

Understanding 'wellbeing' through Sejahtera Productivity Culture Index



By [Dzulkifli Abdul Razak](#) - March 24, 2022 @ 11:54pm



Across the generations (Gen X, Y & Z), Gen Z seems to suffer the worst overall decline significantly between the pre- to during the Covid-19 period, whereas Gen Y showed a significant improvement, in terms of productivity. - NSTP/HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

Sunday was International Happiness Day. In this day and time of the pandemic, the discussion about wellbeing as the topic of choice proliferated widely among those affected by the coronavirus, directly or otherwise.

This is often related to events like lockdowns, isolations as well as the lack of resilience in the face of psychological challenges and self-help.

As the pandemic deepens, the need to situate such incidences becomes even more crucial if we want to better understand what wellbeing is all about. Perhaps even pointing to possible solutions.

For this, a research project was initiated to evaluate and monitor any changes to the productivity culture, as an indication of wellbeing, amid the pandemic.



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And to propose the best engagement and intervention to elevate productivity culture (thus, wellbeing) especially among the student and female segments in line with the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP).

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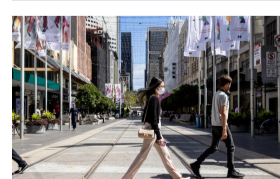
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However, in this project, the term "sejahtera" was used to better reflect a more comprehensive meaning of "wellbeing" because it can be "broken down" to a more precise combination of drivers that includes: values, intellect, resources, progeny and a way of life (which reflects "belief" of the individual).

In other words, wellbeing can be better understood if each of the above drivers is introspected in more detail. Nonetheless, we make a grave error if we assume that sejahtera to be single-dimensional or likewise translate it singularly into different languages, especially in English as "happiness", and reduce it to a superficial meaning that is no longer as beneficial.

If so, Sejahtera cannot be applied, less still demonstrated, appropriately. Hence, the holistic approach is therefore preferred.

This evidence-based approach is well reflected in what is termed as Sejahtera Productivity Culture Index (SPCI) which in turn can be disaggregated into a number of outcomes, namely: standard of living, quality of life, financial stability, being a good citizen, contribution to nation-building, digital adoption and sustainability. The last three are more focused on the 12MP.

What is interesting, the overall study of more than 3000 populations sampled during the pre-Covid-19 period as a benchmark. This was repeated during the pandemic.

The results clearly pointed to the driver that is most affected, is "values", during the pandemic in 2021. The elements of "trust", "patience" and "tolerance" seemed to be heightened during the pandemic (in contrast with before, in 2019).

The first two showed a significant change. The second set of three elements, however, was the reverse, namely, pertaining to "gratefulness", "openly accepting criticism" and "harmonisation between action and belief".

In short, more are ungrateful, less susceptible to criticism, and disharmony between action and belief. And all were significant changes, although, the overall change involving "values" is hardly noticeable.

Still, based on this driver for the younger generation, the Gen Z samples fared worse, showing a significant drop during the pandemic.

If only the right and proper emphasis can be enhanced to further drive the values mentioned, the state of sejahtera is more assured, so too wellbeing.



"values" is the most vulnerable in no different. The preliminary findings suffered a reversal, the worse being change – "I am open to new learning" during the pandemic), and the other is "resources" or resourcefulness (all with negative change) as expected.

"Progeny" as driver saw two positive (respect for social norm, and other people family) changes, while "way of life," three, namely, during the pandemic: being physically healthy, care for others' wellbeing and having time for enjoyable activities.

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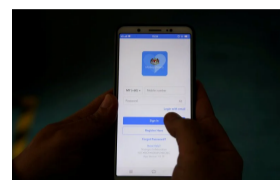
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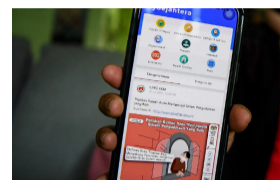
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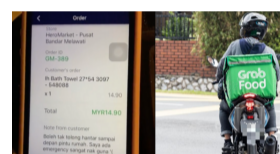
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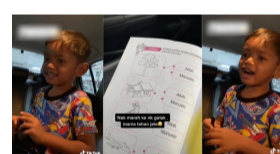
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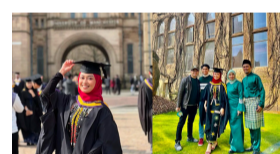
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In general, this study showed that out of the five outcomes stated, four showed improvement during the pandemic, except "being a good citizen (perhaps limited to complying with the "new" norms).

The two other outcomes (adoption to digitalisation and practice of sustainability) were not tested since it is more specific to 12MP, announced in 2020 (not 2019 to make comparison possible).

Across the generations (Gen X, Y & Z), Gen Z seems to suffer the worst overall decline significantly between the pre- to during the Covid-19 period, whereas Gen Y showed a significant improvement, in terms of productivity.

More specifically, from the intellectual aspects, all generations showed a decline with Gen Z again, significantly!

As previously noted, similarly in terms of "values" which is in contrast with the other two that showed some improvement although not very significant.

Overall, taking the drivers of sejahtera in sum, Gen Y performed the best during the pandemic! Even when compared with the Baby Boomers, and the students' samples per se during the pandemic period.

In summary, what the study sponsored by the Malaysian Productivity Corporation (MPC), tends to indicate is that sejahtera could be more fully and better understood when it is disaggregated meaningfully as the study has attempted to do.

More than that, it allows for better data analysis in a non-judgemental way to give clarity on what to focus for improvement vis-à-vis the pre-Covid period.

It made for a positive difference that is usually associated with general wellbeing, thus sejahtera per se.

The writer, an NST columnist for more than 20 years, is International Islamic University Malaysia rector

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