expert input. Expert input was gathered from the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure Working Group and senior leaders and experts.



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Interviews were held with senior leaders and experts who influence the wellbeing landscape both in Singapore and internationally. Braun and Clarke's method of thematic analysis^{43,44} was used to analyse the interview data. Additional details on the interviews are in Appendix 4.

The recommendations in Chapter 3 are informed by a global knowledge synthesis, survey responses, expert insights and learnings from entries to the annual WorkWell Leaders Awards.

3. Findings and Recommendations



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3.1 Leadership Commitment to Wellbeing is Limited

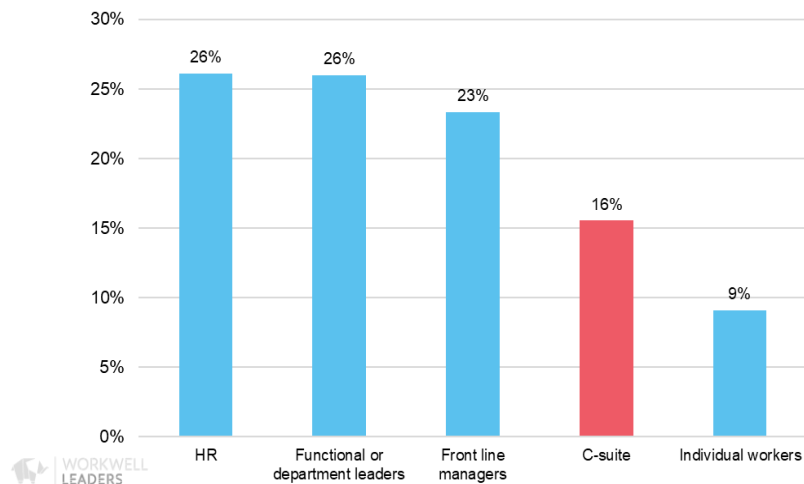
Leaders See Wellbeing Through Rose-Tinted Lenses

Perceptions of organisational wellbeing are strongly influenced by an employee's position within the hierarchy. Senior, middle and junior management have a much more positive view of the organisation's state of wellbeing compared to non-management—a pattern echoed in studies globally ⁴⁵. This disconnect can erode trust and create complacency around addressing wellbeing.

Leaders Are Not Taking Accountability for Wellbeing

Beyond gaps in perceptions, the question of accountability is even more concerning. Only 1 in 6 respondents (16%) identified the C-suite as the primary entity responsible for wellbeing initiatives.

Group primarily responsible for driving wellbeing within the organisation

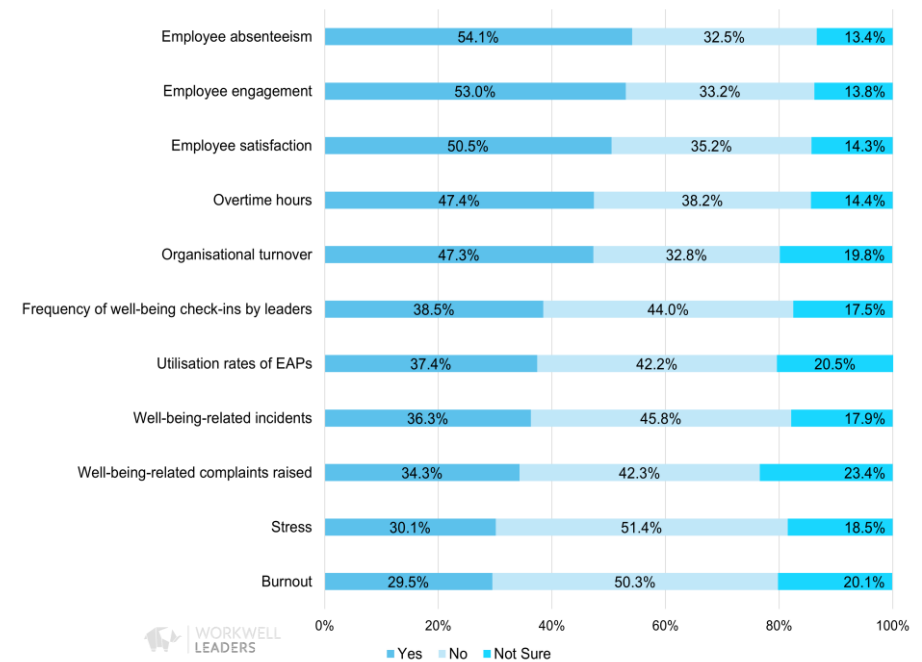


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Leaders Are Not Integrating Wellbeing into Performance Tracking

The integration of wellbeing into organisational performance measurement remains inadequate. Unless wellbeing is tracked alongside other performance metrics, employees will not view it as a true leadership priority.

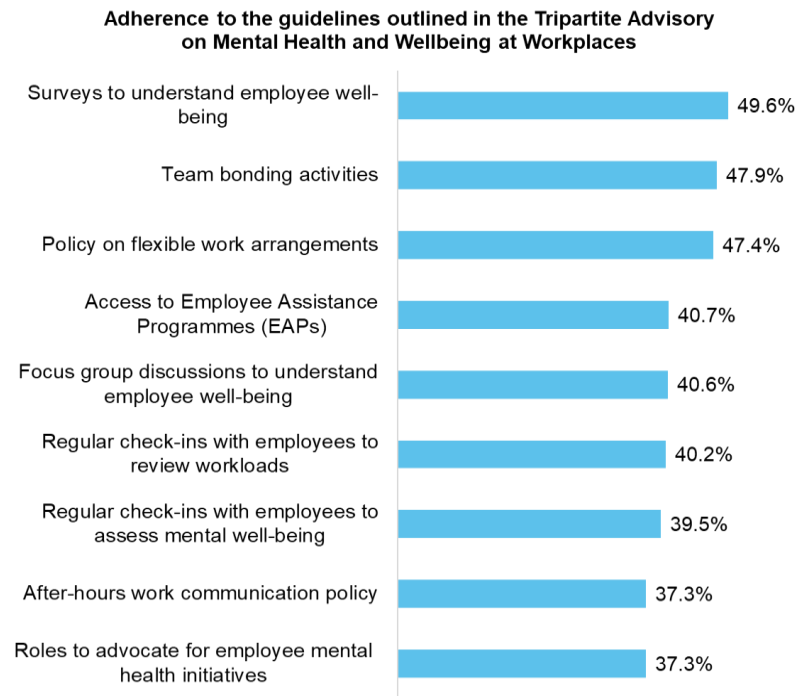
Tracking of metrics related to wellbeing in organisations



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Leaders Are Not Fully Adhering to National Wellbeing Guidelines

Adherence to the guidelines outlined in the national Tripartite Advisory on Mental Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces ⁴⁶ is partial. The adoption rates for key recommendations mostly hover around 40% to 50%, indicating that leaders have yet to fully commit to creating the conditions needed to support wellbeing. These recommendations are broadly representative of wellbeing programmes globally.



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3.2 The Organisational Wellbeing–Performance Matrix

The Organisational Wellbeing–Performance Matrix illustrates the impact of more than 200 factors, covering over 40 categories, on organisational wellbeing and performance. Grey denotes factors with no material impact on organisational wellbeing and/or performance. Yellow denotes interventions traditionally considered effective but found to have limited impact. Green represents factors that drive organisational wellbeing and/or performance, while red represents factors that undermine both.

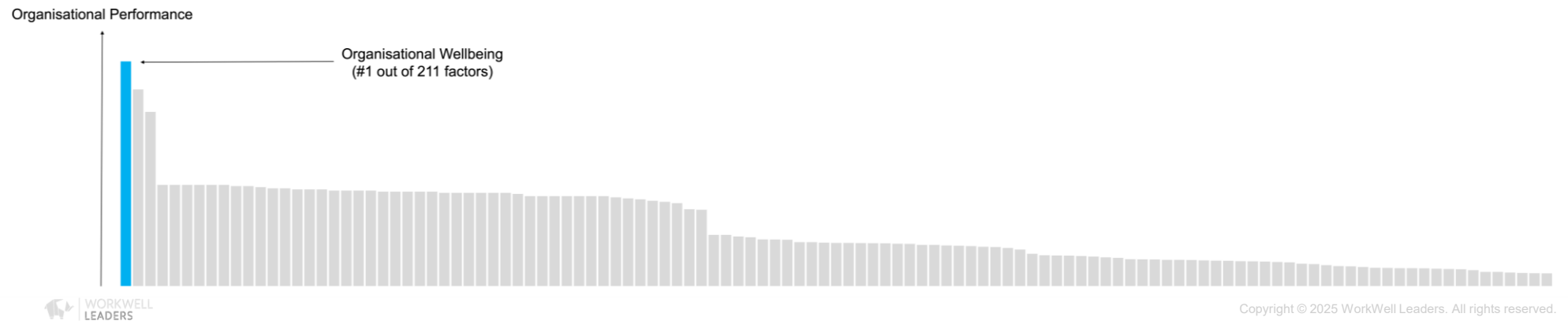


The factors in green are not standalone solutions; rather, they operate as part of an interconnected system, amplifying each other when aligned. In essence, organisational wellbeing and performance arise not from isolated actions, but from the coordinated application of multiple, reinforcing drivers. The findings that follow should be seen as part of an integrated leadership approach—one that positions wellbeing as a foundation for performance.

3.3 Leaders Should View Organisational Wellbeing as a Must-Have, Not a Nice-to-Have

Among the 211 factors analysed, organisational wellbeing stood out as the single most powerful driver of organisational performance ^a. This reinforces a crucial point: wellbeing is not just a nice-to-have; it is a performance multiplier.

Factors Influencing Organisational Performance



^a Although organisational wellbeing emerged as the most significant driver of organisational performance, it is important to note that the study did not examine the full range of factors influencing organisational performance, such as resources, work quality or operational processes. While external influences like macroeconomic uncertainty and technological advancements were considered, the other factors analysed were primarily related to wellbeing.

3.4 Focus Areas for Leaders to Drive Wellbeing and Performance

IMPACT Lever #1: Invest in Leader Wellbeing

Among the 210 factors analysed, leader wellbeing emerged as the most influential driver of organisational wellbeing. Remarkably, it is 56 times more effective than stress management or resilience programmes, and 50 times more effective than wellbeing apps.

A leader is defined as anyone in a managerial position, whether at junior, middle or senior management levels. Leader wellbeing refers to a leader's psychological and emotional health, characterised by a sense of purpose, strong social connections, active engagement, personal competence and optimism about the future ⁴⁷.

Leaders who feel fulfilled, competent and connected create the conditions for their organisations to thrive. Their state of wellbeing directly shapes the organisational climate, influencing team morale, psychological safety and overall performance ⁴⁸.

Leader wellbeing is the

#1

driver of organisational wellbeing
out of over 200 factors



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What Should Leaders Do?

Leaders must make wellbeing an integral part of their leadership ethos, embedding it into how they lead every day rather than viewing it as a responsibility to delegate to HR. This starts with taking personal ownership of their own wellbeing: cultivating a strong sense of purpose, committing to continuous self-growth and fostering meaningful, supportive relationships within and beyond their teams. Leaders should also model optimism and integrity by embracing vulnerability and encouraging open dialogue. Equally important is designing a sustainable work life through setting healthy boundaries, managing workload effectively and prioritising rest and reflection. By actively investing in their own wellbeing, leaders not only enhance their capacity to lead effectively, but also set a powerful example that moulds the culture of the organisation.

“

I need to care for myself before I can care for others, and others will care for me in return, creating a virtuous cycle.”

— C-suite leader

This table outlines ways for leaders to invest in their own wellbeing.

IMPACT Recommendation #1: Invest in Leader Wellbeing	
Leadership Focus	Leadership Actions
Cultivate purpose and growth	- Regularly reflect on and articulate personal purpose and values, aligning them with organisational direction - Commit to continuous self-development (e.g., seek 360-degree feedback with a wellbeing lens, pursue learning opportunities that stretch their perspectives)
Strengthen meaningful connections	- Actively build and nurture supportive relationships both at work (e.g., peer learning circles, mentor other leaders) and outside work - Dedicate time to support and uplift others' wellbeing, reinforcing a culture of mutual care
Foster optimism and integrity	- Engage in regular self-reflection and coaching to foster self-acceptance, integrity and optimism - Show vulnerability and be approachable, inviting honest feedback and authentic conversations
Design and guard a sustainable work life	- Set personal boundaries around work, model realistic work hours and prioritise rest - Make conscious choices to delegate or redesign tasks to maintain energy and engagement

IMPACT Lever #2: Make Work Empowering

The SMART work design model ⁴⁹ identifies five elements of effective job design: Stimulating (S), Mastery (M), Agency (A), Relational (R) and Tolerable Demands (T). Four of these elements—stimulation, mastery, agency and relational elements—greatly enhance organisational wellbeing.

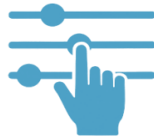
In particular, designing work to foster a sense of control (M) improves organisational wellbeing 120 times more than merely managing workload or minimising time pressure (T). Creating engaging roles (S) boosts wellbeing 119 times more than simply ensuring workloads are manageable (T).

120x

Designing work to facilitate a sense of control improves organisational wellbeing 120 times more than merely managing workload



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There is a wealth of evidence that attributes burnout to demanding work conditions, such as heavy workloads and intense time pressure ⁵⁰⁻⁵². However, findings from this study suggest a different perspective: to truly support wellbeing, work must be empowering—designed to engage, challenge, enable and connect people. Elements like stimulation, mastery, agency and relational connection serve as protective factors that buffer against high demands while actively promoting wellbeing.

119x

Creating engaging roles boosts wellbeing 119 times more than simply managing workload



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What Should Leaders Do?

Leaders should play an active role in shaping work design, beginning with their own direct reports to set the tone that creating empowering work is a leadership responsibility at every level. Senior leaders must model this by co-creating roles with their teams, providing clear guidance, offering stimulating challenges and fostering strong, supportive team dynamics. They should also equip other leaders to do the same by developing their ability to balance autonomy with coaching, enable ownership of meaningful projects and deliver timely, constructive feedback. Embedding these expectations into performance conversations will also reinforce that designing empowering work is a core part of leadership, not an optional extra.

This table outlines ways for leaders to make work empowering.

IMPACT Recommendation #2: Make Work Empowering	
Leadership Focus	Leadership Actions
Set the tone through direct reports	• Model the design of empowering work directly with teams to signal it as a core leadership responsibility • Support leaders at all levels to co-create roles with employees based on evolving strengths • Integrate discussions about work design and empowerment into conversations about performance and development
Actively review work design	• Use pulse surveys or team retrospectives to gather feedback on job design • Re-allocate tasks to ensure balance between routine and growth-focused work
Foster stimulating work	• Assign diverse projects, through job rotation or cross-functional tasks, to keep work engaging and challenging • Create opportunities for problem-solving, like innovation challenges or continuous improvement initiatives • Encourage and allocate time for creative, self-directed work (e.g., innovation sprints)
Enable a sense of mastery	• Clearly define roles and expectations during onboarding and regular reviews • Provide ongoing, constructive feedback through frequent one-on-ones and 360-degree feedback • Enable employees to own projects end-to-end to build a sense of accomplishment
Cultivate agency	• Offer flexible work arrangements to increase employee control over time • Allow teams to select their own collaboration tools and work methods to fit their needs • Balance autonomy with support: provide guidance and coaching without micro-managing
Strengthen relational elements	• Participate in team-building activities to strengthen bonds and trust • Promote peer mentoring and buddy systems to build informal support networks • Support employee-led groups and foster collaborative workflows that create shared purpose

IMPACT Lever #3: Promote Belonging

Organisational wellbeing is significantly strengthened when employees feel they can be themselves at work. In fact, being able to be oneself is nine times more effective at promoting organisational wellbeing than offering performance bonuses, and seven times more effective than using apps to promote healthy sleep.

Fostering a sense of belonging is

9x more effective
at enhancing
organisational
wellbeing than

offering performance bonuses



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What Should Leaders Do?

Leaders should promote belonging by actively modelling inclusive behaviours and cultivating an environment where employees feel valued, heard and free to be themselves. When leaders champion psychological safety and encourage authentic expression, they deepen connection and trust across the organisation.



Work needs to be fun and nourishing. We set up a *kiasu* committee where a judge is appointed and wears a wig. A jury is formed with junior staff. Anyone can challenge any company policy. If the jury is convinced and the judge rules in favor, the policy is deemed too *kiasu* and slated for change.”

— C-suite leader



We began a meeting ritual called ‘Raccoon Time’ where people could voice concerns about what might go wrong. This ritual permeated everyday speech, with people saying, ‘I’m being a racoon. What if...?’ Raccoon Time provided the psychological safety needed to speak up.”

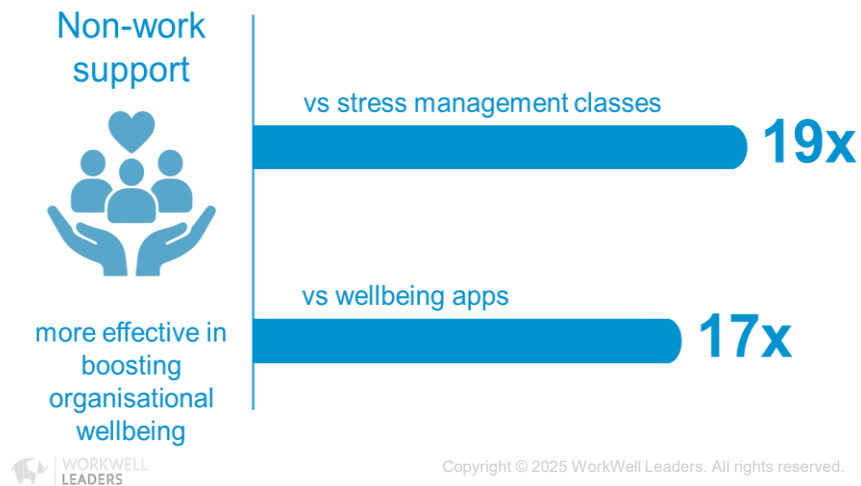
— C-suite leader

This table outlines ways for leaders to promote belonging.

IMPACT Recommendation #3: Promote Belonging	
Leadership Focus	Leadership Actions
Model inclusive norms	• Model openness and vulnerability by sharing personal experiences and encouraging authenticity in meetings and interactions • Actively invite diverse viewpoints and reinforce that differing opinions are valued • Acknowledge and appreciate unique strengths and contributions publicly • Support flexible ways of working and explicitly signal acceptance of different work and communication styles • Recognise and celebrate personal milestones and cultural events important to team members
Encourage feedback and growth	• Facilitate regular team check-ins to understand individuals' comfort and sense of belonging • Have one-on-one conversations to align growth opportunities with individuals' strengths and personal values rather than just job titles • Provide constructive, strengths-based feedback that highlights contributions • Encourage employees to take ownership of their personal development paths and create space for exploration • Set the tone by constructively receiving feedback and showing openness to challenge • Regularly ask for feedback on psychological safety and team dynamics • Publicly support employees who speak up to demonstrate that voicing different views is both safe and valued

IMPACT Lever #4: Address Whole-Person Needs

Support for employees beyond the workplace plays a powerful role in shaping both organisational wellbeing and performance. Specifically, such support is 19 times more effective than stress management classes and 17 times more effective than wellbeing apps in boosting organisational wellbeing. When it comes to organisational performance, it is 6.5 times more effective than stress management classes and twice as effective as wellbeing apps. Essentially, investing in the whole person is not just compassionate leadership; it is sound business strategy.



What Should Leaders Do?

Leaders should adopt a whole-person mindset, recognising that employees have needs and aspirations beyond work and engaging with them as whole people. By championing flexibility and empathy, leaders help people balance work with family, health, personal growth and other life priorities. Finally, by modelling openness and sharing their own experiences as whole people, leaders create a culture where others feel safe to do the same.



If you want employees to bring their full selves to work, leaders need to take care of employees holistically, which means addressing aspects of life that are not work-related.”

— Leadership expert

This table outlines ways for leaders to address whole-person needs.

IMPACT Recommendation #4: Address Whole-Person Needs	
Leadership Focus	Leadership Actions
Adopt a whole-person mindset	Understand that employees have needs and aspirations beyond work and engage with them as whole people
Champion flexibility and empathy	Create a culture where flexibility is normalised and personal challenges are met with understanding rather than judgement, for example, by being open to individualised adjustments
Model openness	Proactively share personal experiences—including challenges, priorities and wellbeing practices—as a whole person to signal to others that it is safe for them to do the same

IMPACT Lever #5: Champion Fairness

Perceptions of fairness, particularly in remuneration and promotion opportunities, are critical in boosting both organisational wellbeing and performance. In particular, ensuring perceptions of fairness is six times more impactful than providing commuter benefits in fostering wellbeing, and 46 times more effective than unlimited leave in driving performance.

Ensuring perceptions of fairness in pay and promotions

6x

more effective in driving
organisational wellbeing



vs commuter benefits

46x

more effective in driving
organisational performance



vs unlimited leave



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When employees feel their contributions are fairly recognised and rewarded, it fosters engagement, trust and commitment, all of which contribute to greater wellbeing⁵³. Likewise, when employees believe opportunities for growth are distributed fairly, a positive feedback loop is created: fairness drives engagement, which in turn drives performance⁵³⁻⁵⁵.



Managing recognition and unconscious bias is critical in building trust and driving engagement.

— C-suite leader

What Should Leaders Do?

Leaders should champion fairness by proactively creating transparent systems, encouraging open dialogue, demonstrating personal approachability and ensuring equitable practices grounded in data. By personally owning conversations and practices around fairness, leaders nurture trust and reinforce a culture of meritocracy and inclusion.

This table outlines ways for leaders to champion fairness.

IMPACT Recommendation #5: Champion Fairness	
Leadership Focus	Leadership Actions
Set an example with your own team	- Actively demonstrate fair and transparent practices with direct reports to show what fairness looks like in action - Regularly revisit these practices to ensure they stay aligned with evolving team needs
Model and drive transparency	- Clearly communicate pay structures and promotion criteria so employees understand how decisions are made and perceive processes as fair - Ensure leaders at all levels are mindful of unconscious biases, apply fair and unbiased decision-making and actively intervene when inequities arise
Foster open communication	- Personally engage with employees by providing platforms for them to give feedback and ask questions about remuneration and promotions - Be visible and approachable so employees feel safe raising concerns about fairness and discussing career aspirations directly
Ensure equitable practices	- Regularly benchmark compensation against industry standards - Conduct audits to identify disparities and ensure decisions on pay and promotions are grounded in objective data rather than subjective bias

IMPACT Lever #6: Translate Values into Action

The true measure of leadership lies not in what leaders say or believe, but what they do. Courage, Compassion, Commitment and Clarity are not just abstract ideals; they are expressions of leader wellbeing made visible through behaviours. These four principles were examined both as values and practices.

Courage, as a value, means believing in doing the right thing even when it is difficult. As a practice, it involves addressing difficult truths, challenging norms, creating space for dissent and sharing vulnerabilities. Compassion, as a value, is about caring for others' and one's own wellbeing. As a practice, it involves encouraging self-care, supporting team wellbeing, balancing empathy with accountability and mentoring others.

Commitment, as a value, reflects a personal belief in honesty, integrity and dedication. As a practice, it means following through on promises, taking responsibility during crisis and investing in wellbeing initiatives. Clarity, as a value, is about valuing transparency, purpose and alignment. As a practice, it includes communicating goals clearly, linking tasks to purpose and regularly updating priorities and expectations.

Only Courage and Commitment have a strong impact on organisational wellbeing when held as values. However, when all four are practised consistently, they each have a positive influence on wellbeing. Notably, Compassion, Clarity and Commitment are especially powerful when enacted in everyday behaviours. For instance, Compassion is nearly six times more impactful as a practice than as a value.

These findings reinforce a critical truth: organisational wellbeing is not sustained by good intentions, but by the embodiment of leader wellbeing through values and actions. It is this alignment that enables trust to take root across the organisation.



What Should Leaders Do?

Leaders should move beyond viewing leadership principles as mere aspirations and actively integrate them into daily leadership practice. This involves incorporating them into performance conversations, peer feedback, mentoring and team reflections. Leaders should also be equipped with practical tools, coaching and structured support to help them demonstrate these behaviours consistently. Crucially, they must also ensure all the other drivers of organisational wellbeing are embodied within the organisation.



Talking about values is hard because it's so personal and one risks being vulnerable. I had a boss who was very persistent in explaining and practising the organisation's values, to the point that people started experiencing, living and breathing them. We were in the middle of a difficult restructuring and that bonded everyone."

— C-suite leader



Every month, my CEO would organise a quality campaign where anyone could write anonymously, and he would respond to every letter. I asked him why he would take the time to do this. He said this was the only time he would get the truth and he was committed to getting the truth."

— C-suite leader



For values to be practised, they need to be written down as specific behaviours. The most remarkable example is a 100-year-old Japanese insurance company with a 100-page manual detailing how employees should practise kindness, even in the elevator!"

— C-suite leader

This table outlines ways for leaders to translate values into action.

IMPACT Recommendation #6: Translate Values into Action		
Leadership Principle	Definition	Leadership Actions
Courage	A leader's willingness to be vulnerable, take principled stands and speak openly about difficult issues.	• Share personal experiences with mental health struggles to reduce stigma and encourage openness in others • Speak openly about difficult topics (e.g., inequity, bias) • Defend wellbeing priorities even in the face of limited resources or cultural resistance • Make difficult decisions to protect psychological safety and team morale • Use platforms (e.g., panels, campaigns) to champion bold initiatives aligned with organisational values
Compassion	A leader's ability to care genuinely for the wellbeing of others and their own.	• Schedule regular one-on-one check-ins to offer a safe space for listening and support • Send personalised appreciation messages that acknowledge and celebrate staff efforts • Model self-care visibly (e.g., taking breaks, attending wellbeing sessions) • Host informal chats to build authentic connections • Instead of using distant or formulaic expressions of empathy, communicate genuine support through clear, direct expressions of care (e.g., "I care for you") • Provide flexibility for staff facing personal challenges (e.g., flexible leave, adjusted roles) • Champion inclusive benefits (e.g., mental health days, eldercare leave, no-MC-needed sick leave)

IMPACT Recommendation #6: Translate Values into Action		
Leadership Principle	Definition	Leadership Actions
Commitment	A leader's dedication to embedding wellbeing into organisational systems, structures and culture.	• Build external partnerships that extend impact beyond the organisation, for example, by collaborating with supply chain partners to promote ethical practices, wellbeing standards or inclusive employment • Make skip-level meetings and reverse mentoring a regular part of leadership routines to build trust, promote open dialogue and strengthen organisational culture • Participate in mental health training to build confidence in recognising and responding to employee wellbeing concerns • Establish accountability structures at both department and individual levels by setting measurable goals for teams and incorporating wellbeing objectives into individual performance reviews • Show up consistently for team members in both visible and behind-the-scenes ways • Deliver on promises related to support, inclusion and fairness • Ensure wellbeing is a core agenda item in strategy and decision-making • Role-model integrity by aligning actions with words even under pressure
Clarity	A leader's ability to communicate goals, values and wellbeing expectations transparently and consistently, ensuring alignment across the organisation.	• Communicate the "why" behind decisions to build alignment and motivation • Articulate a compelling vision of how wellbeing and purpose support performance. • Provide transparent updates and metrics on people-related initiatives • Set clear expectations to reduce ambiguity and stress • Reinforce core values consistently across communications, strategy and behaviours • Encourage open feedback loops (e.g., 'Ask-Me-Anything' sessions, suggestion platforms, feedback forums)

3.5 Wellbeing Investments that Miss the Mark

While investment in wellbeing has gained significant momentum, not all initiatives yield meaningful returns. Many well-intentioned programmes that are common globally fall short because they fail to tackle the systemic factors that shape the workplace experience. This section highlights common investments that often miss the mark in driving real improvements in organisational wellbeing.

Individual-Focused Wellbeing Programmes

Many organisations invest in initiatives such as mindfulness programmes, stress management training, lifestyle apps and relaxation sessions. While these are valuable tools for individual stress relief, evidence suggests they have limited impact on organisational wellbeing. By concentrating primarily on individual behaviours, such interventions may overlook underlying workplace conditions—such as workload, role clarity and leadership—that contribute to stress and disengagement. Without addressing these root causes, individual-focused programmes alone are unlikely to yield meaningful improvements in organisational wellbeing.

Recommendations from the Tripartite Advisory on Mental Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces

The national Tripartite Advisory on Mental Health and Wellbeing at Workplaces plays a vital role in raising awareness and offering practical guidance to organisations in supporting mental health. As a national standard, it normalises the integration of various measures—such as employee wellbeing surveys, flexible work arrangements and after-hours communication policies—into everyday workplace practices.

However, while these initiatives are valuable, evidence indicates that on their own they have minimal impact on overall organisational wellbeing. To achieve lasting change, these measures must be part of a holistic strategy that re-imagines the work experience and places wellbeing at the centre of organisational priorities.

Volunteering

Volunteering evinced a negative association with organisational wellbeing. While the benefits of employee volunteerism are well documented ⁵⁶, these positive outcomes are not guaranteed. The impact of volunteering largely depends on how it is perceived and implemented in the workplace. When seen as an added obligation rather than a meaningful opportunity, volunteering can be a source of stress. There is evidence linking certain corporate volunteer activities to emotional exhaustion and burnout ⁵⁷.

Additionally, volunteering can be perceived as window-dressing—a symbolic gesture aimed at burnishing corporate image rather than a genuine commitment to social impact. When employees feel that corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are inauthentic or superficial, it can lead to disengagement and reduced organisational trust ⁵⁷.

Recommendation: To maximise the positive effects of volunteering, leaders should adopt a more structured and intentional approach. An effective strategy involves partnering with specialised third-party organisations to manage volunteering programmes, as seen in many Australian companies ⁵⁸. These partners handle logistics and even facilitate structured reflection, helping employees process and find meaning in their experiences. By integrating reflection and meaning-making, volunteerism can become more meaningful for both individuals and the organisation. This intentional design can also mitigate potential downsides such as burnout.

“

I think intentionality is important. In Australia, the planning and execution of voluntary activities are outsourced to third parties. Perhaps in Singapore, we need to professionalise the conduct of volunteerism.”

— C-suite leader



Photo: Adobe Stock

3.6 Organisational Characteristics Do Not Determine Wellbeing Outcomes

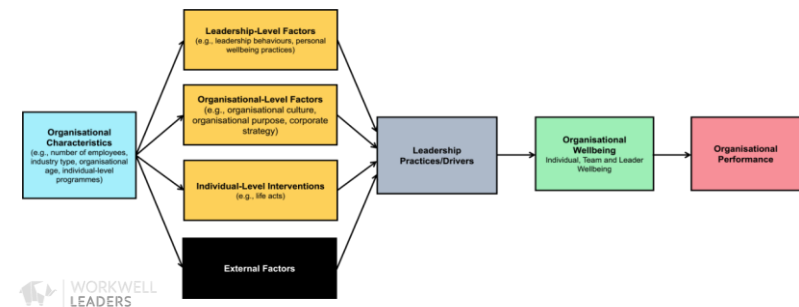
Organisational characteristics—such as workforce type, organisation size, industry and degree of internationalisation—have no direct link to organisational wellbeing or performance. This means that whether an organisation is an SME, a large enterprise, local or international does not inherently determine its level of wellbeing or performance.

Nonetheless, interventions to improve organisational wellbeing and performance should still be tailored to the specific context of each organisation. Organisations differ in available resources, operational realities and level of wellbeing maturity. Taking a context-specific approach ensures that strategies are aligned with organisational priorities and are both realistic and sustainable.

For example, when it comes to investing in leader wellbeing, leaders in SMEs might focus on personally modelling self-care and maintaining authentic relationships, as their proximity to employees makes their behaviours highly visible and influential. In large organisations, leaders may need to establish more formalised systems to support their own wellbeing—such as structured coaching, peer learning networks or dedicated recovery time—while also role-modelling these practices publicly to set the tone across complex, layered structures.

3.7 Validated Model of Organisational Wellbeing and Performance

The study began with a model blueprint that provided a conceptual framework for exploring the complex interactions influencing organisational wellbeing and performance. This blueprint identified four key domains as potential antecedents of organisational wellbeing and performance: leadership-level factors, organisational-level factors, individual-level factors and external factors.

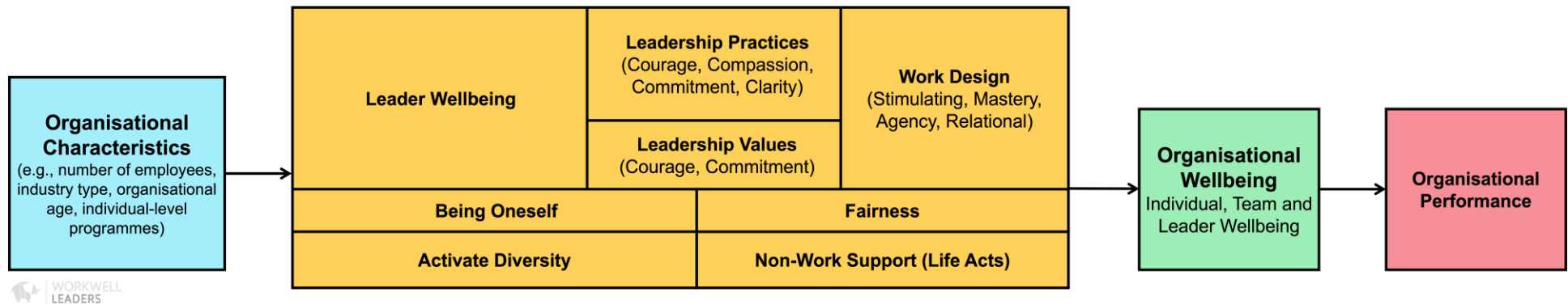


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The updated model (Figure 2), validated through survey analysis and expert input, builds upon this foundational blueprint.

The analysis confirmed that leadership-level factors—particularly leader wellbeing and leadership practices—are the most significant drivers of both organisational wellbeing and performance. Yet, only 1 in 6 leaders takes primary responsibility for wellbeing. The analysis further illustrated that organisational-level factors, such as allowing employees to be their authentic selves at work, fostering perceptions of fairness and valuing diversity, have a clear and measurable impact on wellbeing and performance. In addition, the analysis highlighted the importance of non-work support that addresses employees' broader life contexts beyond the workplace.

The validated model provides a rigorous, science-backed framework for organisations worldwide seeking to develop targeted, high-impact wellbeing strategies. By systematically identifying the factors with the greatest influence on organisational wellbeing and performance, it offers both conceptual clarity and practical guidance to support effective decision-making and targeted action.



Note: The size of each box reflects the relative influence of the factor in promoting organisational wellbeing and performance; larger boxes indicate greater impact.

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Figure 2. Validated model of organisational wellbeing and performance

4. A Path Forward: Making an IMPACT

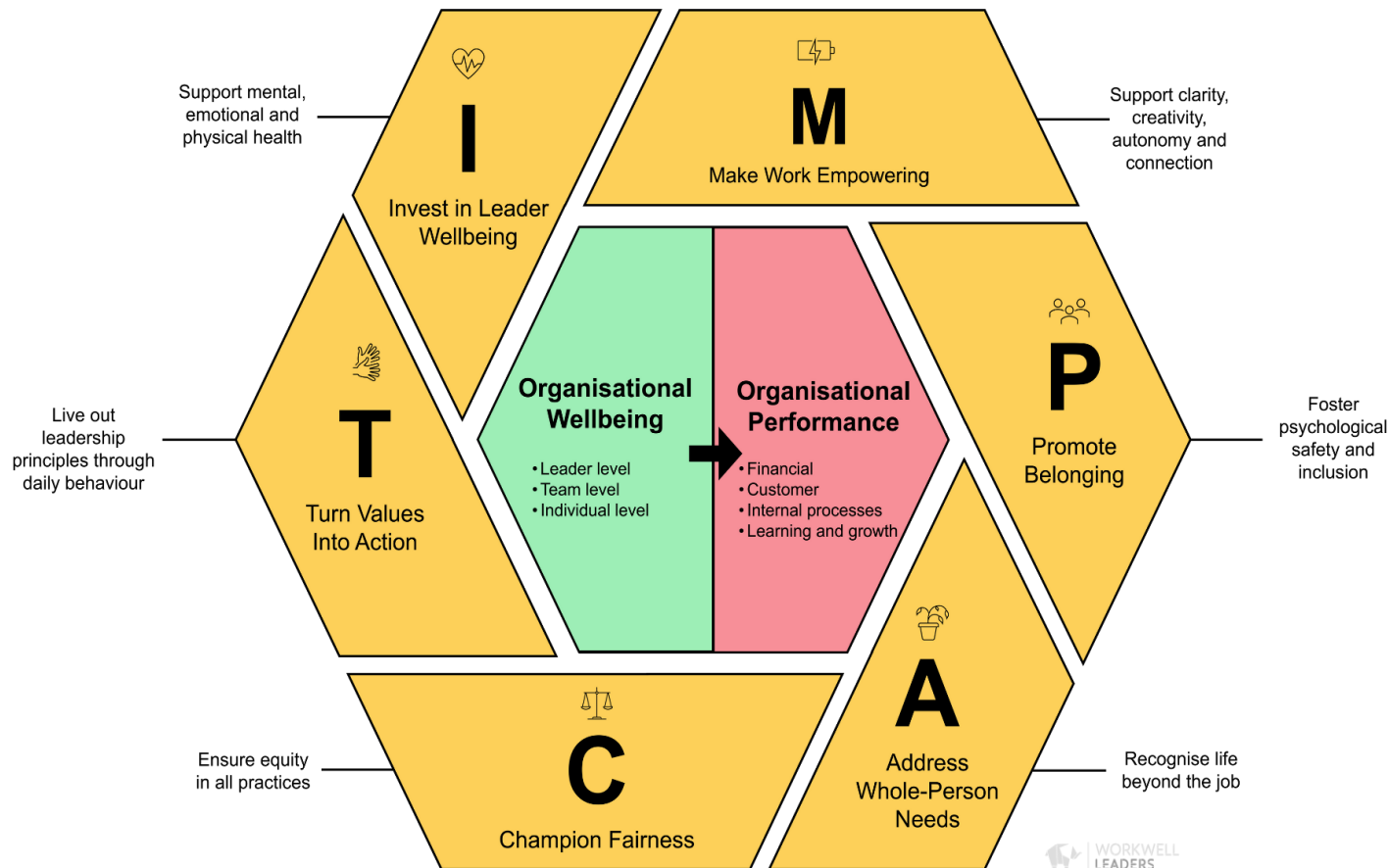


Photo: Adobe Stock

4.1 The Organisational Wellbeing–Performance IMPACT Framework

The findings of the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure underscore the urgent need for CEOs and Boards worldwide to embrace wellbeing as a core strategic driver of organisational performance, rather than relegating it to HR or operations. To support this change, the Organisational Wellbeing–Performance IMPACT Framework offers a universally applicable approach to enhance both organisational wellbeing and performance.

The Organisational Wellbeing–Performance IMPACT Framework



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Invest in Leader Wellbeing

CEOs play a critical role in shaping the emotional climate of an organisation and must treat their wellbeing as both a strategic priority and personal responsibility. CEOs who manage their own wellbeing—such as by practising self-care, seeking coaching and modelling healthy work-rest boundaries—are able to better support their teams. Just as importantly, CEOs must empower their leaders at every level to do the same, creating the conditions for wellbeing to cascade across the organisation.

Make Work Empowering

Clear roles, autonomy and variety in tasks make work energising rather than draining. Leaders should take personal ownership of work design by co-creating roles, offering constructive feedback and focusing on outcomes rather than micromanaging, while still ensuring employees receive the support they need. Such intentional leadership shapes work into a source of growth and fulfillment.

Promote Belonging

Belonging is a key driver of organisational wellbeing and leaders—not just HR—have a role to play in creating inclusive cultures. Leaders should foster psychological safety, model inclusive behaviours, encourage open dialogue and celebrate individuality. By doing so, they build trust and allow people to show up to work as their authentic selves.

Address Whole-Person Needs

Employees bring their full lives to work, including personal responsibilities and challenges. Leaders should recognise this reality and support employees by offering flexibility, showing empathy and openly discussing life outside work. This strengthens loyalty and performance by making sure people feel valued as individuals.

Champion Fairness

Ensuring perceptions of fairness in pay and promotions is essential for building trust and demonstrating respect. Leaders should communicate clear criteria, invite open conversations, remain approachable on concerns and audit decisions for bias. Demonstrating fairness in actions builds trust and signals respect for all contributions.

Turn Values into Action

Values only matter if leaders consistently live them out. Leaders should embed values in decisions, role-model behaviours, seek feedback on alignment and hold themselves accountable. Aligning values with actions fosters both credibility and trust.

4.2 How CEOs and Boards Can Measure IMPACT

There is no straightforward way for CEOs and Boards to measure progress on organisational wellbeing. Traditional employment engagement surveys or participation in wellbeing programmes are, at best, surface-level indicators. While metrics like turnover or absenteeism—especially when analysed across different levels of the organisation—can offer some insight, the more telling question is: if all formal wellbeing initiatives stopped tomorrow, how would employees, teams, leaders and the organisation feel or behave differently? This question gets to the heart of whether wellbeing is truly embedded in leadership and culture.

CEOs and Boards should focus on signals that reflect behaviour and sentiment to gauge meaningful impact:

- Longevity of tenure, not just across the organisation, but within specific teams
- Psychological safety, where people feel safe to speak up, take risks and show up fully as themselves
- Employee empowerment, shown through internal mobility, ownership of meaningful work and flexible ways of working
- Leader wellbeing and behaviours, visible through 360-degree feedback and peer insights
- Discretionary effort and employee advocacy, indicating whether people feel energised to go above and beyond, and actively champion the organisation
- Frequent pulse checks, to capture the ongoing "heartbeat" of the organisation

By attending to these markers, CEOs and Boards gain a true picture of organisational wellbeing—one that reflects leadership and culture in action, not just programmes on paper.

4.3 From Aspiration to Action

The findings of the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure are more than instructive; they are a call to lead differently. Wellbeing is no longer a nice-to-have but rather a central pillar of performance. The IMPACT framework translates these findings into a practical roadmap, empowering organisations to move beyond well-intended but low-impact interventions towards high-impact structural levers that drive sustained change.



As a leader, I'm guilty of hiding behind programmes. This study has shown conclusively that it starts with me."

— C-suite leader

The case for action is clear. The path forward requires leadership grounded in what truly works. Now more than ever, CEOs and Boards must lead with IMPACT and make wellbeing the foundation of organisational performance.

4.4 Next Steps

The publication of this White Paper marks not the end, but the beginning of an ongoing effort to improve organisational wellbeing in Singapore and beyond. The next phase of this work encompasses the following key areas:

Presentation of Findings to a Range of Stakeholders

Following the launch of this White Paper, the research team of the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure will actively engage an array of stakeholders—including local and international governments, business associations and thought leadership forums—to share key findings. Through presentations, roundtables and leadership dialogues, the aim is to reinforce that organisational wellbeing is not a responsibility to be offloaded to HR, but a strategic, long-term investment that must be championed from the top and across.

Roadmap for Organisational Wellbeing and Performance for CEOs and Boards

A comprehensive roadmap is in development to better empower leaders to strengthen both organisational wellbeing and performance. This roadmap will enable CEOs and Boards to drive fundamental shifts in leadership mindsets, embed system-wide accountability and achieve lasting cultural transformation. While not intended to be exhaustive, it will provide tailored recommendations for different contexts, such as workforce type and organisation size.

Academic Publications and Conferences

The research team will publish key findings in leading peer-reviewed journals in the fields of management and organisational

psychology. These findings will also be shared at conferences related to mental health and organisational psychology. Through these efforts, global scholarly discourse will be advanced and new directions for future study will be identified.

Media Engagement

A dedicated media engagement strategy will be launched to disseminate the key findings and recommendations of this White Paper. The aim is to elevate organisational wellbeing as a critical agenda item in both local and international public discourse.

Integration with the WorkWell Leaders Awards

The WorkWell Leaders Awards will be adapted to incorporate the key findings of this study, celebrating organisations that exemplify evidence-based, high-impact wellbeing strategies on the national stage. The study will also serve as the backbone of WorkWell Leaders' future interventions and initiatives for CEOs and leaders. This ensures that all activities are consistently anchored in robust data and designed to drive long-term cultural transformation.

Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the continued relevance of the WorkWell Leaders Impact Measure, mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, feedback and iteration will be put in place. In particular, the study will lay the foundation for monitoring longitudinal changes in organisational wellbeing in Singapore and beyond.



Photo: Benjamin Schneider

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Appendix 1: Summary of Activities at GMH Asia 2025 Symposium

Workshop Objectives

1. Introduce participants to the Leadership Value-Practice Alignment Framework, which revolves around four principles of leadership: Courage, Compassion, Commitment and Clarity (the '4Cs').
2. Facilitate structured group discussion to explore the perceived relevance, applicability and implementation of the 4Cs within participants' organisational contexts.
3. Elicit qualitative feedback to inform the face validity of the framework and identify potential areas for refinement.

Workshop Overview

Components	Objectives
Briefing on the 4Cs	• Present theoretical foundations • Share empirical rationale
Breakout Discussions	• Define practical applications • Identify gaps in implementation
Feedback Collection	• Capture perceived value of the 4Cs • Document key takeaways • Record intended applications

Structure of Breakout Discussions

The breakout discussions revolved around three core questions:

- How effective is each of the 4Cs in fostering an environment that supports organisational wellbeing?
- How should each of the 4Cs look and feel in practice, particularly as modelled by CEOs and senior leaders?
- Which aspects of the 4Cs are already being practised well in your organisation (or in typical organisations), and what is missing that would better support organisational wellbeing?



Key Insights

The table below outlines key themes reflecting participants' perceptions of the 4Cs framework.

Perceived Value and Impact

Theme	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Practical Applicability	Integration of theory with real-world application resonated strongly with participants	<i>"Practical, open discussion. Mix of theory, data and examples. Loved the focus on courage and flipping the narrative to investment."</i>
Model Resonance	Framework perceived as directly relevant to current leadership challenges	<i>"The 4Cs, a health check on where we are."</i> <i>"Showing vulnerability is effective as it connects to the heart."</i>

The following table outlines the specific ways participants anticipate applying the 4C framework within their organisations.

Intended Applications

Possible Implementation Domain	Specific Applications	Illustrative Quotes
Organisational Strategy	- Integration into formal policies - Strategic planning processes - Performance management systems	<i>"Incorporate into our strategy and across what we do."</i>
Personal Leadership	- Behavioural modelling - Authentic communication - Vulnerability in leadership	<i>"Will try to practise the 4 Cs in my role as a leader."</i> <i>"Starting from courage and self-compassion."</i>
Team Engagement	- Communication practices - Team development initiatives - Collaborative decision-making	<i>"Learn to hear my team more than listen."</i>

Implications for Survey

The workshop provided strong preliminary evidence supporting the face validity of the Leadership Value-Practice Alignment Framework in the Asia-Pacific context. Face validity was reflected in the way participants articulated its applicability to their organisational settings and outlined specific implementation pathways across strategic, personal and team levels. Participants also demonstrated a solid grasp of the core concepts and expressed a commitment to applying them in practice, thereby reinforcing its suitability for inclusion in the survey.



Appendix 2: Survey Structure and Constructs

Section 1: Organisational Characteristics

Data collected included organisation size, type, structure, industry classification and degree of internationalisation. Respondent characteristics included their role within the organisation, management level, departmental affiliation and work arrangements. Questions about the presence and scope of organisational wellbeing policies and programmes, as well as performance measurement systems, were also included.

Section 2: Leadership-Level Factors

Leadership Behaviours

This construct was measured across the following dimensions: Courage, Compassion, Commitment and Clarity.

Each dimension comprised three sub-dimensions. Courage included moral courage social courage and emotional courage. Compassion encompassed compassion for others, compassion received from others and self-compassion. Commitment involved honesty, accountability and consistency. Clarity included clarity of organisational purpose, clarity of personal meaning and clarity of context, communication and actions.

Leadership Values

Leadership values were assessed using the same framework as leadership behaviours: Courage, Compassion, Commitment and Clarity. This parallel structure enabled the examination of alignment between espoused values and demonstrated behaviours.

Leader Wellbeing

Leader wellbeing was composed of nine domains: 1) Purpose and Meaning, 2) Supportive Relationships, 3) Engagement, 4) Life Satisfaction, 5) Contribution to Others, 6) Competence, 7) Moral Self-View, 8) Optimism and 9) Respect.

Reference: Diener, E., Wirtz, D., & Tov, W. (2010). New measures of well-being: Flourishing and positive and negative feelings. *Soc Indic Res*, 39, 247–266.

Work Design

This construct covered the following aspects of work design: 1) Stimulating, 2) Mastery, 3) Agency, 4) Relational and 5) Tolerable Demands.

Reference: Parker, S. K., & Knight, C. (2024). The SMART model of work design: A higher order structure to help see the wood from the trees. *Human Resource Management*, 63(2), 265–291.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22200>

Section 3: Organisational Wellbeing

This construct covered the nine elements of the PERMA+4 framework: 1) Positive Emotions, 2) Engagement, 3) Relationships, 4) Meaning, 5) Accomplishment, 6) Physical Health, 7) Mindset, 8) Environment and 9) Economic Security. These elements were assessed on three levels: individual, team and leader.

Reference: Donaldson, S. I., Donaldson, S. I., McQuaid, M., & Kern, M. L. (2024). Systems-Informed PERMA + 4: Measuring Well-being and Performance at the Employee, Team, and Supervisor Levels. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, 9(2), 1153–1166. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-024-00177-y>

Section 4: Organisational Performance

Organisational performance covered 12 dimensions: 1) Product/Service/Programme Quality, 2) Product/Service/Programme Innovation, 3) Employee Attraction, 4) Employee Retention, 5) Customer/Client Satisfaction, 6) Management–Employee Relations, 7) Employee–Employee Relations, 8) Organisational Wellbeing, 9) Marketing Effectiveness, 10) Sales Growth, 11) Profitability and 12) Market Share.

Reference: Delaney, T., & Huselid, M. (1996). The Impact of Human Resource Practices on Perceptions Organizational Performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(4). <https://doi.org/10.2307/256718>

Section 5: Organisational-Level, Individual-Level, External and Demographic Factors

Organisational-Level Factors

Organisational Belonging: Subscales included 1) Being Myself, 2) Acceptance, 3) Diversity Valued and 4) Connection.

Reference: Blau, G., Goldberg, D., & Kyser, D. (2023). Organizational belonging – proposing a new scale and its relationship to demographic, organization, and outcome variables. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 38(3), 226–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15555240.2023.2178448>

Perceived Fairness: This construct assessed perceptions of fairness in terms of remuneration and promotion opportunities.

Stigma Towards Mental Illness: Subscales included 1) Attitudes Predicting Avoidance and 2) Beliefs About Danger/Unpredictability.

Reference: Lindsay, B. L., Dobson, K. S., Krupa, T., Knaak, S., & Szeto, A. C. H. (2024). A psychometric evaluation of the Opening Minds Scale for Workplace Attitudes (OMS-WA), a measure of public stigma towards mental illnesses in the workplace. *Discover Psychology*, 4(1), 134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44202-024-00249-9>

Quiet Quitting: Subscales included 1) Detachment, 2) Lack of Initiative and 3) Lack of Motivation.

Reference: Galanis, P., Katsiroumpa, A., Vraka, I., Siskou, O., Konstantakopoulou, O., Moisoglou, I., Gallos, P., Kaitelidou, D., Galanis, P., Katsiroumpa, A., Vraka, I., Siskou, O., Konstantakopoulou, O., Moisoglou, I., Gallos, P., & Kaitelidou, D. (2023). The quiet quitting scale: Development and initial validation. *AIMS Public Health*, 10(4), Article publichealth-10-04-055.
<https://doi.org/10.3934/publichealth.2023055>

Organisational Strategy: Domains covered include Organisational Purpose, Corporate Strategy, ESG Strategy, DEI Strategy and Organisational Stressors.

Individual-Level Factors

Individual-level factors focused on the provision of support across multiple domains: 1) Caregiving, 2) Pet Care, 3) Financial Literacy, 4) Retirement Planning, 5) Bereavement and Grief, 6) Health and Wellness and 7) Personal Development.

External Factors

External factors included: 1) Macroeconomic Uncertainty, 2) Social Movements, 3) Technological Advancements, 4) Geopolitical Instability, 5) Legislative Changes, 6) Global Standards and Compliance Requirements, 7) Investor Sentiment and 8) Market Competitiveness.

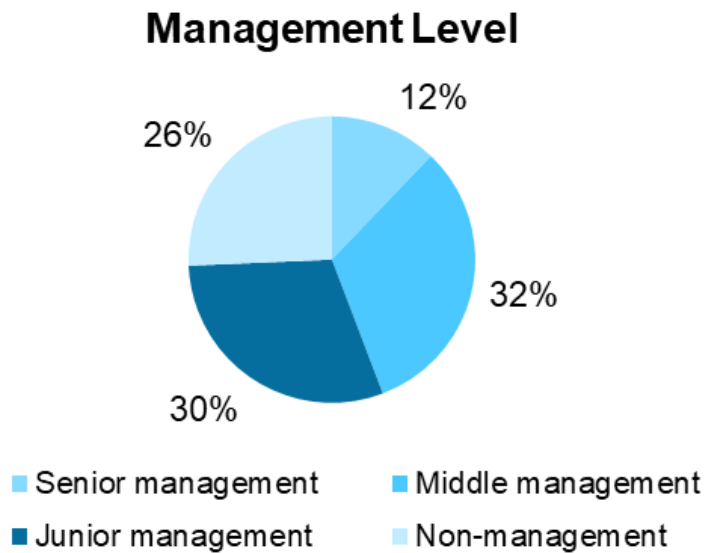
Demographic Information

Data collected included age, gender, race, religion, marital status, number of children, household income, personal income and educational background.

Appendix 3: Organisational and Demographic Overview of Sample

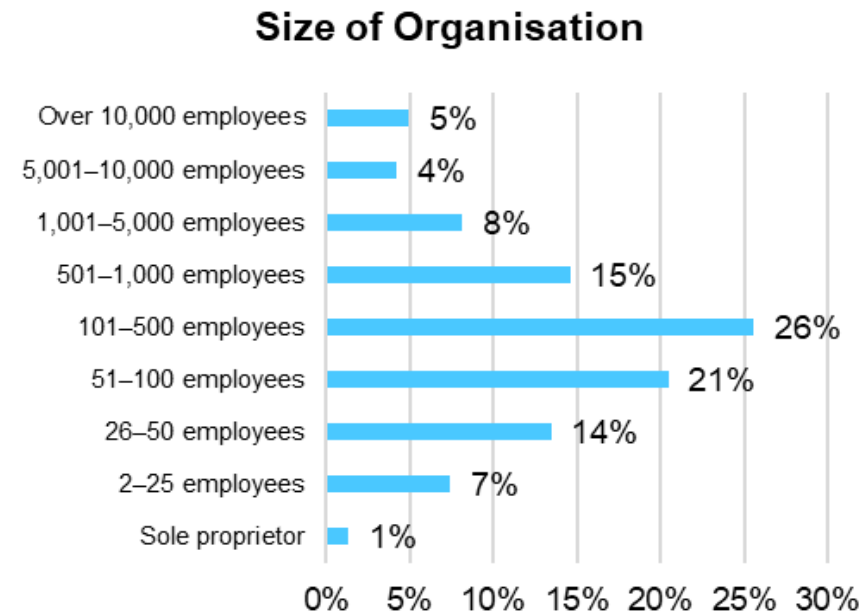
Organisational Characteristics

A significant majority held management roles, with 12% in senior management, 32% in middle management and 30% in junior management. The remaining 26% were in non-managerial positions.



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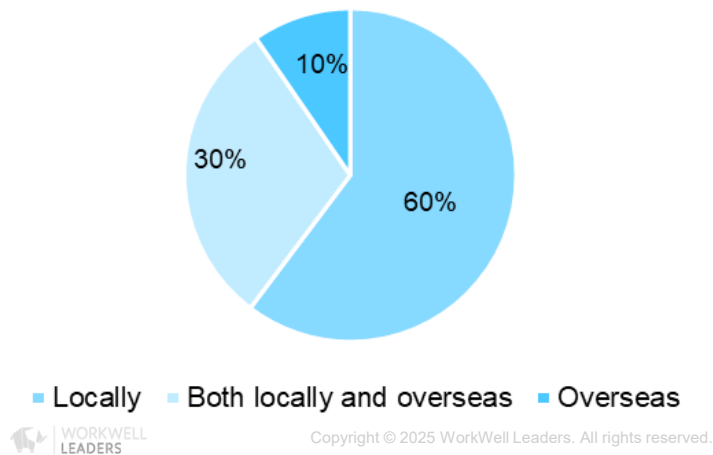
A wide spectrum of organisational sizes was represented, ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to larger corporations.



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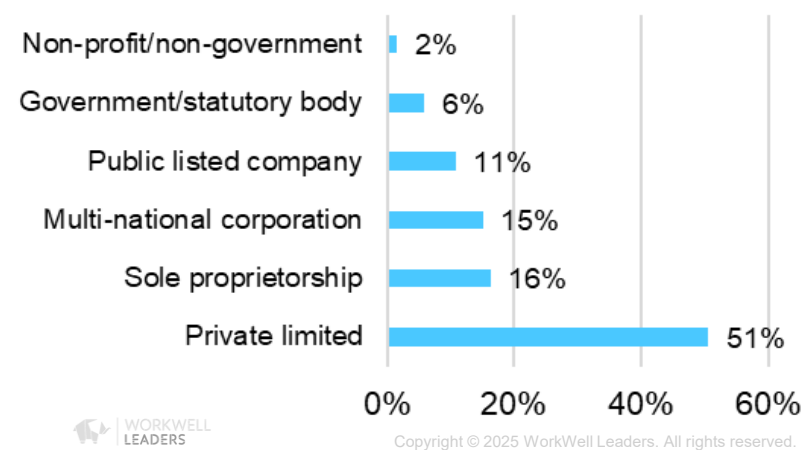
Respondents came from organisations with varying degrees of internationalisation. Most (60%) were from companies with a local presence, while 10% were from organisations with an international presence. Thirty percent of respondents were from organisations operating both locally and internationally.

Degree of Internationalisation



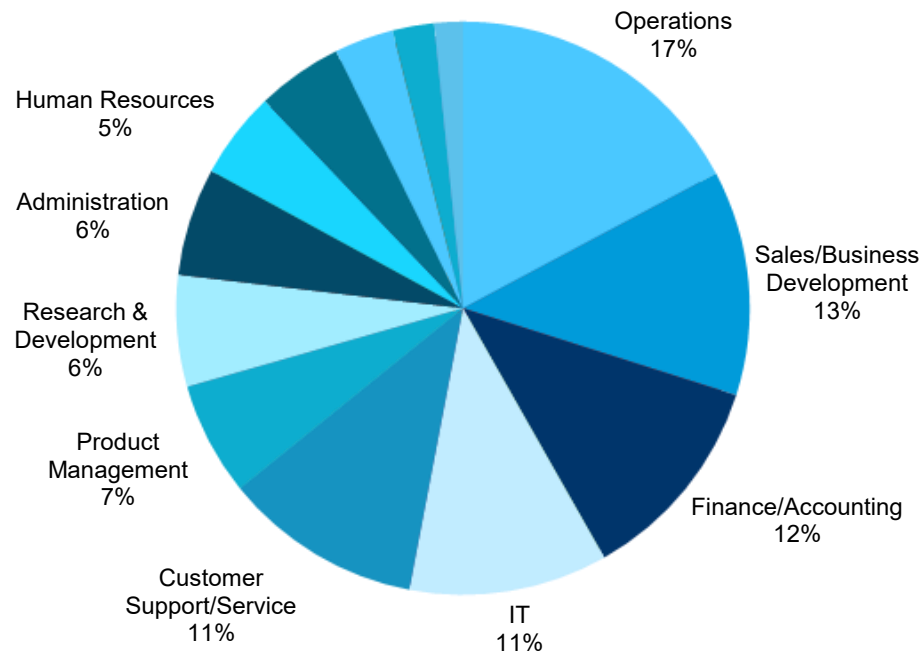
In terms of organisational structure, the sample represented various business types: 51% of respondents came from private limited companies, 16% from sole proprietorships, 15% from multinational corporations, 11% from publicly listed companies, 6% from government/statutory entities and 2% from non-profit organisations.

Structure of Organisation



The distribution of respondents across departments was diverse. The most represented departments were Operations (17%), Sales/Business Development (13%) and Finance/Accounting (12%).

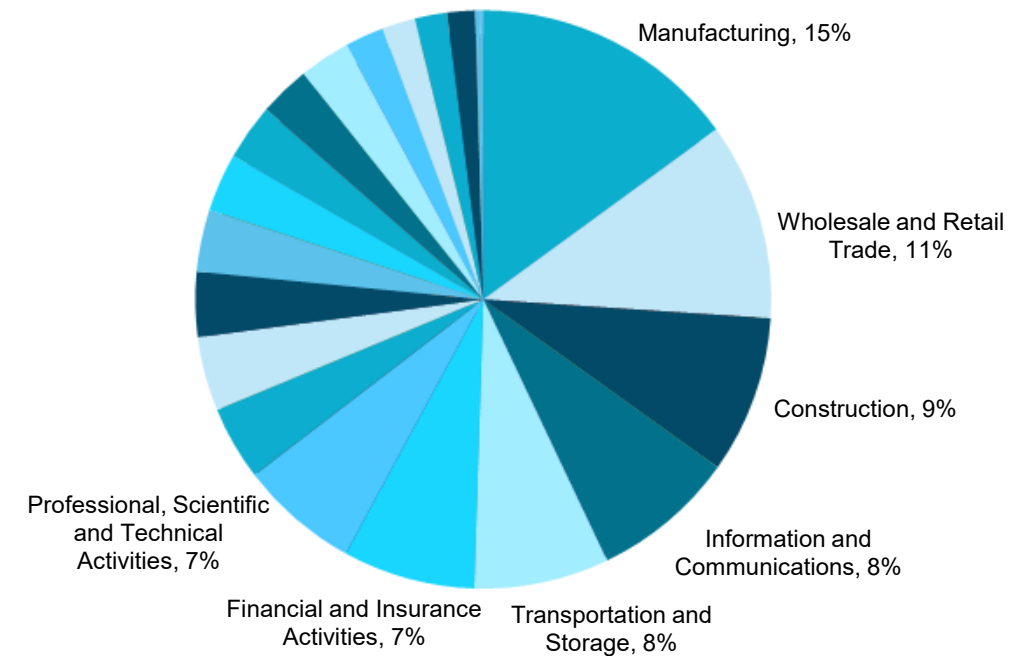
Types of Departments



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In terms of industry, the sample was well-rounded. The most represented industries were Manufacturing (15%), Wholesale and Retail Trade (11%), Construction (9%) and Information and Communications (8%).

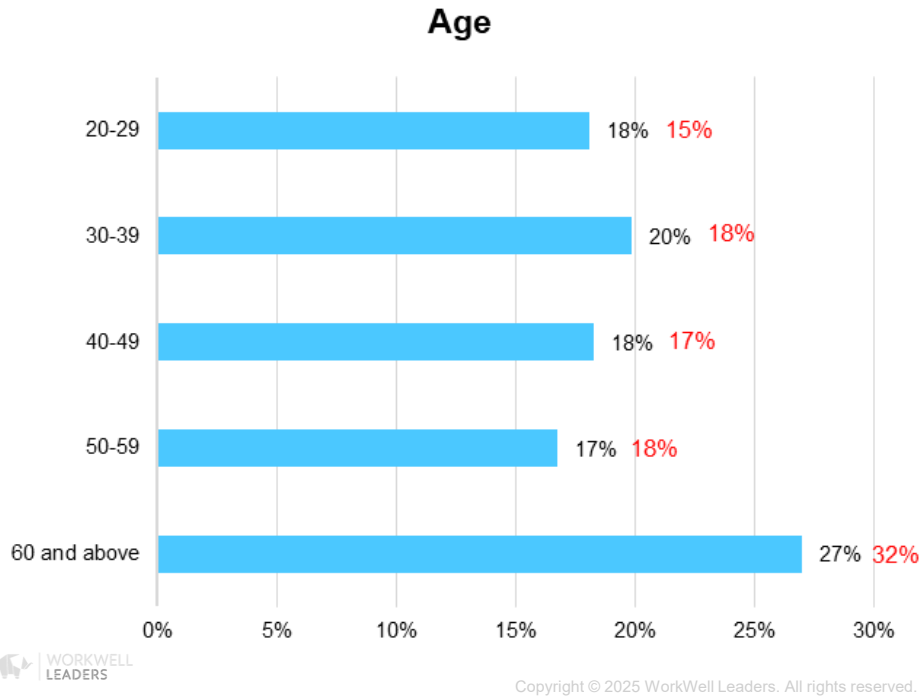
Types of Industries



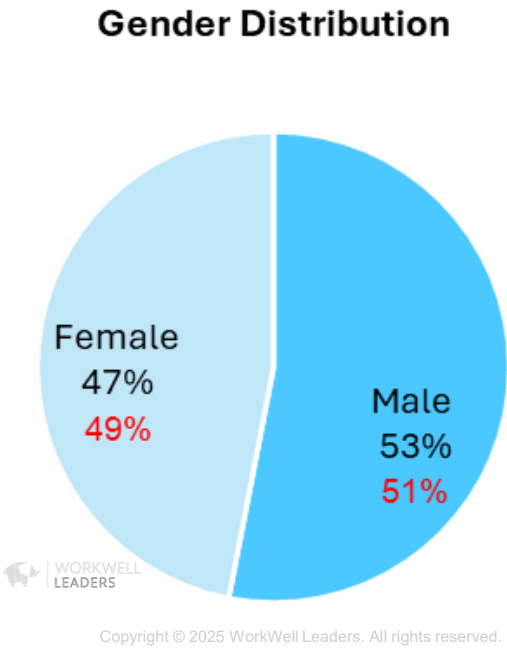
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Demographic Characteristics

The respondent pool included a mix of age groups, closely aligning with the national demographic breakdown.

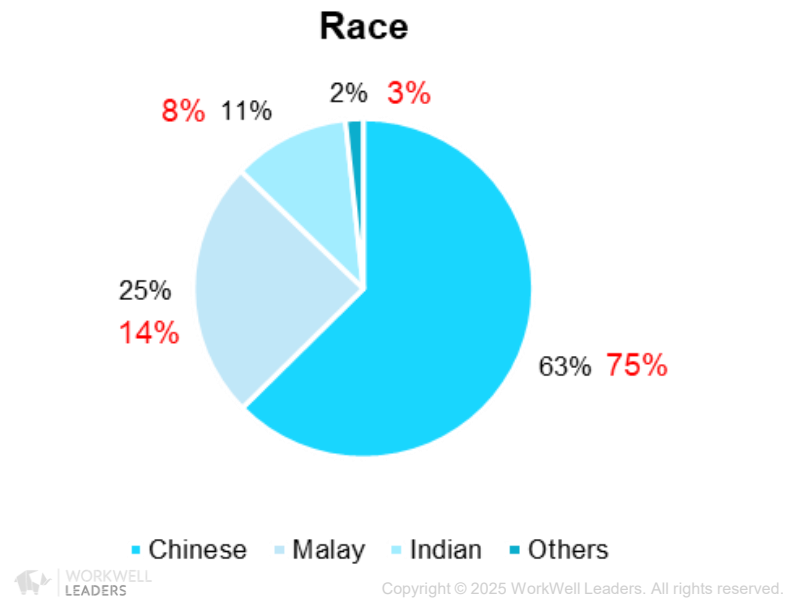


The sample comprised 53% male and 47% female respondents, indicating a near-even gender distribution.

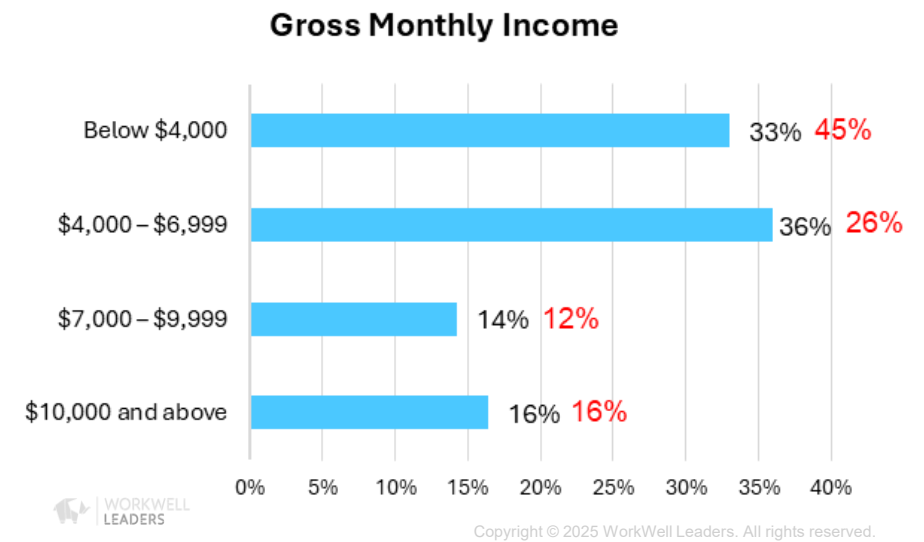


Note: The percentages shown in red represent national demographics, sourced from the Singapore Department of Statistics.

The sample closely mirrored the national profile of Singapore in terms of race. The majority were Chinese (63%), followed by Malay (25%), Indian (11%) and other racial groups (2%).

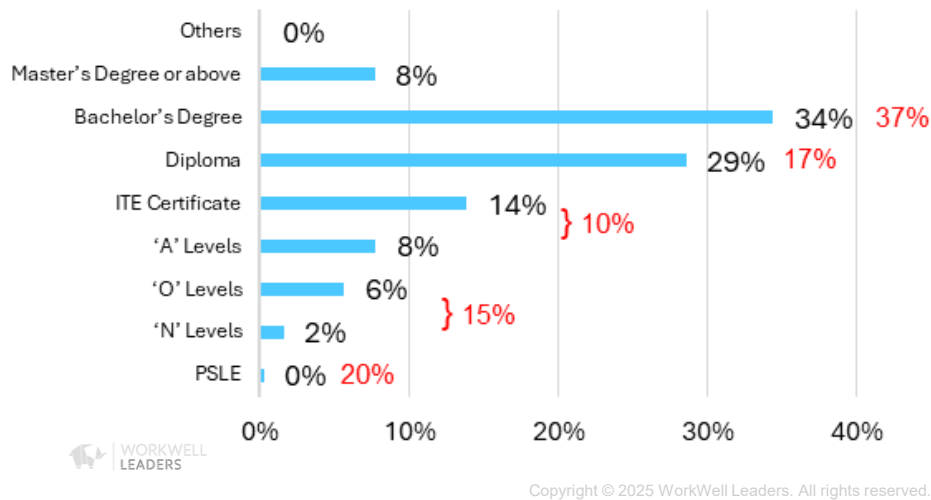


Various income brackets were represented. The \$4,000 to \$6,999 bracket constituted the largest group (36%), followed by those earning below \$4,000 (33%).



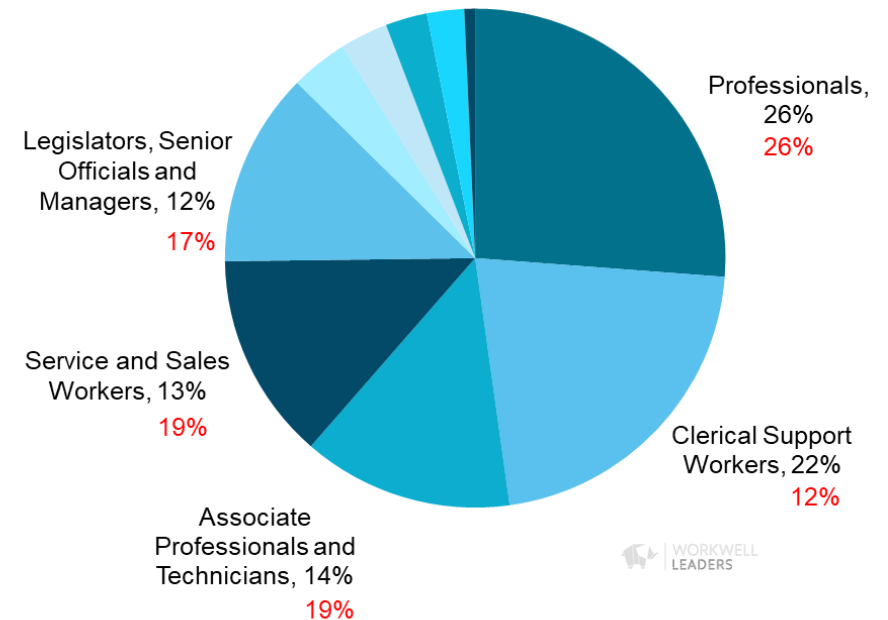
A broad educational spectrum was reflected. The bulk of respondents held a Bachelor's degree or higher (42%) or a Diploma (29%).

Education



The sample comprised a wide array of occupations. The largest groups were Professionals (26%), Clerical Support Workers (22%), Associate Professionals and Technicians (14%) as well as Services and Sales Workers (13%).

Type of Occupations



Appendix 4: Qualitative Insights from Interviews with Senior Leaders

Interviews were conducted with senior leaders and experts who influence the wellbeing landscape across various sectors. The interview process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved. Each interview was guided by a set of questions that provided a flexible framework for discussion. This approach allowed the conversation to flow in a direction meaningful to participants, while maintaining enough structure to permit comparative analysis across interviews. Rather than delivering the questions verbatim, the interviewer practised reflexive listening, actively engaging with participants' responses and using them as springboards for follow-up questions.

The interview data were analysed using a six-step method of thematic analysis: 1) familiarisation with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing themes, 5) defining and naming themes and 6) producing the report. This rigorous and iterative analytical approach facilitated the identification of recurring patterns and themes, offering valuable qualitative insights into leadership practices related to wellbeing.

Interview Guide

The interviews followed a semi-structured framework, guided by the following questions:

Reflections on Influential Leaders

- Who are some of the best leaders you have worked with or observed in your career?
- What defining characteristics made these leaders effective?

Leadership Philosophy and Learning

- How would you describe your own leadership philosophy?
- What key lessons have you carried forward from past mentors or role models?
- What practices do you adopt to build trust, engagement and connection with your team?

Organisational Wellbeing and Culture

- How does your organisation currently approach wellbeing?
- What challenges or barriers have you faced in cultivating organisational wellbeing?
- Can you share examples of initiatives or practices that have been particularly impactful?

During the interviews, findings from the survey were shared with participants. Participants reflected on the findings in relation to their own experiences. The following table presents an overview of the themes, along with the corresponding sub-themes.

Theme	Sub-Themes
1: Foundations of Leadership	• From Technical Prowess to Human Connection • Vulnerability and Emotional Intelligence • Purpose-Driven Leadership and Values Alignment
2: Cultivating a Positive Organisational Environment	• Building Psychological Safety and Flattening Hierarchy • Fostering Collaboration and Shared Purpose • Promoting Role Clarity for Wellbeing
3: Strategic Investment in Wellbeing	• Courageous Commitment to Wellbeing Initiatives • Mindful Volunteerism and Professional Partnerships • Redesigning Work for Nourishment and Sustainability
4: Measurement and Accountability	• Advocating for Rigorous Measurement and ROI • Benchmarking and Sector-Wide Standards
5: Innovative Practices and Culture-Building	• Creating Rituals for Transparency and Engagement

Theme 1: Foundations of Leadership

From Technical Prowess to Human Connection

Participants highlighted the importance of moving beyond a purely task- or competence-focused leadership style. Effective leadership involves genuine relational engagement: getting to know team members beyond their work outputs, demonstrating accessibility and building human connections.

Vulnerability and Emotional Intelligence

Leaders who showed personal vulnerability and connected emotionally with their teams bolstered trust and engagement. This approach contrasts sharply with traditional, technocratic or intellectual leadership styles commonly seen in hierarchical or civil service contexts.

Purpose-Driven Leadership and Values Alignment

Effective leaders consistently communicated and embodied organisational values, particularly during times of change or restructuring. Storytelling was identified as a useful vehicle for reinforcing shared purpose and helping staff connect emotionally to the mission of the organisation. Importantly, these leaders ensured their actions—for example, the allocation of resources—aligned visibly with stated wellbeing commitments.

Theme 2: Cultivating a Positive Organisational Environment

Building Psychological Safety and Flattening Hierarchy

Several participants described inheriting toxic or overly hierarchical cultures, where subordinates were afraid to speak up or contribute ideas. Transforming these environments necessitated deliberate efforts to create psychological safety. These efforts include encouraging open dialogue, soliciting diverse perspectives and breaking down power distances.

Fostering Collaboration and Shared Purpose

To break down siloed or territorial work cultures, leaders shifted away from emphasising individual ownership and instead focused on shared goals. By anchoring teams in a collective sense of purpose, leaders clarified roles and reduced blame-shifting or territorialism, helping employees better understand how their work fit into broader organisational objectives.

Promoting Role Clarity

Drawing on ideas of systems thinking, leaders emphasised that role clarity is critical for organisational wellbeing. Without clarity, employees experience stress, uncertainty and reduced engagement. By focusing on shared purpose rather than simply assigning ownership, leaders provided clarity in ways that motivate and align teams.

Theme 3: Strategic Investment in Wellbeing

Courageous Commitment to Wellbeing Initiatives

Leaders demonstrated notable courage when implementing wellbeing initiatives that required significant resource investment or cultural shifts, such as introducing extra leave policies, supporting employee sports activities or maintaining steady community donations despite fluctuations in revenue. These actions signalled genuine commitment that went beyond mere rhetoric.

Mindful Volunteerism and Professional Partnerships

Concerns were raised about the unintended negative effects of poorly structured corporate volunteerism. A best practice approach involves collaborating with third-party organisers to structure volunteer activities intentionally and meaningfully, ensuring they include elements like post-activity reflection.

Redesigning Work for Nourishment and Sustainability

Leaders acknowledged that superficial wellbeing interventions—so-called “plasters”—cannot solve the deeper crises confronting the workforce. Addressing burnout and employee disengagement requires fundamentally redesigning work systems, incorporating psychosocial and ergonomic considerations and moving towards sustainable, nourishing work environments.

Theme 4: Measurement and Accountability

Advocating for Rigorous Measurement and ROI

A key theme was the lack of robust measurement in current wellbeing efforts. Leaders stressed the need for benchmarking, rigorous evaluation and ROI analysis to determine what actually works. Without proper measurement, wellbeing initiatives risk becoming performative.

Benchmarking and Sector-Wide Standards

Leaders suggested that competitive benchmarking and the establishment of sector-wide standards could drive greater leadership engagement and accountability. By providing organisations with clear comparisons and goals, these frameworks could help track progress and identify areas for improvement.

Theme 5: Innovative Practices and Culture-Building

Creating Rituals for Transparency and Engagement

Several leaders shared innovative cultural practices designed to embed psychological safety and foster transparency. Examples included: 1) setting aside “raccoon time” in meetings for dissenting or contrarian views, 2) creating anonymous feedback channels directly to senior leadership and 3) establishing “kiasu committees” where seemingly unnecessary policies were openly reviewed and challenged. These rituals helped normalise open dialogue and reduced the fear of speaking up.

