

Positive Psychology Theory and Application

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News From The Chair

Rhea L. Owens, Ph.D.



Rhea Owens, Ph.D. is the Chair of the Positive Psychology Section. She is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point and Neuropsychology Resident at the Achieve Center in Wausau, Wisconsin. Generally, her research interests involve child clinical/pediatric psychology, positive psychology, and psychological assessment. More specifically, she is interested in strength identification and development,

Greetings from the Section on Positive Psychology!

The section has been keeping busy with a variety of activities and we have several exciting announcements.

Come to Atlanta!

**Positive Psychology is active
in all aspects of our
endeavors!**

We are happy to welcome two new members to the leadership team—Richa Khanna (Teaching Representative) and Brian Cole (Research Representative). These new section leaders are joining the current leadership team, including: Danny Singley (Past-Chair), Collie Conoley (Communications Officer), Ingrid Weigold (Treasurer), Christine Agaibi (Practice Representative), and Nicole Lozano (Student Representative). The section has also recently formed a Student Involvement Committee, including Megan Thoen and Ashley Gulden. One of our primary goals is to increase the level of involvement from students. This committee will develop and work on initiatives to do so.

The section continues to recognize outstanding individuals who study and promote Positive Psychology. Jeana Magyar-Moe was the 2013 recipient of the Shane J. Lopez Distinguished Contributions to Positive Psychology award. The section also developed a one-time student research award in the amount of \$100 to support student-lead research in the area of Positive Psychology.

In addition, the section has a number of events taking place at the upcoming Atlanta Counseling Psychology Conference and the American Psychological Association Convention. At the Atlanta 2014 Counseling Psychology Conference, the section will be holding a business meeting as well as the workshop, "Positive Psychology in Action." At the APA Convention, the section will hold another business meeting and host its annual section-sponsored symposium. This year, the symposium will focus on the future of Career Counseling and exciting new applications of positive psychology in this context.

Finally, members from the section are working on contributions for a

special issue of The Counseling Psychologist on the Applications of Positive Psychology. We hope many of you submit manuscripts, and we look forward to the resulting fantastic resource.

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Engaging in Our Future by Acknowledging Our Past:

A Brief History of Positive Psychology



Brian P. Cole, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy at Seton Hall University. His research interests include the areas of men and masculinity and clinical applications of positive psychology. He currently serves as the Research Representative for the Section on Positive Psychology.

"What would happen if we studied what is right with people?" (Clifton, 1952, in Lopez & Snyder, 2003). This is the essence of positive psychology, the scientific and applied approach to uncovering people's strengths in an effort to promote their positive functioning (Lopez & Edwards, 2008). Prior to World War II, psychologists set out to accomplish three goals: (a) to cure mental illness, (b) to make people's lives more fulfilling, and (c) to identify and nurture talents (Seligman, 1998). Following the war, there was a great need for mental health services for returning veterans. This led to the creation of the National Institute of Mental Health and the Veterans Administration. Researchers found significant amounts of research funding available to work related to the first goal: curing mental illness. Over time, this led the field of psychology to shift toward a disease model with a focus on pathology,

weaknesses, and deficits (Magyar-Moe, 2009; Seligman, 1998).

In Seligman's 1998 American Psychological Association Presidential Address, he recalled psychology's shift away from an emphasis on making lives fulfilling and identifying and nurturing talents. He proposed that this emphasis on diagnosis and treatment of mental illness has given psychologists a great deal of information about causes and treatment of mental illness, but that we have much less knowledge of flourishing, building strengths, and prevention of mental illness (Linley, 2009; Seligman, 1998). He advocated for a shift back to the traditional roots of the field, introduced his "three pillars of positive psychology" (Positive Individual Traits, Positive Emotions, and Positive Institutions), and made this the focus of his presidency of the American Psychological Association (Magyar-Moe, 2009).

Although the field of positive psychology is widely considered a recent development in psychology, the roots of the field and its pillars can be traced to Western philosophy, psychologists such as James, Adler, Maslow and Rogers, and the field of Counseling Psychology.

Historical Roots of Positive Psychology

The historical roots of positive psychology began with Greek philosophers who debated the roles of hedonia and eudaimonia in the pursuit of a good life. The hedonic tradition emphasized a life that was full of enjoyment and pleasure whereas the eudaimonic tradition focused upon the use of knowledge and virtue to better one's state of being. This approach to well-being emphasizes striving to reach one's true potential through a process of self-actualization and personal growth. Aristotle believed that the

difficult and virtuous path to eudaimonia was the appropriate road to a good life and happiness. Socrates' adage "Know thy self" reflects this emphasis pursuing eudaimonia by utilizing knowledge of one's strengths weaknesses, values, and goals (Cole, 2009). Many years later, another group of philosophers would take up the issue of positive experiences and the good life.

Historical Roots of Pillar 1 (Positive Experiences)

In William James' 1906 presidential address to the American Philosophical Association entitled "The Energies of Men"; he discussed observations about challenges tapping into human potential. He explained the need to understand the limits of human energy and the benefits of finding ways to stimulate individuals to live to their optimal level of potential. James would go on to lament the difficulties of empirically measuring these constructs. James' focus on human energy and positive subjective experiences mirrors Seligman's description of Pillar 1 (Froh, 2004; Rathunde, 2001).

Historical Roots of Pillar 2 (Positive Traits)

The notion of using client strengths to offset problems and deficits can be traced back to the work of Alfred Adler. Adler's Individual Psychology is a holistic approach to psychotherapy that

emphasizes uniqueness of the individual, social interactions, and a positive view of human nature (Corey, 2005). Individual Psychology places emphasis on the development of meaningful life goals and improving well-being. The client and therapist work together to identify strengths and to integrate them in a way that helps clients deal with problem areas of their lives (Day, 2004). This focus on positive traits is reflected in current research on constructs such as hope, optimism, resilience, and psychological well-being.

Historical Roots of Pillar 3 (Positive Institutions)

As psychology shifted following the events of World War II, Humanistic Psychologists expressed concerns about the new direction the field was taking. There was concern amongst them that psychology would no longer play a role in developing a thriving society based upon human potential and positive functioning. In his 1954 work "Motivation and Personality", Maslow included a chapter called "Toward a Positive Psychology." He expressed concern about psychology's new focus on mental illness and the lack of attention being devoted to human potential. He also advocated for integrating the process of self actualization into therapy, by using one's talents, abilities, capacities, and potentiality to the fullest (Froh, 2004, Lopez & Edwards, 2008).

In this chapter, Maslow wrote:

"The science of psychology has been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side; it has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illnesses, his sins, but little about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations, or his full psychological height. It is as if psychology had voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction, and that the darker, meaner half" (Maslow, 1954, p. 354).

Maslow's concern was echoed in the work of Karl Menninger (1963) who also advocated for a more balanced view of treatment and of mental health. Carl Rogers (1961) model of person centered therapy (PCT) addressed many of these concerns. PCT emphasizes self actualization and the belief that all humans have innate motivation to move beyond survival and toward development of our fullest potentials. These aspects of PCT are mirrored in positive psychology's emphasis on moving beyond the point of a lack of mental illness and toward a life of flourishing.

The Role of Counseling Psychology

The field of Counseling Psychology also has strong historical ties to Positive Psychology. As our profession made its transition from Vocational Guidance, counseling psychologists utilized an integrated

approach emphasizing the role of optimal human functioning, prevention, and self-actualization (APA, 1952; Super, 1955). Although changes in the field of psychology have led to many similarities between clinical and counseling psychology (e.g., the utilization of the medical model) and APA's definition of the specialty no longer references aspects of optimal human functioning, counseling psychologists continue to embrace their strength-based roots in research and practice. Reviews of counseling psychology scholarship indicate that approximately 30% of publications in counseling psychology journals in the last 50 years were positively focused (Lopez et al., 2006). With regard to practice, a recent survey of Division 17 members indicated that the majority of respondents utilized positive psychology in counseling, teaching, and social justice advocacy (Magyar-Moe, 2012).

"A forgotten mission?"

Although Seligman (1998) described psychology's shift toward a medical model as forgetting our mission to make life fulfilling by focusing more holistically on "mental health", historical evidence suggests otherwise. For more than 50 years, the field of Counseling Psychology has placed an emphasis on studying and promoting optimal human functioning (Lopez & Edwards, 2008). In APA's (1952) conceptualization of our specialty, Counseling Psychology was

described as focusing on the positive and the preventative by stimulating the personal development of individuals in an effort to maximize personal and social effectiveness. Similarly, Super (1955) discussed the role of hygiology (identifying and developing personal resources) as an aspect of counseling psychologists' work with clients at all levels of functioning. Division 17 made this a central focus of Counseling Psychology in 1964, when they called for a special emphasis on "the appraisal and use of assets for furthering individual development" (Thompson & Super, 1964, p. 3-4). This call to shift away from a deficit oriented model of client functioning was recently echoed by Gelso & Fretz (2001) when they called upon counseling psychologists to "focus on people's assets and strengths, regardless of the degree of disturbance."

A new field for a new idea?

Although it is hard to dispute that Seligman's presidency of APA and the positive psychology movement have led to a larger focus upon human strengths, historical evidence suggests that the three pillars of positive psychology pre-date Seligman's (1998) initiative. The modern positive psychology movement has provided a large amount of empirically supported research on a variety of topics with implications for individuals, families, and communities. Despite this, some counseling psychologists express resistance to embracing positive

psychology. It is my belief that this is the result of alienation caused by the "forgotten mission" and the failure of positive psychology researchers to acknowledge the historical foundations of the field. In addition to anecdotal evidence gathered at our annual conventions, the most recent data from Division 17 surveys indicates that although the majority of counseling psychologists report using positive psychology, 46% indicated that they do not use any specific theory and 60% reported that they do not utilize positive psychology models of therapy. Relatedly, the majority of participants reported being unfamiliar with many of the main theories and constructs of positive psychology.

Counseling psychologists should be commended for their focus on strength-based work; however, I echo Singley's (2012) assertion that there is a disconnect between our strength-based philosophy and the extent to which we actually integrate positive psychological approaches in our work. Although William James posed his question about human "energies" more than 100 years ago, we still have many unanswered questions about the study of human potential. Unlike James, we have the benefit of advanced research methodology and resources. Thus, I challenge counseling psychologists to become more engaged in shaping the science of positive psychology by (a) critically examining major theories and clinical interventions, (b)

continuing to develop positive psychological research emphasizing multiculturalism and social justice, (c) sharing their findings through peer reviewed publications and professional organizations, and (d) re-engaging in the conversation about the field of positive psychology through the lens of our unique strengths and historical roots.

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Utilizing the Seven-Axis System of Positive Psychological Assessment in Psychotherapy



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In the beginning stages of therapy it is common for practitioners to engage in the process of assessment for the purposes of accurately conceptualizing clients and their functioning and to utilize in formulation of an appropriate treatment plan. Research from positive psychology can be used to inform this assessment process in order to balance out the deficit perspective or illness ideology that tends to pervade psychotherapy. Although the five-axis assessment system of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition – Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) has not been retained in the fifth edition of the DSM, the model continues to be utilized in many practice settings and as such, encourages practitioners to focus on pathology while failing to hold therapists accountable for finding strengths and resources as well. In particular, Axes I (clinical syndromes and other conditions that may be a focus of clinical attention) and II (personality disorders and mental retardation) provide opportunities for therapists to document the weaknesses of clients, while Axis IV allows for psychosocial and environmental problems to be noted. Axis V, the

Global Assessment of Functioning Scale (GAF), is focused almost exclusively on pathology with a score of 1 representing extremely severe pathology while the highest score of 100 indicates the absence of symptomology (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Given that the absence of mental illness symptomology is not equivalent to the presence of mental health, the GAF scale falls short in terms of mental health assessment.

A few basic changes or additions to the DSM 5-Axis assessment system could assist clinicians in conceptualizing clients in a more balanced and culturally relevant way (Lopez, Snyder, & Rasmussen, 2003; Magyar-Moe, 2009; Snyder et al., 2003; Sue, Sue, & Sue, 2006). More specifically, broadening Axis IV to include not only psychosocial and environmental problems but also psychosocial and environmental resources would require practitioners to attend to all aspects of their clients' environmental influences. The developers of the DSM note that Axis IV was included because the nine categories of psychosocial and environmental problems that are assessed on this Axis might contribute to or exacerbate the various disorders listed on Axes I and II. If such

problems can exacerbate pathology, it is logical to assume that psychosocial and environmental resources might serve as protective factors that could potentially minimize the impact of disorders and therefore should be assessed as well (Snyder et al., 2003).

Broadening Axis V to include two global assessment of functioning scales with one focused on symptoms of mental illness and the other on symptoms of well-being would also make for a more complete assessment model (Magyar-Moe, 2009). To broaden Axis V, therapists can utilize the current Global Assessment of Functioning Scale provided in the DSM, in which they rate clients on a scale of 1 (severely impaired functioning) to 100 (absence of symptomology) and then complete a second Global Assessment of Positive Functioning Scale (Magyar-Moe, 2009) with anchors of 1 representing a complete absence of well-being symptoms and 100 representing optimal functioning. Sue, Sue, and Sue (2006) recommend the addition of an Axis VI that focuses therapist attention to the cultural contexts of client's lives. Indeed, failure to attend to the cultural background and context that impacts so much of who clients

are can completely override the utility of all of the other data that is collected. Furthermore, attending to strengths as well as struggles that may be associated with one's various cultural identities is key

Finally, adding an additional axis, Axis VII, in which the personal strengths and facilitators of growth of clients are documented is also recommended (Snyder et al., 2003). Through these changes to the DSM-assessment system, therapists and clients become more aware of not only problems or areas of concern, but also of strengths and resources within a cultural context that can be utilized in sound treatment planning (Magyar-Moe, 2009).

Given that the revised 7-Axis System (Magyar-Moe, 2009) is not currently a part of the DSM, most mental health agencies and insurance companies do not require this information to be provided. This

does not mean, however, that practitioners should not or could not include this information in their work with clients. The extra time it takes to gather and share this information with clients is well worth the benefits garnered from a more complete conceptualization. For example, when clients feel understood as whole people within a cultural context, the working alliance between therapist and client is strengthened and clients also may become more motivated to work in therapy. This contrasts sharply with being equated solely with their problems and seen only from the dominant cultural perspective. When the treatment plan incorporates building from culturally appropriate client strengths, clients may have more hope that things really can change. These are just a few examples of how a balanced conceptualization can lead to

positive therapeutic outcomes (Magyar-Moe, 2009).

See Magyar-Moe (2009) for more detailed information regarding the 7-Axis system of Positive Psychological Assessment, strategies for gathering client information regarding the axes, and client handouts and therapist forms for use in the assessment process.

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Positive Psychology Section Leadership

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The Importance of Multicultural Competence in Positive Psychology Therapy



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Culture influences our lives on a daily basis. Our ideas are filtered through cultural context, and our worldviews shaped by our status on various cultural facets. Within the field of psychology as a whole, many have noted that attention paid to culture as an influence on experience and development has been lacking (Sue & Constantine, 2003). In the specific area of positive psychology, we have unfortunately emulated this same lack of cultural focus. Scholars within positive psychology have begun to call for more work in cultural areas and have asserted that culture must be “counted” as we attempt to understand positive functioning within broad populations (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008; Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2009).

What one sees as “normal” or “abnormal” or “strength” or “weakness” is largely influenced by culture. An example in our field as a whole might be the inclusion of “homosexuality” as a disorder in past versions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (DSM; APA, 1984). When, as a culture, it was decided that this “condition” was not an example of abnormality, it was removed. The field of psychology, and the resurgence of positive psychology in the field, both originate from a Western-oriented cultural framework. Thus, much of the research and literature focuses more on a Western population and occurs from this worldview. Too often, research has been conducted on a particular group of individuals (e.g., upper middle class, White, college students) and then conclusions are drawn from this small sample about “people” in general. When not attending to cultural differences, this type of conclusion can lead to deficit models and overpathologizing of underrepresented cultural groups (Sue & Sue, 2013). This means that much of the literature and research that has been conducted up to this point in time must be called into question to some extent. Only through analyzing methods for multicultural competence can we see if findings can be applied in universal or diverse ways with different individuals. Results of

these comparative studies may, in the end, show that some constructs do function in universal ways across cultural groups; they may also show that they do not.

Practitioners who use positive psychological techniques thus must pay attention to facets such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation in developing and executing a multiculturally competent positive psychological intervention. Failure to consider these myriad cultural facets as overarching influences early on in the development process, may lead to difficulty in communication, misinterpretation of responses, or lack of development of a close working alliance (Sue & Sue, 2008). Current positive psychology research points to differences in (a) definitions of positive constructs, (b) manifestations of positive traits, and (c) relationships among various positive constructs across cultural groups. Some brief examples of each of these areas, and clinical implications with regard to each, will be given here.

With regard to definitional differences, “substantial cultural variations” were found in accepted definitions across cultural groups in

a study completed by Uchida, Norasakkunkun, and Kitayama in 2004 (p. 223). In comparing East Asian participants with European American individuals, Uchida and colleagues found that Western participants' ideas of happiness were grounded as contingent upon "both personal achievement and positivity of the personal self" (p. 227) while East Asian understandings of happiness focused more strongly on harmony within the social sphere and balance in relationships. This definitional difference has great implications for considering development of a happiness increasing intervention. A culturally unaware therapist may inadvertently decrease the well-being of his or her Asian client (as a function of creating social conflict), if not attending to both personal and social meanings as could be appropriate in this client's life.

Wisdom is a second construct in which culture appears to play a large role in definition. Research conducted with college students in different nations has shown that has shown that students from the United States placed much more of an emphasis on the cognitive aspects of wisdom in defining this construct as opposed to Slovak students who placed significantly more focus on the affective aspects (Benedikovičová & Ardelet, 2008). In addition, Yang (2008) noted in other research that the description of wise people offered by individuals from Taiwan contained a more balanced treatment of cognitive and affective factors as compared to individuals from the United States, who emphasized solely cognitive aspects. In terms of clinical applications, positive intervention designed to increase wisdom in Asian or Slovak

groups would need to include a strong affective component in order for the participants to feel that wisdom had increased, while this may not be necessary in a participant in the United States. Thus, definitional differences that exist between cultures can have overarching effects on design, and success, of particular positive interventions.

With regard to manifestation of various positive psychology constructs, differences based on culture also appear to occur. Both happiness and forgiveness appear to manifest differently in different cultural groups. Happiness, for example, has been found to manifest as a less intense experience in Asian groups (Lu & Gilmour, 2004) and this less intense expression is culturally functional for Asian individuals according to research conducted in this area (Leu et al., 2011). Thus, a practitioner may underestimate the feeling underlying this less intense manifestation if not paying attention to this cultural distinction. In addition, positive affect and negative affect appear to be positively correlated in Asian samples, which differs from their usual inverse relationship in most Western samples (Spencer-Rodgers, Peng, & Wang, 2010). One reason for this difference may be concern an Asian individual has at the effect of good fortune or happiness on social relationships (e.g., jealous reaction from others in the community). This concern may manifest itself as an increase in negative affect alongside of increased positive affect in this type of situation. Due to this difference, it may not be beneficial to attend only to increasing positive emotions in Asian clients; negative affect would

also need to be investigated and monitored and an appropriate balance discussed. Cultural differences exist with regard to forgiveness as well. Kiang and Lau (2007) studied forgiveness in the Congolese and found that forgiveness in this cultural group required an interpersonal component as opposed to the more intrapersonal definition one might use in Western groups. Again, including something different (e.g., a social piece) would be necessary in working with these different populations.

Finally, we often accept constructs as being correlated to one another in ways that they fit within our own cultural context. In therapy, we often aim to increase one type of emotion, trait, or behavior with the hope that it might affect other portions within a client's life as well (e.g., increasing optimism in order to impact depression in an inverse way). Chang (2001) showed in a seminal study that though optimism was inversely correlated with depression in a Caucasian American sample, this finding was not replicated in a Chinese American sample. In the Chinese American sample, participants who were high in optimism were not necessarily low in depression and in addition those participants in this sample who were high in pessimism were also found to be higher in problem-solving. This positive relationship between pessimism and problem-solving was not found in the Caucasian American participants. Thus, decreasing pessimism in a Chinese American client might have the unintended effect of decreasing problem-solving as well, while this would not necessarily take place in a Caucasian client. Similarly, hope as

defined by Snyder and colleagues (1991) has been found to interact with other constructs differently in different racial samples. Chang and Banks (2007) found that with regard to the motivational aspect of Snyder's hope model (i.e., agency) different predictors of this aspect existed. While in an African American sample positive affect was the strongest predictor of agentic thinking, rational problem-solving was the strongest predictor in a Latino sample. In White individuals life satisfaction was the strongest predictor of this. In addition, positive affect was not a significant predictor of agentic thinking at all for Latino participants (Chang & Banks, 2007). Thus, relationships may have specific and important nuances that differ in different cultural groups. Clinically this would obviously have impact if one didn't take these differences into account.

Part of being a responsible practitioner is the development of awareness, knowledge, and skills in the area of multicultural competence (APA, 2003). Thus, maintaining a sense of personal awareness and continuing to check oneself for biases and actions that follow from these is one strategy to utilize in making sure to use positive psychology in a multiculturally competent way as a part of therapy. This type of awareness may also help one in avoiding various types of microaggressions that could lead to ruptures in the working alliance (Capodilupo & Sue, 2013). Check-ins with other colleagues and continued education on cultural issues are important strategies for making sure that one is consistently using multiculturally competent practices in using positive psychology. Checking in with clients is another

way in which we as counselors can make sure to utilize multicultural competence. For example, avoidance of colorblindness and to allowing a client to discuss salient cultural facets for him or herself, may be helpful tools in this sort of practice. This is particularly helpful with regard to positive psychology as this may also assist a practitioner in determining what sorts of strengths might be derived from various salient cultural facets. In addition, use of strategies such as Wright's (1991) Four-Front Approach in which questions are asked of a client regarding both personal and environmental strengths and weaknesses, can also be helpful in a multiculturally competent positive psychology therapy session.

In conclusion, while positive psychology, like the field of psychology in general, has not always paid close enough attention to cultural competence, there is strong potential for strides to be made in this area today. Multicultural competence is an essential part of any type of psychological treatment, but is perhaps particularly useful within the framework of positive psychology. This is, in part, due to the fact that people of color and other underrepresented and disenfranchised groups have often been pathologized or viewed as having only weakness in comparison to majority culture individuals. Multiculturally competent positive psychology thus has the opportunity to provide a more balanced view that includes both strengths and weaknesses for individuals of all backgrounds.

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Subjective Well-Being and Career Counseling with Diverse Clients

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One of counseling psychology's main goals from the beginning would appear to have been to help individuals find a career that would allow them to achieve optimal human functioning and thereby live happier, more fulfilling lives (Parsons, 1909). This still appears to be the main focus of career counseling, although fewer psychologists seem to be interested in pursuing this career path in both the counseling and research realms (Brown & Krane, 2000). A theoretical literature review was used to more fully understand counseling psychology's role in the future of Subjective Well-Being (SWB), career satisfaction, and career counseling diverse clients. SWB has been defined as the emotional and cognitive evaluation of life and "what lay people may call fulfillment, happiness, or life satisfaction" (Cotter & Fouad, 2011, p. 52). A plethora of research on career satisfaction and SWB taken separately exists, but the number of articles on the two topics together is very few. Additionally, there is an even greater gap in the literature when it comes to career counseling and SWB with diverse clients.

The first question this review asked was the following: Does career counseling, through helping clients choose fitting careers, contribute to SWB? In other words, does choosing the "right" career make one happier? Although personality has a strong effect on SWB, life circumstances (i.e., work) can have a

significant effect on SWB and levels of SWB can change over time (Lucas & Diener, 2009). A correlation of .4 has been found between overall happiness and job satisfaction (Diener & Lucas, 1999) and employed people consistently report greater happiness than unemployed ones (cited in Cotter & Fouad, 2011). Successful people are generally happier than non-successful ones, but happiness also may in itself help people to be successful (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008). There are also other reasons to promote career satisfaction and overall higher SWB, including greater workplace productivity (Russell, 2008).

Multiple studies in several different countries and with diverse populations seem to agree that individuals who report being more satisfied with their careers tend to report higher levels of SWB (Proyer et al., 2011; Roborh & Stacey, 1987; Barnett et al., 2003; Browne, 2005; Lounsbury et al., 2004). For example, for a group of New Zealand men who made a radical career change to a more preferred career rated their well-being higher than the general population did despite working more for less money and having lower job security (Roborh & Stacey, 1987). Those individuals who were pulled by liking another field versus pushed from not liking their previous field, were happier. Similarly, Swiss military officers' higher subjective and objective career success was linked positively to overall life satisfaction (Proyer et al., 2011).

Working class Mexican-Americans who reported job satisfaction also reported satisfaction with family life and work/family balance (Barnett et al., 2003). Black college students with higher career-decideness reported higher satisfaction with life (Brown, 2005). For librarians in several Western countries, career satisfaction predicted life satisfaction above and beyond personality traits (Lounsbury et al., 2004). Those who choose careers that match their passionate interests may experience greater well-being (Dik & Hansen, 2008). Overall, it appears that career choice can influence SWB.

Career counseling might be an avenue of helping individuals to choose a more fulfilling career. There is meta-analytic evidence that career counseling generally works, although less is known about the long term effects after the counseling ends (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000; Whiston, 2011). Individuals who received career counseling have sometimes been shown to have long term increases in life and career satisfaction (Verbruggen & Sels, 2009). Particularly, career counseling's influence on goal self-efficacy had the strongest long term effect on life satisfaction. Therefore it appears that there is evidence that career counseling that helps clients choose a fitting career (i.e., one that focuses on zero-sum goals that are in alignment with their values) can help some individuals increase their overall SWB.

The next question asked is the following: How can career counseling be used to increase SWB in the most multiculturally sensitive ways with diverse clients? There is recognition in the scant literature that many of our current career models may be limiting when working with the growing number of diverse clients due to the models' individualistic, mono-cultural foci (Henderson, 2000), thereby sparking the need to develop treatments specific to diverse clients (Whiston, 2011). Many career theories are not culturally sensitive and are not comprehensive in how they address multicultural needs (Brown, 2005). Research and practice need to focus on unique needs to diverse clients due to changing demographics (Henderson, 2000) in addition to there being global implications (Whiston, 2011). For example, there are millions of people on this planet who do not have a choice in their career and may be suffering (Whiston).

While recognizing the need for more research, this article offers a few guidelines to help counselors work with diverse clients who seek career counseling. Despite the lack of guidance in the literature, some useful suggestions have been made and include the use of Career Construction Theory (Hartung & Taber, 2008), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Whiston, 2011) and Brown and Ryan Krane's (2000) five best empirical practices. The first appears to be very conducive for working with diverse clients due to its social construction and the way it "provides the opportunity for clients to make sense of their unique experiences and life goals" and allows them to "essentially narrate their career autobiographies"

(Hartung & Taber, p. 83). This gives multicultural clients a voice in deciding the meanings of their career experiences and choices. Next, SCCT is also recommended because of this theory's consideration of the multifaceted context from which clients come from in addition to the supports and barriers they perceive in their environments (Lent & Brown, 2008). SCCT empowers clients to assert agency "over their experience of work satisfaction" (p. 19), to overcome the undermining effects of barriers, and to seek support. Being able to overcome barriers such as racism and sexism and increase social support for career decisions may be paramount to multicultural clients (Whiston, 2011). The counselor's cultural awareness and knowledge also play a role in support building interventions (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000). The third suggestion when working with multicultural clients is to use the five best practices for career counseling. They are: written exercises, individualized interpretations and feedback, information on the world of work, modeling, and building support (see Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000, for more details).

Additional suggestions for counselors is to try to enhance goal self-efficacy through mastery experience, anxiety reduction, positive feedback, and the provision of role models. Role models of similar race/ethnicity, age, and gender might be preferred (Lent & Brown, 2008). A final suggestion is to have cultural empathy—the understanding and acceptance of family and community influences—since client goals may be contrary to the counselor's worldviews and

values (Henderson, 2000). For example, counselors are encouraged to reflect cultural sensitivity and understanding through collectivist interpretations with Chinese clients (Henderson & Chan, 2000). "Following one's bliss" is generally accepted by many Euro-Americans as the best way to choose the best fitting career but may be counter to some clients' cultural scripts (Henderson, 2000). Examples of phrasing counselors might use would be "What are the hopes of your family for you?" instead of "What does career happiness mean to you?"

Lastly, I will outline the limitations of current research and discuss future directions. Limitations of much of the current literature include the fact that many studies used only one item to measure SWB, have not been replicated with diverse populations, tend to focus on people in just one career, and are cross sectional. Future research could include studies that use multiple measures of SWB, more studies and replications with diverse populations, studies that compare people from several different careers, and more longitudinal research. When it comes to diverse clients, it is particularly important that research begins to address the intersectionality effects of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, and SES on career counseling (Brown & Ryan Krane, 2000) and which career interventions work best for which kind of people in which kinds of situations (Whiston, 2011). This article is meant to spark discussion and scholarly inquiry on how counseling psychologists can most effectively and sensitively serve the

career counseling needs of diverse clients.

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Exploring the Strength Development of Taiwanese International Students

During the Cultural Transition Process: A Grounded Theory Study



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According to the Open Doors report, the number of undergraduate international students increased from 15,312,000 to 20,625,000 in the U.S. from 2000-01 to 2011-12

academic years (Open Doors, 2012). One of the missions of U.S higher education is to encourage the enrollment of international students for academic, cultural, and economic purposes (Sumer, Poyrazli, &

Grahame, 2008). With the growing attention on international students, there is gap in the current literature that calls for strength-based approach. The aim of this study was to develop a model illustrates the

strengths development of Taiwanese international students in the cultural transition process by using grounded theory research design. The strengths developmental model emerged from the study will provide better understanding on (a) how the strengths were utilized and (b) what is the strengths development process looks like in their cross-cultural experiences. The model will help us to gain a better idea of the appropriate services and environment for international students.

There is a reciprocal benefit to the intellectual infusion of talents and exchange of ideas that international students bring (Rice et al., 2009). Also, the economic benefit from them is highly valued as international students contribute approximately \$13.5 billion dollars to the U.S. economy each year (Open Doors, 2006). International students face various challenges in the transitional process, such as adjusting to the social interaction and the new educational and cultural system (Sumer, Poyrazli, & Grahame, 2008). Yoon and Portman (2004) suggested conceptualizing international students' experiences from a developmental and learning perspective for future studies.

Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning. Seligman (2002) argued the key to promote mental health is to cultivate a "science of human strength" (p.11). The foundational beliefs of the positive psychology

movement have served as a theoretical anchor for the emergence of strengths philosophy (Rath & Clifton, 2004). A strengths-based perspective assumes that every individual has talents or resources that can be mobilized toward success in many areas of life (Anderson, 2000). At the same time, Constantine and Sue (2006) argued, optimal human functioning is cultural bounded, thus there is a risk that the concept of positive psychology is intimately tied to the dominate social values. Thus, it is essential to explore the strengths of international student with inductive research design.

Method

The central question of the study is "what is the process of strengths development for Taiwanese international students in cultural transition?" I choose to use grounded theory as the research design, which aims for generating an explanation (a theory) of a process. (Strauss, & Corbin, 2008). 15 participants in this study were recruited based on the following criteria: Taiwanese students studying in the Midwestern schools. Data collected included semi-structure interview and StrengthsQuest Assessment interpretation. A four-member research team was formed for the study. All the members are doctoral students who have devoted into the work with international students. We followed the systematic procedure of developing categories of information, interconnecting the

categories, building a "story" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Findings

A model (see Figure 1.) was developed to illustrate the strengths development process of Taiwanese international students transition into the U.S.

Pre-departure. The model showed that cultural transition started when the decision of studying abroad was made. Existing strengths and family support were the two main categories. Prior to coming to the U.S., the participants had already processed various strengths from their background and experiences. We found four categories of existing strength. Personal traits were identified as important strengths utilized in cultural transition. Many participants had insights of their own personality traits that all the participants found the StrengthsQuest result matched with their self-perceptions. Pre-experience provided participants cross-cultural skills needed in coping with transitional challenges. Cultural traits indicated the developed characteristics as the participants came into contact with the environments they grew up. The values, such as being humble in life, had helped to maintain a sense of self. Participants showed strong motivation in their decision making for studying abroad, which fueled them during difficult times after arrival. To achieve their goals, being away from family is a common cost for

international students. Besides of existing strengths, the moral support from family members becomes particularly crucial.

Transition process. After the participants arrived in the U.S., their strengths development experiences appeared to be a circulated process that included

three categories, stressors, support factors, and developed strengths. Cross-cultural transition can be stressful. When people crossed the border, they left behind what they had and to re-learn and re-establish new life style. Language, daily functions, educational systems, social relationships, and perceived discriminations, were the

categories emerged as the stressors in the transition.

To cope with the stressors and to flourish in achieving their goals, the participants adjusted their existing strengths and developed new strengths. The positive growth reported include: curiosity, courage,

bicultural flexibility, maintaining boundaries, widened worldview, and maturity. The opportunities of experiencing diversity amplified the participants' curiosity, which motivated them to try new things and meet new people; courage helped them to overcome the fear for unfamiliar things; bicultural

that all of them identified widened worldview and maturity were the important strengths they developed after coming to the U.S.

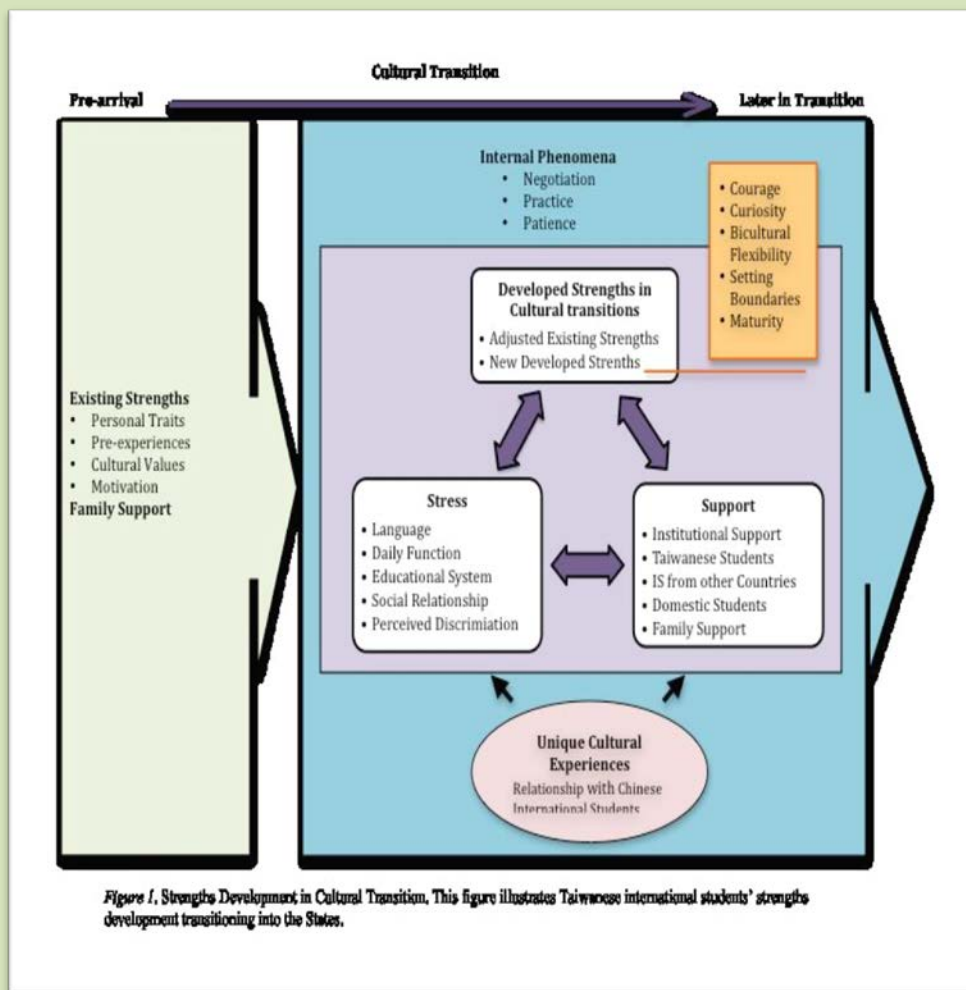
All these developed and fortified strengths interrelated in a positive way for the participants. The support factors identified include

institution, inter-cultural friendships, intra-cultural friendships, and family support. The support factors and developed strengths both buffered the impacts of stressors to the participants' psychological well-beings, such as psychological stress, sense of insecurity, and self-doubt.

The close but distant relationships with Chinese international

students were reported by every participant. Because of the historical and political tension between China and Taiwan, the relationships were found serving both as support and stressors.

Internal Phenomena in the Process. To answer the question, "What



flexibility indicated the increasing awareness of cultural differences and the ability to navigate in-between; maintaining boundaries means that they were able to protect their sense of self while being open to diversity. The stimulations happened in cultural transition expended the participants

happened in the process?" We found negotiation, practice, and patience were the three categories in their stories. Negotiation happened both intrapersonally and interpersonally. Participants often negotiated between two cultures and tried to reach a balance. Practice is crucial in strengths development for turning a person's talents into strengths, which was indicating practicing new developed strengths in this study. Being patient is a highly valued trait in Taiwan. It served as a significant way to cope with discouraging situations were being patient.

Discussion

The model presented the complexity of strengths development in the cultural transition process for Taiwanese international students. The strengths development model (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001) assumed that individuals develop their strengths through practicing their talents. This linear model provided us a solid foundation to add on the complexity of strengths development in transition process. When individuals migrate to another culture, the original strengths may be transformed and reshaped in the new context. Also, the new context provides stimulation for new strengths to be developed. The cross-cultural experiences can be challenging as the existing studies addressed; meanwhile, with the support factors, people can flourish in the process. With the knowledge about how the support factors play

out in the developmental process, the institution may provide services to facilitate international students' strengths development. In sum, this model emerged from the participants' voice provides us a positive lens to look at international students' experiences in the U.S.

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Education, Well-Being and Electronic Games: Perfect Context for Positive Psychologists!



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A student's success in school and life beyond schooling is intimately influenced by well-being. High levels of well-being can counter most of the negative influence that poverty has on a child's achievement. Impressive results from a large 23-country sample in which Sznitman, Reisel & Romer (2011) found that well-being predicted one third of a student's achievement in school.

Although well-being is not a simple goal, educators may be empowered to know their efforts at improving student well-being can be quite influential in instigating high levels of academic achievement. A growing resource is electronic teaching and learning strategies as they intersect with elements of well-being.

Every educator should have the goal of facilitating student thriving and well-being as well as science and mathematics. Beyond facilitating academic achievement well-being should remind adults that childhood

readying a person for a good life in the future.

Strategies for promoting well-being can be enhanced by electronic approaches that appeal to many students in today's net generation (Williams & Chinn, 2009; Prensky, 2001). Indeed net generation students demand interactive learning environments that include experiential, engaged learning (active learning), interactivity, collaboration, immediacy and connectivity (Williams & Chinn, 2009). All of these expectations can be used to promote well-being through the use of highly interactive electronic teaching and learning applications that are designed to branch to meet and challenge students' skills, allow for collaboration and provide immediate feedback.

defined by students' behavioral participation in academics and extra-curricular activities, cognitions about educators and academics, and emotional willingness to exert effort to gain content mastery (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004).

Unfortunately estimates are that 40 to 60 percent of students are disengaged in high school, meaning they are inattentive, exert little effort, and claim to be bored (National Research Council, 2004; Conner & Pope, 2013). While boredom may result from non-challenging material, that may not be the whole story when engagement wanes in rigorous college preparatory courses (Lambert, 2007). Simply working hard and obtaining good grades is

not enough for student engagement and well-being (Conner & Pope, 2013). High student engagement leads to higher GPA, more advanced courses, less academic dishonesty, as well as less anxiety and anger.

Flow is a different type of engagement than the engagement typically researched in school research. Flow describes engagement in an activity in which self-consciousness disappears, time distorts, and the individual engages in complex, goal-directed activity motivated not by external rewards but simply for the exhilaration of the engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). During flow no thoughts or feelings are noticed; after the experience, flow is described as enjoyable (Delle Fave & Massimini, 2005).

Flow requires a balance between an individual's skill and the increasing difficulty or challenge of the task (Keller & Bless, 2008). The excitement of intrinsic motivation matched with the increasing knowledge required for accomplishing the escalating challenge provide a fertile learning experience (Keller & Bless, 2008; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009). Intrinsic goals are associated with more thoughtful and creative engagement (Kaplan & Maehr, 1999). Internally motivated students view difficult tasks as challenges, willingly engage in challenges, experience more positive affect, and respond better to constructive feedback (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

The research on flow is particularly relevant to education because the requirements for involved learning are clearly specified. Central to flow

is the balance between the student's skill level and the learning challenge and prompt feedback regarding success (Keller & Bless, 2008). Electronic teaching and learning strategies can generate activities at the appropriate challenge level and provide prompt feedback on performance. This level of individualization would not be possible, in fact, without the benefits of the electronic age.

The electronic game industry has not yet embraced the educational market place in a manner that compares with their fascination with warfare, but the promise is there. Characteristics of gaming technology make it a good match for the expectations net era learners have for fast paced, high interactive experiences that grow in complexity and difficulty. The elements of well-being can be programmed into novel, engaging games, puzzles, competitions, and creative expression. Perfect technology from the well-being perspective would provide avenues for virtuous student action, increase challenge in steps that begin at the individual's level, provide timely feedback, create contexts for meaningful relationships and identify goals that serve higher meanings. The perfect educational experience may never be incorporated into a single electronic game but an array of electronically enhanced experiences that match the developmental trajectories of youth could be invaluable in building on children's strengths for the present and the future. Perhaps positive psychologists could team up with game producers to focus on facilitating increased well-being along with entertainment!

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