7-2023

The fear of being idle: What it is and how it relates to goal pursuits

Verity Yu Qing LUA
Singapore Management University, verity.lua.2021@msps.smu.edu.sg

THE FEAR OF BEING IDLE:

WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT RELATES TO GOAL PURSUITS

VERITY LUA YU QING

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

2023

The Fear of Being Idle:
What it is and How it Relates to Goal Pursuits

Verity Lua Yu Qing

Submitted to Singapore Management University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Psychology

Thesis Committee Members:

Dr. Angela Leung (Supervisor/Chair)

Professor of Psychology

Singapore Management University

Dr. Cheng Chi-Ying

Associate Professor of Psychology

Singapore Management University

Dr. Andree Hartanto

Assistant Professor of Psychology (Education)

Singapore Management University

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis / dissertation is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in this thesis / dissertation.

This thesis / dissertation has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

Verity Lua Yu Qing

4th July 2023

The Fear of Being Idle: What it is and How it Relates to Goal Pursuits

Verity Lua Yu Qing

Abstract

Modern society places a strong emphasis on making full use of one's time and the aversion of idleness. While urging people to spend their time wisely can promote productivity and personal striving, an overemphasis on this ideal can also have detrimental effects on their sense of well-being. However, to date, there is limited research on individuals' belief about aversion towards idle time – in part due to the lack of a measurement scale to assess such a disposition. Thus, the current work proposed a novel construct and measure—the fear of being idle (FOBI)—to capture the individual differences in affective responses towards the perception of being idle. Across three culturally diverse samples (American, French, and Singaporean samples), a one-factor FOBI scale was developed and validated. The FOBI scale displayed good psychometric properties and there was strong evidence of the scale's criterion validity, convergent and discriminant validity, test-retest reliability, and cross-cultural measurement invariance. The current work presents the first empirical findings on the correlates of FOBI and discusses the implications of studying FOBI in our increasingly fast-paced society.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many people who have supported me throughout my time as a Masters' student at SMU.

To Prof Angela, thank you for investing your time, energy, and expertise in me. I greatly appreciate your patience and willingness to provide me with thoughtful feedback whenever I needed it, and for allowing me to explore topics that I am passionate about (like FOBI). Your mentorship, constant encouragement, and unwavering support have been key to my growth as a researcher and as a person.

To my Prof Chi-Ying and Prof Andree, thank you both for being such nurturing mentors and for always challenging me to take on new perspectives. I am deeply grateful for all your guidance and unyielding support, which has had a profound impact on me as an aspiring academic.

To the other psychology faculty and my graduate school friends: thank you for creating such a fun and supportive environment at SMU. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here, and SMU will always hold a special place in my heart because of that.

To thank mom, jie, zac, and xin, thank you for constantly supporting me in my pursuit of my goals and for always celebrating my achievements with me. I'm indebted to you all (especially mom) for the things you guys have done to allow me to pursue my passion. Thank you for trusting me to do my thing, and for quietly supporting me with lots of food and care!

To my friends from JC and Swiss, thank you for always being my hype men and for always being willing to help provide me with constructive

feedback and emotional support. You guys have played an indispensable role in giving me the will and motivation to pursue this long academic journey.

And finally, to matt: thank you for supporting me in so many ways. I'm very thankful I get to hustle alongside you! Thank you for being my very sturdy pillar of support, for always being patient with me, and for constantly reassuring me that I'm doing alright. I'm excited for all that there is to come!

THE FEAR OF BEING IDLE

"Remember that time is money."

— Benjamin Franklin

Modern society places a strong emphasis on making full use of one's time (Ehn & Löfgren, 2010). Indeed, common cliché sayings such as *carpe diem* and *make today count* reflect the ideal that is widely endorsed in many societies: time is a limited resource that should be spent wisely regardless of whether one is engaged in paid work, or social and leisure activities. As a result, being 'idle' or doing nothing is often associated with the negative trait of being 'lazy' (Bennett, 2020).

Although urging people to spend their time wisely can promote productivity and personal striving, an overemphasis on this ideal can also have detrimental effects on their sense of well-being. It is a common view that there are potentially harmful effects of being obsessed with making full use of one's time (e.g., Brown, 2014; Griffith, 2019; Lua et al., 2021). For example, many lay people have pointed out that the 'hustle culture' we live in is exhausting and unsustainable (e.g., Bennett, 2020; Brown, 2014; Griffith, 2019). In some instances, the promotion of hustle culture has become so strong that social movements have swung far in the opposite direction. One such example is the 'laying flat' (i.e., "tan ping") movement in China, where younger individuals are purposefully deciding to '(take) a break from relentless work' (Davidovic, 2022). Voicing his displeasure towards the hustle culture in China, a participant in the movement described the movement as 'a quiet protest [against] the current rules. Not accepting it, when people tell you (that) you must learn more and work harder' (Davidovic, 2022).

Consistent with the negative sentiments towards the obsession on productivity, research suggests that internalizing an aversion towards being idle may be harmful for well-being. Individuals who are always busy appear to have poorer spiritual well-being (Heintzman, 2013). Furthermore, such ideals can lead to physical and/or mental exhaustion, which negatively affect one's health (Kareaga et al., 2009). Additionally, holding such an ideal may discourage individuals from recognizing the benefits of being idle. For example, research has suggested that being still (e.g., meditating, resting, and relaxing) can increase individuals' subjective happiness (e.g., Crowley et al., 2020; Forbes et al., 2017). Even among individuals who enjoy busyness, research by Kasser and Sheldon (2009) has found that having more spare time was associated with greater life satisfaction. Taken together, internalizing the societal ideal of always maximizing time is likely to be a double-edged sword. Although such values may encourage individuals to be productive members of society, they may also adversely impact their psychological well-being.

While cultures differ in their dominant values and ideals, there are individual differences in the degree to which people internalize these societal values and ideals. For example, research on intergenerational cultural transmission suggested that parents' inculturation of values can influence their children's adoption of those values (e.g., Bisin et al., 2009). Therefore, regarding the belief about making full use of time, it is plausible that individuals, even within the same culture, differ in their preference for busyness (Kasser & Sheldon, 2009; Koh, 2019), and their evaluation of how useful free time is (Jara-Díaz et al., 2007; Juniu, 2000). In a similar vein,

individuals differ in how much value they place on maximizing time, and how negatively they evaluate 'being idle' to be. Hence, it is both theoretically and practically important to examine individual differences in the aversion of idleness in order to gain a clearer picture of how these individual attitudes and beliefs are related to important psychosocial outcomes.

Nevertheless, there is limited research on individuals' belief about aversion towards idle time. It is partly because the field has yet to develop a measurement scale to assess such a disposition. As such, the current work proposed a novel construct and measure—the fear of being idle—to capture the individual differences in affective responses towards the perception of being idle.

The Fear of Being Idle

The present work conceptualizes the fear of being idle (FOBI) as a tendency to experience high levels of negative affect when one feels that they are wasting valuable time by being idle. While idleness and the perception of time wasting may be inherently subjective, individual differences in FOBI are not about differences in evaluating the state of being idle. Instead, individual differences in FOBI reflect differences in how likely people show negative affective and motivational responses when they identify themselves as in the state of being idle and wasting time.

The Stability of the Fear of Being Idle

To establish that FOBI is best conceptualized as a trait variable, it would be relevant to consider the factors that affect individuals' levels of FOBI. As previously alluded to, culture is expected to play a role in shaping individuals' levels of FOBI. For example, individuals in countries with a

faster pace of life—e.g., a greater rate, speed, rapidity and density of experiences and activities (Levine & Norenzayan, 1999; Werner et al., 1985)—are likely to have higher levels of FOBI. Specifically, given that the norm in such cultures is that individuals' schedules are densely packed with activities, it is likely that time is viewed as a valued and scarce resource, which should not be 'wasted' on doing nothing.

Nonetheless, people's upbringing or life experiences is likely to influence their dispositional FOBI as well. For example, children who grow up attending many extra-curricular activities may inculcate a habit of packing many activities in a day. This could in turn lead to a high valuation of time, and a sense of uneasiness when their schedules are not as packed. Additionally, students from lower income families who may be compelled to work while studying could find themselves constantly seeking out pockets of time to engage in paid work. They may, as a result, develop a strong aversion towards wasting time being idle. These differences in family upbringing are likely to contribute to differences in peoples' levels of FOBI.

Given that these influences are quite enduring and rooted in one's formative years, it follows that FOBI can be viewed as a relatively stable disposition. Undoubtedly, over the years, individuals may gain new insights and experiences that influence their attitudes towards being idle. However, following the *aging-stability hypothesis* (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Pöge, 2020) and the *impressionable years hypothesis* (Etchegaray et al., 2019; Krosnick & Alwin, 1989), it is believed that the attitudes people form about idle time during their formative years are likely to be more influential and longer lasting.

Theoretically Related Constructs to the Fear of Being Idle

Although the present construct is novel, there are notable constructs that are expected to be related to FOBI. FOBI — the tendency to feel negative affect when people feel that they are wasting time — is likely to be positively associated with their dispositional tendency to experience negative affect in general (i.e., *neuroticism*) and well-being (i.e., *state negative affect*). Neuroticism is part of the five-factor model of personality (Wiggins, 1996), and is defined as the disposition to experience negative affective states such as anger, anxiety, and depression (Leary & Hoyle, 2009). As such, across most situations (including situations where individuals feel that they are wasting time), individuals higher on neuroticism are expected to feel greater negative affect relative to those lower on neuroticism. Nonetheless, the two constructs are distinguishable. Individuals lower on neuroticism who perceive time as a valuable and scarce resource may still be high on FOBI. It is likely that the negative affect arising from individuals' perceptions of idle time are more dependent on their valuation of time relative to their dispositional susceptibility to experiencing negative emotions.

Additionally, it is expected that the tendency to feel negative affect during idle time among individuals high on FOBI would be positively related to state negative affect. It is inevitable that individuals are idle from time to time, and idleness is needed for individuals to feel rested and energized. As such, individuals high on FOBI are almost certain to feel negative affect in their day-to-day lives. Furthermore, given that the negative affect arising from idle time are likely to be stressful for individuals and signal that individuals are not 'up to par' with what they perceive to be society's

expectations of their time management, these evaluations are likely to further exacerbate feelings of negative emotions. Taken together, it is likely that individuals high on FOBI would experience greater negative affect in general relative to their low FOBI counterparts.

FOBI and Goal-Pursuit Behaviors

Although FOBI is likely to have negative implications on well-being outcomes, it is expected that FOBI would facilitate certain forms of goal pursuit. As previously discussed, the values held by those high on FOBI are shaped, in part, by modern society's emphasis on productivity. The values these individuals hold are thus likely to motivate behaviors that are conventionally thought to be productive, such as those related to goal pursuit and attainment. In other words, those high on FOBI would have the motivational impetus to avoid being idle by engaging in activities they personally deem as not 'wasting time', which can ultimately promote greater goal attainment.

Just as one example, FOBI is likely to predict greater planning, given that individuals high on FOBI are motivated to schedule their time to minimize idleness. In turn those high on FOBI are likely to dedicate more time to behaviors that facilitate the pursuit of their goals. This disposition hence increases their chances of attaining a goal they have set for themselves. In line with this, one of the most commonly cited barriers to attaining career and financial goals was time management and planning (O'Neill et al., 2020; Perrone et al, 2011). Hence, if individuals high on FOBI are more adept and more likely to engage in time management and planning, they will have a higher likelihood to achieve greater goal progress.

Tangentially related, higher levels of FOBI are also likely to manifest greater *workaholic behaviors*, which could be argued to be an indicator of goal pursuit. Based on Schaufeli and colleague's (2009; p.321) highly cited work on workaholism, a workaholic refers to an individual who is 'obsessively driven to work excessively hard'. In other words, workaholics spend a significant portion of their time engaging in work, beyond that of average workers. Driven by the aversion to being idle, individuals high on FOBI may turn to work to avoid the discomfort of being idle and to fulfil their desire for activity engagement. This is especially so given the lay perception of work as a productive activity (e.g., Stahl, 2018). Despite its potential negative association with well-being, workaholic behaviors can sometimes effectively facilitate work-related goal pursuits such as greater job performance and progression (Burke, 2006; Ng et al., 2007; Scottl et al., 1997). Taken together, these findings highlight that individuals high on FOBI may be motivated to engage in greater goal-related behaviors, like that of workaholism. As such, having higher FOBI may be a positive driver in individuals' goal success.

The Significance of the Fear of Being Idle Construct and Measure

Given that the disposition of having a fear of being idle is posited to be associated with important personality, motivational, and behavioral constructs, a well-validated scale to measure FOBI could have significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, establishing the construct of FOBI can help to promote greater research into this individual difference. As some preliminary empirical works have suggested that individuals do show differential preferences in their desire to keep busy

(Kasser & Sheldon, 2009; Koh, 2019) and evaluate the utility of free time differently (Jara-Díaz et al., 2007; Juniu, 2000), it is highly likely that individual differences in the fear of being idle is a meaningful psychological construct. Thus, a clear definition of FOBI and a validated scale which captures individual variations in FOBI can significantly contribute to future research into this interesting phenomenon.

Beyond its theoretical significance, the current theory also has important practical implications. As one example, research examining the fear of being idle can help identify individuals who are more prone to engaging in unhealthy behaviors such as workaholism, which has been found to be related to a host of negative health and well-being outcomes (Hockey, 2013; Kareaga et al., 2009; Shimazu et al., 2010). Furthermore, the fear of being idle can function as a moderating variable for examining the dynamic interaction between personality and situational (and cultural) variables on a host of outcomes such as health and well-being. For example, individual differences were shown to affect the effectiveness of well-being and health interventions that have yet to be explained (e.g., the mixed evidence on the effectiveness of relaxation techniques; Kwekkeboom & Bratzke, 2016). This can be demonstrated by using the Culture × Person × Situation (CuPS) model by Leung & Cohen (2011). For example, if an individual lives in a modern society which places a strong emphasis on maximizing time (culture variable) and is high on the fear of being idle (person variable), they may feel particularly stressed when undergoing a well-intentioned intervention program that teaches people to slow down their pace of life and do nothing for a few hours a day (situation variable). This is because the individual may

feel more stressed in the situation due to their high fear of being idle (Person × Situation interaction). This may even further be exacerbated by the culture the individual is in (Culture × Person × Situation interaction), given that culture is thought to have a normative influence on well-being outcomes (Kitayama et al., 2010). Hence, this may explain why certain interventions may be ineffective for individuals high on FOBI. Taken together, the current research can offer insightful evidence to better inform practitioners of more appropriate interventions based on the individuals' levels of the fear of being idle who are embedded in a sociocultural context.

The Current Research

In sum, the present work sought to establish and validate a measure of the construct of the fear of being idle. Given the high value placed on making full use of time in modern societies (Ehn & Löfgren, 2010), the fear of being idle has emerged to be an increasingly prevalent phenomenon. Furthermore, the increasing polarization of related phenomena (e.g., the lay flat movement versus the hustle culture) highlight the pressing need for more empirical research to examine individuals' aversion towards idle time. Thus, it is timely for the current work to establish a validated scale to measure individual differences in FOBI and provide preliminary insights into the correlates of FOBI.

To achieve these aims, four studies were conducted. Study 1 sought to develop and validate a one-factor scale aimed at capturing individuals' trait levels of FOBI in a diverse adult sample from the United States. In Studies 2a and 2b, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to confirm the structure of the scale among a separate American adult sample from the United States,

and a sample of French Adults respectively. Additionally, the criterion, convergent, and discriminant validity of the scale was tested using a wide range of established constructs. In Study 3, the test-retest reliability of the FOBI scale, and the relationship between FOBI and goal progress was examined through a three-wave study conducted among Singaporean Undergraduates. Finally, pooling data from Studies 2a, 2b, and 3, analyses were conducted to examine the cross-culture measurement invariance of the FOBI scale.

Study 1: Development of the FOBI Scale

The present work defines the fear of being idle as the tendency to experience high levels of negative affect when people feel that they are wasting valuable time by being idle. Based on this definition of FOBI, an initial list of 22 items consisting of positively-worded statements such as "I get anxious when I have nothing to do" and "I rather be busy than doing nothing" was generated for developing the FOBI scale.

Method

Participants

Based on the recommendation of having 10 respondents for each scale item (Boateng et al., 2018; Nunnally, 1978), it was determined a priori that a sample of at least 220 participants were needed for Study 1. A total of 250 participants were recruited for the current study through the crowdsourcing platform, Amazon Mechanical Turk. To ensure the quality of responses, all participants had to complete a bot-detection check (Littrell & Fugelsang, 2021) prior to the main survey, which contained the 22-item FOBI scale and some demographic questions. Participants who passed the

bot-detection check and completed the main survey were remunerated USD$0.50 for their participation. The study was approved by the Singapore Management University Institutional Review Board (IRB-21-104-E027-M1(1021)) and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Of the 250 participants recruited, one participant was dropped from the analyses as he/she had indicated being not comfortable communicating in English and three participants were dropped because they indicated that they were non-Americans. Hence, data from a total of 246 participants (41.32% female; M_{age} = 41.42, SD_{age} = 12.03; Table 1) were included in the current analyses.

Measures

Fear of Being Idle Scale

Twenty-two items (as shown in Table 2) measuring participants' dispositional FOBI were generated based on the aforementioned definition of FOBI. Participants indicated how true each of the statements were "pertaining to (their) own preferences and experiences" on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all true of me*, 5 = *Very true of me*). The 22 statements were presented in a random order for all participants. Descriptive statistics for the responses on each of the items are presented in Table 2.

Analytic plan

First, the squared multiple correlations (SMC) for each item were computed to examine if each item correlated highly with the other items in the scale. As per established guidelines (Beavers et al., 2013), items with an SMC lower than .30 were dropped due to weak correlations with other items in the scale.

Table 1

Demographic information of participants included in Study 1.

	N	*M*	(*SD*)	Range
Gender (% Female)	242	41.32%		0 — 1
Age	246	41.42	*(12.03)*	22 — 84
Ethnicity (% Caucasian)	246	77.24%		0 — 1
Education [a]	243	2.44	*(1.11)*	1 — 5
Subjective Socioeconomic Status [b]	246	4.57	*(1.69)*	1 — 10
Household Income [c]	246	4.37	*(1.86)*	1 — 8

Note. [a] Education was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *High School*, 2= *Associate's degree*, 3 = *Bachelor's degree*, 4 = *Master's degree*, 5 = *Doctorate degree*). [b] Subjective socioeconomic status was measured using a 10-point ladder scale, whereby higher scores indicated greater subjective socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000). [c] Household Income was measured on an eight-point scale (1 = *USD15,000 or less*, 8 = *USD150,000 or more*), in interval bands of USD$10,000.

Next, to ensure that the responses on the 22 items were appropriate for factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO-MSA) was conducted. The KMO-MSA empirically tests whether the responses to the 22 items are driven by a common underlying factor (Ferguson & Cox, 1993). A score greater than .50 (Dziuban & Shirkey, 1974; Kaiser, 1974) indicates that the data can be accounted for by a smaller set of factors, indicating that factor analyses would be appropriate.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and square multiple correlations for all items on the fear of being idle scale.

No.	Items	*M*	(*SD*)	Range	SMC
1	I get stressed out when I have nothing planned for the day.	2.11	*(1.33)*	1 — 5	.79
2	It is important to me to always strive to do more things.	2.84	*(1.32)*	1 — 5	.73
3	On a typical day, I spend most of my time constantly engaged in activities or tasks.	3.00	*(1.22)*	1 — 5	.67
4	I get anxious when I do not get anything done in a day.	2.83	*(1.38)*	1 — 5	.74
5	I feel that I am wasting my time when it is not spent on engaging in chores or tasks.	2.59	*(1.28)*	1 — 5	.75
6	I find myself searching for more things to do when I am free.	2.72	*(1.26)*	1 — 5	.73
7	I like to keep my schedule packed.	2.45	*(1.27)*	1 — 5	.75
8	Wasting time makes me feel stressed.	2.63	*(1.41)*	1 — 5	.79
9	I feel uneasy when I take breaks.	2.00	*(1.21)*	1 — 5	.68
10	It bothers me when I feel that I have spent time doing nothing.	2.79	*(1.37)*	1 — 5	.84
11	Letting myself do nothing makes me feel uneasy.	2.47	*(1.38)*	1 — 5	.81
12	I dislike lazing around.	2.66	*(1.37)*	1 — 5	.73
13	I fear wasting time.	2.60	*(1.35)*	1 — 5	.71
14	I get anxious when I have nothing to do.	2.32	*(1.31)*	1 — 5	.83
15	Lazing around feels like a waste of my time.	2.78	*(1.34)*	1 — 5	.71
16	I feel restless when I'm not doing anything.	2.61	*(1.31)*	1 — 5	.77
17	I get nervous when I feel that I have a lot of free time.	2.12	*(1.30)*	1 — 5	.78
18	I fill every small pocket of time I have with tasks or activities.	2.40	*(1.30)*	1 — 5	.76
19	It is important to me to be always doing something.	2.79	*(1.30)*	1 — 5	.83
20	I rather be busy than doing nothing.	3.15	*(1.32)*	1 — 5	.76
21	I am consistently checking off my to-do list.	2.67	*(1.34)*	1 — 5	.61
22	I always make sure I am making full use of my time, regardless of what I am doing.	2.79	*(1.25)*	1 — 5	.69

Note. *N* = 246. SMC = square multiple correlation. All items were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all true of me*, 5 = *Very true of me*).

To determine the number of factors in the scale, three methods of factor extractions were used concurrently. Based on the Kaiser-Guttman rule (Kaiser, 1960), the number of factors with eigenvalues from the principal component analysis (PCA) greater than 1.0 were retained. Based on parallel analyses, the number of factors with actual eigenvalues greater than the resampled eigenvalues were retained (Hayton et al., 2004). A scree-plot was also used to visually examine the number of factors to be retained. Following which, exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale. In the case where more than one factor was extracted, an oblimin rotation was specified due to the expectation that the factors of the scale would be correlated rather than orthogonal (Corner, 2009). Items which loaded significantly onto more than one factor (based on a cut-off of .30) were dropped from the scale. All analyses were conducted in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, 2020) using *psych* package version 2.2.5 (Revelle, 2022).

Results

Results revealed the SMCs for all items ranged between .61 (for #21 "I am consistently checking off my to-do list") and .84 (#10 "It bothers me when I feel that I have spent time doing nothing"). Hence, all items were retained in this step. Next, the overall KMO-MSA index for all items was .97, indicating a possible underlying factor driving responses on these items. This also indicated that the data was suitable for factor analysis.

Next, based on the three analyses used to inform the number of factors to extract, all results pointed to two factors (Table 3). Firstly, based on the Kaiser-Guttman rule (Kaiser, 1960), there were two factors with eigenvalues

Table 3

Results of analyses for the factor extraction process.

Factors	PCA eigenvalues	Actual eigenvalues	Resampled eigenvalues
1	**14.73**	**14.39**	0.67
2	**1.57**	**1.20**	0.50
3	0.71	0.33	0.42
4	0.55	0.19	0.36
5	0.49	0.12	0.30
6	0.44	0.09	0.25
7	0.35	0.02	0.20
8	0.34	-0.01	0.15
9	0.31	-0.03	0.11
10	0.29	-0.06	0.06

Note. PCA = Principal component analyses. Factor extraction based on the Kaiser-Guttman rule utilized PCA eigenvalues. Factor extraction based on parallel analyses compared the actual and resampled eigenvalues. Bolded eigenvalues indicate the eigenvalues that informed the number of factors which should be kept.

greater than 1. Secondly, based on parallel analyses, two factors had actual eigenvalues greater than the eigenvalues based on randomly resampled data. Thirdly, based on the scree plot, there was a sharp bend at two factors. Hence, two factors were extracted for the exploratory factor analyses.

Upon extracting the two factors, it was noticed that one item (i.e., #15 “Lazing around feels like a waste of my time”; Table 4) significantly cross-loaded on both factors. Hence, the item was dropped. The first factor was made up of 11 items (e.g., #17 “I get nervous when I feel that I have a lot of free time”, #11 “Letting myself do nothing makes me feel uneasy”) and the second factor was made up of 10 items (e.g., #3 “On a typical day, I spend most of my time constantly engaged in activities or tasks”, #22 “I always make sure I am making full use of my time, regardless of what I am doing”; Table 4). Examining the contents of the items loading significantly onto each

Table 4

Factor loadings and discrimination scores of each item.

No.	Items	Factor loadings	
		Factor 1	Factor 2
1	**I get stressed out when I have nothing planned for the day.**	0.89	
2	It is important to me to always strive to do more things.		0.79
3	*On a typical day, I spend most of my time constantly engaged in activities or tasks.*		0.90
4	**I get anxious when I do not get anything done in a day.**	0.79	
5	*I feel that I am wasting my time when it is not spent on engaging in chores or tasks.*	0.72	
6	I find myself searching for more things to do when I am free.		0.60
7	I like to keep my schedule packed.		0.85
8	**Wasting time makes me feel stressed.**	0.78	
9	**I feel uneasy when I take breaks.**	0.81	
10	**It bothers me when I feel that I have spent time doing nothing.**	0.70	
11	**Letting myself do nothing makes me feel uneasy.**	0.91	
12	I dislike lazing around.		0.57
13	**I fear wasting time.**	0.68	
14	**I get anxious when I have nothing to do.**	1.00	
15	*Lazing around feels like a waste of my time.*	0.45	0.39
16	**I feel restless when I'm not doing anything.**	0.63	
17	**I get nervous when I feel that I have a lot of free time.**	0.90	
18	I fill every small pocket of time I have with tasks or activities.		0.85
19	It is important to me to be always doing something.		0.80
20	I rather be busy than doing nothing.		0.80
21	*I am consistently checking off my to-do list.*		0.73
22	I always make sure I am making full use of my time, regardless of what I am doing.		0.89

Note. Only factor loadings greater than .30 are shown. Items that loaded significantly onto Factor 1 were retained (bolded), except for item #5 which was dropped due to theoretical reasons and item #15 which was dropped due to cross-loading.

factor, it was determined that the first factor more accurately captured the construct of the fear of being idle. Specifically, the items that loaded significantly onto the first factor were largely affective in nature, while the items that loaded onto the second factor largely captured individual differences in preference for maximizing time (rather than an aversion of idleness). Hence, the first factor was retained as the FOBI scale.

Finally, upon examining the contents of the 11 items retained, one item's content (#5 "I feel that I am wasting my time when it is not spent on engaging in chores or tasks") was found to be not closely associated with the other items. More specifically, while the other items were affective in nature, this item was not. Based on this theoretical reason, the item was dropped. The final FOBI scale thus consisted of 10 items and displayed strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .96$).

Study 2a: Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the FOBI Scale (American Sample)

Study 1 validated a one-factor scale measuring individual differences in FOBI. Hence, Study 2a sought to confirm the factor structure of the FOBI scale in a separate sample of American adults, and to test the criterion, convergent and discriminant validity of the scale. This would be important in establishing the distinctiveness of FOBI from other well-established constructs, and in providing evidence for the construct validity of the FOBI scale.

Method

Participants

Based on previous works suggesting that correlation estimates stabilize at a sample size of around 250 (Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013), it was decided a priori that a sample of at least 250 participants would be required for the current study. Hence, to account for participants who may be excluded during data analysis, a total of 304 participants were recruited for the current study through the crowdsourcing platform, Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Procedure

Similar to Study 1, all participants had to complete a bot-detection check (Littrell & Fugelsang, 2021) prior to the main survey. The main survey contained the 10-item FOBI scale, a few individual difference measures, and some demographic questions. Participants who passed the bot-detection check and completed the main survey (regardless of whether they were included in the final analyses) were remunerated USD$0.50 for their participation. The study was approved by the Singapore Management University Institutional Review Board (IRB-21-104-E027-M1(1021)) and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Of the 304 participants recruited, participants who reported feeling uncomfortable with communicating in English (n = 1) and who identified as non-American (n = 3) were not included in the analyses. Additionally, one attention check item was administered in the middle of the survey (nested within the competitiveness scale). Participants who failed the attention check (n = 15) were dropped. Hence, data from a total of 285 participants (53.65 % female; M_{age} = 44.69, SD_{age} = 12.03; Table 5) were included in the current analyses.

Measures

Fear of Being Idle Scale

The 10 items retained in the FOBI scale based on the results of Study 1 were administered in a randomized order to all participants, who rated how true each of the statements were "pertaining to (their) own preferences and experiences" on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all true of me*, 5 = *Very true of me*).

Big-Five Personality Traits

Participants' big-five personality traits (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism, and openness) were measured using the Big Five Inventory–2-Short (Soto & John, 2017). Each facet of personality was measured using six items; participants rated how strongly they agreed with certain descriptions of themselves (e.g., "Is compassionate, has a soft heart" for agreeableness; "Is reliable, can always be counted on" for conscientiousness; "Tends to be quiet" [reversed] for extraversion; "Is temperamental, gets emotional easily" for neuroticism; "Has little creativity" [reversed] for openness) on a five-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*). Ratings on items within each facet were averaged to provide a score for each personality dimension ($\alpha_{agreeableness}$ = .83; $\alpha_{conscientiousness}$ = .85; $\alpha_{extraversion}$ = .79; $\alpha_{neuroticism}$ = .88; $\alpha_{openness}$ = .83), and higher scores indicate a stronger manifestation of the personality trait.

As discussed earlier, participants' levels of neuroticism were expected to correlate positively with the FOBI scale. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to predict that the correlation would be moderate, highlighting the distinctiveness of FOBI with respect to neuroticism. There were no specific

Table 5

Descriptive statistics for participants in Study 2a.

	M	(*SD*)	Range			α
Demographics						
Gender (% Female)	52.65%					
Age	44.69	(*12.03*)	24	—	77	
Ethnicity (% Caucasian)	82.46%					
Education	2.69	(*1.12*)	0	—	6	
Subjective Socioeconomic Status	5.16	(*1.53*)	1	—	8	
Household Income	5.15	(*1.75*)	1	—	8	
Fear of Being Idle (6-item)	2.68	(*1.17*)	1.00	—	5.00	.90
Personality Traits						
Agreeableness	3.83	(*0.82*)	1.50	—	5.00	.83
Conscientiousness	4.14	(*0.80*)	1.83	—	5.00	.85
Extraversion	3.09	(*0.90*)	1.17	—	5.00	.79
Neuroticism	2.31	(*1.01*)	1.00	—	5.00	.88
Openness	3.88	(*0.84*)	1.17	—	5.00	.83
Other Key Variables						
Desire to be Engaged	2.94	(*1.08*)	1.00	—	5.00	.95
Workaholism	2.57	(*0.72*)	1.00	—	4.00	.90
Working Excessively	2.48	(*0.73*)	1.00	—	4.00	.81
Working Compulsively	2.65	(*0.78*)	1.00	—	4.00	.84
Regulatory Focus						
Prevention Focus	3.66	(*0.73*)	1.33	—	5.00	.86
Promotion Focus	3.55	(*0.83*)	1.40	—	5.00	.77
Boredom Proneness	2.48	(*1.21*)	1.00	—	7.00	.90
Competitiveness						
General Competitiveness	0.02	(*1.27*)	-2.00	—	2.00	.98
Personal Enhancement	0.22	(*1.27*)	-2.00	—	2.00	.95
Subjective Well-being						
Trait Negative Affect	1.47	(*0.65*)	1.00	—	4.90	.93
Trait Positive Affect	3.46	(*0.80*)	1.30	—	5.00	.93
Life Satisfaction	4.39	(*1.63*)	1.00	—	7.00	.94

Note. N = 285. [a] Education was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *High School*, 2 = *Associate's degree*, 3 = *Bachelor's degree*, 4 = *Master's degree*, 5 = *Doctorate degree*). [b] Subjective socioeconomic status was measured using a 10-point ladder scale, whereby higher scores indicated greater subjective socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000). [c] Household Income was measured on an eight-point scale (1 = *USD15,000 or less*, 8 = *USD150,000 or more*), in interval bands of USD$10,000.

hypotheses regarding the associations between the other personality traits (i.e., agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness) with FOBI.

Motivational and Behavioral Dispositions

Scales measuring participants' desire to be engaged, workaholism, and regulatory focus were used to establish convergent and discriminant validity of the FOBI scale. Additionally, boredom proneness and competitiveness were measured as exploratory variables.

Desire to be Engaged. Participants' desire to be engaged was included as a criterion variable, given that individuals high on FOBI should have a motivational impetus to minimize their idle time by being consistently engaged. Eight items which loaded significantly onto Factor 2 in Study 1 that captured individuals' desire to be constantly engaged in tasks (e.g., "I fill every small pocket of time I have with tasks or activities", "It is important to me to be always doing something") were administered to participants. Participants reported their agreement to each statement on a 5-point scale (1 = *Not at all true of me*, 5 = *Very true of me*), and responses on all eight items were summed as a composite measure of individuals' dispositional desire to be engaged ($\alpha = .95$). It was expected that FOBI would be strongly and positively correlated with individuals' desire to be engaged.

Workaholism. Participants' workaholism (i.e., work addiction) was measured using the Dutch Workaholism Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2009). They responded to five items measuring their tendency to work excessively hard (e.g., "I stay busy and keep many irons in the fire"), and five items measuring their tendency to work compulsively (e.g., "It is hard for me to relax when I am not working.") on a 4-point scale (1 = *Totally disagree*; 4 = *Totally agree*). Ratings on each set of five items were averaged to form two workaholism scores ($\alpha_{\text{workaholism-excessiveness}} = .81$; $\alpha_{\text{workaholism-compulsion}} = .84$),

and ratings on all ten items were averaged to form an overall score for workaholism ($\alpha_{workaholism\text{-}overall}$ = .90). It was expected that participants' levels of workaholism would be positively associated with FOBI, evidencing the convergent validity of the FOBI scale. Nonetheless, it was expected that the correlations would be moderate, highlighting the distinctiveness of FOBI from workaholism.

Regulatory Focus. Participants' regulatory focus orientations (Higgins, 1997) were measured using the Regulatory Focus Questionnaire (RFQ; Higgins et al., 2001). The RFQ comprises of two independent subscales: the prevention subscale (six items; e.g., "I feel like I have made progress toward being successful in my life") and the promotion subscale (five items; e.g., "Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times" [reversed]). Participants rated each statement on a 5-point scale, and scale anchors varied for different items. In general, higher ratings indicated greater agreement with, or a greater frequency of the situation described in the item. Ratings on items within each subscale were averaged ($\alpha_{prevention}$ = .86; $\alpha_{promotion}$ = .77). Higher scores on the prevention subscale indicated a greater inclination to use avoidance or vigilance strategies to attain their goals, whereas higher scores on the promotion subscale indicated a greater inclination to use approach or eagerness strategies to attain their goals.

Prevention and promotion focus were included as measures of discriminant validity. Although intuitively FOBI appears to be related to prevention focus, the two constructs are expected to be distinct. Dispositional prevention focus refers to the primary preventive strategy individuals adopt to achieve their goals, such as that of academic, professional, and personal

strivings. However, FOBI on the other hand refers specifically to individuals' tendency to feel negative affect when they do not feel that they are striving towards their goal of not being idle, which is independent of the strategy they adopt towards their goal pursuit. Hence, it was expected that FOBI would be unrelated to both prevention and promotion focus.

Boredom Proneness. Participants' tendency to feel bored was measured using a short-form version of the Boredom Proneness Scale (Struk et al., 2017). Participants rated their agreement to eight items (e.g., "I find it hard to entertain myself") on a 7-point scale (1 = *Highly disagree*; 7 = *Highly agree*). Scores across all items were averaged to form a composite score of participants' boredom proneness ($\alpha = .90$).

There were no a priori hypotheses regarding the relationship between boredom proneness and FOBI. However, boredom proneness was included as an exploratory variable because it is theoretically plausible that one way individuals high on FOBI appraise small pockets of idle time is by regarding them as boring—an emotion that is considered to be aversive (Eastwood et al., 2012). Nonetheless, given the lack of research examining this relationship, it was deemed exploratory to study the relationship between individuals' dispositional boredom proneness and FOBI in the current study.

Competitiveness. Participants' trait competitiveness was measured using two dimensions from the Competitiveness Orientation Measure (Newby & Klein, 2014) — the General Competitiveness subscale (12 items; e.g., "I love to compete") and the Personal Enhancement Competitiveness subscale (4 items; e.g., "I can improve my competence by competing"). Participants rated their agreement to the 16 statements on a 5-point Likert

scale (-2 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Strongly agree*). Ratings on items within each subscale were averaged ($\alpha_{\text{general competitiveness}}$= .98; $\alpha_{\text{enhancement competitiveness}}$= .95) and scored such that higher values indicated greater competitiveness within each domain.

There were no a priori hypotheses regarding the relationship between competitiveness and FOBI. However, competitiveness was included as an exploratory variable because it is theoretically plausible that competitive individuals have a desire to minimize idle time and fully pack their schedules if they perceive busyness as a status symbol. In fact, some research has suggested that a lack of leisure time and a busy schedule has become a 'badge of honor' in modern society (e.g., Bellezza et al., 2016). Hence, it is possible that FOBI is positively associated with competitiveness.

Measures of Well-being

Participants' trait negative affect, trait positive affect, life satisfaction, and satisfaction across 11 life domains were measured. As previously discussed, it was expected that there would be a positive relationship between FOBI with trait negative affect. There were no a priori hypotheses for the relationships between FOBI with positive affect, life satisfaction nor domain satisfaction.

Positive and Negative Affect. Trait levels of positive and negative affect were measured using a shortened version of Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988). Positive affect and negative affect were measured independently using 10 emotions each. Participant rated how much they felt each of the 20 emotions (e.g., "excited" for positive affect, "hostile" for negative affect) 'on the average' on a 5-point scale (1 =

Very slightly or not at all, 5 = *Extremely*). Ratings on corresponding items were averaged to compute individuals' trait levels of positive (α = .93) and negative (α = .93) affect. Higher scores indicated higher levels of positive or negative affect.

Life Satisfaction. Life satisfaction was measured using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Participants rated their agreement with five statements (e.g., "The conditions of my life are excellent") on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Ratings across the five items were averaged (α = .94) to form a composite score of participants' level of life satisfaction. Higher scores indicated greater life satisfaction.

Life Domain satisfaction. Participants responded to the prompt "How satisfied are you with the following areas of your life?" in relation to 11 specific life domains on a 7-point scale (1 = *Extremely dissatisfied* , 7 = *Extremely satisfied*). The 11 domains are as follows: *family*, *romantic life*, *friends*, *work/ academics*, *financial situation*, *housing*, *health*, *morality*, *physical appearance*, *recreation (e.g., movies, leisure)*, and *yourself*. Each domain was analyzed separately.

Importance of Life Domains

As an exploratory measure, participants' perceptions of the importance of the above eleven life domains were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = *Extremely dissatisfied* , 7 = *Extremely satisfied*). Similar to the ratings on domain satisfaction, ratings of importance on each domain were analyzed separately.

Analytic plan

First, to replicate the factor structure of the FOBI scale, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. It was expected that the model would show a good model fit (i.e., CFI ≥ .95, TLI ≥ .95, SRMR ≤ .08, RMSEA ≤ .06; Hu & Bentler, 1999); where the model did not show a good fit, the scale was modified to improve the model fit. Next, to examine the correlations between FOBI and other scales administered in the present study, bivariate correlational analyses were conducted. All analyses were conducted in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, 2020). CFA was conducted using the R package *lavaan* version 0.6-12 (Rosseel, 2012).

Results

Psychometric Properties of the FOBI Scale

CFA revealed that the one-factor structure of the 10-item FOBI scale was not a good fit for the data (CFI = .94, TLI = .92, SRMR = .03, RMSEA = .13 [.12, .15]). A visual inspection of the items shows that there was highly overlapping item content. Hence, items were dropped from the scale based on modification indices. Specifically, items whose residual covaried substantially with many other items' residuals were dropped. After dropping four items from the scale in a stepwise fashion (items #17: "*I get nervous when I feel that I have a lot of free time*", #1: "*I get stressed out when I have nothing planned for the day*", #13: "*I fear wasting time*", and #4: "*I get anxious when I do not get anything done in a day*"), the six-item scale achieved acceptable fit (CFI = .99, TLI = .98, SRMR = .02, RMSEA = .08 [.04, .12]). The internal validity of the scale was also good (α = .94). Thus, the six-item scale (Appendix A) was used in all further analyses.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The bivariate Pearson correlation of all key variables included in the current study with the six-item FOBI scale are presented in Table 6.

Personality Traits

As hypothesized, there was a significant positive correlation between neuroticism and individuals' scores on the FOBI scale (r = .23, p < .001). There were no significant associations between FOBI and the other personality traits except for extraversion, which was positively associated with FOBI (r = .19, p = .002). We will discuss this further in conjunction with the results of the French sample. Overall, the positive correlations observed support the validity of the FOBI scale. Of importance, the correlations between FOBI and the personality traits were small to moderate (rs < .23) highlighting the distinctiveness of FOBI with these personality traits. This indicates the novelty of FOBI as a dispositional trait distinct from individuals' big five personality.

Motivational and Behavioral Dispositions

Desire to be Engaged. As hypothesized, participants' dispositional level of FOBI scale was highly correlated with their desire to be consistently engaged (r = .84, p < .001). The high correlation highlights the criterion validity of the FOBI scale, given that the FOBI scale was intended to measure individuals' desire to be constantly engaged and avoid idle time.

Workaholism. As predicted, FOBI was positively associated with both aspects of workaholism (i.e., work engagement and work compulsion, rs = [.61, .65], ps < .001), as well as the overall workaholism index (r = .67, p < .001). Individuals higher on FOBI displayed a greater tendency to display

Table 6

Bivariate correlations between key variables and the Fear of Being Idle (FOBI) in Study 2a.

#	Variable	1
1	Fear of Being Idle	-
2	Gender	.12*
3	Age	-.13*
4	Ethnicity	.09
5	Education	.03
6	Subjective Socioeconomic Status	-.01
7	Household Income	.13*
8	Agreeableness	-.04
9	Conscientiousness	.01
10	Extraversion	.19**
11	Neuroticism	.23***
12	Openness	.08
13	Desire to be Engage	.84***
14	Workaholism	.67***
15	Working Excessively	.61***
16	Working Compulsively	.65***
17	Promotion Focus	-.02
18	Prevention Focus	-.07
19	Boredom Proneness	.22***
20	General Competitiveness	.10
21	Personal Enhancement	.09
22	Trait Negative Affect	.25***
23	Trait Positive Affect	.16**
24	Life Satisfaction	-.04

Note. $N = 285$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

work addiction. Importantly, the correlations between workaholism and FOBI were not very high, indicating that the two constructs are distinguishable. Variations in FOBI do not merely reflect variations in individuals' workaholism.

Regulatory Focus. In line with hypotheses, FOBI was found to be unrelated to prevention focus (r = -.07, p = .270) and prevention focus (r = -.02, p = .687), suggesting that individuals' dispositional FOBI was unrelated to their regulatory strategies towards goal pursuit. These findings thereby provide evidence of the discriminant validity of the FOBI scale.

Boredom Proneness. Exploratory analyses revealed that boredom proneness was positively associated with FOBI (r = .22, p < .001). Participants higher on FOBI were more likely to experience the aversive feelings of boredom. As previously discussed, it is possible that individuals high on FOBI are more likely to appraise even small pockets of idle time as boring. Thus, these findings are thus compatible with the theoretical underpinnings of FOBI.

Competitiveness. Finally, exploratory analyses revealed that there was no relationship between FOBI and general competitiveness nor personal enhancement motivations (ps > .115).

Well-being

Positive and Negative Affect

As hypothesized, FOBI was significantly associated with trait negative affect (r = .25, p < .001). FOBI was also significantly related to trait positive affect (r = .16, p = .006). Given the exploratory nature of this finding, we will discuss this observed positive association later, in conjunction with the results of the French sample.

Life Satisfaction and Domain Satisfaction

Despite the associations between FOBI and trait affect, there was no association between FOBI and life satisfaction (p = .457). Taking a closer

look at these findings using the eleven items administered to examine satisfaction on specific life-domains, it was found that FOBI was only associated with three of the eleven domains. FOBI was associated with lower satisfaction in the domains of physical appearance (r = -.12, p = .046), recreation (r = -.20, p < .001), and self (r = -.18, p = .002). Given the exploratory nature of these findings, we discuss the associations between FOBI and satisfaction with life domains together with the results of the French sample. Nonetheless, it is evident from these analyses that FOBI only affects satisfaction within a few life domains, so the impacts may not be large enough to have significant effects on their overall life satisfaction.

Importance of Life Domains

Exploratory analyses on the relationship between FOBI and the perceived importance of life domains showed that FOBI was positively associated with the perceived importance of work (r = .21, p < .001), and negatively associated with the perceived importance of recreation (r = -.17, p = .004).

Interim Discussion

Taken together, the six-item FOBI scale showed a sound factor structure with high criterion, convergent, and discriminant validity within the sample of American adults. The findings were largely in line with expectations – FOBI was positively associated with the desire to be busy, neuroticism, workaholism, and negative affect. Furthermore, these analyses showed that FOBI was distinguishable from well-established traits in the literature.

Study 2b: Convergent and Discriminant Validity of the FOBI Scale (French Sample)

Study 2b was conducted to validate the scale and replicate the validity findings of Study 2a in a different cultural sample by recruiting French participants. The decision to utilize a French sample was due to the stark differences between American and French work culture and norms (Landolt & Laurent, 2020), which are often compared against each other (e.g., Lebowitz, 2017; Weinreb, 2012). For example, the French's norm of having paid vacation time is rare in American culture (Pellen, 2022), which may contribute to their differences in levels of FOBI and emphasis on busyness and productivity. This would give insights into whether the FOBI scale is valid across cultures which are likely to be different in average levels of FOBI. Validity evidence gathered in the American and French samples would lend greater utility of the scale in future works.

Method

Participants

Similar to Study 2a, it was decided a priori that a sample of at least 250 participants would be required for the current study. Hence, to account for participants who may be excluded during data analysis, a total of 335 participants were recruited for the current study through the crowdsourcing platform, Prolific.

As in the previous studies, all participants had to complete a bot-detection check (Littrell & Fugelsang, 2021) prior to the main survey. The main survey was identical to the one used in Study 2a with the exception of one measure (as described below). Participants who passed the bot-detection

check and completed the main survey (regardless of whether they were included in the final analyses) were remunerated £1.90[1] for their participation. The study was approved by the Singapore Management University Institutional Review Board (IRB-21-104-E027-M1(1021)). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to starting on the main survey.

Of the 335 participants recruited, participants who reported feeling uncomfortable with communicating in English (n = 6) and who identified as non-French (n = 5) were not included in the analyses. Similar to Study 2a, one attention check item was administered in the middle of the survey (nested within the competitiveness scale). Participants who failed the attention check (n = 13) were dropped. Hence, data from a total of 311 participants (46.53% female; M_{age} = 30.01, SD_{age} = 9.48; Table 7) were included in the current analyses.

Procedure

The measures administered in Study 2b were identical to those administered in Study 2a (Cronbach alphas of all scales are presented in Table 7), with the exception of the measure of the desire to be engaged. As the scale capturing individuals' desire to be engaged in Study 2a was self-developed and not previously validated, it was replaced by a more established scale that has been validated in the existing literature—the preference for busyness scale (Koh, 2019).

[1] The remuneration for French participants was increased from £1.40 to £1.90 midway through data collection based on recommendations from the Prolific platform.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics for participants in Study 2b.

	M	(*SD*)	Range	α
Demographics				
Gender (% Female)	46.53%			
Age	30.01	(*9.48*)	18 — 67	
Ethnicity (% Caucasian)	84.89%			
Education	3.31	(*1.05*)	1 — 5	
Subjective Socioeconomic Status	5.58	(*1.69*)	1 — 9	
Household Income	3.02	(*1.81*)	1 — 8	
Fear of Being Idle (6-item)	2.65	(*0.99*)	1.00 — 4.83	
Personality Traits				
Agreeableness	3.27	(*0.38*)	2.33 — 4.50	.68
Conscientiousness	3.33	(*0.36*)	2.17 — 4.67	.70
Extraversion	3.05	(*0.35*)	2.00 — 4.00	.71
Neuroticism	3.16	(*0.36*)	1.83 — 4.83	.88
Openness	3.06	(*0.41*)	2.17 — 5.00	.68
Other Key Variables				
Preference for Busyness	4.08	(*1.41*)	1.00 — 7.00	.89
Workaholism	2.25	(*0.63*)	1.00 — 3.90	.84
Working Excessively	2.27	(*0.66*)	1.00 — 4.00	.71
Working Compulsively	2.23	(*0.73*)	1.00 — 4.00	.79
Regulatory Focus				
Prevention Focus	2.87	(*0.71*)	1.40 — 4.60	.82
Promotion Focus	3.17	(*0.41*)	2.00 — 4.33	.64
Boredom Proneness	2.87	(*0.71*)	1.40 — 4.60	.89
Competitiveness				
General Competitiveness	-0.15	(*0.63*)	-1.67 — 1.33	.96
Personal Enhancement	-0.02	(*1.12*)	-2.00 — 2.00	.88
Subjective Well-being				
Trait Negative Affect	2.38	(*0.91*)	1.00 — 4.60	.92
Trait Positive Affect	3.29	(*0.65*)	1.30 — 4.80	.85
Life Satisfaction	3.72	(*1.37*)	1.00 — 6.60	.89

Note. N = 311. [a] Education was measured on a 5-point scale (1 = *High School*, 2 = *Associate's degree*, 3 = *Bachelor's degree*, 4 = *Master's degree*, 5 = *Doctorate degree*). [b] Subjective socioeconomic status was measured using a 10-point ladder scale, whereby higher scores indicated greater subjective socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000). [c] Household Income was measured on an eight-point scale (1 = *EUR15,000 or less*, 8 = *EUR150,000 or more*), in interval bands of EUR$10,000.

Measures

Preference for Busyness

Participants' preference for busyness was measured as the criterion measure using a 4-item scale (Koh, 2019). Notably, while the preference for busyness measure was designed to examine participants' desire to be consistently engaged specifically in career-related and/or paid tasks, FOBI is posited to be related to a desire to be consistently engaged in any types of task (e.g., leisure-related activities, personal projects, etc.). Nonetheless, FOBI is expected to be correlated with the preference to be busy given that FOBI should manifest in the desire to be highly engaged in paid work, among other domains. Although FOBI is likely to be more likely to be associated with the desire to be engaged as measured in Study 2a, we opted to use the preference for busyness scale in Study 2b as the criterion variable given that it has shown to be highly valid and displayed good psychometric properties in previous research (Koh, 2019). Participants rated their agreement with the items "I prefer to keep myself busy, "I would rather be busy than free", "I keep myself busy most of the time" and "If I have free time, I quickly find some work to keep myself busy" on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Ratings on all items were averaged (α = .89), and scores were coded such that higher values indicate greater preference to be busy.

Analytic plan

The analytic plan was similar to that of Study 2a. First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with the six-item FOBI scale derived from the previous studies. It was expected that the model would show a good model fit (i.e., CFI $\geq$ .95, TLI $\geq$ .95, SRMR $\leq$ .08, RMSEA $\leq$ .06; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Next, to examine the correlations between FOBI and other scales administered in the present study, bivariate correlational analyses were

conducted. Finally, to examine if the correlates of FOBI were significantly different between the French and Americans, moderation analyses were conducted with culture specified as the moderating variable. Prior to the moderation analyses, FOBI scores were mean centered within cultures, and culture was dummy coded with the French acting as the reference group (i.e., French = 0, Americans = 1). All analyses were conducted in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, 2020). CFA was conducted using the R package *lavaan* version 0.6-12 (Rosseel, 2012).

Results

Psychometric Properties of the FOBI Scale

CFA confirmed that the one-factor structure of the six-item FOBI scale provided acceptable fit for the data (CFI = .98, TLI = .96, SRMR = .03, RMSEA = .09 [.06, .13]). Additionally, the internal validity of the scale was high (α = .90). Hence, it was judged that the one-factor structure of the FOBI scale was acceptable for the current data.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The bivariate Pearson correlation of all key variables included in the current study with the FOBI scale are presented in Table 8.

Personality Traits

As hypothesized and consistent with Study 2a (American sample), there was a significant positive correlation between neuroticism and individuals' scores on the FOBI scale (r = .19, p < .001). There were no significant associations between FOBI and the other personality traits except for agreeableness, which was negatively associated between agreeableness and FOBI (r = -.12, p = .037) – a finding we discuss in greater detail later.

Table 8

Bivariate correlations between key variables and the Fear of Being Idle (FOBI) in Study 2b.

#	Variable	1
1	Fear of Being Idle	-
2	Gender	.11
3	Age	-.21***
4	Ethnicity	-.05
5	Education	-.12
6	Subjective Socioeconomic Status	-.09
7	Household Income	-.06
8	Agreeableness	-.12*
9	Conscientiousness	-.06
10	Extraversion	.09
11	Neuroticism	.37***
12	Openness	.09
13	Preference for Busyness	.57***
14	Workaholism	.56***
15	Working Excessively	.46***
16	Working Compulsively	.55***
17	Promotion Focus	-.13*
18	Prevention Focus	-.18**
19	Boredom Proneness	.36***
20	General Competitiveness	-.02
21	Personal Enhancement	.01
22	Trait Negative Affect	.41***
23	Trait Positive Affect	.08
24	Life Satisfaction	-.10

Note. N = 311. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Similar to Study 2a, the correlations between FOBI and the big five personality traits were small to moderate (rs < .37) highlighting the distinctiveness of FOBI with these personality traits. This indicates the

novelty of FOBI as a dispositional trait distinct from individuals' big five personality.

Motivational and Behavioral Dispositions

Preference for Busyness. As hypothesized, participants' dispositional level of FOBI scale was highly correlated with their desire to be consistently engaged (r = .58, p < .001). The high correlation highlights the criterion validity of the FOBI scale, given that the FOBI scale was intended to capture individuals' motivation to be consistently busy.

Workaholism. As predicted, and similar to Study 2a, FOBI was positively associated with both aspects of workaholism (i.e., work engagement and work compulsion, rs = [.46, .55], ps < .001), as well as the overall workaholism index (r = .56, p < .001). Participants higher on FOBI displayed a greater tendency to display work addiction. Importantly, the correlations between workaholism and FOBI indicate that the two constructs are distinct and separable. Variations in FOBI do not merely reflect variations in individuals' workaholism.

Regulatory Focus. Contrary to Study 2a, FOBI was found to be significantly negatively associated with both promotion (r = -.13, p = .019) and prevention focus (r = -.18, p = .001). Nonetheless, the small correlations observed support the expectation that FOBI and regulatory focus are not likely to be closely related. These findings thus support the notion that FOBI and regulatory focus are distinct constructs.

Boredom Proneness. Exploratory analyses revealed that boredom proneness was positively associated with FOBI (r = .36, p < .001), in line

with Study 2a. Participants higher on FOBI were more likely to experience the aversive feelings of boredom. As previously discussed, it is possible that individuals high on FOBI are more likely to appraise even small pockets of idle time as boring. Thus, these findings are compatible with the theoretical underpinnings of FOBI.

Competitiveness. Finally, similar to Study 2a, there was no observed relationship between FOBI and general competitiveness nor personal enhancement motivations (*p*s > .682).

Well-being

Positive and Negative Affect

As hypothesized and in line with Study 2a, FOBI was significantly associated with trait negative affect ($r = .42$, $p < .001$). In contrast, positive affect was found to be unassociated with FOBI ($r = .08$, $p = .162$).

Life Satisfaction and Domain Satisfaction

In line with Study 2a, there was no association between FOBI and life satisfaction ($p = .068$). We found that FOBI was only associated with poorer satisfaction in a few of the eleven domains. In line with Study 2a, FOBI was associated with lower satisfaction in the domains of recreation ($r = -.18$, $p = .002$) and self ($r = -.26$, $p < .001$). Additionally, in the current French sample, FOBI was associated with lower satisfaction in the domains of family ($r = -.15$, $p = .007$) and morality ($r = -.16$, $p = .004$) as well. Similar to our conclusion in Study 2a, we posit that FOBI only affect satisfaction within a few life domains. Thus, FOBI may not have a large enough impact to affect one's overall life satisfaction.

Importance of Life Domains

Correlational analyses showed that FOBI was positively associated with the perceived importance of work (r = .26, p < .001). Interestingly, contrary to the findings in Study 2a, FOBI was not found to be associated with the importance of leisure among the French sample (r = -.07, p = .227), and was found to be associated with the importance of one's financial situation (r = .27, p < .001), morality (r = .14, p = .011), and physical appearance (r = .13, p = .020).

Differences In FOBI Correlates Across Cultures

Despite FOBI being significantly correlated with extraversion, positive affect, and the importance of recreation in the American sample but not in the French sample, moderation analyses revealed that there was no statistically significant moderating effect of culture on these correlations (ps > .132). Similarly, although FOBI was negatively correlated with agreeableness, promotion focus and prevention focus in the French sample but not the American sample, moderation analyses revealed that there was no statistically significant moderating effect of culture on these correlations (ps > .142).

However, there was a significant interaction between FOBI scores and culture on negative affect (b = -0.22, p < .001). Specifically, the positive relationship between FOBI and negative affect was significantly stronger in the French sample compared to the American sample. In a similar vein, the relationship between FOBI and boredom proneness was also moderated by culture (b = -0.20, p = .039), whereby the positive relationship between FOBI and boredom proneness was significantly stronger in the French compared to the American sample. Finally, there was also a significant

interaction between FOBI and culture on workaholism (b = 0.12, p = .004). The positive association between FOBI and workaholism was significantly stronger in the American sample relative to the French sample.

Discussion

The findings of Study 2a (American sample) and Study 2b (French sample) show that the six-item FOBI scale had good psychometric properties. The one-factor structure of the scale fit the data well, and the scale displayed high internal reliability in both the American and French samples. Further, the scale correlated highly with the criterion variable of the desire to be busy and displayed high convergent and discriminant validity. Across both samples, FOBI was found to be positively associated with a preference to be busy, neuroticism, workaholism, and negative affect. There were some correlates of FOBI that differed significantly between the two cultures. In particular, FOBI was more strongly associated with increased negative affect and boredom proneness in the French sample compared to the Americans, while FOBI was more strongly associated with increased workaholism in the American sample relative to the French. These findings suggest that FOBI may be associated with different outcomes across cultures that hold differing attitudes towards work and recreation. In cultures where vacation time is valued (e.g., France), high levels of FOBI may be particularly incompatible with social norms and be particularly detrimental for well-being. In cultures that tend to glorify productivity over recreation (e.g., America), FOBI may be more compatible with the norms of the culture and be more strongly associated with behavioral outcomes like workaholism.

Taken together, Study 2 provided compelling evidence for the validity of the six-item FOBI scale. Whilst more work is needed to replicate some of the results of the exploratory analyses conducted, these exploratory findings were also in line with theoretical expectations of cultural differences between the French and Americans. Beyond showing the substantive validity of the FOBI scale, the observed differences in the relationship between FOBI and other well-established constructs across the two cultures suggest the possibility of utilizing the FOBI scale to understand cultural differences in work and recreational behaviors – a point we return to in the general discussion. In sum, Study 2 presented the first empirical work to shed light on the correlates of FOBI.

Study 3: The Relationship between FOBI and Goal Pursuits

Having established the factor structure and validity of the FOBI scale as evidenced by the findings in Study 2, Study 3 sought to examine a potential implication of dispositional FOBI. Specifically, Study 3 seeks to examine the relationship between FOBI and goal pursuit. For individuals high on FOBI, their internalized ideal of '*seizing the day*' may serve to motivate them to use their time wisely and productively. This could in turn facilitate greater goal progress. However, as evident from Study 2, FOBI has been consistently associated with higher levels of negative affect – a factor that has been shown to be detrimental for goal pursuit (Aarts et al., 2008). It would be both important and interesting to examine if holding these productivity ideals does indeed translate to actual tangential benefits such as goal progress and attainment. In line with the theoretical arguments that motivated the present research, it was hypothesized that individuals higher on

FOBI would show greater goal progress over time relative to those lower on FOBI.

However, given that individuals high on FOBI may be more adept to busyness given their tendency to seek busy schedules, and that busyness can lower the likelihood of being idle and experiencing the resultant negative affect, it was expected that busyness would moderate the relationship between the fear of being idle and goal progress. Specifically, in situations of low busyness, individuals high on FOBI may experience higher levels of distress, which may be particularly demotivating for goal pursuit (Aarts et al., 2008). In contrast, in situations of high busyness, those high in FOBI are more likely to experience lower distress from their achievement of their desired busy state (Higgins, 1987). Hence, it was expected that busyness and FOBI would interact to influence one's levels of negative affect, and in turn, goal progress.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from a local Singaporean university through the university's subject pool system and received course credit for their participation. Based on the expectation that an interaction effect between busyness and FOBI on negative affect and goal progress would be small to medium (f^2 = .04), a priori power analysis showed that a minimum sample size of 199 participants would be required for the current study to achieve a power of .80 at α = .05. Hence, we aimed to recruit approximately 240 undergraduates for the current study to account for attrition. Approval for conducting the study was sought from the university's Institutional Review

Board (IRB-21-104-E027-M5(223)) and all participants provided consent to their participation in the study.

A total of 247 undergraduates were recruited for the study and completed the baseline survey. Of whom, 221 participants completed both follow-up surveys (attrition rate$_{T1}$ = 6.07%, attrition rate$_{T2}$ = 4.74%). Of these 221 participants, 13 participants' follow-up survey responses (5.88%) could not be matched to their baseline survey responses (e.g., due to typological errors in participant ID). Hence, 208 participants were retained for analyses (Table 9). Of the 208 participants, 45 participants had changed their personal goal, and/or their intended goal behaviors despite instructions not to. Hence, sensitivity analyses were conducted excluding these participants (n = 163). Results presented in-text were based on the full sample of 208 participants and they were consistent across the full sample and the sample with 45 participants excluded (n = 163) unless otherwise stated.

Procedure

The study consisted of three parts—a baseline survey and two follow-up surveys that were completed two and four weeks after the baseline. The baseline survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete, while each follow up survey took approximately five minutes to complete. Participants were briefed at the start of the study session before filling out the baseline survey to inform them about the dates of the follow-up surveys to prevent attrition, and participation credits were only awarded to participants who completed all three surveys.

At baseline (i.e., T0), participants were asked to complete the six-item FOBI scale, some demographic variables, as well as a questionnaire requiring

Table 9

Descriptive statistics for participants in Study 3.

	M	(*SD*)	Range		
Demographics					
Age	21.82	(*1.84*)	18	—	27
Gender (% Female)	81.73%		0	—	1
Baseline (T0)					
Fear of Being Idle (FOBI)	2.77	(*0.95*)	1.00	—	5.00
Goal Difficulty	4.50	(*1.22*)	1	—	7
Goal Self-Concordance	1.04	(*3.16*)	-6	—	8
First Follow-Up Survey (T1)					
Busyness	4.48	(*0.71*)	1.00	—	5.00
Positive Affect	3.12	(*0.78*)	1.30	—	5.00
Negative Affect	2.46	(*0.82*)	1.00	—	5.00
Subjective Goal Progress	4.07	(*1.63*)	1.00	—	7.00
Goal Behavior Frequency	3.27	(*0.88*)	1.00	—	5.00
Goal Effort	4.56	(*1.62*)	1	—	7
Second Follow-Up Survey (T2)					
Busyness	4.57	(*0.60*)	2.00	—	5.00
Positive Affect	3.01	(*0.85*)	1.00	—	5.00
Negative Affect	2.59	(*0.90*)	1.00	—	5.00
Subjective Goal Progress	4.10	(*1.67*)	1.00	—	7.00
Goal Behavior Frequency	3.25	(*0.87*)	1.00	—	5.00
Goal Effort	4.55	(*1.64*)	1	—	7
Fear of Being Idle (FOBI)	2.98	(*1.00*)	1.00	—	5.00

Note. $N = 208$.

them to list one goal they hope to achieve or make progress during the coming month. Several goal-related characteristics (e.g., goal difficulty; Werner et al., 2016) were also measured with respect to the goal listed to be used as control variables. During both follow-up surveys (i.e., T1 and T2), participants were asked to report their subjective busyness, affect, goal progress, goal behaviors, perceived goal ease, and goal effort in the past two weeks. As such, the follow-up survey at T1 captured participants' perceptions

and experiences pertaining to goal attainment within the two weeks after the baseline survey. Accordingly, the follow-up survey at T2 measured participants' experiences during the third and fourth week after the baseline survey. At the second follow-up survey (i.e., T2), participants were also asked to fill in the FOBI scale again. This was to allow us to examine the test-retest reliability of the FOBI scale.

Measures

FOBI Scale. The six-item FOBI scale (as in Study 2b) measuring trait levels of FOBI was administered to all participants at two time points – once at baseline ($\alpha = .89$) and once at the second follow-up survey ($\alpha = .90$). This meant that there was a month between the two measurements of FOBI.

Baseline Measures

Personal Goal. Participants indicated one personal goal that they intended to work on in the following month by responding to a free-text item with the following prompt (adapted from Werner et al., 2016): "*Personal goals are projects and concerns that people think about, plan for, carry out, and sometimes (though not always) complete or succeed at. They may be more or less difficult to implement; require only a few or a complex sequence of steps; represent different areas of a person's life; and be more or less time consuming, attractive, or urgent. Please think of <u>one</u> (most important) personal goal that you plan to carry out this month*.". This goal was then emailed to participants at the end of the baseline survey. Participants were also explicitly asked to refer to the email containing this information during the follow-up surveys.

Intended Goal Behaviors. Participants also listed three behaviors they intended to engage in to fulfil their personal goal. These behaviors served as a behavioral measure of goal progress during the follow-up studies. Similar to their personal goal, these intended goal behaviors were emailed to participants at the end of the baseline survey.

Goal Characteristics. Two goal characteristics—namely, perceived goal difficulty and self-concordance of the goal—were measured for the personal goal listed. Considering that previous work has found positive relationships between goal progress and these goal characteristics (Werner et al., 2016), these variables were included as covariates in our analyses.

Goal difficulty was measured using the item "How challenging do you think it will be to attain this goal?" on a 7-point scale (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Extremely*), with higher scores indicating greater perceived difficulty. Self-concordance of the goal was measured using four items capturing participants' external (i.e., "you pursue this striving because somebody else wants you to or because the situation demands it"), introjected (i.e., "you pursue this striving because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you didn't"), identified (i.e., "you pursue this striving because you believe it's an important goal to have") and intrinsic (i.e., "you pursue this striving because of the fun and enjoyment it provides you") motivations for pursuing their goal (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Werner et al., 2016). Self-concordance of participants' goal was computed as in previous studies (e.g., Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Werner et al., 2016), by subtracting the average scores on the external and introjected items from the average scores on the intrinsic and identified items.

Follow-up Surveys

Busyness. Participants' perceived busyness in the past two weeks was measured by adapting three items from prior research (Neupert et al., 2011). Participants were asked to rate their busyness (e.g., "In the past two weeks, I was busy") on a 5-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*) across the two weeks leading up to the follow-up survey. Ratings on the three items were averaged such that higher values indicate greater busyness (α_{T1} = .89, α_{T2} = .81).

Positive and Negative Affect. Participants' positive and negative affect across the two weeks leading up to the follow-up survey were measured by the shortened PANAS scale (Watson et al., 1988) that was adapted for the two-week time frame. Similar to Study 2, 10 items measuring positive affect and 10 items measuring negative affect were administered on a 5-point scale (1 = *Very slightly or not at all*, 5 = *Extremely*). Ratings on items in the positive affect subscale (α_{T1} = .92, α_{T2} = .93) and ratings on items in the negative affect subscales (α_{T1} = .90, α_{T2} = .92) were averaged to form a composite score whereby higher scores indicate greater levels of the corresponding affect.

Subjective Goal Progress. Prior to the items measuring subjective goal progress, participants were prompted to key in their personal goal again in a free-response text box. Following which, subjective goal progress across two weeks was measured using three items (e.g., "In the past two weeks, I have made a lot of progress toward this goal"; Werner et al., 2016) on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). Ratings were

averaged and higher scores indicated greater goal progress (α_{T1} = .94, α_{T2} = .93).

Engagement in Goal Behavior. Engagement in goal-directed behaviors across the two weeks following the baseline survey was measured as the frequency participants engaged in each of the three goal directed behaviors they had listed at baseline. Specifically, participants were asked to key in their three intended goal behaviors, and subsequently responded to the prompt "In the past 2 weeks, how often have you engaged in this behavior to achieve your goal?" with respect to each behavior using a 5-point scale (1 = *Never*, 5 = *Very Often*). Ratings across the three behaviors were averaged to form a composite score, whereby higher scores indicated greater goal behavior engagement (α_{T1} = .64, α_{T2} = .67).

Goal Effort. Goal effort (Werner et al., 2016) was included as an exploratory dependent measure. Participants rated their agreement to the statement "In the past two weeks, I have tried really hard to achieve this goal" on a 7-point scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*) during each of the follow-up surveys.

Analytic plan

First, to replicate the one-factor structure of the FOBI scale, confirmatory factor analyses were performed using the items administered to participants in the baseline survey. As in previous studies, it was expected that the model would show a good model fit (i.e., CFI ≥ .95, TLI ≥ .95, SRMR ≤ .08, RMSEA ≤ .06; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, to examine the test-retest reliability of the FOBI scale, participants' FOBI score at baseline will be correlated with their score at the second follow-up survey. It

was expected that there would be a significant, large (r >.50; Cohen, 1969) correlation between participants' two FOBI scores, demonstrating the relative stability of FOBI as a disposition.

Second, to examine the relationship between FOBI and goal progress as well as between FOBI and negative affect, linear regressions were conducted. FOBI as measured at baseline was indicated as the predictor, the different goal progress indicators (i.e., subjective goal progress, and engagement in goal behaviors), and negative affect measured at T1 and T2 were indicated as the dependent variables in the corresponding regression models.

Third, to examine if the relationship between FOBI and goal progress or negative affect was moderated by busyness, a second set of linear regressions were conducted. FOBI as measured at baseline was indicated as the predictor, and busyness at T1 was indicated as the moderator. The different goal progress indicators measured at T2 (i.e., subjective goal progress, and engagement in goal behaviors) and negative affect measured at T2 were indicated as the dependent variables in the corresponding regression models.

Finally, to test for the hypothesis that the indirect relationship between FOBI and goal progress through negative affect would be more positive under high busyness relative to low busyness, moderated mediation analyses were conducted using Model 7 in PROCESS for R Version 4.3.1 (Hayes, 2022). FOBI measured at T0 was indicated as the predictor variable, negative affect at T1 was indicated as the mediating variable, busyness at T1 was indicated as the moderating variable in the *a* pathway (between the

predictor and mediator), and measures of goal progress at T2 (i.e., subjective goal progress and engagement in goal-directed behaviors) were indicated as the dependent variable in separate models.

As part of sensitivity analyses, goal congruence and goal difficulty were included in as control variables in all analyses (except for the test-retest reliability analysis). Results presented in-text did not include these control variables, and results including these control variables were similar unless otherwise stated.

Results

Confirmatory factor analyses revealed that the one-factor model was a good fit for the data (CFI = .99, TLI = .98, SRMR = .02, RMSEA = .06 [.00, .11]). Correlational analyses reveal that there was a significant, large positive correlation between participants' FOBI scores at baseline and the second follow-up survey (r = .57, p < .001). Hence, participants' FOBI scores were relatively stable across a one-month period, offering evidence for test-retest reliability.

Linear regression analyses revealed no direct relationship between FOBI and any of the goal progress variables at both T1 (ps > .442) and T2 (ps > .374; Table 10), contrary to expectations. However, there was a significant relationship between FOBI and negative affect at T1 (b = 0.27, p < .001) as well as at T2 (b = 0.35, p < .001; Table 10). Additionally, moderation analyses were performed with busyness at T1 acting as the moderator. There was no significant interaction between FOBI and busyness at T1 on any of the goal progress variables at T2 (ps > .087; Table 10), nor on negative affect at T2 (p = .652; Table 10).

Table 10

Results of linear regression analyses for goal progress and negative affect outcomes at T2.

	Subjective Goal Progress (T2)				
	Simple Model			Moderation Model	
	b	*p*		*b*	*p*
Fear of Being Idle (FOBI)	-0.11	.374		0.36	.655
Busyness (T1)				0.43	.362
Busyness (T1) × FOBI				-0.11	.542
	Goal Behavior Frequency (T2)				
	Simple Model			Moderation Model	
	b	*p*		*b*	*p*
Fear of Being Idle (FOBI)	0.04	.566		0.72	.081
Busyness (T1)				0.55	.027 *
Busyness (T1) × FOBI				-0.16	.087
	Negative Affect (T2)				
	Simple Model			Moderation Model	
	b	*p*		*b*	*p*
Fear of Being Idle (FOBI)	0.35	.000	***	0.53	.185
Busyness (T1)				0.10	.663
Busyness (T1) × FOBI				-0.04	.652

Note. $N = 208$. Sensitivity analyses controlling for goal difficulty and goal self-concordance, as well as analyses excluding the 45 participants who changed their personal goal midway through the study yielded similar results. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Finally, moderated mediation analyses were performed with FOBI measured at baseline, busyness at T1 and their interaction term included as predictors, negative affect at T1 included as the mediator, and goal progress at T2 included as outcome variables (Model 7; Hayes, 2022). FOBI and busyness did not interact to predict negative affect at T1 ($b = -0.04$, $p = .633$). This indicated that the relationship between FOBI and negative affect at T1 was not dependent on participants' busyness levels at T1. However, negative affect at T1 significantly negatively predicted subjective goal progress at T2

(b = -0.49, p < .001), and frequency of engaging in goal behaviors at T2 (b = -0.19, p = .017)[2].

Exploratory Mediation Analyses

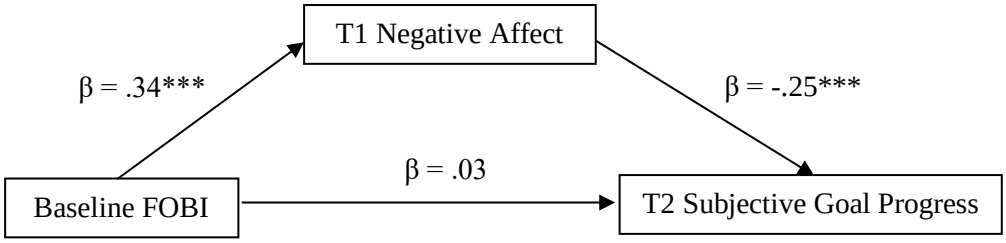
Considering the strong association observed between FOBI and negative affect at T1 in the linear regression analyses, exploratory analyses were run to examine if there would be a mediating role of negative affect at T1 on goal progress at T2. Mediation analyses were run with FOBI measured at baseline included as the independent variable, negative affect at T1 included as the mediator, and goal progress indicators at T2 included as outcome variables (i.e., Model 4 of the PROCESS package; Hayes, 2022). Unlike the previous analyses, busyness was not included as a moderating variable in this mediation analyses. Mediation analyses revealed that FOBI was associated with higher levels of negative affect at T1 (β = .34, p < .001), and negative affect at T1 was in turn associated with lower subjective goal progress at T2 (β = -.25, p < .001; Figure 1).

Negative affect at T1 was also associated with less frequent engagement in goal behaviors at T2 (β = -.18, p = .017; Figure 2), but this became non-significant (albeit in the same direction) after excluding the 45 participants who had changed goals and goal behaviors during the survey (β = -0.14, p = .085). Taken together, FOBI was associated with higher levels of negative affect, and subsequently, lower levels of goal progress.

[2] The significant relationship between negative affect at T1 and frequency of engaging in goal behaviors at T2 became non-significant after excluding the 45 participants who had changed goals and goal behaviors during the study (b = -0.16, p = .085), although the direction of the relationship was consistent. We posit that this was likely due to the lower statistical power of the smaller sample.

Figure 1

Exploratory Mediation Analyses with Subjective Goal Progress as Outcome Variable.

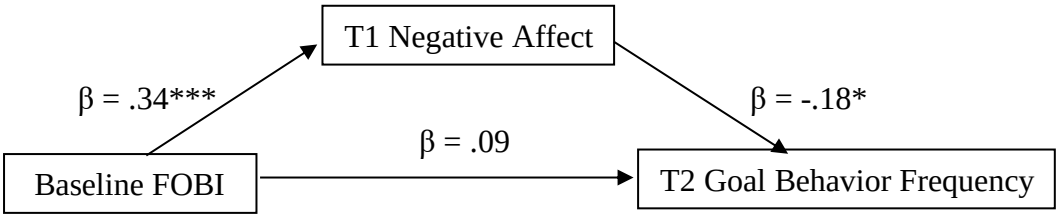


Indirect effect: β = -.08 [-.14, -.03]

Note. N = 208. Sensitivity analyses controlling for goal difficulty and goal self-concordance, as well as analyses excluding the 45 participants who changed their personal goal midway through the study yielded similar results. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 2

Exploratory Mediation Analyses with Goal Behavior Frequency as Outcome Variable.



Indirect effect: β = -.06 [-.12, -.01]

Note. N = 208. Sensitivity analyses controlling for goal difficulty and goal self-concordance yielded similar results. Sensitivity analyses excluding the 45 participants who changed their personal goal midway through the study yielded similar trends. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

A second set of exploratory analyses were done to examine if busyness would moderate the relationship between negative affect at T1 and goal outcomes at T2 (i.e., on the *b* pathway) in the mediation model tested above.

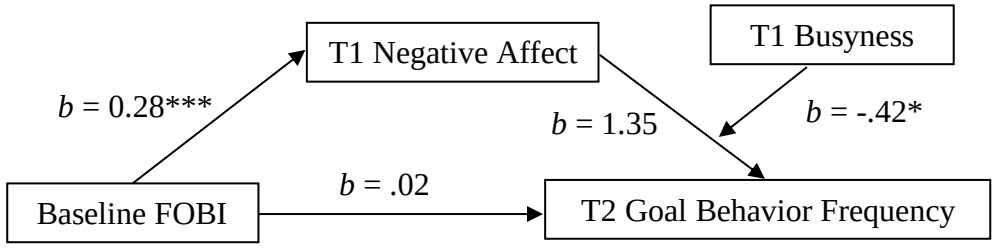
It may be possible that the detrimental impact of negative affect on goal outcomes were limited to times of high levels of busyness. Hence, busyness at T1 was included as a moderator on the *b* pathway, and the interaction between negative affect at T1 and busyness at T1 on goal outcomes was examined. When subjective goal progress at T2 was indicated as the outcome variable, there was a significant interaction between negative affect at T1 and busyness at T1 on subjective goal progress at T2 (b = -0.42, p = .028). The index of moderated mediation was also significant (index = -0.12 [-0.25, -0.02], Boot SE = 0.06; Figure 3).

The conditional indirect effects revealed that at low levels of busyness (-1SD), the effect of negative affect at T1 on subjective goal progress at T2 was non-significant (b = -0.30, p = .152). In contrast, at higher levels of busyness (mean levels of busyness and higher), the effect of negative affect at T1 on subjective goal progress at T2 was significant (b = -0.54, p < .001). This highlighted that the detrimental effect of negative affect on later subjective goal progress did not occur if participants were relatively less busy. Although the interaction term and the index of moderated mediation for subjective goal progress at T2 as the outcome variable became non-significant when excluding the 45 participants who changed their goals midway through the study, as well as when controlling for goal difficulty and goal self-concordance, the trends for the conditional indirect effects remained similar.

When goal behavior frequency at T2 was specified as the outcome variable, the index of moderated mediation and interaction term (p = .152) between negative affect at T1 and busyness at T1 were non-significant.

Figure 3

Exploratory Mediation Analyses with Goal Behavior Frequency as Outcome Variable.



Index of Moderated Mediation: b = -.12 [-.25, -.02]

Note. N = 208. Sensitivity analyses controlling for goal difficulty and goal self-concordance, as well as analyses excluding the 45 participants who changed their personal goal midway through the study yielded similar trends. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Nonetheless, the conditional indirect effects revealed similar trends as above – the relationship between negative affect at T1 was non-significant at low levels of busyness, but significant at mean levels and higher levels of busyness. Taken together, these findings suggest the possibility that the effect of earlier negative affect on later goal progress was only present at higher levels of busyness.

Discussion

Study 3 sought to examine the implications of FOBI on goal pursuit among the sample of Singaporean undergraduate students. In line with the previous studies, confirmatory factor analysis showed that the six-item FOBI scale has good psychometric properties and high internal validity. Contrary to expectations, FOBI was not associated with higher levels of goal progress as measured by subjective self-reports and goal behavior frequency. Additionally, there was no interaction between busyness and FOBI on

negative affect nor goal progress outcomes. Unexpectedly, exploratory analyses revealed that the opposite was true; higher dispositional FOBI was associated with higher levels of negative affect, which was in turn associated with lower goal progress. These findings show that in general, FOBI is indirectly associated with poorer goal progress through increasing negative affect.

Measurement Invariance of the six-item FOBI scale

Pooling data from Studies 2a, Study 2b, and Study 3 which utilized samples from three different cultures, further analyses were conducted to examine the cross-cultural measurement invariance of the six-item FOBI scale. Examining the measurement invariance of the scale is important as it allows us to empirically examine if the construct measured is the same across the three cultural samples. Only when cross-cultural invariance is achieved can we then make meaningful comparisons of FOBI between these cultures.

Analytic plan

To examine the measurement invariance of the FOBI scale, data from Studies 2a, 2b and 3 were combined. The analyses empirically tested whether the FOBI scale measured the same FOBI construct across respondents from American, French, and Singaporean cultures. If cross-cultural measurement invariance is established, it would support making cross-cultural comparisons of FOBI can be made when using the scale in future research. A multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) was conducted to evaluate the degree of cross-cultural measurement invariance of the FOBI scale. First, to examine the configural invariance of the scale, the analysis would estimate the fit of the one-factor structure of FOBI in each sample separately. The model fit for

the configural model would be examined based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) guidelines for good model fit (i.e., CFI ≥ .95, TLI ≥ .95, SRMR ≤ .08, RMSEA ≤ .06).

If the model fit is deemed acceptable, the metric invariance of the FOBI scale would be tested. To test for metric invariance, the factor loadings are restricted to be equal across both samples, while intercepts are unconstrained. The decrease in Comparative Fit Index (CFI) between the configural model and the metric model is used to determine if the metric model produces a poorer fit relative to the configural model. In line with Cheung and Rensvold (2002), a value of ΔCFI smaller than or equal to –0.01 is assumed to mean that the null hypothesis of invariance should not be rejected.

If metric invariance is achieved, intercepts are additionally restricted to be equal across both samples to test for scalar invariance of the scale. Similarly, the ΔCFI between the metric model and the scalar model are analyzed to examine if the scalar model produces a poorer fit relative to the metric model. If full scalar invariance is not achieved, constraints will be eased one at a time as informed by the modification indices. This process will be stopped once a partially invariant model is achieved that is not significantly worse compared to the configural model. Finally, where possible, structured equation modelling was conducted to compare FOBI scores across cultures.

Analyses for measurement invariance were conducted in R version 3.6.3 (R Core Team, 2020). MGCFA and structured equation modelling was conducted using the R package *lavaan* version 0.6-12 (Rosseel, 2012), and

model comparisons were conducted using the R package *semTools* version 0.5-5 (Jorgensen et al., 2022).

Results

As previously determined, the one-factor model for the six-item FOBI scale had a good fit in the American (CFI = .99), French (CFI = .98), and Singaporean (CFI = .98) data based on the CFI. MGCFA indicated that the configural invariance model displayed a good model fit (CFI = .98, TLI = .97, SRMR = .02, RMSEA = .09 [.06, .11]).

Next, the metric invariance of the scale was tested. Analyses revealed that the metric invariance model displayed a good fit with the data (CFI = .98, TLI = .98, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = . 70 [.05, .09]). More importantly, the ΔCFI was less than 0.01. Thus, the assumption of metric invariance was not rejected.

Following this, the scalar invariance of the six-item FOBI scale was tested. Analyses revealed that the scalar invariance model displayed a good fit with the data (CFI = .96, TLI = .96, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .10 [.08, .12]). However, the ΔCFI from the metric invariance model to the scalar invariance model was greater than 0.01. Thus, intercept constraints were released one at a time until the change in CFI between the partial scalar invariance model and the metric invariance model was less than 0.01 (i.e., CFI = .97). After releasing two constraints (the intercept constraints of items #8 and #10; Appendix A), the model achieved a good fit and the ΔCFI was less than 0.01 (CFI = .98, TLI = .98, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .08 [.06, .10]). Given that there was equality of factor loadings for all six items, and there was equality of item intercepts for more than two items, partial scalar

invariance was achieved (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Thus, the latent scores of FOBI between the three cultures can be meaningfully compared.

Using structured equation modelling, the latent score of FOBI was indicated as the outcome variable, and two dummy-coded variables representing culture (where Americans were used as the reference group) were included as predictor variables. Results revealed that there was no significant difference in the latent scores of FOBI between Americans and Singaporeans (b = 0.07, p = .449), nor between Americans and French (b = -0.02, p = .794). A similar analysis was conducted with Singaporeans included as the reference group and the results revealed that there was no significant difference in latent FOBI scores between Singaporeans and French (b = -0.10, p = .312) as well.

Discussion

The current set of analyses sought to examine the cross-cultural measurement invariance of the six-item FOBI scale. Results revealed that the scale achieved partial scalar invariance – whereby all factor loadings were equal across cultures and a majority of item intercepts were similar across cultures. These findings suggest that the latent scores (but not the mean scores) of FOBI between the three cultures can be meaningfully compared (Van de Schoot et al., 2012), highlighting the scale's potential to be used in cross-cultural research.

The intercepts for items #8 ("Wasting time makes me feel stressed") and #10 ("It bothers me when I feel that I have spent time doing nothing") were shown to be unequal across the three cultural samples. For item #8, the value of the intercept in the French (3.21) sample was higher than in the

Singaporeans (3.07) and the American (2.81) samples. Similarly, for item #10, the value of the intercept in the French (3.36) sample was higher than in the Singaporeans (3.03) and the American (3.01) samples. It may be possible that the phrasing of these items could have contributed to different interpretation of the items across cultures. For example, it may be possible that the word "stressed" and the phrase "bothers me" are considered to be more intense feelings to the Americans and Singaporeans compared to the French, thus causing the Americans and Singaporeans to have relatively lower endorsement of these items relative to the French. However, more work is needed to thoroughly examine why there are indeed cultural-specific nuances or differences in the interpretation and understanding of these specific items.

General Discussion

As our knowledge of the ills stemming from modern society's emphasis on making full use of one's time continues to grow, the need for a validated measure to examine individuals' internalization of such an ideal is increasingly pressing. The present research sought to bridge this gap by proposing and validating a scale measuring individuals' dispositional "fear of being idle" (FOBI), which was defined as the tendency for an individual to experience high levels of negative affect when they feel that they are wasting valuable time by being idle. Through multiple studies, a six-item FOBI scale was developed and validated. The scale showed good convergent and discriminant validity with a wide range of well-established constructs, and acceptable test-retest reliability. Furthermore, the scale consistently displayed a sound one-factor structure and high internal validity across multiple diverse

samples and achieved partial cross-cultural measurement invariance, highlighting its potential for use in future cross-cultural comparison studies.

FOBI and a Preference to be Busy

The fixation of busyness in modern society stems from good intentions; messages that encourage people to seize the day are intended to spur individuals to recognize the importance of cherishing time. Indeed, internalizing this societal ideal does translate to the desire and preference to be busy, as we observed in Study 2. Despite this self-proclaimed preference, the relationship between FOBI and negative affect was not buffered by busyness. Individuals high on FOBI do not feel better when they achieve their desired state of busyness. We found instead that FOBI was strongly associated with higher levels of negative affect, regardless of how busy individuals were.

These findings could suggest that individuals high on FOBI are unaware of the negative impacts of busyness on their sense of well-being. A potential explanation for this could be grounded in the concept of affective forecasting errors, as delineated by Wilson & Gilbert (2003); specifically, individuals high on FOBI may inaccurately assume that being busy would decrease their levels of negative affect to a larger extent and for longer than is actually the case (i.e., impact bias; Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). As such, individuals high on FOBI may prefer busyness due to their expectations that busyness would substantially improve their sense of well-being, although that is not the case in reality.

Alternatively, it may also be possible that the preference to be busy among individuals high on FOBI is not rooted in improving affective well-

being. For example, it may be possible that individuals high on FOBI may prefer to be busy due to feeling improved sense of self-efficacy, meaning in life or higher levels of eudaimonic well-being when they are busy (e.g., Cohen et al., 2020). Given that busyness acts as a status symbol in certain modern societies (Bellezza et al., 2016), this is highly plausible. Individuals who aspire to be constantly engaged may desire to feel needed, although they may be aware that busyness does not translate to better affective outcomes. Whilst the present work provides preliminary insights into the correlates of FOBI, it would be worthwhile to empirically test this possibility in future works.

FOBI and Goal Pursuit

Furthermore, despite their preference to be busy, individuals high on FOBI did not show greater goal progress on personal goals compared to those lower on FOBI. Contrary to society's intentions of encouraging a more productive use of time, we found no evidence that FOBI was beneficial for goal pursuit. Utilizing a well-powered study that tracked participants across a month, we found that FOBI did not predict increased goal progress as measured by both subjective perceptions of goal progress and frequency measures of goal-related behaviors.

Moreover, the present work found instead that FOBI was associated with greater negative affect, which was in turn associated with lower goal progress subsequently. Thus, instead of being helpful for goal pursuit, these findings propose the possibility that FOBI may be detrimental for goal pursuit instead. Indeed, the consistent observation that FOBI is associated with higher levels of negative affect across the multiple studies conducted in

the present thesis, combined with a robust literature linking negative affect with poorer goal progress (e.g., Aarts et al., 2008), provides compelling evidence that FOBI is not beneficial for encouraging greater goal progress. Taken together, the current findings warn against the continued glorification of busyness; contrary to society's good intentions, internalizing a fear of being idle appear to have a backfire effect of increasing individuals' negative affect and in turn decreasing individuals' ability to progress on personal goals.

It should however be noted that there are possible methodological reasons that there was no observed relationship between FOBI and goal progress. For one, goal progress was measured through retrospective self-reports, subjected to individuals' appraisals. Different individuals may have different perceptions of how much they have progressed towards their goal depending on their self-expectations. Individuals who have higher expectations of themselves may appraise the same amount of progress as lesser than those with lower expectations. To counter this issue, we also included a more objective measure of goal behavior frequency in our study, to which we observed the same null results. However, these differences in appraisals may still cause substantial noise in the data and make it difficult to find true effects. Additionally, participants were asked to report their goal progress every two weeks, a method that may be susceptible to recall biases (Stone & Shiffman, 2002). Participants may not accurately recall how much they have engaged in certain goal behaviors, and how much they have truly progressed towards their goal in the last two weeks. Hence, future work may consider utilizing a more intensive and objective design, such as a daily diary

design (Stone & Shiffman, 2002) and observer reports (Connelly & Ones, 2010), to reduce potential recall biases and individual biases. These designs may help to attain a more accurate measurement of individuals' goal progress.

FOBI Across Cultures

Finally, another particularly notable finding in the present thesis is that the six-item FOBI scale displayed partial scalar invariance across three diverse cross-cultural samples (American, French and Singaporean), thereby highlighting that the FOBI scale is suitable for use in multiple cultures. Although the present work only examined the measurement invariance of the FOBI scale across three diverse cultures, future work should seek to build upon this research to examine if the FOBI scale is also psychometrically valid in other cultural contexts. Nonetheless, the promising findings presented in this study show that the FOBI scale can be used in future cross-cultural works. Cross-cultural work concerning FOBI is indeed a promising direction for future research. Specifically, cross-cultural differences observed in the correlates of FOBI highlight that FOBI may manifest differently in different cultures. In the current thesis, there were several cross-cultural differences observed that suggest FOBI may manifest differently in different cultures, and lead to varying outcomes based on cultural norms.

One of the most direct pieces of evidence that FOBI may manifest differently across culture is the observation that Americans and French individuals high on FOBI prioritize different life domains. While FOBI was positively correlated with the importance of work and academics in both the American and French samples, a negative correlation between FOBI and the

importance of recreation was observed only in the American sample. The positive correlation between FOBI and the importance of work is in line with the idea that society often views productive work as those relating to paid work or schoolwork. Indeed, these findings support the notion that FOBI indicates an internalization of the societal ideal to be productive all the time, and that productivity is heavily associated with paid work and academic performance. On the other hand, it is reasonable to argue that the negative association observed between FOBI and perceived importance of recreation in the American sample but not the French sample is evidence of the differing cultural norms in America and France. In France where paid vacation time is considered a norm (Pellen, 2022), French individuals are likely to value recreation, and consider work and recreation as less of a zero-sum game. However, in America, given that vacation time is often unpaid, recreation is likely considered to be an unproductive activity that takes away one's time from engaging in work. Thus, such differences in cultures' attitudes towards the value of time can cause differences in how individuals high on FOBI prioritize different activities.

These cross-cultural differences in the prescribed importance of life domains can also lead to differences in behavioral correlated of FOBI. Unsurprisingly, although the relationship between FOBI and workaholism was high in both the French and American samples, the positive association between FOBI and workaholism was significantly stronger in the American sample. It is possible that individuals high on FOBI in France regard recreation as a more "legitimate" activity, an activity that is separate from simply being idle. On the other hand, Americans high on FOBI may view

recreation as synonymous with idleness, and thus, have a more narrow range of activities they would prefer to engage in to fill their time with. These cross-cultural differences in the manifestation of FOBI can help us make sense of the prevalence of workaholism in different cultures. In cultures were recreation is synonymous with idleness, modern society's growing emphasis on productivity and maximizing time could be especially detrimental and cause a greater prevalence of workaholic behaviors.

FOBI may also show different levels of social approval in different cultures. It is possible that the negative relationship between FOBI and agreeableness is observed among the French (but not Americans) could be due to this. Specifically, individuals high on FOBI may impose on others due to their desire to plan their schedules a certain way to keep busy. This desire could be deemed as less socially acceptable in a French culture relative to an American culture, especially given that the French are less individualistic than Americans (Hofstede Insights, n.d.). Thus, French individuals high on FOBI may consider themselves to be less agreeable because they face greater social resistance towards their desire to plan their schedules, as compared to Americans high in FOBI who may not experience as great of a resistance. Taken together, it is highly possible that FOBI may be deemed as less socially acceptable in some cultures relative to others.

The differences in the acceptability of FOBI across cultures may also influence how FOBI is related to well-being outcomes. In line with this idea, the current thesis found differences in the relationship between FOBI and affective outcomes between the American and French. While FOBI was positively associated with positive affect among the American sample, there

was no relationship between FOBI and positive affect among the French. Further, the positive relationship between FOBI and negative affect was significantly stronger in the French sample compared to the American sample. In America, where busyness is regarded as desirable and a symbol of one's high social status (Bellezza et al., 2016), FOBI may be relatively less harmful and more beneficial for one's sense of well-being given that the desire to be consistently engaged and busy is in line with the culture's mandates and ideals. In contrast, these benefits may be completely quelled in cultures that have dissimilar ideals; in such cultures, FOBI may be particularly detrimental given that they go against the culture's views towards busyness and idleness. Taken together, our understanding of how FOBI manifests in different cultures is still limited. Future works examining the construct of FOBI in cross-cultural samples will be a particularly promising area of research.

Conclusion

In sum, the present work established a novel scale capturing individual differences in the fear of being idle. As modern societies continue to promote an aversion towards being idle and as an increasing number of individuals push back against this modern ideal (e.g., Bennett, 2020; Brown, 2014; Davidovic, 2022; Griffith, 2019), the development of the FOBI scale is particularly timely. The present work supports the idea that internalizing this modern ideal can indeed be harmful for individuals' sense of wellbeing, thereby providing the first empirical evidence suggesting that the modern societal norm of avoiding idle time may be doing more harm than good. We believe that with the development of the FOBI scale and the promising

insights provided in this work, the current findings can motivate further research on the topic and provide us a better understanding of the impact of our society's glorification on busyness.

References

Aarts, H., Custers, R., & Veltkamp, M. (2008). Goal priming and the affective-motivational route to nonconscious goal pursuit. *Social Cognition*, *26*(5), 555–577. https://doi.org/10.1521/soco.2008.26.5.555

Adler, N. E., Epel, E. S., Castellazzo, G., & Ickovics, J. R. (2000). Relationship of subjective and objective social status with psychological and physiological functioning: Preliminary data in healthy, White women. *Health Psychology*, *19*, 586–592. https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.19.6.586

Alwin, D. F., & Krosnick, J. A. (1991). Aging, cohorts, and the stability of sociopolitical orientations over the life span. *American Journal of Sociology*, *97*, 169–195. https://doi.org/10.1086/229744

Beavers, A., Lounsbury, J., Richards, J., Huck, S., Skolits, G., & Esquivel, S. (2019). Practical considerations for using exploratory factor analysis in educational research. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, *18*(1). https://doi.org/10.7275/qv2q-rk76

Bellezza, S., Paharia, N., & Keinan, A. (2016). Conspicuous consumption of time: When busyness and lack of leisure time become a status symbol. In L. Petruzzellis & R. S. Winer (Eds.), *Rediscovering the Essentiality of Marketing* (pp. 71–72). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29877-1_13

Bija, B. (2020, January 22). Being lazy? That's good! The rationale for doing nothing. *Ageist*. https://www.ageist.com/wellness/health/being-lazy-thats-good-the-rationale-for-doing-nothing/

Bisin, A., Topa, G., & Verdier, T. (2009). Cultural transmission, socialization and the population dynamics of multiple-trait distributions. *International Journal of Economic Theory*, *5*(1), 139–154. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1742-7363.2008.00098.x

Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar-Quiñonez, H. R., & Young, S. L. (2018). Best practices for developing and validating scales for health, social, and behavioral research: A primer. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *6*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2018.00149

Brown, J. D. (2009). *Choosing the right type of rotation in PCA and EFA*. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Choosing-the-Right-Type-of-Rotation-in-PCA-and-EFA-Brown/6ff30495374a1b41a5453b44d413f971c7439dc0

Brown, S. (2014, January 5). Society's self-destructive addiction to faster living. *New Yowk Post*. https://nypost.com/2014/01/04/societys-addiction-to-faster-living-is-destroying-us-doctor/

Burke, R. J. (2001). Workaholism components, job satisfaction, and career progress. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *31*(11), 2339–2356. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2001.tb00179.x

Cheung, G. W., & Rensvold, R. B. (2002). Evaluating goodness-of-fit indexes for testing measurement invariance. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *9*, 233–255. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15328007SEM0902_5

Cohen, D. B., Luck, M., Hormozaki, A., & Saling, L. L. (2020). Increased meaningful activity while social distancing dampens affectivity; mere busyness heightens it: Implications for well-being during COVID-19.

PLOS ONE, *15*(12), e0244631. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0244631

Cohen, J. (1969). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. Academic Press.

Connelly, B. S., & Ones, D. S. (2010). An other perspective on personality: Meta-analytic integration of observers' accuracy and predictive validity. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*, 1092–1122. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021212

Country comparison tool. (n.d.). Hofstede Insights. Retrieved June 6, 2023, from https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool

Crowley, C., Kapitula, L. R., & Munk, D. (2022). Mindfulness, happiness, and anxiety in a sample of college students before and after taking a meditation course. *Journal of American College Health, 70*(2), 493–500. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2020.1754839

Davidovic, I. (2022, February 16). "Lying flat": Why some Chinese are putting work second. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60353916

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *49*(1), 71–75. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13

Dziuban, C. D., & Shirkey, E. C. (1974). When is a correlation matrix appropriate for factor analysis? Some decision rules. *Psychological Bulletin, 81*, 358–361. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0036316

Eastwood, J. D., Frischen, A., Fenske, M. J., & Smilek, D. (2012). The unengaged mind: Defining boredom in terms of attention. *Perspectives*

on Psychological Science, *7*(5), 482–495. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691612456044

Ehn, B., & Löfgren, O. (2010). *The secret world of doing nothing* (1st ed.). University of California Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppjkh

Etchegaray, N., Scherman, A., & Valenzuela, S. (2019). Testing the hypothesis of "impressionable years" with willingness to self-censor in Chile. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *31*(2), 331–348. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edy012

Ferguson, E., & Cox, T. (1993). Exploratory factor analysis: A users' guide. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *1*(2), 84–94. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2389.1993.tb00092.x

Forbes, H., Fichera, E., Rogers, A., & Sutton, M. (2017). The effects of exercise and relaxation on health and wellbeing. *Health Economics*, *26*(12), e67–e80. https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.3477

Griffith, E. (2019, January 26). Why are young people pretending to love work? *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/26/business/against-hustle-culture-rise-and-grind-tgim.html

Hayton, J. C., Allen, D. G., & Scarpello, V. (2004). Factor retention decisions in exploratory factor analysis: A tutorial on parallel analysis. *Organizational Research Methods*, *7*(2), 191–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428104263675

Heintzman, P. (2000). Leisure and spiritual well-being relationships: A qualitative study. *Society and Leisure*, *23*(1), 41–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2000.10715603

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review*, *94*, 319–340. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist*, *52*, 1280–1300. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.52.12.1280

Higgins, E. T., Friedman, R. S., Harlow, R. E., Idson, L. C., Ayduk, O. N., & Taylor, A. (2001). Achievement orientations from subjective histories of success: Promotion pride versus prevention pride. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *31*(1), 3–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.27

Hockey, R. (2013). *The psychology of fatigue: Work, effort and control*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139015394

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *6*(1), 1–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

Jara-Díaz, S., Munizaga, M. A., Greeven, P., Guerra, R., & Axhausen, K. W. (2007). Estimating the value of leisure from a time allocation model. *Arbeitsberichte Verkehrs- Und Raumplanung*, *494*. https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-a-005564906

Jorgensen, T. D., Pornprasertmanit, S., Schoemann, A. M., Rosseel, Y., Miller, P., Quick, C., Garnier-Villarreal, M., Selig, J., Boulton, A., Preacher, K., Coffman, D., Rhemtulla, M., Robitzsch, A., Enders, C., Arslan, R., Clinton, B., Panko, P., Merkle, E., Chesnut, S., … Johnson, A. R. (2022). *semTools: Useful tools for structural equation modeling* (0.5-6). https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/semTools/index.html

Juniu, S. (2000). The impact of immigration: leisure experience in the lives of South American immigrants. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *32*(3), 358–381. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2000.11949921

Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, *39*(1), 31–36. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291575

Kareaga, A. A., Exeberria, S. A., & Smith, J. C. (2009). Assessment of burnout and psychological wellbeing among health professionals in the Basque country. *Psychology in Spain*, *13*, 62–71.

Kasser, T., & Sheldon, K. M. (2009). Time affluence as a path toward personal happiness and ethical business practice: Empirical evidence from four studies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *84*(2), 243–255. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9696-1

Kitayama, S., Karasawa, M., Curhan, K., Ryff, C., & Markus, H. (2010). Independence and interdependence predict health and wellbeing: Divergent patterns in the United States and Japan. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *1*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2010.00163

Koh, B. (2019). I want to be busy: Instrumental regulation of busyness among conscientious individuals. *Dissertations and Theses Collection*. https://ink.library.smu.edu.sg/etd_coll/211

Krosnick, J. A., & Alwin, D. F. (1989). Aging and susceptibility to attitude change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*, 416–425. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.3.416

Kwekkeboom, K. L., & Bratzke, L. C. (2016). A systematic review of relaxation, meditation, and guided imagery strategies for symptom management in heart failure. *Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, *31*(5), 457. https://doi.org/10.1097/JCN.0000000000000274

Landolt, S., & Laurent, A. (2020). *Can we agree to disagree?: Exploring the differences at work between Americans and the French: A cross-cultural perspective on the gap, and tips for successful and happy collaborations.* CALEC.

Leary, M. R., & Hoyle, R. H. (2009). *Handbook of individual differences in social behavior* (pp. xv, 624). The Guilford Press.

Lebowitz, S. (2017, August 2). 8 things that drive French people nuts about American offices—And vice versa. *Business Insider*. https://www.businessinsider.com/differences-between-french-american-work-culture-2017-7

Leung, A. K.-Y., & Cohen, D. (2011). Within- and between-culture variation: Individual differences and the cultural logics of honor, face, and dignity cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *100*, 507–526. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022151

Levine, R. V., & Norenzayan, A. (1999). The pace of life in 31 countries. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *30*(2), 178–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022199030002003

Long, J. A. (2021). *interactions: Comprehensive, user-friendly toolkit for probing interactions* (1.1.5). https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/interactions/index.html

Lua, V. Y. Q., Majeed, N. M., Leung, A. K. -y., & Hartanto, A. (2022). A daily within-person investigation on the link between social expectancies to be busy and emotional wellbeing: The moderating role of emotional complexity acceptance. *Cognition and Emotion*, *36*(4), 773–780. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2022.2054778

Marsh, H. W., Hau, K.-T., & Wen, Z. (2004). In search of golden rules: Comment on hypothesis-testing approaches to setting cutoff values for fit indexes and dangers in overgeneralizing Hu and Bentler's (1999) Findings. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *11*(3), 320–341. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328007sem1103_2

Newby, J. L., & Klein, R. G. (2014). Competitiveness reconceptualized: Psychometric development of the competitiveness orientation measure as a unified measure of trait competitiveness. *The Psychological Record*, *64*(4), 879–895. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40732-014-0083-2

Ng, T. W. H., Sorensen, K. L., & Feldman, D. C. (2007). Dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of workaholism: A conceptual integration and extension. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *28*(1), 111–136. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.424

O'Neill, B., Xiao, J. J., Bristow, B., Brennan, P., & Kerbel, C. (2000). Successful financial goal attainment: Perceived resources and obstacles. *Financial Counseling and Planning, 11*.

Pellen, G. (2022, September 1). France and America at work: The Same, but different. *France-Amérique*, *August*. https://france-amerique.com/france-and-america-at-work-the-same-but-different/

Perrone, K. M., Sedlacek, W. E., & Alexander, C. M. (2001). Gender and ethnic differences in career goal attainment. *The Career Development Quarterly, 50*(2), 168–178. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2001.tb00981.x

Pöge, A. (2020). Stability and change of values during the formative years: Latent state–trait analyses of adolescents in a seven-wave panel study. *Journal of Personality, 88*(2), 266–286. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12484

R Core Team. (2020). *R: The R project for statistical computing*. R Foundation for Statistical Computing. https://www.r-project.org/

Revelle, W. (2023). *psych: Procedures for psychological, psychometric, and personality Research* (2.3.3). https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/psych/index.html

Rosseel, Y. (2012). lavaan: An R Package for structural equation modeling. *Journal of Statistical Software*, *48*, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v048.i02

Schaufeli, W. B., Shimazu, A., & Taris, T. W. (2009). Being driven to work excessively hard: The evaluation of a two-factor measure of

workaholism in The Netherlands and Japan. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *43*(4), 320–348. https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397109337239

Schönbrodt, F. D., & Perugini, M. (2013). At what sample size do correlations stabilize? *Journal of Research in Personality*, *47*(5), 609–612. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2013.05.009

Scottl, K. S., Moore, K. S., & Miceli, M. P. (1997). An exploration of the meaning and consequences of workaholism. *Human Relations*, *50*(3), 287–314. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679705000304

Sharif, M. A., Mogilner, C., & Hershfield, H. E. (2021). Having too little or too much time is linked to lower subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *121*, 933–947. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000391

Shimazu, A., Schaufeli, W. B., & Taris, T. W. (2010). How does workaholism affect worker health and performance? The mediating role of coping. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, *17*(2), 154–160. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12529-010-9077-x

Soto, C. J., & John, O. P. (2017). The next Big Five Inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *113*, 117–143. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000096

Stahl, A. (2018, June 28). 5 ways to increase your productivity at work. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2018/06/28/5-ways-to-increase-your-productivity-at-work/

Stone, A. A., & Shiffman, S. (2002). Capturing momentary, self-report data: A proposal for reporting guidelines. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine: A Publication of the Society of Behavioral Medicine*, *24*(3), 236–243. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15324796ABM2403_09

Struk, A. A., Carriere, J. S. A., Cheyne, J. A., & Danckert, J. (2017). A short boredom proneness scale: Development and psychometric properties. *Assessment*, *24*(3), 346–359. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191115609996

Tsai, J. L., Knutson, B., & Fung, H. H. (2006). Cultural variation in affect valuation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*, 288–307. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.2.288

van de Schoot, R., Lugtig, P., & Hox, J. (2012). A checklist for testing measurement invariance. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *9*(4), 486–492. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2012.686740

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *54*, 1063–1070. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.1063

Weinreb, E. (2012, March 29). France vs. US: Which work culture is more sustainable? *GreenBiz*. https://www.greenbiz.com/article/france-vs-us-which-work-culture-more-sustainable

Werner, C. M., Altman, I., & Oxley, D. (1985). Temporal aspects of homes. In I. Altman & C. M. Werner (Eds.), *Home Environments* (pp. 1–32). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-2266-3_1

Werner, K. M., Milyavskaya, M., Foxen-Craft, E., & Koestner, R. (2016). Some goals just feel easier: Self-concordance leads to goal progress through subjective ease, not effort. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *96*, 237–242. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.03.002

Wiggins, J. S. (1996). *The five-factor model of personality: Theoretical perspectives* (pp. xiii, 216). Guilford Press.

Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2003). Affective forecasting. In *Advances in experimental social psychology, Vol. 35* (pp. 345–411). Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(03)01006-2

Appendix A

Final 6-item FOBI scale.

The following statements are about your personal preferences and day-to-day experiences. Please indicate how true each statement is pertaining to your own preferences and experiences. There is no right or wrong answer.

< 1 = Not at all true of me, 2 = Slightly true of me, 3 = Moderately true of me, 4 = Very true of me, 5 = Extremely true of me>

8	Wasting time makes me feel stressed.
9	I feel uneasy when I take breaks.
10	It bothers me when I feel that I have spent time doing nothing.
11	Letting myself do nothing makes me feel uneasy.
14	I get anxious when I have nothing to do.
16	I feel restless when I'm not doing anything.