RESEARCH PAPER

A Multi-Dimensional Snapshot of Wellbeing: A Reflexive Thematic Analysis of a Photo-a-Day for Wellbeing Practice

Liz Gooster [1]

Corresponding author
Liz Gooster, PhD
Cambridge, UK
Email: liz@lizgooster.com
Website: www.lizgooster.com
Phone: +44 (0)7429 118084

Affiliation
[1] *Graduate of MAPPCP (Masters in Applied Positive Psychology & Coaching Psychology) at UEL (University of East London), Faculty Member and Tutor of Meyler Campbell, professional executive and leadership coach with own practice.*

Abstract

Background: Photo-a-day is a popular practice of uploading photos to an online platform to capture and share everyday moments. While existing research on the practice is limited, several previous studies suggest it can impact wellbeing, making it a promising subject for positive psychology research.

Aims: The present study seeks to understand the lived experience of a photo-a-day for wellbeing practice, as conducted naturalistically by members of two online groups.

Methodology: 12 practitioners of photo-a-day for wellbeing participated in semi-structured interviews. These were recorded, transcribed and analysed using the qualitative method of reflexive thematic analysis to explore common themes around the experience of the practice.

Results: Key findings were that, for these participants, photo-a-day offered multiple pathways to wellbeing through evoking positive emotion in the moment; enjoying positive social connections; gaining a sense of mastery. Sub-themes of mindfulness; appreciating nature; savoring; belonging and commitment; and interacting with others were identified.

Discussion: The results support earlier research and offer new insights into the relationship between photo-a-day and wellbeing. Mindfulness, the physical experience of natural environments, a connection with outdoor activity, and learning, have previously received scant attention in the literature on photo-a-day.

Conclusions: Photo-a-day may be experienced as contributing to wellbeing in complex ways. Depending on how it is enacted, it can be considered as an embodied positive practice. The pathways delivering the benefits perceived by participants are inter-related, supporting the view of wellbeing as a multidimensional construct. The practice of photo-a-day for wellbeing merits further research through the lens of third-wave positive psychology models.

Keywords: *Photo-a-day; wellbeing; reflexive thematic analysis; positive emotions; social connections; mastery*

INTRODUCTION

Facilitated by the ubiquity of smartphones, high quality digital images and the growth of social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook and Instagram, photo sharing is a popular online activity (Maclean et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2016). The practice of photo-a-day (PaD) makes daily posting part of its rationale, with platforms like Blipfoto using this principle of regular sharing to structure their online communities. The fast-growing site Seeing Happy explicitly seeks to apply positive psychology

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

1 of 16

principles to enhance happiness using photography. Its merit has been endorsed by the founder of positive psychology himself, Martin Seligman: "Photography can help us focus on the best in our lives, it can connect us to each other and help us share our stories" (Seeing Happy, 2023).

Despite this popularity, research into the psychological impacts of the practice is limited. The small body of literature on PaD and related interventions suggests a connection with wellbeing (Chen et al., 2016; Cox & Brewster, 2018; Kurtz, 2015; Lee et al., 2021; McKee et al., 2020; Read et al., 2022; Steger et al., 2014). These studies call for more research on how people's wellbeing may be benefiting from this practice: the present study is a response to this call. Using the qualitative methodology of reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) within the framework of positive psychology, it explores the lived experience of practicing PaD for wellbeing.

Creative Pathways to Wellbeing

Research has shown the effectiveness of creative practices as a therapeutic solution to mental health problems (Suler, 2009) and the value of art therapy in alleviating suffering and enhancing wellbeing in patients with physical illness (Nainis et al., 2006; Reynolds & Lim, 2007). Less attention has been paid to the capacity of the arts to promote wellbeing in non-clinical populations (Lomas, 2016; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010); the possible significance for positive psychology of photography as a specific creative practice thus remains under-researched. However, against the backdrop of widespread smartphone photography and the sustained popularity of SNSs, more studies are beginning to emerge (Rubinstein & Sluis, 2008).

Findings on the psychological impact of using sites like Instagram and Facebook are inconsistent, with both benefits (Seabrook et al., 2016) and negative effects (Dobrean & Păsărelu, 2016) being observed. More granular exploration of the type of online activity may resolve some of these inconsistencies. For instance, Oh et al. (2014) found that interactions perceived as supportive correlated with increased positive affect (PA), whereas general indicators of SNS activity, like number of connections, did not. It has been proposed that while image-based sites have a positive impact on wellbeing, text-based platforms are ineffectual (Pittman & Reich, 2016). Other research claims the impact depends on the type of photograph shared: one study indicated posting 'selfies' on Instagram increased wellbeing through social rewards satisfaction (receiving 'likes' and comments), whereas sharing other types of photo had no effect (Maclean et al., 2020).

Wellbeing: Framing the Concept

Enhancing wellbeing is a key ambition of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Characteristics associated with wellbeing include positive emotions; social connections and a sense of belonging; purpose; meaningful goals; achievement and mastery; engagement (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fredrickson, 2001; Martela & Steger, 2016; Ryff & Singer, 1998). Yet there is still no universal definition of the concept. Distinctions are commonly drawn between hedonic, or subjective, wellbeing (SWB) (Diener, 1984) and eudaimonic, or psychological, wellbeing (PWB) (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989). However, its specific meaning continues to be disputed (Dodge et al., 2012).

Although the inter-relationship between psychological and physical wellbeing has been recognised (Ryff & Singer, 2008), positive psychology has been critiqued for neglecting this aspect (Diener & Chan, 2011). Another criticism is that positive psychology lacks consideration of socio-cultural, political and economic factors (Frawley, 2015).

In response, frameworks like Seligman's (2011) PERMA model of flourishing and Ryan & Deci's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) theorise wellbeing as a multidimensional construct. Positive psychology is now said to be in a 'third wave' or beyond, characterised by a broader, multi-layered, approach to wellbeing and an interdisciplinary or even post-disciplinary perspective (Lomas et al., 2021). Integral frameworks like the LIFE model (Lomas et al., 2015) incorporate greater complexity, including awareness of the wider systems in which individuals are embedded. Addressing criticisms about the absence of physical health from positive psychology, they encompass an embodied perspective of wellbeing (Hefferon, 2015).

The latest thinking in positive psychology embraces other factors shown to have a positive impact on wellbeing, like mindfulness (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Lomas et al., 2019), being in the natural environment (Capaldi et al., 2015; Gesler, 2005) and 'green exercise' (outdoor activity) (Barton et al., 2016; Pretty et al., 2005). These dimensions may be inter-related: Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory, for instance, posits that positive emotions build resources like mindfulness and social intelligence, in turn building physical and mental health (Fredrickson, 2001; Kok et al., 2013).

Photo-a-Day and Wellbeing: The Picture So Far

PaD projects, sometimes called 365 projects, entail taking one photograph every day and uploading it to an online platform. PaD has been interpreted as a reflexive and creative practice

2 of 16

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

(Piper-Wright, 2013). Several qualitative studies have explored PaD in a naturalistic setting, from the perspectives of practice theory, positive computing and self-care, using a range of methodologies, including thematic analysis, narrative analysis and ethnography (Brewster & Cox, 2019; Cox & Brewster, 2021). These authors conceptualise PaD as a way people shape and understand their own wellbeing in complex ways. Interestingly, the perceived benefits to wellbeing were generally not part of people's original reasons for beginning the practice (Cox & Brewster, 2021, p.13).

Although experimental studies cannot replicate PaD as a freely-chosen activity undertaken in everyday life, interventions incorporating some of its key elements have been designed to quantitatively investigate its relationship with wellbeing. These studies indicate positive outcomes, although the relationship is not necessarily a straightforward one. For example, in a positive computing study investigating how smartphone technology (apps) can be harnessed to increase SWB, three distinct activities of taking smiling 'selfies', pictures of things that made oneself happy, and photos to make others happy, were all found to increase PA, while taking photos to share also reduced negative affect (NA) (Chen et al., 2016). Lee et al. (2021) observed an uplift in SWB by employing an experimental app for users to take photos of positive moments in their daily lives, then review and reflect on them. In the specific context of the Covid pandemic, Read et al. (2022) present preliminary evidence from a randomised controlled trial indicating the therapeutic value of a self-administered photography intervention.

The literature touches on some negative impacts, for instance the perceived burden of keeping up with the demands of posting daily photos and comments. Piper-Wright refers to a 'negative pleasure' (2013, p.237), citing tensions between a long-term desire to sustain the practice and the short-term difficulties daily photography can present. Serafinelli & Cox (2019) mention the concerns of privacy related to photo sharing online. No studies were found reporting an overall neutral or negative impact, although this could reflect publication bias. Existing research therefore suggests that PaD can have beneficial impacts on wellbeing, although the current knowledge base remains limited.

Paths to Wellbeing through Photo-a-Day

Several mechanisms through which the benefits of PaD for wellbeing are delivered have been proposed. A core aspect of the practice is sharing images online: this 'social' element may be significant given the importance of social relationships for wellbeing (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Several studies have found evidence of an uplift in PA linked to sharing images with others in experimental interventions (Chen et al., 2016; McKee et al., 2019). While social relationships are typically associated with PWB (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), these studies measured SWB, indicating a potential lack of conceptual clarity.

Seeking positive events and subjects for photographs has been proposed as a route towards enhanced SWB (Chen et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2021). According to Cox & Brewster (2018, p.21), the conventions of online photography tend towards sharing aesthetically pleasing images within a culture of positive commenting. Pro-social behaviour - creating and sharing images with the intention of boosting the mood of others - has been observed to increase wellbeing (Chen et al., 2016; McKee et al., 2019). Positive emotions generated by image content are therefore potentially inter-related with social behaviours, demonstrating the complexity of wellbeing.

Mastery, the 'desire to get better and better at something that matters' (Pink, 2009, p.111), is recognised as a core component of PWB (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Seligman, 2011). Online spaces like PaD sites can be construed as 'sites of learning' (Barton, 2012, p.139). Learning surfaced as an unexpected theme in Barton's (2012) study of multilingual practices on Flickr, and was seen to be a social process with role flexibility – people could be teachers as well as learners. Piper-Wright (2013, p.242) regards improvements in technical photographic skills and confidence as a major motivation for continuing PaD.

Photography is viewed as an innovative method for understanding meaning (Glaw et al., 2017; Steger et al., 2013). While meaningful does not necessarily equate with positive or pleasant (Baumeister et al., 2016), meaning in life has been associated with PWB (Ryff, 1989) and taking meaningful and mindful photographs has been associated in experimental interventions with increases in individual wellbeing (Kurtz & Lyubomirsky, 2013; Steger et al., 2014).

Mindfulness can be understood as 'the state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present' (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p.822). Several studies of PaD and related experiments reference mindfulness in connection with wellbeing (Brewster & Cox, 2019; Chen et al., 2016; Kurtz, 2015; McKee et al., 2019, 2020). The construct of savoring, defined as the 'capacity to attend to, appreciate and enhance positive experiences' (Bryant & Veroff, 2007, p.2) may be related to mindfulness and has been associated

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

3 of 16

Table 1:

Demographic profile of participants

Demographic variable	Category	Number of participants
Gender*		
	Female	10
	Male	2
Age		
	41-50	2
	51-60	5
	61-70	3
	71+	2
Employment status		
	Not employed	3
	Employed full time	5
	Employed part time	
	Self-employed	1
	Retired	3

*No other gender identities were reported

with PaD through reviewing and reminiscing about photos (Brewster & Cox, 2019; McKee et al., 2020; Piper-Wright, 2013). Nature appears to be a popular subject for photos (Lee et al., 2021; Steger et al., 2013). Finding subjects to photograph outdoors combines experiencing nature with physical activity (Brewster & Cox, 2019). These dimensions are alluded to in the literature on PaD for wellbeing, but have not yet been fully considered.

METHOD

Design

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the University's School of Psychology. The study was conducted in accordance with UEL and BPS codes of ethics. A phenomenological epistemological standpoint was adopted, congruent with a qualitative methodology (Joffe, 2012; Willig, 2013). Reflexive thematic analysis (RTA), developed by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2021, 2022), was applied as the research method. The theoretical flexibility of RTA meant the analysis of participants' lived experience could be informed by positive psychology, as well as existing cross-disciplinary research on PaD. RTA's analytical

flexibility, enabling both inductive and deductive coding, was also important (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Joffe, 2012).

RTA considers the researcher inextricably involved in the research process, with their assumptions, agenda and subjectivity influencing the research topic, participants, and data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Willig, 2013). Through the RTA methodology lens, this subjective co-creation of qualitative research is a strength rather than an undesirable bias, although conscious reflexivity is required of the researcher. To encourage reflexive critical thinking, a journal was kept throughout the research process, as recommended by Barrett et al. (2020).

Participants

One-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted online with 12 participants, recruited via an advert placed in two online PaD communities: Photo-a-Day for Wellness, a private Facebook group with 250 members, and 365 Project group, with approximately 5000 members. Participants met the following inclusion criteria: self-identifying as practicing PaD for their wellbeing; current member of one of the two online groups; at least 18 years of age.

Basic demographic data about the participants were gathered

4 of 16

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

(see Table 1), using questions formulated according to guidelines presented by Hughes et al. (2016). Average age was 59; all 12 participants self-identified as white. The majority (seven) were from the UK, three were from the US, one from Romania, one from New Zealand. No definitive data is available to confirm whether this reflects or contrasts with the overall demographic make-up of the two groups, or with other PaD groups.

Quantitative studies of PaD-type interventions have typically used relatively homogenous samples of young (average age around 20) students in US and UK universities (Chen et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2021; McKee et al., 2019, 2020; Steger et al., 2014). Positive psychology research has been critiqued for the predominance of such samples, comprising students from Western Educated Industrialized Rich Democratic (WEIRD) populations (Hendriks et al., 2019). It was hoped to include a broader range of demographic characteristics in the study sample; this objective was only partially achieved. Participants lived in diverse locations, none were students and a range of occupations was represented, including teacher, solicitor, software tester, company director, PA, logistics manager and coach/consultant. The age range was broader and average age higher than in the quantitative studies above. Other qualitative studies of PaD have reported similarly older age profiles (Brewster & Cox, 2019; Cox & Brewster, 2018). This is surprising given the higher usage of SNSs in general by younger age groups (Pittman & Reich, 2016). It could be speculated that older, retired people have more time to practice PaD and participate in research. However, half the participants in this study were working full-time, which contradicts this point.

Volunteers were sent an invitation to participate in the research; all signed a consent form and were sent a debrief note afterwards. Interviews, including a pilot, were conducted from September-December 2021. As context, Covid restrictions were in place, although none of the participants lived in regions in lockdown during this period.

Procedure and Materials

Interviews were approximately one hour long and audio-recorded before being transcribed and anonymised. Each participant was given a pseudonym. The interviews combined open-ended questions with an invitation to share reflections on three photographs participants had posted to their group. The method thus incorporated photo-elicitation, developed to evoke additional verbal data and access rich memories and feelings (Frith et al., 2005; Glaw et al., 2017). Reproducing images shared by research participants presents ethical challenges (Silver, 2013). These were addressed by ensuring participants signed a form giving permission to use their images and not including photos of people (see Appendix 1).

Data Analysis

Analysis followed the six-phase RTA process elaborated by Braun & Clarke (2021, 2022) in a refinement of their original conceptualisation of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data were coded with NVivo, using inductive and deductive codes to represent participants' voices and acknowledge existing theory and research. Semantic coding, derived from explicitly expressed meaning, was applied, while also looking for implicit meanings across participants, involving latent coding. Some codes combined both. Coding was followed by several rounds of generating, developing, clustering, refining, discarding, and regrouping themes (see Appendix 2), interspersed with writing. This process was messy, challenging and recursive rather than neatly linear.

Reflexivity and Co-creating the Research: "I hadn't thought about it until you brought it up"

The method chosen stemmed from an epistemological view of the researcher as subjective instrument of the research and the interviews as connected dialogue. The participants had pre-existing thoughts around the questions asked, but their specific articulation was created within the context of the researcher-participant relationship, however temporary and overtly transactional.

My role as a professional coach, trained to listen and ask questions, played into the dynamics of the interviews. I am an educated, middle-aged, white, British woman, originally from a northern working-class background, now living a middle-class lifestyle in the south of the UK. I am married and the mother of a young child. These and many other factors explicitly and implicitly influenced my collection, analysis and presentation of the data. For instance, my identity may have influenced who replied to the call for participants and how people responded in the interviews.

RESULTS

Data analysis using RTA identified three over-arching themes and five sub-themes (see Table 2).

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

5 of 16

Table 2:
Thematic summary

Data analysis using RTA identified three over-arching themes and five sub-themes.

Theme/ sub theme	Name	Characteristics	Illustrative quotes
Theme 1	Experiencing positive emotion in the moment	Recognising and valuing emotions evoked by taking photographs and looking at those shared by others. A short-term boost to subjective wellbeing	"It's people carving out a moment in the day, that, you know, has meant something for them and that's actually brought them, you know, that dose of mental sunshine." (Sally)
Subtheme 1	Mindfulness and noticing	Photography bringing a greater sense of awareness of surroundings and the present moment and paradoxically, also of being lost in the moment, experiencing a flow state	'It just makes you sort of slow down and pay attention to little details." (David)
Subtheme 2	Appreciating nature	Encompassing pleasure at being in and really noticing the natural environment, as well as connections to personal "happy places". Combining PaD with outdoor physical activity as an embodied positive practice	"What the photography does, is it makes me stop and look closer. At that natural environment and appreciate the really finer elements that go to make up the whole vista." (Robert)
Subtheme 3	Savoring past moments and memories	Sense of time shift in participants' perspectives: reviewing photographs as a way of re-experiencing the emotions associated with them	"It almost takes me back to the moment … and how you're feeling in the moment. And all of them are good feelings." (Viv)
Theme 2	Positive social connections	Valuing the relationships and sense of community fostered by membership of the PaD group	"I have met people from all over the world. Figuratively and literally. Which has broadened my life in so many ways … I don't even know where to start." (Kirsty)
Subtheme 4	Belonging and commitment	Feeling at home in the group, a sense of being welcome and supported. A dedication to contributing to the community through posting photos and comments.	"Belonging to similar people, people with similar interests." (Viv) "Even though I don't know them, I feel a commitment to them as a group. Particularly the ones I follow." (Miranda)
Subtheme 5	Interacting with others	Engaging in a range of interactions, from one-off comments to giving tips and feedback, through to developing ongoing relationships and meetings offline. Experiencing strong connections without necessarily knowing people very well	"It feels like family, but yet I don't really know any of them. … I think it's just lovely having a conversation." (Ingrid)
Theme 3	Mastery and learning	Learning technical skills, growing in competence, feeling a sense of pride and achievement in reaching a goal of meeting a challenge. Raising standards as levels of mastery increase	"I got the technique right. … I see something that I was able to do and do well, I guess, in my eyes." (Jayne)

Theme 1: The Feel-Good Factor: Experiencing Positive Emotion in the Moment

All 12 participants described experiencing positive emotions through PaD, from joy and awe evoked by the beauty of their photographic subjects, to having fun and enjoying lighter moments. Taking photographs and viewing others' pictures both kindled positive emotions: "It just makes you feel good." (Miranda). Eleven participants alluded to feeling pride in their photos; most (11) intentionally sought out positive moments through PaD: "Part of it is trying to find something good in my day" (Ingrid). Others explicitly recognised the fleeting nature of these feelings: "It's more day-to-day help, helping lift one's mood" (David). Participants described experiencing positive emotions in three distinct ways.

Subtheme 1. Mindfulness and Noticing Mindfulness as a state of mind, a way of being in the moment, was mentioned by 10 participants, contributing to a greater awareness of the world around them: "Looking for that perfect shot enables you to focus on what's really there and appreciate it all the more. … For me, my photography is my meditation" (Robert). Participants talked about feeling calmer, slowing down, quietening the mind, noticing more. Several described a combined impact of appreciating detail and simultaneously being absorbed in the present: "Just going inward, but at the same time, connecting with what's around you" (Teja).

Subtheme 2. Appreciating Nature All participants said they liked to take and/or look at photographs of nature, appreciating its beauty: "Looking out on nature and seeing the rainbow is … pretty and attractive, it just gave a lift" (David). Sometimes there was an association with personal 'happy places', a significant connection with particular spaces: "I feel like it's my anchor in the landscape, that rock. It's … quite special" (Teja). Moreover, nine participants commented on being outdoors, combining photographing nature with being physically active: "I walk four to five miles a day, with my camera. … I've always been big on exercise" (Miranda).

Subtheme 3. Savoring Past Moments and Memories Participants described experiencing positive moments through looking back at their photographs, recalling memories and associations from the past and savoring them in the present. This meant emotions could be experienced repeatedly: "Takes me straight back to the time when I took the photo. … which is invariably a happy time and a happy place for me, because I captured something wonderful" (Robert).

Theme 2: "It's All About the People": Positive Social Connections

The social aspect of PaD was significant for all participants in some way(s). Nearly all (11) pointed to this element as magnified in the context of the global Covid pandemic: "Gave me a feeling of connection. Especially in these times, when people need to be distanced" (Elena). The research findings were grouped into two subthemes.

Subtheme 4: Belonging and Commitment Most (11) participants described feeling part of and connected to their group. Commitment was demonstrated through regularly sharing photos and posting comments. For some participants, the bonds of connection extended beyond photography to social support and friendship: "It's a wonderful foundation of friendship. It's a group of people that are always supportive, always interested, always concerned" (Kirsty). Several people reflected that their group was unusual and special in some way. These two threads interacted to give a self-reinforcing nature to the commitment: "People are interested in what you do. So that gives you an incentive to do it" (Stella).

Subtheme 5: Interacting with Others Positive interactions with other group members were viewed as beneficial by all participants. In addition to valuing these connections for themselves, many (nine) highlighted a desire to boost others' mood through sharing photos – "You might bring a bit of joy to someone's day, because you've shared something nice" (Viv) – and giving encouragement and feedback on others' photographs: "I've enjoyed learning and teaching things … It makes you feel good" (Patricia). Interactions ranged from giving and receiving one-off comments to ongoing conversations and relationships, including meeting in real life. For some participants the group had become more about people than photography: "It's not about the posting at all anymore. It's about the interaction" (Kirsty).

Theme 3. From Good to Great: Mastery and Learning

Wanting to learn how to take better photographs was expressed by 11 participants as a reason for starting PaD: "I've taken pictures all my life but I really wanted to learn more about it" (Jayne). All participants claimed they had grown their technical skills through PaD: "I just adore, you know, growing my photographic ability" (Robert). This learning is dynamic and ongoing, with ability growing through practice and repetition. Greater competence was associated with greater ease, flow and creativity: "The more you do it, the more it … seems to flow a bit freely" (Stella).

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

7 of 16

The process incorporates a social aspect of learning from others, either directly, through receiving feedback and technical guidance, or indirectly, through being inspired by others' work. Many (10) experienced a sense of achievement through reaching a perceived challenge or goal: "That was a photo I wanted to take and to get it was a feeling of satisfaction" (Miranda). For two participants, it was important that PaD was something they did independently and exercised control over: "Doing what I want without anybody giving me opinions" (Patricia).

DISCUSSION

The results above suggest that, for these participants, PaD is connected with wellbeing via three pathways: generating positive emotions in the moment; experiencing positive social connections; promoting mastery and learning. These findings are consistent with existing literature and begin to extend it in several ways.

The first overarching theme, experiencing a temporary uplift in PA, chimes with previous research suggesting online photography practices can enhance SWB (Brewster & Cox, 2019; Chen et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2021). Being aware of their surroundings when searching for photography subjects, becoming absorbed in composing photographs, and observing details were all seen to generate a mindful state for participants. This aligns with the idea that mindfulness impacts wellbeing through bringing awareness, attention and clarity of sensory experiences in the moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003). This has received limited attention in PaD research.

Appreciating and enjoying nature overlapped with mindfulness to some degree: participants described feeling calmer and more present when photographing natural subjects. This concurs with research suggesting the natural environment is beneficial to wellbeing (McMahan & Estes, 2015) but contrasts with studies claiming that sharing 'selfies' has more impact on wellbeing (Maclean et al., 2020). This may reflect the particular nature of PaD, compared with general photo-sharing on Instagram, for instance.

Participants talked about their connections to particular locations, through the experiential and emotional associations they afforded, suggesting the situational, related aspects of participants' interactions with their environment (Bell et al., 2018). The seaside represented a 'happy place' for several participants, consistent with recent geographical literature on 'blue spaces' (coastal and waterside areas) as specific forms of natural environment benefiting wellbeing (Bell et al., 2015). Actively engaging with nature, rather than just spending time in it, has also been suggested to enhance the nature-wellbeing relationship (Richardson et al., 2021). The present study is one of the first attempts to apply these perspectives to PaD. For most (nine) participants, photographing nature was a way of combining psychological and physical aspects of wellbeing, illustrated by participant narratives from Robert's 'puddle shots' on dawn dog walks to Miranda's crawling under bushes hunting for the perfect shot. For this group, then, PaD may be interpreted as a mind-body activity, a form of green exercise fostering PA (Barton et al., 2016).

Reviewing photographs was a third pathway to generating positive emotions for this group. Accessing memories and reliving feelings and associations suggests a form of savoring (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). Here, PaD stimulated positive emotions in the moment, through appreciating nature and mindfulness, and later, through savoring prompted by reviewing photos. This connection has been noted previously (McKee et al., 2019, 2020). The savoring strategy of memory building is described as 'taking mental photographs of an event to remember it' (Villani et al., 2023, 4). PaD extends this mechanism as it involves taking actual photographs. It thereby uses cognitive imagery as a savoring process (Smith et al., 2014). Sato et al. (2018) reported that spending time in natural environments evokes savoring, highlighting a possible link between these two sub-themes too.

Setting out to take a photo every day and posting it online in the expectation of receiving validation from and social interaction with others could be seen as a form of proactive savoring, the 'deliberate act of seeking out or creating positive experience' (Bryant, 2021, p.8). Biskas et al. (2018) describe savoring as 'consciously capturing a current experience so it can later be reflected upon fondly'. The word 'capture' is frequently mirrored in comments on PaD sites, as in 'great capture'. Moreover, this pattern of reviewing – savoring - photos in the light of comments from others may link into the second overarching theme of social connections.

Social connections were experienced in at least two different, though inter-related, ways. First, a feeling of commitment to the group, alongside a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded individuals. Second, a perception of group members as supportive and non-judgmental, with positive and affirming interactions between them. This was seen by some participants as a noteworthy contrast to other online groups.

While most participants had not begun their PaD project primarily for social reasons, several considered their continued

8 of 16

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

involvement in the group as partly, even largely, due to these social connections. Transitory interactions enacted through giving and receiving likes and comments were appreciated, but participants valued more highly the establishment and cultivation of longer-term relationships. These connections sometimes led to offline friendships and meetings in real life, occasionally involving long-distance travel. This reflects the importance of meaningful social connections for PWB (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); previous research into PaD has also found these to be supportive communities (Cox & Brewster, 2018). In contrast, it has been argued that social elements may become less important over time in some circumstances (Piper-Wright, 2013).

As well as deriving pleasure and support from connections nurtured in the groups, some participants expressed a desire to promote positive feelings in others by sharing uplifting or joyful images. This type of pro-social behaviour has been found in other studies (Chen et al., 2016). It may also represent a form of active-constructive response, associated with stronger and closer relationships, which Smith et al. (2014) posit as a savoring strategy. Several participants commented that it felt better to receive specific feedback rather than more passive 'likes'. Another manifestation of this was in helping others develop their photography skills. This was apparently mutually beneficial – as well as being (presumably) helpful for the recipient, participants reported deriving pleasure from supporting other group members in their learning. Similar reports could not be found in the existing literature on PaD, although it is consistent with the dual roles of teacher and learner noted in Barton's (2012) study of multilingual literacy on Flickr.

The third overarching theme identified was mastery. The value participants placed on learning aligns with the drive to competence and accomplishment highlighted as a fundamental factor in PWB (eg., Pink, 2009). In this study, mastery was represented not by reaching a fixed state of expertise but by periodic accomplishments and participants' growing confidence in their abilities. As their capabilities improved, participants set higher standards for themselves; this motivation to sustain increasingly high self-imposed standards is also noted by Piper-Wright (2013). Meeting challenges and improving competence produced a sense of achievement and pride, suggesting a relationship with experiencing positive emotions. Satisfaction from supporting others' learning adds a social element to this pathway and again speaks to the inter-connection between themes.

Unlike social connections, often viewed as an unexpected positive outcome, learning new photography skills was frequently cited by participants as a reason for starting PaD, as well as a stimulus for continuing the practice. This diverges from other studies, where participants reported learning but had not expected it (Barton, 2012; Cox & Brewster, 2018). The current research offers fresh insights into how learning takes place – through experimentation, practice, and being inspired by viewing others' images. For some participants, PaD was an important activity through which they demonstrated agency. The practice may therefore support wellbeing through fostering autonomy, as well as competence, as articulated in SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Taken together, these findings suggest participants of this study engaged with PaD for wellbeing in multiple ways. This discussion has highlighted three distinct pathways and explored some of the strands within and inter-relations between the three dimensions, which make the overall picture promising, yet complex.

Limitations of Present Study

This research was conducted in 2021, during the global Covid-19 pandemic. All participants mentioned this, especially in relation to valuing social connections in their PaD group during lockdowns and periods of reduced social interaction. Based on comments from longer-standing group members, this seems to be an amplification of the pre-existing situation rather than a new phenomenon. However, as a one-time, single sample study the current study cannot reliably establish this.

RTA was chosen as an appropriate, epistemologically-aligned methodology to explore the lived experience of PaD for wellbeing. It was used systematically to establish a small new body of data. It was therefore successful in its own terms and the research findings largely concur with previous publications on the beneficial effects for wellbeing experienced through PaD and related experimental interventions. However, as with all small-scale qualitative studies, the findings are not generalisable to a larger population.

The study sample was a self-selected, naturalistic one. The main criterion for inclusion was that participants were currently engaging in PaD for wellbeing; it did not aim to be representative. Nevertheless, as a reflexive researcher, I was very aware that all participants, other than in the pilot, were white, aged 40 plus. This demographic profile may reflect the composition of the groups from which participants were sourced. Alternatively, my position as a white, middle-aged woman may have influenced the response to my recruitment advert - my photo did not appear in the advert but is easy to find online. Other forms of diversity within the participant group were similarly limited. PaD for wellbeing may

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

9 of 16

have differential appeal and impact across different population groups; this represents a potentially useful avenue for other researchers to pursue.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand how a small group of participants experience PaD for wellbeing, using the qualitative methodology of RTA. The results suggest three potential, interlinked pathways via which PaD may enhance wellbeing: generating positive emotion; enjoying social connections; and advancing towards mastery. Despite the limitations noted above, these findings have several implications for future research and practical application.

Within the overarching themes, sub-themes of mindfulness, appreciating nature, savoring, belonging and positive interactions with others, including supporting others' learning, were identified. These aspects of PaD for wellbeing have previously received limited attention and merit further work, both as singular dimensions and in combination. For instance, when conducted outdoors in nature, PaD may become an embodied positive practice, a form of green exercise contributing to holistic physical and mental wellbeing.

Quantitative experimental research has begun to explore PaD as the basis for new PPIs (Lee et al., 2021; Steger et al., 2014); further work may establish it as an empirically-validated PPI. Alternatively, as in the current study, PaD may be viewed less as an intervention and more as a personal practice embedded in everyday life as an ongoing contribution to wellbeing. This accords with the view of PaD as a socio-cultural practice (Brewster & Cox, 2019, p.623). Again, further research would be valuable to understand the specific pathways through which PaD interacts with wellbeing.

While existing research draws largely on perspectives from sociology, practice theory, informatics and positive computing, a key contribution of this study is its location within positive psychology. In a theoretical sense, it represents an attempt to conceptualise PaD as a complex, multi-dimensional practice in the context of third wave positive psychology. Future research could develop this, for instance analysing the practice through the lens of the integrated LIFE model (Lomas et al., 2015).

Methodologically, photo-elicitation was seen to be effective in building rapport and generating rich interview material. Showing their photographs, participants became absorbed in describing the circumstances in which they had taken their photos and the feelings, meanings and associations they evoked, often disclosing a surprising amount of detail and emotion. Visual methodologies have been described as an innovative, practical and under-utilised qualitative method (Glaw et al., 2017). Photo-elicitation gives power to research participants, who choose which images they share with the researcher, aligning with a Big Q concern to recognise and seek to address the power dynamics inherent in research (Frith et al., 2005). It may therefore be a fruitful method to apply in qualitative positive psychology studies in general, and particularly appropriate where the research question pertains to photography, as in the current study.

To conclude, this study supports earlier research depicting PaD as a practice with potential for enhancing wellbeing. The explicit positive psychology lens adopted here has focused attention on the possible impacts of this practice on both short-term SWB, for instance, experiencing positive emotions and social interactions in the moment, and longer-term PWB, for example through developing mastery and building sustained social relationships. Considering the dimensions of mindfulness, appreciating nature and green exercise, it has begun to explore how PaD could operate as an embodied positive practice and to capture a fuller picture of wellbeing as complex, multi-dimensional and holistic. ∎

Biography

Liz Gooster, PhD is a Graduate of MAPPCP (Masters in Applied Positive Psychology & Coaching Psychology) at UEL (University of East London), Faculty Member and Tutor of Meyler Campbell, professional executive and leadership coach with her own practice.
Email: liz@lizgooster.com
Phone: +44 (0)7429 118084
Website: www.lizgooster.com

https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5179-2413

10 of 16

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

References

Barrett, A., Kajamaa, A., & Johnston, J. (2020). How to ... be reflexive when conducting qualitative research. *The Clinical Teacher*, *17*, 9-12. https://doi.org/doi: 10.1111/tct.13133

Barton, D. (2012). Participation, deliberate learning and discourses of learning online. *Language & Education: An International Journal*, *26*(2), 139-150. https://10.0.4.56/09500782.2011.642880

Barton, J., Wood, C., Pretty, J., & Rogerson, M. (2016). Green exercise for health: A dose of nature. In *Green exercise: Linking nature, health and well-being* (pp. 26-36).

Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J. L., & Garbinsky, E. N. (2016). Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life. *Positive Psychology in Search for Meaning*, 49-60. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2168436

Baumeister, R., & Leary, M. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*, 497-529. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

Bell, S. L., Foley, R., Houghton, F., Maddrell, A., & Williams, A. M. (2018). From therapeutic landscapes to healthy spaces, places and practices: A scoping review. *Social Science & Medicine*, *196*, 123-130. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.11.035

Bell, S. L., Phoenix, C., Lovell, R., & Wheeler, B. W. (2015). Seeking everyday wellbeing: The coast as a therapeutic landscape. *Social Science & Medicine*, *142*, 56-67. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.08.011

Biskas, M., Cheung, W.-Y., Juhl, J., Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T. & Hepper, E. (2018). A prologue to nostalgia: savoring creates nostalgic memories that foster optimism. *Cognition and Emotion*, 33 (3), 417-427. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2018.1458705

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(3), 328-352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide.* SAGE Publications.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brewster, L., & Cox, A. M. (2019). The daily digital practice as a form of self-care: Using photography for everyday well-being. *Health*, *23*(6), 621-638. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363459318769465

Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *84*(4), 822-848. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822

Bryant, F. B. (2021). Current progress and future directions for theory and research on savoring. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12.* https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.771698

Bryant, F. B., & Veroff, J. B. (2007). Concepts of savoring: An introduction. In F. Bryant & J. B. Veroff (Eds.), *Savoring: A new model of positive experience* (pp. 1-24). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Capaldi, C. A., Passmore, H. A., Nisbet, E. K., Zelenski, J. M., & Dopko, R. L. (2015). Flourishing in nature: A review of the benefits of connecting with nature and its application as a wellbeing intervention. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *5*(4). https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v5i4.449

Chen, Y., Mark, G., & Ali, S. (2016). Promoting positive affect through Smartphone photography. *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research & Practice*, *6*(1), 1-16. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13612-016-0044-4

Cox, A., & Brewster, L. (2018). Photo-A-Day: A digital photographic practice and its impact on wellbeing. *Photographies*, *11*(1), 113-129. https://doi.org/10.1080/17540763.2017.1399288

Cox, A., & Brewster, L. (2021). Vernacular narratives of well-being and the practice of photo-a-day. *Storytelling, Self, Society*, *16*(2), 9-28.

Diener, E. (1984). Subjective well-being. *Psychological Bulletin*, *95*(3), 542–575.

Diener, E., & Chan, M. (2011). Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology*, *3*(1).

Dobrean, A., & Păsărelu, C.-R. (2016). Impact of social media on social anxiety: A systematic review. In F. Durbano & B. Marchesi (Eds.), *New developments in anxiety disorders*. IntechOpen. https://doi.org/10.5772/65188

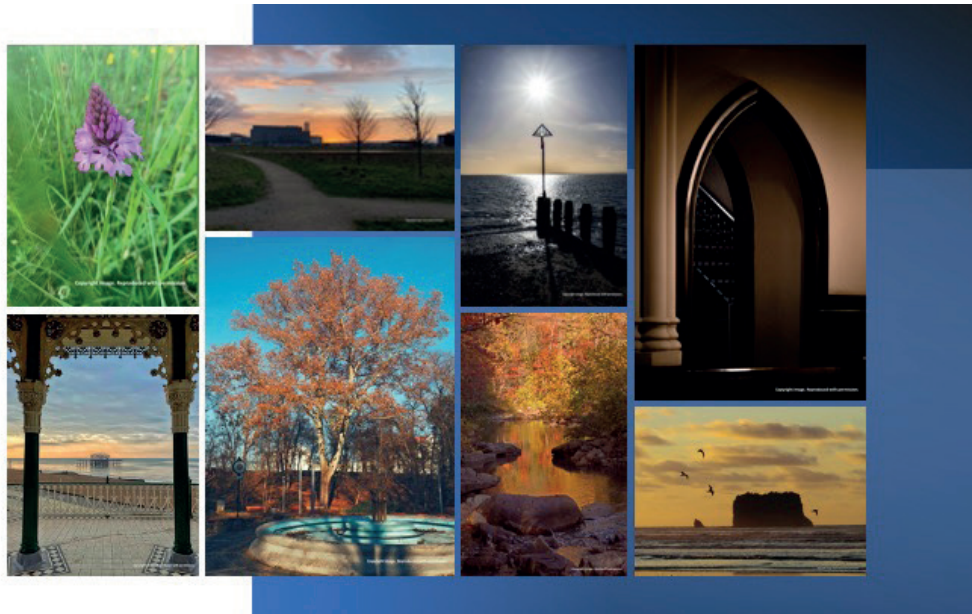Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *2*(3), 222-235. https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4
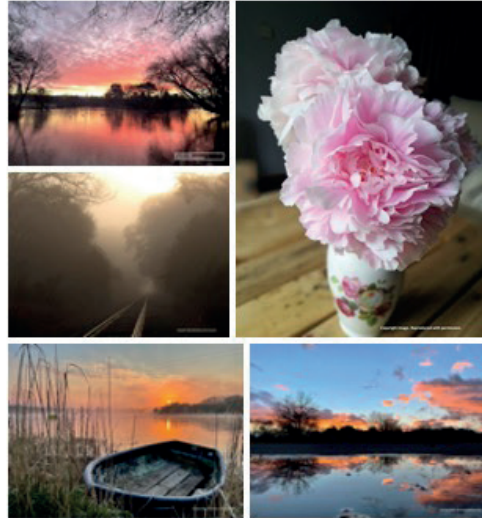
European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

11 of 16

Frawley, A. (2015). Happiness research: A review of critiques. *Sociology Compass*, *9*(1), 62-77. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12236

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, *56*(3), 218-226. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.218

Frith, H., Riley, S., Archer, L., & Gleeson, K. (2005). Imag(in)ing visual methodologies. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *2*(3), 187-198. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088705qp037ed

Gesler, W. (2005). Therapeutic landscapes: An evolving theme. *Health & Place*, *11*(4), 295-297. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2005.02.003

Glaw, X., Inder, K., Kable, A., & Hazelton, M. (2017). Visual methodologies in qualitative research: Autophotography and photo elicitation applied to mental health research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 1609406917748215. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917748215

Hefferon, K. (2015). The role of embodiment in optimal functioning. In S. Joseph (Ed.), *Positive Psychology in Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 789-806). John Wiley & Sons, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118996874.ch45

Hendriks, T., Warren, M. A., Schotanus-Dijkstra, M., Hassankhan, A., Graafsma, T., Bohlmeijer, E., & de Jong, J. (2019). How WEIRD are positive psychology interventions? A bibliometric analysis of randomized controlled trials on the science of well-being. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *14*(4), 489-501. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1484941

Hughes, J., Camden, A. A., & Yangchen, T. (2016). Rethinking and updating demographic questions: Guidance to improve descriptions of research samples. *Psi Chi Journal of Psychological Research*, *21*, 138-151.

Joffe, H. (2012). Thematic analysis. In D. Harper & A. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Qualitative research methods in mental health and psychotheraphy: A guide for students and practitioners* (pp. 209-2223). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Kok, B. E., Coffey, K. A., Cohn, M. A., Catalino, L. I., Vacharkulksemsuk, T., Algoe, S. B., Brantley, M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2013). How positive emotions build physical health: Perceived positive social connections account for the upward spiral between positive emotions and vagal tone. *Psychological Science*, *24*(7), 1123-1132. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612470827

Kurtz, J. L. (2015). Seeing through new eyes: An experimental investigation of the benefits of photography. *Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 11*, 354-358.

Kurtz, J. L., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). Happiness promotion: Using mindful photography to increase positive emotion and appreciation. In J. J. Froh & A. C. Parks (Eds.), *Activities for teaching positive psychology: A guide for instructors* (pp. 133-136). *American Psychological Association*. https://doi.org/10.1037/14042-021

Lee, J. A., Efstratiou, C., Siriaraya, P., Sharma, D., & Ang, C. S. (2021). SnapAppy: A positive psychology intervention using smartphone photography to improve emotional well-being. *Pervasive and Mobile Computing, 73*, 101369. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmcj.2021.101369

Lomas, T. (2016). Positive art: Artistic expression and appreciation as an exemplary vehicle for flourishing. *Review of General Psychology, 20*(2), 171-182. https://doi.org/10.1037/gpr0000073

Lomas, T., Hefferon, K., & Ivtzan, I. (2015). The LIFE Model: A meta-theoretical conceptual map for applied positive psychology. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 16*(5), 1347-1364. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9563-y

Lomas, T., Medina, J. C., Ivtzan, I., Rupprecht, S., & Eiroa-Orosa, F. J. (2018). Mindfulness-based interventions in the workplace: An inclusive systematic review and meta-analysis of their impact upon wellbeing. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 14*(5), 625-640. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2018.1519588

Lomas, T., Waters, L., Williams, P., Oades, L. G., & Kern, M. L. (2020). Third wave positive psychology: Broadening towards complexity. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 16*(5), 660-674. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1805501

Maclean, J., Al-Saggaf, Y., & Hogg, R. (2020). Instagram photo sharing and its relationships with social rewards and well-being. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies, 2*(3), 242-250. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.207

Malik, A., Dhir, A., & Nieminen, M. (2016). Uses and gratifications of digital photo sharing on Facebook. *Telematics and Informatics, 33*(1), 129-138. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2015.06.009

Martela, F., & Steger, M. F. (2016). The three meanings of meaning in life: Distinguishing coherence, purpose, and significance. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 11*(5), 531–545. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1137623

McKee, L. G., Algoe, S. B., Faro, A. L., & O'Leary, J. L. (2020). What do daily reports add to the picture? Results from a photography intervention designed to increase positive emotion. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *15*(5), 639-644. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1789697

McKee, L. G., Algoe, S. B., Faro, A. L., O'Leary, J. L., & O'Neal, C. W. (2019). Picture this! Bringing joy into focus and developing healthy habits of mind: Rationale, design, and implementation of a randomized control trial for young adults. *Contemporary Clinical Trials Communications*, *15*, 100391.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.conctc.2019.100391

McMahan, E. A., & Estes, D. (2015). The effect of contact with natural environments on positive and negative affect: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *10*(6), 507-519.
https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2014.994224

Nainis, N., Paice, J. A., Ratner, J., Wirth, J. H., Lai, J., & Shott, S. (2006). Relieving symptoms in cancer: Innovative use of art therapy. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, *31*(2), 162-169.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2005.07.006

Oh, H. J., Ozkaya, E., & LaRose, R. (2014). How does online social networking enhance life satisfaction? The relationships among online supportive interaction, affect, perceived social support, sense of community, and life satisfaction. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *30*, 69-78.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.07.053

Pink, D. H. (2009). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. Canongate.

Piper-Wright, T. (2013). That's the story of my life …: Daily photography as reflexive practice. In R. Miller, J. Carson, & T. Wilkie (Eds.), *The Reflexive Photographer* (p. 332). MuseumsEtc.

Pittman, M., & Reich, B. (2016). Social media and loneliness: Why an Instagram picture may be worth more than a thousand Twitter words. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *62*, 155-167.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.084

Pretty, J., Peacock, J., Sellens, M., & Griffin, M. (2005). The mental and physical health outcomes of green exercise. *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, *15*(5), 319-337.
https://doi.org/10.1080/09603120500155963

Read, R. K., Mason, O. J., & Jones, C. J. (2022). A randomised controlled trial (RCT) exploring the impact of a photography intervention on wellbeing and posttraumatic growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Arts and Health*.
https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2022.2107033

Reynolds, F., & Lim, K. H. (2007). Contribution of visual art-making to the subjective well-being of women living with cancer: A qualitative study. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *34*(1), 1-10.
https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2006.09.005

Richardson, M., Passmore, H. A., Lumber, R., Thomas, R., & Hunt, A. (2021). Moments, not minutes: The nature-wellbeing relationship. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *11*(1), 8-33.
https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v11i1.1267

Rubinstein, D., & Sluis, K. (2008). A life more photographic: Mapping the networked image. *Photographies*, *1*(1), 9-28.
https://doi.org/10.1080/17540760701785842

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68-78.
https://doi.org/10.1037//0003-066x.55.1.68

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 141-166.
https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*(6), 1069-1081.
https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069

Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological wellbeing revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(4), 719.

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. (1998). The contours of positive human health. *Psychological Inquiry*, *9*(1), 1-28.

Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *9*(1), 13-39.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0

Sato, I., Jose, P. E., & Conner, T. S. (2018). Savoring mediates the effect of nature on positive affect. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, *8*(1).
https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v8i1.621

Seabrook, E. M., Kern, M. L., & Rickard, N. S. (2016). Social networking sites, depression, and anxiety: A systematic review. *JMIR Ment Health*, *3*(4), e50.
https://doi.org/10.2196/mental.5842

Seeing Happy. (2023, January 19) *Live from London*.
https://seeinghappy.org/news/live-from-london/

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A new understanding of happiness, well-being - and how to achieve them*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology. An introduction. *The American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 5-14.
https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.5

Serafinelli, E., & Cox, A. (2019). 'Privacy does not interest me'. A comparative analysis of photo sharing on Instagram and Blipfoto. *Visual Studies*, *34*(1), 67-78.
https://doi.org/10.1080/1472586X.2019.1621194

Silver, J. (2013). Visual methods. In C. Willig (Ed.), *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 156-165). McGraw-Hill Education.

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

13 of 16

Smith, J. L., Harrison, P.R., Kurtz, J. L. & Bryant, F. B. (2014) Nurturing the capacity to savor. In A. C. Parks & S. M. Schueller (Eds). *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Positive Interventions* (pp. 42-65). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Steger, M. F., Shim, Y., Barenz, J., & Shin, J. Y. (2014). Through the windows of the soul: A pilot study using photography to enhance meaning in life. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, *3*(1), 27-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2013.11.002

Steger, Michael F., Shim, Y., Rush, B. R., Brueske, L. A., Shin, J. Y., & Merriman, L. A. (2013). The mind's eye: A photographic method for understanding meaning in people's lives. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *8*(6), 530-542. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.830760

Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010). The connection between art, healing, and public health: a review of current literature. *American Journal of Public Health*, *100*(2), 254-263. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.156497

Suler, J. (2009). The psychotherapeutics of online photosharing. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, *6*(4), 339-344. https://doi.org/10.1002/aps.219

Villani, D., Pancini, E., Pesce, F., Scuzzarella, L. (2023) Savoring life during pandemic: an online intervention to promote well-being in emerging adults. *BMC Psychol*ogy, *11*, 196. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01225-z

Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. McGraw-Hill Education.

14 of 16

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

Appendix 1: Participant photos

Note: *Participant photos are reproduced here with permission of the photographers; all images are copyright. Given that photo-elicitation was used as part of the methodology, it feels appropriate to include them here to convey a flavour of the visual aspect of the research. They are also included to honour the participants, who shared their photographs so willingly and with such pride. Finally, a paper on a photography practice did not seem complete without photographs.*
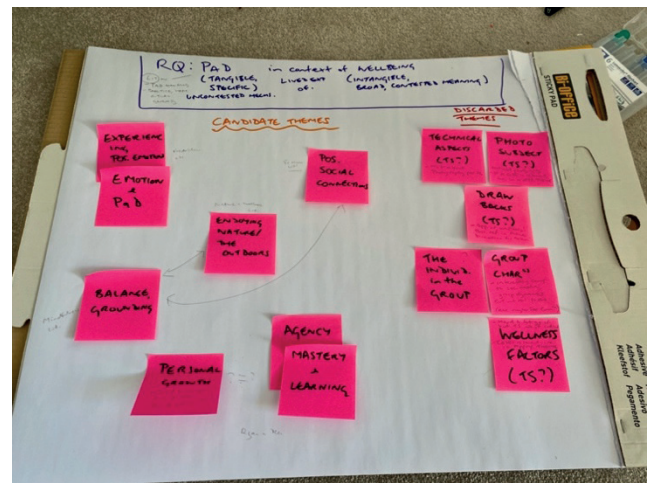
European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 6 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals

15 of 16

Appendix 2: Mind Maps of Themes Throughout the Reflexive Thematic Analysis Process

The photographs in this Appendix are the author's own.

Phase 2-3: Generating initial coding clusters
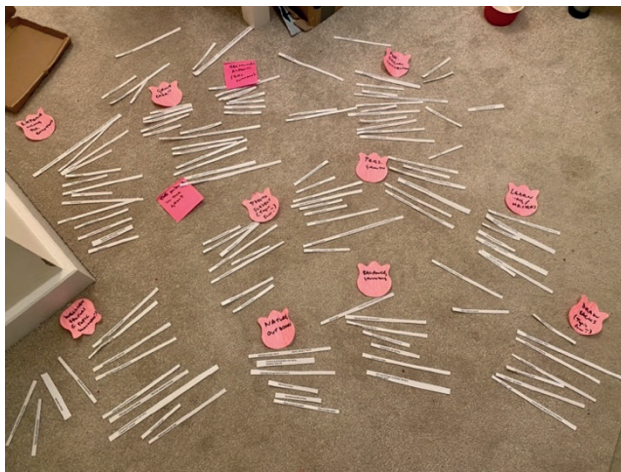
Phase 3: Generating initial candidate themes

Phase 4: Developing and reviewing themes

Phase 6: Writing up the analysis

16 of 16

European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology 2024, 8, Article 5 ISSN 2397-7116
Published by National Wellbeing Service Ltd 2024 • www.nationalwellbeingservice.com/journals