

Positive Psychology: The Model for Accentuating Happiness, and Well-Being

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ABSTRACT:

The need for being in the state of happiness and meaningful lifestyle becomes the human most important mechanism. That is why modern psychology qualifies a well-being as an exciting and positive emotions which is rooted from the acquisitions of pleasant lifestyle. Psychologists know hitherto very scanty about how normal people live a flourishing life even though they are under benign conditions. For many decade psychology has been a science which largely puts it is emphasis on healing disorders such as anxiety, phobias, and depressive moods. It magnifies the repairing damages within a disease and model of human functioning. Positive Psychology emerges with the aim of catalysing a change in the focus of psychology from the preoccupation of repairing the worst thing in life to building positive qualities. Therefore, this paper is designed to highlight the content of Positive Psychology and also elucidate further on the trending model, as it accentuates the human psychological condition of flourishing life and feeling of well-being.

Keywords: Positive psychology, psychology, model and well-being

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I. Introduction

Traditionally in psychology, the focus has been on identifying and treating mental health problems like phobia, anxiety, disorder and depression. This is critically important for those facing mental illness however, it provides an incomplete picture of mental health. The field of Positive Psychology is about well-being, contentment, satisfaction, hope, optimism, flow and happiness. Positive psychology is not about putting on a happy face all the time. Life can be hard and disappointments and challenges are inevitable. However, scientific research has shown that there are some strategies and skills that allow people to navigate the challenges of life more effectively and enjoy life despite the upsets. Positive psychology on the other hand, puts emphasis on people who fell languishing and help them to flourishing.

The theory of life satisfaction describes happiness as the process favourable behaviour towards other people. Psychology has long been inclining its helping hand to people that suffer from calamity, illness and adversity. Up to the middle of the 20th century, psychologists put much more concern about depression, disorders, anxiety and all sorts of pathological problems affecting people. The exclusive attention on psychological problems that have overpowered so much of the field, results in a model of human who struggles to make life worthwhile to live.

In response to the failure of modern psychology in solving the psychological problems of modern man, a new field of psychology called Positive Psychology was introduced in the year 2000

with the aim of achieving a systematic perception and needed intervention to support a thriving modern man. (Seligman, 2012), a father of positive psychology asserts that the next century will witness a science and profession transformation that comes to understand and intervene to reconstruct factors that enable individuals, communities and societies to grow or develop successfully. Based on the foregoing dimension, it emerges that the newly invented approach of Positive Psychology represents a new revolution intended to push professional psychologists to examine their works and transform them in the manner that helps knowing not only how to resuscitate unhappiness and dysfunction but also to know how to preserve and promote happiness (Stacey, 2013).

II. Conceptual Clarification

Positive psychology is a relatively new branch of psychology that shifts the focus from what is clinically wrong, to the promotion of well-being and the creation of a satisfying life filled with meaning, pleasure, engagement, positive relationships and accomplishment. Positive psychology is perceived of as a panacea for many modern ills (Linley et al. 2006). Indeed, this offers different interpretative lens and provides various worldwide and thereby novel answers to some questions that have been around for a long time, and illuminates the light of scientific inquiry into previous concealed and abandoned corners. Positive psychologists, non-psychologists, academics, and practitioners may provide different answers as Sheldon and King (2001), contend that the field of positive psychology is nothing more than the scientific study of common man strengths and

virtues. It revisits the ordinary human with an interest in finding out what works, what is right, and what is improving. Moreover, it is argued that positive psychology concentrates only on the positive aspects of human experiences and conversely neglecting the negative practices of human beings.

According to the Journal of Positive Psychology (2005), positive psychology is concerned about scientifically informed perspectives on what makes life worth living, which focusses on aspects of the human condition that lead to happiness, fulfilment and flourishing. In another attempt (Gable & Haidt, 2005) describe positive psychology as the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions. Positive psychology, as another branch of psychology that deals with positive human thrive, lays more emphasis on positive experiences, good emotions, healthy personality traits and well-being. Moreover, it is referred to as the scientific study of the human successful development and functioning which aims at supporting strengths and virtues that can make people and communities to develop fully (Aisha, 2011). In their introduction to the field (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) who were believed to be the founders of positive psychology delineate.

A new branch of an ideal philosophical experience, dealing with individual traits, and positive institution determines to scaffold life and improves its quality, simultaneously averting the anxiety, phobia and disorder that render human as hopeless. These scientific aims of positive emotion and happiness are the pillars of Positive Psychology. The main stress on psychological problem that has overtaken the field has to do with portraying of modern man as sustaining life without ideal features that enables worthwhile living. Reliance, insight, ingenuity, foresightedness, courageousness, sensitivity, and steadfastness are all abandoned or rather illustrated as transformation of more adversary desires.

III. Modern-Day Positive Psychology

The person regarded as being responsible for the creation of the positive psychology movement is Martin E. P. Seligman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. After decades of experimental research and success with his learned helplessness theory, Seligman was appointed President of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1998. It was during his inauguration at the 107th Annual Convention of the APA in Boston, Massachusetts, 21 August 1999, that Seligman decided to introduce his agenda to correct the trajectory of modern day 'pathologically focused' psychology. Since Seligman's presidential position, he has become a figurehead for the positive psychology movement and continues

to gain support from research funds and governments across the world to include positive psychology theories and practices into daily life. The positive psychology movement has gained massive momentum over the past years. After Seligman's speech, researchers gathered in Akumal, Mexico, from 1999 to 2002, to discuss development of the new area of positive psychology. At the same time, researchers were holding national and international summits from Lincoln, Nebraska to Washington DC, which continued to thrive (Linley, 2009). There are currently hundreds of undergraduate classes in positive psychology across the world as well as two Masters programmes in applied positive psychology, the first founded in 2005 by Seligman at the University of Pennsylvania, and the second founded in 2007 at the University of East London, UK. Italy, Portugal and Mexico are currently creating Masters courses in positive psychology in their own languages. At present, there are several conferences offered by the European Positive Psychology Network (Boniwell, 2009). The First World Congress of Positive Psychology was held on 18–21 June 2009 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Finally, a sign of the strength of the movement lies in the fact that positive psychology boasts its own academic, peer-reviewed journal, Journal of Positive Psychology, founded in 2006

IV. Positive Psychology and Happiness

In an attempt to respond to what some psychologists referred to as the failure of modern psychology in solving the psychological problems of modern man, an intriguing development at the beginning of the 21st century, in contemporary secular psychology has been the emergence of a new field called "Positive Psychology" This is a scientific study of human successful development and an applied approach to best aspect of functioning, with the primary goal of revealing and supporting strengths and virtues that can make people and communities to develop fully (Aisha, 2011). Positive Psychology is another branch of psychology that deals with positive human thrive and functioning. In their introduction to the field, (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) delineate:

A new branch of an ideal philosophical experience, dealing with individual traits, and positive institution determines to scaffold life and improves its quality, simultaneously averting the anxiety, phobia and disorder that render human as hopeless. These scientific aims of positive emotion and happiness are the pillars of Positive Psychology. The main stress on psychological problem that has overtaken the field has to do with portraying of modern man as sustaining life without ideal features that enables worthwhile living. Reliance, insight, ingenuity, foresightedness, courageousness, sensitivity, and steadfastness are all abandoned or rather illustrated as transformation of more adversary desires.

Moreover, being an offshoot of psychology, Positive Psychology lays more emphasis on positive experiences, good emotions, healthy personality traits and favourable social interactions and well-being. Positive Psychology is geared towards shifting the old and prolonged centralisation of cognitive or emotional treatment on human affairs that leads to happy, peace and success in one's life (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). That is to say the ultimate mission of Positive Psychology is to make reversal and catalyse the all-embracing notion thereby, substituting the idea of "fixing the wrong" with what is "building the right" (Seligman, 2011). This corresponds with (Fulmer, 2014), who conclusively asserts that the main goal of happiness in Positive Psychology is purely connected to life satisfaction on the logic of what the positive psychologists referred to as "Well-being." Indeed, the nature of Positive Psychology involves a change from cognitive disease to wellness being; from phobia and dejection to thrive and the state of being happy, healthy and success (Pietrowsky & Mikutta, 2012).

Therefore, happy life in Positive Psychology is all about considering pleasure as the most important goal in life, and the life satisfaction and individual balance of pleasant over unpleasant experiences. Henceforth, one of the bodacious ideas about Positive Psychology is thriving or "happy life." In Positive Psychology happiness is seen as a state of flourishing characterised by relative performance, in the form of satisfaction to an in-depth and perpetual joy. (Seligman, 2004), concludes that, the domain of Positive Psychology is all about three experience: Previously, self-satisfaction, wellness and inner peace; presently, flow and happy mood; futuristically, reliance and optimism. But, some psychologists are of the opinion that, happiness has its origin from three basic sources. They found that the source of happiness is mainly from the genetic set point, circumstances and intentional activity (Horowitz, 2018). This means that people are just happier naturally than others due to genetic factors, while age, gender, ethnicity and geographic factors have influence on happiness. Whereas, happiness can also be sought from actions or practice that someone chooses to do (Ahmad, 2012).

V. The Model of Psychological Well-being

Conventionally, the focal point of psychology has been to relieve human suffering (Seligman, 2002). After the World War II, great attempts have been made in the understanding and treatment of mental health disorders. Relieving suffering, however, is not the same as flourishing. People prepare well-being, not just surviving. The skills that build well-being are different from the skills that alleviate suffering. Removing the disabling conditions is not the same as building the enabling conditions that make life most worth living. Seligman provides a mental toolkit to achieve what he calls the pleasant life by enabling

people to think constructively about the past, gain optimism and hope for the future and, as a result, gain greater happiness in the present. Seligman(2002) identifies three outstanding components of happiness in an individual's life, as having Good life, Pleasant life and Meaningful life.

He (Seligman) further illustrates the human strengths of thriving life into a model with the acronym PERMA which represents the five core elements of happiness and well-being. The American psychologist and educator designed the PERMA model, as he understands how natural it is for individuals to continuously seek for what makes them happy, regardless of their age, orientation and status in life. Team (2022) illustrates that PERMA basically stands for Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment. According to Seligman's research, he believes that PERMA model's five core elements are what people need in order to achieve a healthy sense of well-being, fulfilment and satisfaction in life that can lead to finding life's true meaning. The five elements of PERMA model:

1. **Positive emotion** – Positive emotion is about feeling good and is obviously the most direct path to being happy. When one feels good, one feels positive. However, such positive emotion according to Seligman does not just stop at someone flashing a great smile. Positive emotion goes beyond that and may even involve acceptance of the past regardless of how bad it was and anticipating positively what the true holds.
2. **Engagement** – The second element in the PERMA model is Engagement, which refers to something that an individual can get engrossed with or absorbed in. Almost everybody has experienced getting lost, while doing something. Doing something that engages an individual also brings happiness even if it has nothing to do at all with one's work or if it is deemed by others as silly.
3. **Relationships** – Relationships are the third element of happiness and well-being, according to the PERMA model. As human beings, it is our natural desire to want to be connected and be part of a group such as a clique, school organisation, or a circle. We were wired to not just want but need love, affection, attention and interaction. That is why people need to create relationships with family, friends and peers.
4. **Meaning** – Many people wonder why some important personalities who live a luxury life, own a multi-million dollar mansions and go to wherever they want on vacations end up taking their lives. What they do not understand is that there is so much more to life than just money and material possession. Above it all, what makes a person want to live is the meaning they find in their lives.
5. **Accomplishments** – Finally, the fifth PERMA model element is accomplishments. We all take pride in something we have done or accomplished.

It is these accomplishments that strengthen our self-esteem and our confidence that we are worth something. When we achieve something, we feel good and want to do more and become more. In short, these accomplishments drive people to achieve more and make them feel good.

VI. Conclusion

The assumption of modern psychology is that human nature is intrinsically negative-oriented and in need of control. Despite this consideration, some psychologists argue that psychology fails to salvage the psychological problems of modern man thereby leaving man in a state of anarchy with depression, anxiety and disorders. In response to the failure of traditional psychology in solving the psychological problems of modern society, a new field of psychology, called Positive Psychology was introduced to complement the traditional psychology and stresses the importance of applying scientific method by making emphasis on optimal functioning, happiness and well-being. Research in the field involve analysing things like states of pleasure or flow, values, strengths, virtues, talents, as well as the ways that they can be promoted by social systems and institutions. Therefore, Positive Psychology is the way forward specifically for all humanity throughout the world. As, the main concern of the PERMA model is to help human beings realise their full potential by redefining the concept of happiness and well-being. Finally, when PERMA Model is followed, there are higher chances of creating a happy schooling and workplace, which easily translates to happy and productive life.

Recommendations

Most people in Nigeria would like to be happier or at least more content and relaxed. Positive psychology strives to help us understand how to be happier, more optimistic and resilient. However, whether an individual is depressed or down about recent setback, positive psychology can be applied to your everyday life to improve your mood and well-being. Based on the above literature, following recommendations have been put forward for the beneficial use of parents, teachers, students, general public, policy makers and anybody that has a stake in the field of positive psychology:

1. Individuals should be encouraged to work with their inner strengths to promote flourishing and the optimal functioning of people, groups and institutions.
2. The PERMA Model of well-being should be integrated into school curriculum by focusing it on teaching positive emotions such as joy, hope and optimism.
3. Positive psychology should be taught both as an academic subject and practically through exercises and activities that support each of the elements of PERMA.
4. Government should engage in interventions which would promote positive emotions and

thereby helping children and adults become less anxious and stressed while improving happiness.

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