

Title of the abstract: Ikigai Assessment in a Western Work Context

Authors: M. Sartore, S. Buisine, I. Ocnarescu & L.-R. Joly

Presenting author: M. Sartore

Abstract:

The measurement of well-being is widely studied in the literature but may still benefit from a multicultural viewpoint. We present a new approach by measuring the ikigai of individuals. Ikigai is part of the Japanese philosophy of life purpose and well-being. Japanese research offers the Ikigai-9 scale (Imai, 2012) based on a three-dimensional model measuring: optimistic and positive emotions towards life, active and positive attitudes towards one's future, and acknowledgment of the meaning of one's existence. This scale has been translated and tested in the UK (Fido et al., 2019). This study did not confirm the three-dimensional model, results showing a single-factor solution. This research demands further studies on importing ikigai into Western cultures. We are also interested in investigating ikigai in the workplace, whereas it was mainly studied in personal contexts. Examining ikigai in professional contexts could be a valuable contribution to both theoretical and applied research on well-being at work.

For this aim, we first present a cognitive model of ikigai (Sartore et al., under review), as a dynamic process bridging the gap between the specific Japanese research on the concept and relevant theories on well-being from the literature. This analysis led us to consider that ikigai at work is a process triggered by dispositional factors (e.g., causality orientation), and situational factors (e.g., social and physical work environment), which stimulate self-determination and contribute to meeting basic psychological needs. To support prosocial and sustainable attitudes consistent to the ikigai concept, we underline the link between mindfulness and self-determination. As outputs, ikigai generates eudemonic well-being, physical health and performance. A commitment feedback loop allows to self-nourish this ikigai process.

Beyond the conceptual clarification of ikigai, this model relying on well-documented psychological processes allows us to compose a new measure of ikigai. Indeed, standardized scales have been validated to measure all these components: dispositional factors such as causality orientation, situational factors such as leadership in the workplace, user experience in regards with professional tools, climate for creativity and so on. Standardized scales also exist to measure the satisfaction of basic needs, self-determination, and mindfulness. Finally, it is possible to reliably measure eudemonic well-being, work engagement, physical health and self-assessed performance.

The combination of these scales makes it possible to investigate the existence of a theoretical construct corresponding to the notion of ikigai. Moreover, it permits to study its validity in Western cultures and its applicability to the workplace. We could thus determine how this construct is organized and test the causal links predicted by the model. For example, it would be interesting to understand the relative weight of the different types of motivation (i.e., intrinsic, extrinsic, identified, introjected) on the strength of ikigai for a given population. The model and the assessment tool could also be used to identify relevant ikigai drivers in a specific work context, for example the influence of leadership in organizations, or the impact of technologies on human flourishing in work contexts.

References:

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Main topic: “New measures of well-being”

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