

*Self-esteem, Readiness for Self-improvement and Subjective Well-being in Women
from Collectivistic and Individualistic Cultures*

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Abstract

The study examined the question of how personal self-esteem and collective self-esteem are linked to readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being in women from individualistic and collectivistic countries. Indian and Polish women were surveyed in order to measure personal and collective self-esteem, readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being. The results allowed to distinguish three groups of women: A) satisfied with themselves and their lives (high personal self-esteem and high well-being); B) satisfied with their groups and ready for self-improvement (high collective self-esteem, high readiness for self-improvement); and C) dissatisfied with themselves and their groups and not ready to change (low personal self-esteem, low readiness for self-improvement and lower well-being). Most women from the collectivistic country belonged to group B whereas women from the individualistic country were split between group A and group C. The conclusion is that collective self-esteem is very important for both readiness for self-improvement and well-being in women from the collectivistic culture and personal self-esteem is important for well-being in women from individualistic countries. What is more, collective self-esteem mediates the relationship between personal self-esteem and subjective well-being in women from individualistic cultures.

Introduction

A lot of psychological research has been devoted to searching for correlates of well-being. As far as studying well-being is concerned, there are different approaches: well-being can be analyzed by looking into inner qualities (personal qualities) or outer qualities (living conditions and environment) or else by focusing on life chances and life results (Veenhoven, 2000). In this paper, we adopt the approach in which well-being is seen as life results (subjective well-being), i.e. the way in which individuals evaluate their lives (Veenhoven, 2000). The research so far indicates that personal self-esteem (understood as *feeling of self-worth and self-respect derived from individual traits, abilities, skills*) is linked to subjective well-being. However, the results are not uniform and show that personal self-esteem may be more or less significant for well-being depending on the culture. For example, it was established that personal self-esteem is more important for subjective well-being in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures (cf. Diener, 1994; Chen, Cheung, Bond, Leung, 2006). What is more, it was found out that life satisfaction in collectivistic cultures is linked to constructs referring to interpersonal relations and social environment (Chen et al., 2006; Kwan, Bond, Singelis, 1997). It was revealed that two dimensions of collective self-esteem (understood as *feeling of self-worth related to membership in social groups and the value of the membership to the person*) are linked to subjective well-being in both cultures, but the links are stronger in some ethnical groups than in others, e.g. in Asian groups than in White groups (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, Broadnax, 1994). In other words, culture may be considered an important moderator of relationships between subjective well-being and various aspects (personal and social) of self-esteem. Therefore, studies aimed at a deeper understanding of the relations between those variables are of special significance.

Self-improvement motive is a basic motive for human change and development and that is why in many psychological theories it is regarded as a guarantee of well-being (Maslow, 1970; Ryan, Deci, 2000, Seligman, 2002). In the present study, we assumed that self-improvement motive can be manifested, among others, by readiness for self-improvement understood as an intention of a person to change the self, i.e. *an intention to really improve one's traits, abilities, skills, health state* (Taylor, Neter, Wayment, 1995; Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2011). The importance of readiness for self-improvement for well-being was confirmed by research carried out on Polish samples, i.e. subjects remaining under the influence of individualistic culture (Zawadzka 2014, Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk 2011, Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk 2014). However, the question of how important readiness for self-improvement may be for subjective well-being in collectivistic cultures has not been analyzed yet. Improving oneself in order to meet the requirements of the group to which one belongs is a fundamental principle of collectivistic societies (Markus, Kitayama, 1991). That is why readiness for self-improvement may be even more significant for subjective well-being in such cultures.

The aim of the present study was to find out how personal self-esteem and collective self-esteem and also readiness for self-improvement are linked to subjective well-being in cultures of different ratings on the collectivism-individualism dimension. Two countries were chosen for the analysis: Poland to represent an individualistic culture and India to represent a collectivistic culture.

Theoretical background

I. Cultural differences between Poland and India - individualistic and collectivistic country

Poland and India were chosen for the analysis because of the economic and social transformation leading to the development of free market economy that has been in progress in both countries (e.g.: Minkner, 2010; Zawisza, Luyt, Zawadzka, 2013). What is more, both countries were occupied and isolated: Poland – first, during the partitions beginning in the second half of the eighteenth century and, then, during the time of communist and totalitarian regime after World War II, and India – during colonial times from the seventeenth to the twentieth century; both countries had to fight for their independence. Therefore, although nowadays both Poland and India are young democracies, the people still tend to dislike and ignore their governments (cf. tab. 1).

Table 1 A comparison of India and Poland on Macro Indicators

Key Indicators	Poland	India
Human development index HDI*	0.82 (high)	0.55 (medium)
Gross National income per capita (2012)*	17.78	3.29
Rating of happiness in 2010 - 2011**	5.82	4.77

Source: *Human Development Report 2013, ** World Happiness Report 2013

Research analyzing differences in *four cultural orientations* (relationships, environment, nature of humans and activity) between Indian and Polish employees in similar types of organizations showed that they view human nature in a similar way (Woldu, Budhwar, Parkes, 2006). Both nations perceive human nature as neither good nor bad (Mp=3.93, Mh=3.84, max 7). The same research indicates that Poles (Mp=4.54, max 7) differ significantly from Indian people in their collectivistic values orientations, i.e. Poles are less oriented towards collectivistic values than Indian people (Mh=5.02, max 7).

Hofstede's research demonstrates that Poles and Indian people differ in the degree to which individuals identify with a group (Hofstede, 2014, Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov, 2010). Poles are more individualistic, focused on achievement and individual rights, and involved in relations based on reciprocity. Indian people, as representatives of collectivistic cultures, focus more on other people's needs, pay more attention to the aims of the group, and create bigger communities. The most significant cultural differences between Poland and India revealed by Hofstede concern uncertainty avoidance, i.e. a dimension which reflects the extent to which a given culture programs its members to feel uncomfortable or comfortable in unclear and ambiguous situations (Hofstede et al., 2010, Hofstede 2014). In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, anxiety and stress resulting from uncertainty is reduced by a large number of norms, bans and social rules. In comparison with Indian people, Poles rely more on legal rules and social norms, worry more about the future, are more afraid of failure and display emotional resistance to changes. They are also more materialistic, more assertive and more focused on themselves and their individual achievements, less sympathetic to the not-so-successful ones. Indian people, in turn, have stronger power distance, i.e. more acceptance for inequality of power and status upheld and

strengthened by social rules and rites based on obedience and submissiveness (cf. tab. 2). To sum up, the characteristics presented above display that the two selected countries are undergoing economic and social transformation toward strengthening free market economy and differ on the cultural dimension of collectivism and individualism, significant for this study.

Table 2. Index of Cultural Dimensions

Country	Poland	India
Dimension		
PDI (<i>Power Distance</i>)	61	71
IDV (<i>Individualism</i>)	64	49
UAI (<i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i>)	82	31
MAS (<i>Masculinity</i>)	66	57

Source: *The Hofstede Center, 2014*

II. Self-esteem and well-being in individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

The need for positive self-regards is universal, but its manifestation is realized within the frame of a given culture and its cultural norms (Kurman, Sriram, 2002). Frequently, many differences observed within self-esteem are largely an artifact of culturally non-sensitive ethnocentric methodologies (Heine, Lehman, 1997). Hence, in our study we focus on cross-cultural comparisons.

Self-esteem is an important predictor of life satisfaction and subjective well-being in both individualistic and collectivistic cultures (e.g.: Benet-Martinez, Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2003; Diener, Diener, 1995; Kang, Shaver, Sue, Min, Jing, 2003; Kong, Zhao, You, 2013). As far as differences are concerned, previous cross-cultural comparisons show that individuals in individualistic cultures have higher self-efficacy than individuals in collectivistic cultures (Klassen, 2004; Scholz, Dona, Sud, Schwarzer, 2002). What is more, people from collectivistic countries are more self-critical, i.e. they have lower self-esteem than people from individualistic countries (Heine et al., 1999). The results of cross-cultural research devoted to studying correlations between self-esteem and life satisfaction demonstrate that self-esteem is a more powerful predictor of life satisfaction in individualistic countries than in collectivistic countries (Diener, Diener, 1995). Research done in individualistic cultures indicates that self-esteem fosters good health and both life and financial success (Diener, Diener, 1995). However, results from collectivistic countries (Hong Kong and China) show that self-esteem is moderately linked with subjective well-being (Chen et al., 2006; Kwan et al., 1997). Considering the above, it was assumed in this study that subjective well-being of women from a more individualistic culture, i.e. Poland, is more closely linked with personal self-esteem than subjective well-being of women from a more collectivistic culture, India.

Therefore, the first hypothesis tested in this study was as follows:

H1: Subjective well-being is more closely linked with personal self-esteem in Polish women (i.e. representatives of individualistic culture) than in Indian women (i.e. representatives of collectivistic culture).

The results of Kwan, Bond and Singelis's study show that the relationship between life satisfaction and independent self-construal (typical for individualistic cultures) is mediated by personal self-esteem but the relationship between life satisfaction, and interdependent self-construal (typical for collectivistic cultures) is mediated by relationship harmony (Kwan, Bond, Singelis, 1997). In other words, the more dominant independent self-construal the more important personal self-esteem in life satisfaction and also the more dominant interdependent self-construal the more important relationship harmony in life satisfaction. Furthermore, other studies revealed that collective self-esteem may be considered a significant predictor of subjective well-being, especially in collectivistic countries (Crocker, et al., 1994; Zhang, Leung, 2002). Zhang and Leung's study (1999 in Zhang, Leung, 2002) conducted in a sample of athletes demonstrated strong relationships between individual self-esteem and life satisfaction, but collective self-esteem was the strongest predictor of domain satisfaction. Zhang (2005) also revealed that, in Chinese people, collective self-esteem is a more powerful predictor of general life satisfaction and life domain satisfaction than the Big Five personality traits. In view of the findings presented above, another assumption of the present study was that collective self-esteem is more closely linked with subjective well-being of Indian women (brought up in a collectivistic culture) than subjective well-being of Polish women (brought up in a more individualistic culture).

Consequently, the second hypothesis tested in this study was as follows:

H2: Subjective well-being is more closely linked with collective self-esteem (and each of its four dimensions) in Indian women (i.e. representatives of collectivistic culture) than in Polish women (i.e. representatives of individualistic culture).

III. Readiness for self-improvement and well-being

Theories rooting from humanistic psychology assume that well-being results from self-actualization and personal development (Maslow 1970; Ryan, Deci 2000; Seligman 2002), which reflects the idea of self-improvement. The universalist perspective suggests that self-improvement involves basic human motives that coexist in the self-system and are prevalent across cultures (Gaertner, Sedikides, Cai, 2012). Similarly, internalization of collectivistic norms gives rise to self-effacement (e.g. criticism, averageness) and self-improvement motives, which aim at achieving cultural ideal of social harmony (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, Norasakkunkit, 1997). However, a study conducted by Gaertner et al (2012) showed that regardless of cultural background the majority of both collectivistic (Chinese) and individualistic participants (American) wanted self-enhancing and self-improving feedback more than self-effacing feedback or no-feedback - these findings prove universality of self-improvement motives.

The influence of readiness for self-improvement on well-being has already been studied on Polish samples. The results of previous research show that readiness for self-improvement allows to predict overall life satisfaction as well as present and future life satisfaction. It was also shown that if people are more ready to self-improve they are more satisfied with their accomplishments, their future, their work and their studies (Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2014). Furthermore, in another study it

was also concluded that subjective well-being is linked with readiness for self-improvement in working women and elderly people (Zawadzka, Mroczkowska, 2013; Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2011). Moreover, it was revealed that there is a positive relationship between readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being in a work place measured by the level of work engagement (Zawadzka, Szabowska- Walaszczyk, 2011). To sum up, the studies discussed above indicate that subjective well-being can be predicted according to the level of individual readiness for self-improvement.

In the light of the abovementioned conclusions that self-improvement is linked with life satisfaction and is the basic principle of functioning in collectivistic societies (cf. Markus, Kitayama, 1991), it was assumed in the present study that readiness for self-improvement may be linked with subjective well-being in both groups and that it may be even more significant for subjective well-being of Indian women, brought up in a collectivistic culture, than for Polish women, brought up in a more individualistic culture.

Accordingly, the third and fourth hypotheses verified in this study were as follows:

H3: Readiness for self-improvement is linked with subjective well-being in both Indian women and Polish women.

H4: Subjective well-being is more closely linked with readiness for self-improvement in Indian women than in Polish women.

Method

Participants

141 persons, 64 Indian women and 77 Polish women were surveyed. The average age of the surveyed women was $M=23,53(SD=8,43)$, where it was $M=22,40(SD=9,16)$ for Indian women and $M=22,46(SD=7,54)$ for Polish women. The participants were students of social science at University of Delhi and University of Gdańsk.

Materials and procedure

Readiness for Self-improvement Scale (Zawadzka, Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2011). The scale consists of 11 items which refer to two dimensions of readiness for self-improvement: readiness for self-improvement (*When I feel there is something wrong with me I try to change this, I strive for real improvement of my skills and abilities*) and care for one's health (*Healthy diet is important for me, I strive for real improvement of my health*). Respondents rate their answers on a 5-point scale, where 1 is "It does not describe me at all" and 5 is "It describes me perfectly". Cronbach's Alpha for RS scale was $\alpha = .74$, Cronbach's Alpha for RSH scale was $\alpha = .51$. However, owing to the scope of the study, we focused on readiness for self-improvement and omitted readiness to improve one's health.

PSE Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The scale consists of 10 items concerning self-esteem (e.g. *On the whole I am satisfied with myself, I feel that I have a number of good qualities*). Participants rate their answers on a 4-point scale, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 4 is "strongly agree". Cronbach's Alpha for PSE scale was $\alpha = .67$.

CSE Collective Self-esteem Scale (Luhtanen, Crocker, 1992). A collective self-esteem scale is a measure of self-evaluation of one's social identity. The scale consists of 16 items, four items for each of the subscales referring to four aspects of collective self-esteem (CSE), i.e.: membership self-esteem (e.g. *"I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to"*), private collective self-esteem (e.g. *"I often regret that I belong to some of the social groups I do"*), public collective self-esteem (e.g. *"Overall, my social groups are considered good by others"*) and identity importance self-esteem (e.g. *"Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself"*). Participants rate their answers on a 7-point scale, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 7 is "strongly agree". Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was $\alpha=.85$. Cronbach's alpha for the four scales was as follows: CSE membership $\alpha=.67$, CSE private $\alpha=.53$, CSE public $\alpha=.57$, CSE identity importance $\alpha=.49$.

The Satisfaction With Life Scale - SWLS (Dienier, Emmons, Larsen, Griffin, 1985). The scale measures subjective well-being - SWB and consists of five items referring to cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life (e.g. *"In most ways my life is close to my ideal"*), which are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 "disagree" to 5 – "agree". Cronbach's Alpha for SWLS scale was $\alpha = .75$.

Procedure. The survey was carried out at the campuses of University of Delhi and University of Gdańsk. The participants were invited to a lecture hall and seated at separate desks where they answered the questionnaires. The groups consisted of 20 to 40 persons at a time.

Results

Differences between Polish and Indian women concerning self-esteem (personal and collective), readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being.

The analysis consisted of a simple mean comparison of the reported levels of PSE, CSE (membership, private, public, identity importance), RS and SWLS in the Polish and in the Indian samples. The results showed significant differences in PSE and CSE. Polish women rated significantly higher in PSE as compared to Indian women whereas Indian women rated higher in CSE in all four examined dimensions as compared to Polish women (cf. tab.3). A significant difference was also noted in the level of RS. Indian women were more willing to self-improve than Polish women. The difference regarding SWB was significant on the level of statistical tendency ($p<.10$). Indian women's judgments of satisfaction with their lives were slightly more favorable than those of Polish women (cf. tab. 3).

Table 3. t Student significant difference - Poland - India

Variables	Group		t
	Polish (M)	Indian (M)	
CSE membership	4.61	6.74	9.40***

CSE private	4.68	6.29	7.91***
CSE public	4.48	6.30	7.28***
CSE importance of identity	4.17	5.85	8.69***
PSE	28.25	26.60	-2.36*
RS	4.05	4.25	1.90, p<.059
SWB	3.23	3.48	1.62, p<.11

significance level *p<.05, **p<.001

The relationship between self-esteem (personal and collective), readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being in Indian and Polish women.

The analysis of the relationships between the examined variables in the Polish sample demonstrated significant positive correlations between SWB and PSE ($r=.35, p<.01$) and CSE private ($r=.20, p<.09$ - significance on the level of statistical tendency) (cf. tab. 4). In the Indian sample significant correlations were indicated between SWB and RS ($r=.21, p<.10$ - significance on the level of statistical tendency) (cf. tab. 5). Also, a positive correlation was noted between RS, and CSE membership ($r=.54, p<.001$), CSE private ($r=.46, p<.001$) and CSE public ($r=.31, p<.05$).

Table 4 Correlations between variables in the Polish group

	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSE membership						
CSE private	.67***					
CSE public	.55***	.54***	X			
CSE importance of identity	n.i.	.34**	n.i.	X		
PSE	.62**	.48***	.43**	n.i.	X	
SWB	n.i.	.20, p<.09	n.i.	n.i.	.35**	X
RS	.35**	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.

significance level *-p.05, **-p<.01, ***-p<.001

Table 5 Correlations between variables in the Indian group

	1	2	3	4	5	6
CSE membership						
CSE private	.59***					
CSE public	.37**	.36**				
CSE importance of identity	n.i.	.23, p<.07	n.i.			
PSE	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.		
SWB	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.	n.i.	
RS	.54***	.46***	.31*	n.i.	n.i.	.21, p<.10

significance level *-p.05, **-p<.01, ***-p<.001

In order to further analyze the examined interrelations, mediation analysis was applied in the Indian and in the Polish samples by means of Sobel test. In the Polish sample it was established that CSE membership ($z=1.75, p<.05$), CSE private ($z=2.21, p<.01$) and CSE public ($z=1.44, p<.07$) were significant mediators of the relationship between PSE and SWB. Increase in PSE created increase in both SWB and CSE. Introduction of CSE membership, CSE private and CSE public as mediators lowered the significance of the relationship between PSE and SWB (cf. Fig. 1, Fig 2, Fig 3).

Fig. 1 Indian Women - CSE membership as a mediator in the relationship between RS and SWB

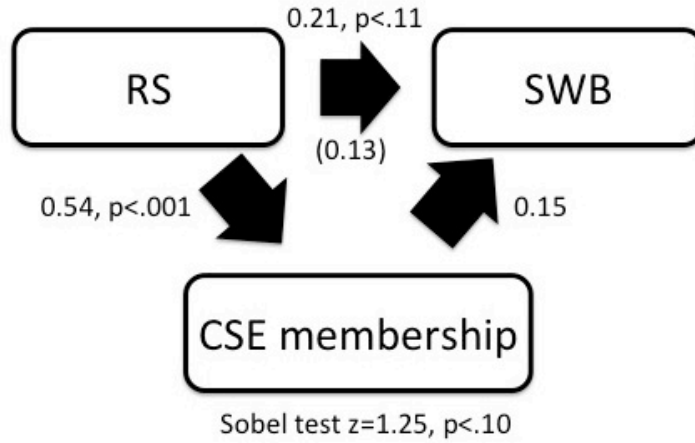
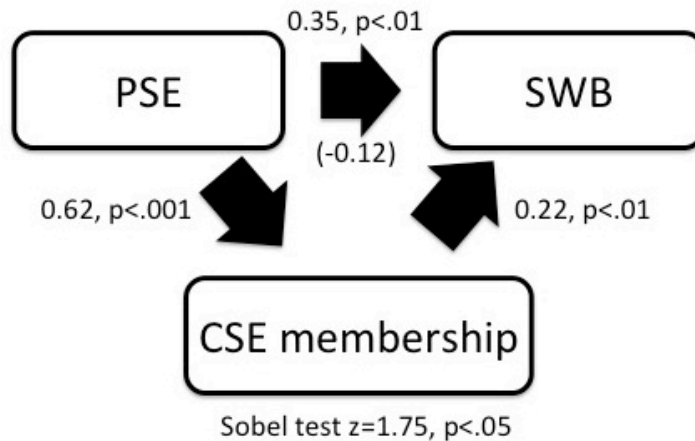


Fig. 2 Polish women - CSE membership as a mediator in the relationship between PSE and SWB



As for Indian women, it was observed that CSE membership was a mediator for the relationship between RS and SWB ($z=1.25, p<.10$ - significance on the level of statistical tendency). RS was linked with increase in CSE membership and SWB (significance on the level of statistical tendency) (cf. Fig 4). At the same time, it was noted that increase in CSE membership reduced the significance of the relationship between RS and SWB.

Fig.3 Polish women - CSE private as a mediator in the relationship between PSE and SWB

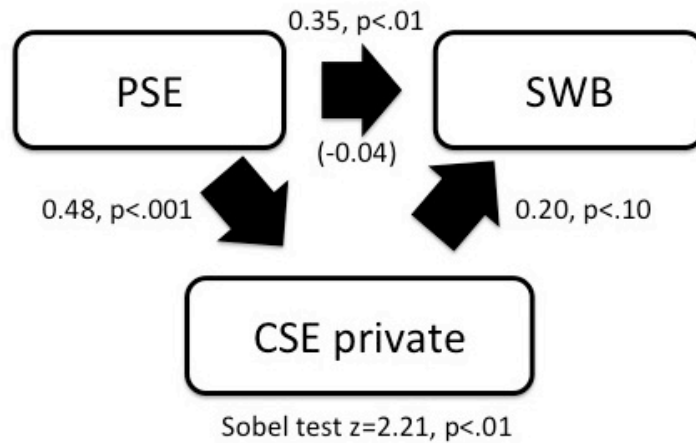
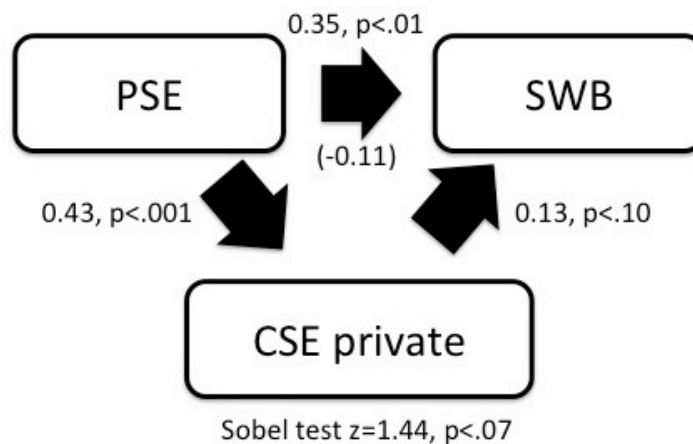


Fig.4 Polish women - CSE public as a mediator in the relationship between PSE and SWB



Self-esteem, readiness for self-improvement and well-being - typologies.

In order to isolate a group of women with similar scores in self-esteem (personal and collective), readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being, K-means cluster analysis was carried out. Three clusters were distinguished (cf. tab. 6).

Table 6 Results of k-means cluster analysis

Variable	satisfied with themselves and their life	satisfied with their groups and ready for self-improvement	dissatisfied with themselves and their groups and not ready to change
PSE	34.42	26.40	25.59

CSE membership	5.80	6.87	4.20
CSE private	5.16	6.57	4.38
CSE public	5.45	6.51	4.06
CSE importance of identity	4.35	6.01	4.12
RS	4.19	4.40	3.91
SWB	3.61	3.44	3.19

Cluster 1 includes women who scored highest in PSE and highest in SWB. Cluster 2 includes women who scored highest in CSE (in each of the four dimensions) and highest in RS, and slightly lower in SWB as compared with women of cluster 1. Cluster 3 includes women who scored lowest in both PSE and CSE (in each of the four dimensions), and lower in both SWB and RS as compared to women of cluster 1 and cluster 2. Next, discrimination function analysis was used, where cluster membership was a dependent variable and self-esteem (personal and collective), readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being were independent variables (cf. tab. 7).

Table 7 Discriminant analysis: correlations between variables and canonical discriminant functions

Variables	Function 1	Function 2
CSE public	.69	-.21
CSE membership	.69*	-.19
CSE private	.57*	-.31
CSE identity	.41*	-.34
RS	.24*	-.07
SWB	.11*	.06
PSE	.40	.87*

F1 = 55.1%, canonical correlation: .84, $\chi^2(14)=271.11$, $p<.001$, Lambda Wilksa .10

F2 = 44.9%, canonical correlation: .81, $\chi^2(7)=127.36$, $p<.001$, Lambda Wilksa .34

Two statistically significant functions were discovered. The first function accounted for 55.1% and the second one for 44.9 % of the variance. The variables whose correlations with the first function were strongest were high CSE (its four dimensions: membership, private, public and identity importance self-esteem), SWB and RS. This function points to differences between cluster 2 and 3. The second function correlates strongly with PSE and points to differences between clusters 1, 2 and 3.

Next, it was investigated if the distinguished types of women were anchored in their culture (individualistic and collectivistic). The results indicated that type 2 - women with highest score in CSE, highest score in RS, and high score in SWB - were mostly Indian women (38). Polish women, however, were divided into the remaining two types: type 1, least numerous (20) - women with high score in PSE, high score in SWB and unwillingness to improve oneself, and type 3, most numerous (47) - women with lowest scores in all self-esteem (PSE and CSE), SWB and RS (cf. tab. 8).

Table 8 Number of Polish and Indian women in three clusters

Type	Group	
	Indian	Polish

satisfied with themselves and their life	4	20
satisfied with their groups and ready for self-improvement	38	7
dissatisfied with themselves and their groups not ready to change	7	47

$\chi^2(2)=59.01, p<.001$

To sum up, considering the analyses presented above it may be ascertained that the first hypothesis (H1) was confirmed, i.e. a statistically significant relationship between subjective well-being and personal self-esteem in the Polish statistically significant relationship between was discovered. The second hypothesis (H2) and the third hypothesis (H3) were partly confirmed, i.e. a relationship between readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being was observed in Indian women whereas it was not observed in Polish women. The fourth hypothesis (H4) was not confirmed, i.e. collective self-esteem was not directly linked with subjective well-being in either of the examined statistically significant relationship. Nevertheless, conclusions regarding the relationship between collective self-esteem, readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being in a collectivistic culture can be drawn indirectly based on clustering. This allowed to distinguish a separate type of women with high scores in collective self-esteem, in each of its dimensions, with high scores in readiness for self-improvement, and with favorable judgments of life satisfaction (high level of SWB). This type included mostly Indian women.

Discussion and summary

Consistent with the assumptions, the study demonstrated a different nature of the relationship between self-esteem (personal and collective), readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being in the examined statistically significant relationship between women rooted in different cultures: a more individualistic culture, Polish women, and a collective culture, Indian women. The results show that subjective well-being is linked with personal self-esteem in Polish women, representing an individualistic country, and well-being is linked with readiness for self-improvement in Indian women, representing a collectivistic country (on tendency level of significance). The study confirmed significant relationships between personal self-esteem and subjective well-being in individualistic cultures (Diener, Diener, 1995). The relationships between these variables in the collectivistic culture were not significant. The results are similar to results demonstrated by Chen et al. (2006) and Kwan et al. (1997), but they are contrary to the results obtained by Kang, Shaver, Sue, Min & Jing (2003), Kong, Zhao & You (2013) and Zhang, (2005). These differences may be due to the fact that the present study included women only.

Furthermore, the results showed that collective self-esteem was significantly linked with readiness for self-improvement in the Indian women sample and collective self-esteem was linked with personal self-esteem in the Polish women sample. However, in both surveyed samples the relationship between RS was significantly linked with CSE membership. CSE membership mediated the relationship between PSE and SWB in the Polish sample and RS and SWB in the Indian sample. What is more, CSE membership (i.e. how useful one sees oneself for the group to which he/she belongs)

lowered the effect of PSE on SWB of women from the individualistic country and the effect of RS on well-being of women from the collectivistic country. Interestingly, RS in Polish women correlated positively and significantly with CSE membership. A possible explanation is that when Polish women assess their usefulness for the group to which they belong their PSE decreases but their RS increases. As for Indian women, when they assess their usefulness for the group to which they belong their RS increases, which results in weakening their selves and decreasing their well-being. The suggested interpretation of the results for Indian women, however, requires further study and analysis. In the Polish sample, the next two dimensions of CSE (personal and public) also served as mediators. It was observed that the higher the level of collective self-esteem referring to those dimensions, the less significant the relationship between personal self-esteem and SWB. Accordingly, collective self-esteem lowered the significance of personal self-esteem for subjective well-being of the surveyed sample of Polish women.

The analysis of the significance of the types distinguished among women confirms the adopted assumptions concerning both women from individualistic and from collectivistic cultures. Women from the individualistic culture (Poland) were more satisfied with their lives when they had higher self-esteem and then they also wanted to self-improve (type 1) but they were less satisfied with their lives when their self-esteem was lower and then they were not so keen to self-improve (type 3). Women from the collectivistic culture (India) were more satisfied with their lives when their collective self-esteem was high and they were eager to self-improve (type 2).

In the presented study, the relationship between self-improvement and life-satisfaction was not confirmed in the Polish sample and it was observed on the level of statistical tendency in the Indian sample. This is quite surprising since the relationship between readiness for self-improvement and subjective well-being proved significant in previous research carried out on Polish samples (cf. Zawadzka and Szabowska-Walaszczyk, 2011, 2014, Zawadzka and Mroczkowska, 2013). Consequently, investigating the cause of such discrepancies requires further examination. What is more, supplementary research on men and on samples from other countries differing on the dimension of individualism vs. collectivism is needed.

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