Wellbeing Profile of France and India IT Employees: A Cross-Cultural Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Cultural influence and variances have a great influence in the development of psychosocial well-being. Cross-cultural psychologists explore the difference between Eastern and Western cultures. The present study was designed to analyse the variations in wellbeing profile of IT professionals between India and France.

Methodology: Two hundred and fourteen non-probabilistic samples were recruited via various IT companies from France (n=92) and India (n=122). The participants completed the wellbeing profile consisted of Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory, Subjective Fluctuating Happiness Scale and Subjective Authentic-Durable Happiness Scale (SFHS and SA-DHS) and rating scale for Satisfaction at work, importance of religions/spirituality shared through a digital format, built on the Google Form.

Results: Based on independent-samples t-tests, the results indicated that Indian and French IT professionals did not exhibit a difference on levels of Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness. In addition, the findings shown inter correlations between Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness across the culture. In contrast, the results indicated that Indian IT professionals did exhibit higher levels in importance of Religions and Spirituality when compared to French IT professionals.

Conclusion: In a nutshell, the present study came to the conclusion that Indian and French employees share a greater number of wellbeing characteristics in common. Religion and spirituality are also important parts of the Indian culture of well-being.

Keywords: Culture, Individualism-collectivism, Happiness, Mindfulness, Religions and Spirituality

INTRODUCTION

In the past four decades, Information Technology (IT) has been emerged as one of the most vibrant sectors of the global economy. IT professionals are typically employees with high skills and have a competitive wage. But the findings suggest that IT professionals are going through huge amounts of work stress and burnout due to heavy workload, tight deadlines, extended and unstipulated hours of work and the role ambiguity affecting their family life [1,2]. There is evidence in the literature that the relation between job burnout and work stress are mediated by coping strategies and mood regulation among Information Technology professionals[3]. Hence, the IT industries must plan coping management programmes, focused at individual and on organizational levels[4].

Emerging findings in positive psychology has been emphasize the role of trait mindfulness[5] and the potential benefits of mindfulness-based intervention for psychosocial wellbeing[6]. The concept Mindfulness has demonstrated validity in the France[7], and India[8]. Religion has an important impact in the lives of people across cultures. The religion has been found to be a significant predictor of biopsychospiritual wellbeing[9]. Further, the cultural dimension

shapes the religious beliefs[10]. Recent evidence has shown that attributes of religiousness were positively associated to subjective well-being and safeguarded the influence of work-related stresses on depressive symptoms[11]. Even though religion and religious practices has cross cultural dimensions, the spirituality is a domain that inclines to be an oecumenical in nature. Studies on the association between spirituality and mental well-being have augmented in recent decades[12]. Further, spirituality encompasses religious practices and cultural beliefs[13].

The first purpose of this study was to investigate whether there are differences in Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, importance of Spirituality-Religions, and Happiness of IT professionals between two countries with different cultures, the India and France. It was hypothesized that the construct Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, importance of Spirituality-Religions, and Happiness would be quantity invariant across the two cultures. The second purpose was to identify the relationships, if any, between Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, importance of Spirituality-Religions, and Happiness of IT professionals in India and France companies. The anticipation was that Mindfulness in both IT professionals in India and France companies would exhibit similar patterns of correlations that would be positive with self-reported Satisfaction at work, importance of Spirituality-Religions, and Authentic Happiness and negative with Fluctuating Happiness. Both of these areas of exploration have received slight or no consideration in the literature. Cultural variances are important to reflect particularly with international changes in the way and place that companies do business and to develop strategies for coping work demands and stress.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

An online cross-sectional survey design was used to test the presumption of cross-cultural similarity. Two hundred and fourteen non-probabilistic, intentional samples were recruited from different IT companies from France and India. A snowball sampling technique was adopted to recruit participants, with persons who have initially joined the research referred others. A covering letter contained the information about the aim of the study and online version of the scales was shared to samples via electronic format, built on the Google Form. Data were automatically and anonymously gathered and stored into Excel file by the Google Form. The instruments were administered in English for Indian Samples and in French for the France samples. Participants were not provided with any incentives for their participation. The entire procedure took approximately 15 min to complete for each participant.

Assessments

Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory[7]: Mindfulness was measured on unidimensional model using the Freiberg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI). The 14-item self-reported questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale rating from 1 (Rarely) to 4 (Almost always). Scores range from 14 to 56, with higher scores indicating higher levels of Mindfulness. This scale has robust psychometric properties; the internal reliability score (Cronbach's alpha) was.86.

Subjective Fluctuating Happiness Scale and Subjective Authentic-Durable Happiness Scale[14]: The scale consisting of 23 items to assess these two types of Happiness: 10 items of the scale are related to the domains of Subjective Fluctuating Happiness (SFHS) and 13 items deal with the dimension of Subjective Authentic-Durable Happiness (SA-DHS). Fluctuation refers to the degree of change in Happiness over time (e.g., "I have times when I swing from moments of total bliss to much lesser satisfying moments") indicate how much they agreed (7) or disagreed (1). Authentic-Durable Happiness refers to assess the current state of Happiness (e.g., "fulfilment") on a 7-point scale, ranged from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high). A single composite score for Happiness was computed by averaging responses to the 13 items (SA-DHS) and 10 items (SFHS) separately. Higher scores reflect greater SFHS and SA-DHS. The reliability of this scale was satisfactory (SFHS; α = .92) and (SA-DHS; α = .95).

Satisfaction at work & importance of Spirituality-Religions: Visual analogue scale of 1–10 was used to indicate, how happy the person at present with your job and the level of Satisfaction at work. The ten-point scale is ranged from 1 (very low) to 10 (very high). One end (very low) corresponds to a very low regular level of satisfaction at work, and the other end (very high) corresponds to a very high regular level of satisfaction at work. Participants rated their level of Satisfaction at work for the last 3 months between these two extremes. The importance of Religion ("Please indicate how important religion is in your life") and Spirituality ("Please indicate how important spirituality is in your life"), which were assessed on five-point Likert scales (from 1 = very low to 5 = very high).

Statistical Analysis: All statistical analyses were performed using the statistical package JASP (Version 0.10.2). Descriptive statistics is expressed as mean (standard deviation) for continuous variables and the categorical variables are presented as frequencies (percentage). Pearson's correlation test was used to explore the correlation between variables. The independent samples t test was used to compare differences between Indian and French IT professionals.

RESULTS

Of the sample of France IT voluntary professionals (n = 92), 64.1% were male, with a mean age of 42.36 years (SD = 10.46 years), and Position in company as first level employee (15.2%), middle level employee

(64.1%), and top-level employee (20.7%). IT professionals from the India (n = 122) were volunteers, and 77% were male, with a mean age of 38.25years (SD=8.68 years), and Position in company as first level employee (23.8 %), middle level employee (56.6%), and top-level employee (19.7%). Further details are summarized in Table 1.

INDIA

Zero-order correlation between variables is summarized in Table 2.

Satisfaction at Work was significant and positive association observed with Mindfulness (r=.27, p < .01), Importance of Spirituality (r=.20, p < .05) and Authentic-Durable Happiness (r=.38, p < .01). Further, Importance of Religion was significant and positive association observed with Importance of Spirituality (r=.46, p < .01) and no statistically significant correlation with Mindfulness and Satisfaction at Work. Furthermore, Importance of Spirituality was significant and positive association observed with Mindfulness (r=.32, p <.01) and Authentic-Durable Happiness (r=.28, p < .01). Additionally, Authentic-Durable Happiness was significant and positive association observed with Mindfulness (r=.60, p <.01) and no statistically significant correlation with Importance

of Religion. Further, the significant negative correlation observed with Subjective Fluctuating Happiness (r=.48, p <.01). Moreover, the Subjective Fluctuating Happiness was significant and negative relation observed with Mindfulness (r=.40, p <.01) and no statistically significant correlation with Satisfaction at Work, Importance of Religion and Importance of Spirituality.

Table 1: Demographic data of the respondents

Demographic data	India Respondents (%)	France Respondents (%)
Gender		
Female	28 (22.95)	33 (35.87)
Male	94 (77.05)	59 (64.13)
Marital Status		
Single	24 (19.67)	25 (27.17)
Separated	1 (0.82)	3 (3.26)
Married	97 (79.51)	57 (61.96)
Divorced	-	7 (7.61)
Education Level		
Bachelor	52 (42.62)	23 (25.01)
Master	64 (52.46)	66 (71.73)
PhD	6 (4.92)	3 (3.26)

Table 2: Correlations for Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, important of religions/spirituality, and Happiness of IT professionals in India and France

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
India (n=122)					
Mindfulness					
Satisfaction at Work	.270**				
Importance of Religion	0.084	-0.060			
Importance of Spirituality	.329**	.204*	.461**		
Subjective Fluctuating Happiness	-.403**	-0.074	0.070	-0.121	
Authentic-durable happiness	.606**	.380**	0.041	.287**	-.486**
France (n=92)					
Mindfulness					
Satisfaction at Work	.425**				
Importance of Religion	0.026	0.133			
Importance of Spirituality	0.122	-0.105	.232*		
Subjective Fluctuating Happiness	-.469**	-.431**	0.063	0.194	
Authentic-durable happiness	.595**	.556**	0.071	-0.019	-.655**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Independent groups t-tests comparing Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, important of religions/spirituality, and Happiness of IT professionals in India and France

Variables		N	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*Sig.*
Mindfulness	India	122	41.17	6.62	1.467	212	0.144
	France	92	39.78	7.17			
Satisfaction at Work	India	122	6.66	2.08	0.82	212	0.413
	France	92	6.44	1.95			
Importance of Religion [a]	India	122	3.24	1.35	8.428	208.932	0.001
	France	92	1.80	1.15			
Importance of Spirituality [a]	India	122	3.82	1.06	2.848	159.004	0.005
	France	92	3.32	1.44			
Fluctuating Happiness	India	122	3.80	1.22	1.584	212	0.115
	France	92	3.52	1.41			
Authentic-durable Happiness	India	122	4.81	1.01	1.504	212	0.134
	France	92	4.60	1.03			

[a] The *t* and *df* were adjusted because variances were not equal

FRANCE

Zero-order correlation between variables is summarized in Table 2.

Satisfaction at Work was significant and positive association observed with Mindfulness (r=.42, p < .01), and Authentic-Durable Happiness (r=.55, p < .01). Further, the significant negative correlation observed with Subjective Fluctuating Happiness (r=.43, p < .01) and no statistically significant correlation with Importance of Religion and Importance of Spirituality. Furthermore, Importance of Religion was significant and positive association observed with Importance of Spirituality (r=.23, p < .05) and no statistically significant correlation with Mindfulness, Subjective Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness. Additionally, Authentic-Durable Happiness was significant and positive association observed with Mindfulness (r=.59, p < .01) and no statistically significant correlation with Importance of Religion. The Subjective Fluctuating Happiness was significant and negative relation observed with Mindfulness (r=.46, p < .01) and Authentic-Durable Happiness (r=.65, p < .01) and no statistically significant correlation with Satisfaction at work, Importance of Religion and Importance of Spirituality. Notably, Importance of Spirituality has no statistically significant correlation with Mindfulness, Subjective Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness.

Two independent-samples t-tests were performed to determine whether significant differences existed in Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, Importance of Religion, Importance of Spirituality, Subjective Fluctuating Happiness, Authentic-Durable Happiness between Indian and French IT professional. Indian IT professionals (M = 3.24, SD = 1.35) rated significantly higher (p = .001) on the Importance of Religion when compared with French IT employees (M = 1.80, SD = 1.15). Further, Indian IT employees (M = 3.82, SD = 1.06) scored significantly higher (p = .00) on the importance of Spirituality when compared with French IT group (M = 3.32, SD = 1.44). Mindfulness score when compared Indian IT group (M = 41.17, SD = 6.62) with French IT group (M = 39.78, SD = 7.17), there is no significant difference. Same trend, no significant difference was observed in the Satisfaction at work compared with Indian IT professionals (M = 6.66, SD = 2.08) with French IT professionals (M = 6.44, SD = 1.95). Further, Subjective Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness when compared, there was no significant difference. The results are summarized in Table 3.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, Indian and French IT professionals were compared on levels of Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness, and importance of Spirituality-Religions. The findings indicated that Indian and French IT professionals did not exhibit difference on levels of Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness. Additionally, the pattern of intercorrelations similarity on Mindfulness, Satisfaction at work, Fluctuating Happiness and Authentic-Durable Happiness, which may be regarded as further indirect evidence of cross-cultural agreement.

The results indicated that Indian IT professionals did exhibit higher levels in importance of Religions and importance of Spirituality when compared to French IT professionals. According to Moberg spirituality and religiosity were principally the creations of exclusive elements in the individual's psychological culture instead of echoes of a common feature of human experience[15]. Individualism-collectivism theory, one of the cultural constructs that have been scientifically verified to capture principal psychological distinctions between countries with divergent cultures[16]. The cross-cultural psychologists hypothesized that many of the Eastern cultures are collectivistic in nature, while many of the Western cultures are inline with individualistic disposition. France, is shown to be an individualistic society[17]. India, is a society with a rather intermediate score of both collectivistic and individualist traits[17]. Individuals' spiritual experiences and religion are innately cultural in nature. Hence this may be the explanation for the significant differences in the importance of spirituality and religiosity between Indian and French IT professionals. Religiosity and spirituality were integral part and a vital factor in the accomplishment of psychological homeostasis[18].

The paradigm Mindfulness accounts for the ability to present moment attention and awareness[19]. Further as projected, Mindfulness was found to be a significant correlation with Satisfaction at work, Fluctuating Happiness, and Authentic-Durable Happiness, which is consistent and congruent with prior research relating to the well-being of professionals and mindfulness[20,21]. Earlier research suggests that mindful employees have the skills to observe and regulate their emotions and managing stressful events[22]. The results of the current study provide support for the argument to develop programs that focus on cultivating Mindfulness among IT professionals to enhance psychological well-being and reduce the distress.

Despite the aforementioned, the current study has limitations. The main shortcoming of this study was the cross-sectional nature which limits the causality of variables in the study. A longitudinal and experimental manipulation of the measurements will be required to demonstrate empirically the causal process of the variables. Further, the use of a convenience sample of IT professionals limits the generalizations about the findings. Future studies with a random sample need to include more participants from diverse cultural groups and religious affiliations, the results can be inferred to

the general population. Furthermore, the self-report information may also be a limitation, as self-report data can result in response bias. The recommendation for future research is to use additional questionnaires and psychophysiological data-collection methods to support the findings.

CONCLUSION

To our knowledge, this was the first study explored the outcome variables across different cultures and IT professionals. In a nutshell, the study found that Indian and French employees have more things in common when it comes to their well-being. The Indian culture places a significant emphasis on religious and spiritual practises as vital components of a wellbeing.

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