American Psychological Association

Translational Issues in Psychological Science

2332-2136/18/$12.00

2018, Vol. 4, No. 3, 211–214
http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tps0000170

EDITORIAL

Translating Positive Psychology

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It is hard to believe that a full 2 decades have passed since Martin Seligman introduced the term, positive psychology, in his 1998 presidential address at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association. Positive psychology insists that understanding what works in people's lives (Sheldon & King, 2001) is just as important as understanding the things that can go wrong (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Whereas traditional approaches in psychology have tended to focus on the alleviation of stress, struggle, and other negative symptoms, positive psychology is instead concerned with the sources of human thriving and flourishing. In 1999, Sheldon, Fredrickson, Rathunde, Csikszentmihalyi, and Haidt (1999/2011) put forth the Positive Psychology Manifesto, which lists a set of foundational perspectives and formal goals for positive psychology. One foundational perspective is that positive functioning should be studied on many levels of analysis, including the "biological, experiential, personal, relational, institutional, and global" (Sheldon et al., 1999/2011, p. 455). Subsequently, positive psychology research has ranged across this sphere, examining very low-level processes (e.g., hormonal and immune system functioning in relation to positive traits; Marsland, Pressman, & Cohen, 2007) all the way up to very high-level processes (e.g., why some societies thrive to a greater extent than others; Diener, 2000; Ura, Alkire, Zangmo, & Wangdi, 2012).

With such a wide scope for basic research, there has been an ever-increasing variety of applied and intervention studies. Positive Psychological principles have been used to improve education, clinical, and counseling practices, relationships, workplace, and organizational cultures and even communities and societies (for a review see Lomas, Hefferon, & Ivtzan, 2014). This makes the relevance of Positive Psychology for this American Psychological Association journal, *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, very clear. Our goal in this issue is to advance this translational process, by showing new ways in which positive psychology is being put to work.

Early research within the field of Positive Psychology laid the foundation for many avenues of translational research. For instance, influential work by Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) showed that happiness is not just a good feeling; happy people are enabled to excel in many aspects of life including work, health, and relationships (Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2007; Pressman & Cohen, 2005). Thus, many

Editor's Note. This is an editorial to the special issue "Emerging Topics in Positive Psychology and Well-Being." Please see the Table of Contents here: http://psycnet.apa.org/PsycARTICLES/journal/tps/4/3/—MBK

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This project has been supported by the Russian Academic Excellence Project 5–100.

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Positive Psychological Interventions (PPIs), special activities based on Positive Psychology principles, have focused on enhancing people's well-being. Such PPIs are widely popular and can be accessed via books, websites, smartphone applications, and even within college and high school classes (Parks & Titova, 2016). PPIs are also being used by clinical psychologists and have been successful aids in many areas, such as smoking cessation (Kahler et al., 2002) and the management of chronic (Hausmann et al., 2018) and nonchronic pain (Hausmann, Parks, Youk, & Kwoh, 2014).

Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed another useful tool that has become widely popular, in both personality and clinical research—the taxonomy of character strengths. This taxonomy, which identifies 24 basic character strengths, has been studied extensively over the past 14 years. The strengths approach reflects the core message of Positive Psychology, illustrating the shift in focus from negative characteristics (weaknesses and vulnerabilities) to positive ones (strengths and capabilities). The strengths model has been applied in both educational (Park & Peterson, 2008; Seligman, Ernst, Gillham, Reivich, & Linkins, 2009) and organizational settings (Harzer, & Ruch, 2013; Littman-Ovadia, & Steger, 2010; Peterson & Park, 2006) as well as within the youth development literature (Park, 2004; Park & Peterson, 2006; Proctor et al., 2011).

As shown in this very brief review, research within the field of Positive Psychology is extremely diverse and spans across many other subdisciplines, including clinical, developmental, social/personality, and industrial/organizational psychology. We have tried to illustrate this diversity in our selection of articles for the special issue, hopefully making it of interest to a broad audience. Below we briefly describe each article in the issue.

Owens, Baugh, Barrett-Wallis, Hui, and McDaniel (2018) take a developmental perspective, examining the developmental trajectory of character strengths across the life span. Taking an organizational perspective, Hofmann, Gander, and Ruch (2018) examine orientations to happiness in relation to different types of jobs and employee skill levels, whereas Gander, Willibald, Platt, Hofmann, and Elmer (2018) explore the connection between current and ideal team roles and work-related outcomes. Taking an intervention perspective, Cordaro et al. (2018) explain how the four pillars of well-being (mindfulness, enquiry, contentment, and balance, community) may help improve the well-being of both teachers and students.

Taking a clinical perspective, Mongrain, Barnes, Barnhart, and Zalan (2018) demonstrate that acts of kindness can reduce depression in individuals low in agreeableness, and Warlick, Nelson, Krieshok, and Frey (2018) show how integrating Positive Psychology and dialectical behavior therapy can be mutually beneficial. Additionally, Owens and Woolgar (2018) propose a Balanced Diagnostic Impressions Model for assessment and conceptualization in clinical settings, a model guided by Positive Psychological principles. Taking a counseling perspective, Raymond, Iasiello, Jarden, and Kelly (2018) put forth the Resilient Futures program, which utilizes a strengths-based approach to build resilience and foster well-being in disadvantaged youth. Taking a physical health perspective, Bergner et al. (2018) highlight the need for easy-to-use and readily accessible (e.g., via smart phone) positive psychology interventions that help increase medication adherence for adolescents with chronic illnesses (in this case, diabetes).

In summary, this special issue highlights a broad sampling of research programs that are translating positive psychology theory and findings into applied settings and practical results. As the articles clearly illustrate, Positive Psychology is rapidly becoming a mature science—one increasingly positioned to help improve the human condition, in a wide variety of ways and life domains.

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Received June 19, 2018
Accepted June 20, 2018 ■