

Theoretical Analysis of the Influence of Positive Psychological Qualities on Life Values

Hu Yue^a, Gao Yanfei^{b,*}

School of Marxism, Dalian University of Technology, Dalian, China
^ahuyue405@163.com, ^bgyfshx@163.com
**Corresponding author*

Abstract: *The rapid transformation and development of society have complex and profound effects on individuals' psychological well-being, which is closely related to their life values. The increasingly prominent issues of psychological well-being have received significant attention from both academia and practitioners. Cultivating self-esteem, self-confidence, rationality, equanimity, and a positive and optimistic social mindset is considered an important approach to address the imbalance in individuals' and society's psychological well-being. From the perspective of positive psychology, this article explores the theoretical implications of how positive psychological qualities influence life values from three dimensions: life value goals, life value processes, and life value evaluations. This provides a theoretical foundation for further investigating the relationship between positive psychological qualities and life values.*

Keywords: *Positive Psychological Qualities, Life Value Goals, Life Value Processes, Life Value Evaluations*

1. Introduction

From the perspective of individual psychological development, various factors that threaten mental health have a significant impact on people's lives as society undergoes rapid transformation and development. Although there are differences in the cognitive, volitional, emotional, and personality characteristics of individuals at different stages of development, the psychological changes and resulting imbalances can easily lead to anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and even incidents of self-harm. The main reason for this is that different groups encounter difficulties in their learning and lives, leading to intense internal conflicts. Due to the inability of individuals to endure pain or psychological trauma and the lack of effective coping strategies, an incorrect set of life values is formed.

The increasingly prominent mental health issues have gained significant attention from both the theoretical and practical domains. The research on the relationship between positive psychological qualities and life values has received considerable interest. Cultivating a social mindset that fosters self-esteem, self-confidence, rationality, equanimity, and a positive and optimistic social mindset is considered an important path for addressing individual and societal psychological imbalances.

Research has indicated a positive association between positive psychological qualities and more positive and optimistic life values. For instance, studies conducted by Scheier et al. have demonstrated that positive psychological qualities such as optimism, self-efficacy are closely related to individuals' positive evaluation of life.^[1] Antonella et al. argue that the relationship between positive psychological qualities and life values is not a simple one-way influence but rather an interactive and mutually influential one.^[2] Michael et al., based on a positive psychology perspective, advocate for the use of scientific and systematic methods to guide social groups in gradually cultivating a positive psychological disposition. This approach aims to enhance individuals' ability to cope with setbacks and psychological crises. It not only contributes to the development of physically and mentally healthy citizens with sound personalities but also reduces harm to individuals and others' lives, thereby improving overall life satisfaction and well-being.^[3] In addition, it has been pointed out by scholars that studying the influence of positive psychological qualities on life values contributes to the development of relevant psychological intervention strategies and methods. These strategies and methods can assist individuals in cultivating a more positive and healthy psychological disposition, thereby enhancing their life values and quality of life.^[4]

2. Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

2.1. *Concept and Characteristics of Positive Psychological Qualities*

Positive psychological qualities are a central concept in positive psychology, referring to a range of positive mental attributes such as emotions, behaviors, and thoughts that individuals develop under the influence of educational environments and innate potentials.^[5] Peterson and Seligman propose that positive qualities articulate the positive psychological characteristics and their underlying causes in individuals. These qualities represent excellent personal traits and are closely related to specific virtues. They can be categorized into six dimensions and 24 qualities as follows: (1) Wisdom and Knowledge, including curiosity, love of learning, judgment, creativity, insight, and social intelligence; (2) Courage, including bravery, perseverance, and integrity; (3) Humanity, including kindness and love; (4) Justice, including fairness, teamwork, and leadership; (5) Temperance, including prudence, humility, and self-regulation; and (6) Transcendence, including appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, faith (sense of purpose), forgiveness, humor, and zest.^[6]

Positive psychological qualities possess characteristics such as constructiveness, stability, diversity, and potentiality. Specifically, positive psychological traits and abilities not only aid individuals in effectively coping with life's challenges and enhancing their resilience and self-regulation capabilities, but also contribute to their psychological well-being and sense of happiness. From the perspective of positive psychology, positive psychological qualities contrast sharply with negative psychological qualities. Negative psychological qualities refer to a range of emotions, psychological traits, and behavioral patterns that are detrimental to individual psychological well-being and happiness. These negative psychological qualities often include negative emotions (such as sadness, anxiety), psychological stress, depression, self-doubt, and social withdrawal. They can have adverse effects on an individual's psychological state and quality of life. In contrast, positive psychological qualities encompass a range of positive emotional, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics.

Positive psychological qualities and negative psychological qualities are characterized by an antagonistic relationship. Research has shown that individuals with higher levels of positive psychological qualities tend to exhibit reduced levels of negative psychological qualities. For instance, optimistic individuals are more inclined to adopt positive coping strategies in the face of adversity, making them less susceptible to negative emotions. Individuals with higher self-esteem are more likely to possess good psychological adaptation abilities, thereby reducing negative behaviors such as self-doubt and social withdrawal. Therefore, in order to promote the development of positive psychological qualities, individuals can enhance their levels of positive psychological qualities through psychological interventions such as cognitive restructuring, emotion regulation techniques, self-reflection, and goal setting.

It should be noted that positive psychological qualities not only promote individuals' mental health and well-being, reduce negative emotions and anxiety levels, but also have significant impacts on their behavior and achievements. Cultivating positive psychological qualities can enhance individuals' self-efficacy and motivation, leading to more positive action tendencies and goal orientation. These positive psychological traits are related to individuals' effort, determination, creativity, and adaptability, and are crucial for achieving personal goals. Therefore, the development of positive psychological qualities is closely related to individuals' behavioral performance, career success, academic achievements, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Research has shown that positive psychological qualities, as a psychological resource, can motivate individuals to actively engage in learning and work, maintain a positive and optimistic mindset, thus improving academic performance, work outcomes, and creativity, as well as enhancing individuals' ability to cope with adversity and setbacks. The cultivation and development of positive psychological qualities can enhance individuals' cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation abilities, and social skills, enabling them to have better capabilities in facing challenges and problem-solving. This positive mindset and behavioral approach help individuals overcome difficulties, embrace challenges, and also enhance their creativity and innovation abilities, leading to positive impacts on individuals' learning, work, and life.^[7]

2.2. *Concept and Characteristics of Life Values*

Life values are the overall value judgments that individuals make about the forms of existence in life. They represent individuals' conscious understanding of the meaning of their own life activities and their significance to other living entities, including others and society, under certain social and

historical conditions.^[8] Life values involve various aspects such as individuals' worldview, values, beliefs, and more. Life values are formed through the interaction of individuals with various factors such as society, culture, and history. As a result, they have a certain influence on individuals' behavior, emotions, and psychological well-being. Life values have been widely studied in disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, religion, sociology, and other related fields.

Due to the influence of various factors such as culture, religion, society, and history, life values exhibit a characteristic of diversity. Different cultural and religious groups hold distinct life values. For example, in certain cultures, individual happiness and pleasure may be considered paramount, while in other cultures, the interests of family, community, or nation may take precedence. It is evident that there are certain differences in individuals' perspectives and beliefs regarding life values, and these variations are closely linked to their personality traits, life experiences, and social backgrounds. For instance, some individuals may prioritize interpersonal relationships, family, and faith, while others may place greater emphasis on personal achievements and self-worth. Tejerina et al. conducted a study on Spanish children and adolescents aged 12-16, using external goals (appearance, money, power) and internal goals (interpersonal relationships, physical health, self-acceptance) as two dimensions to analyze the structure of life values. The research findings revealed cultural differences in individuals' life values across different cultural backgrounds.^[9]

Although life values are influenced by various factors, they are relatively stable concepts and once formed, they are difficult to change. Consequently, different scholars have developed measurement scales to assess life values, focusing on the content and characteristics of life values. For instance, Steger et al. developed the Meaning in Life Questionnaire, which assesses the degree to which individuals perceive life as important and meaningful, as well as the extent to which individuals engage in the search for meaning in life. This questionnaire provides an improved method for measuring the meaning of life.^[10] Hu, Y., et al. constructed the "College Students' Life Values Questionnaire," which consists of three dimensions: life value goals, life value processes, and life value evaluation. Through a sample survey of 1,890 college students from four universities, they analyzed the structure and characteristics of college students' life values. They also proposed suggestions for using college students' life values education to regulate suicidal ideation.^[11]

In summary, life values are a complex concept shaped by the interplay of various factors such as culture, society, and history. Life values exhibit diversity and individual differences, as individuals hold different perspectives and goals regarding the meaning of life. At the same time, life values also possess a certain degree of stability, as they can exist relatively consistently within individuals and have profound impacts on their behavior, emotions, and psychological well-being. Individual life values can guide their behavioral choices, goal setting, and attitudes towards setbacks, thereby influencing their quality of life and sense of happiness.

3. Path Analysis of the Influence of Positive Psychological Qualities on Life Values

Positive psychological qualities have an important and profound influence on life values, as they not only enhance individuals' cognition and understanding of life but also prompt them to contemplate the meaning and value of life. This influence can strengthen individuals' emotional resonance and empathy, thereby promoting their active engagement in family and social activities. This article primarily explores the specific pathways through which positive psychological qualities influence life values from three dimensions: life value goals, life value processes, and life value evaluation.

3.1. Positive Psychological Qualities Positively Influence on Individual Life Value Goals

Cultivating positive psychological qualities not only enhances individuals' intrinsic sense, exploration of meaning, and sense of purpose regarding life value goals but also optimizes their cognitive processes. By fostering positive psychological qualities, individuals are better equipped to face life's challenges and difficulties proactively, leading to increased self-awareness and self-efficacy. Consequently, they can more effectively identify and pursue goals that align with their personal values. Cultivating positive psychological qualities promotes individuals' psychological growth and development, enhancing their emotional regulation, problem-solving abilities, and capacity to adapt to uncertainty and change. As a result, individuals are better equipped to navigate various challenges in life.

Research indicates that individuals with higher levels of positive psychological qualities are more

likely to notice positive experiences and opportunities in life, thus facilitating their understanding and exploration of life value goals. The cultivation of positive psychological qualities leads individuals to have a greater propensity for positive emotional experiences, such as optimism, hope, and satisfaction. This contributes to individuals being more open and flexible in facing life's challenges.^[12] Through the cultivation of positive psychological qualities, individuals can actively establish scientifically reasonable goals and maintain sustained effort and self-motivation towards those goals. The combined effect of these positive psychological traits and behavioral patterns encourages individuals to engage in deeper contemplation of the meaning and purpose of life, ultimately leading to a greater sense of fulfillment and happiness in the pursuit of life's value goals. By conducting in-depth research on the mechanisms through which positive psychological qualities influence life value goals, we can gain a better understanding and provide effective intervention methods to promote the achievement and enhancement of individual life value goals.

3.2. Positive Psychological Qualities Positively Influence on Individual Life Value Processes

The cultivation of positive psychological qualities contributes to enhancing individuals' cognitive awareness and emotional experiences regarding the value of life. It sensitizes individuals to the significance of life processes, thereby guiding them to approach challenges and difficulties in a proactive manner. Through the cultivation of positive psychological qualities, individuals are able to develop profound experiences and insights into life, comprehend its meaning and value, and derive greater internal fulfillment and personal growth from them. This intuitive understanding can stimulate individuals' intrinsic motivation, empowering them with greater drive and determination to confront various challenges and adversities in life. The cultivation of positive psychological qualities also enhances individuals' emotional regulation abilities and coping strategies, enabling them to exhibit greater resilience when facing adversity and hardship.

Moreover, positive psychological qualities can assist individuals in achieving growth and development in the process of life values. Through the cultivation of positive psychological qualities, individuals can enhance their self-awareness and self-acceptance, allowing them to appreciate their own personality and traits with a fresh attitude and becoming more willing to embrace new opportunities. In addition, cultivating positive psychological qualities can enhance individuals' self-regulation and self-control abilities, enabling them to autonomously set life value goals and consistently pursue and achieve these goals. Through in-depth research on the influence of positive psychological qualities on individuals' life value processes, we can gain a better understanding and promote individuals in shaping a rich and meaningful life filled with positive experiences.

3.3. Positive Psychological Qualities Positively Influence on Individual Life Value Evaluation

The cultivation of positive psychological qualities enables individuals to engage in a more positive self-evaluation of their life values, as well as to place greater importance on and acknowledge their own achievements and contributions. Through the cultivation of positive psychological qualities, individuals can develop a positive self-appraisal and self-esteem, thereby enhancing their perception and affirmation of their own abilities and worth. This positive evaluation and recognition contribute to enhancing individuals' self-confidence and self-esteem, motivating them to pursue personal goals more diligently and embrace new challenges. Additionally, cultivating positive psychological qualities also helps develop a positive perception of one's role and impact in society, leading individuals to place greater value on and acknowledge their own achievements and contributions.

This recognition and value can inspire individuals' motivation, encouraging them to actively participate in social activities and enhance their satisfaction and sense of well-being in life. On one hand, through positive self-evaluation, individuals become more aware of their own worth, strengthening their confidence and belief in achieving life goals. This self-confidence enables individuals to evaluate their lives more optimistically and appreciate their own achievements and contributions. On the other hand, when faced with challenges and difficulties in life, individuals are able to approach and solve problems more rationally and optimistically, gaining positive growth experiences from them. At the same time, this psychological resilience and coping ability also enable individuals to evaluate their lives more optimistically and cherish each experience. In-depth research on the impact of positive psychological qualities on individuals' evaluation of life values helps further understand how individuals derive objective assessments of life from positive psychological qualities. This understanding can provide guidance for individuals in their pursuit of a happy life.

4. Conclusions

Positive psychological qualities are influenced by multiple factors and possess characteristics such as constructiveness, stability, diversity, and potentiality. They not only help individuals better cope with challenges in life but also assist in establishing proper life values. Life values represent individuals' overall value judgments of the forms of existence in life and possess characteristics of diversity and relative stability. From the perspective of life values, life values encompass basic dimensions such as life value goals, life value processes, and life value evaluation. From the perspective of life value goals, cultivating positive psychological qualities can enhance individuals' sense of purpose towards life value goals and optimize their cognitive processes. From the perspective of life value processes, cultivating positive psychological qualities helps individuals sensitize themselves to the importance of the process of life, guiding them to face life's challenges and difficulties with a positive outlook. From the perspective of life value evaluation, cultivating positive psychological qualities enables individuals to evaluate their own life values more positively, enhancing their awareness and affirmation of their own abilities and worth. This study provides a theoretical foundation for further exploration of the relationship between positive psychological qualities and life values.

References

- [1] Scheier M.F., Carver C. S. and Bridges, M. W. (1994) *Distinguishing Optimism from Neuroticism (and Trait Anxiety, Self-Mastery, and Self-Esteem): A Reevaluation of the Life Orientation Test*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6, 1063-1078.
- [2] Antonella D. F., Ingrid B., Marié P W., et al. (2016) *Lay Definitions of Happiness across Nations: The Primacy of Inner Harmony and Relational Connectedness*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 30.
- [3] Michael A. C., Barbara L. F., Stephanie L. B., et al. (2009) *Happiness Unpacked: Positive Emotions Increase Life Satisfaction by Building Resilience*. *Emotion (Washington, D. C.)*, 3, 361-368.
- [4] Kennon S., Laura A. K. (2001) *Why Positive Psychology is Necessary*. *American Psychologist*, 3, 216-217.
- [5] Shane J. L., Jeana L. M., Shane J. L., et al. (2006) *Counseling Psychology's Focus on Positive Aspects of Human Functioning*. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 2, 205-227.
- [6] Peterson C. and Seligman M. E. P. (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [7] Christopher M. C., Eleanor E. B., Shannon V. M., et al. (2013) *Positive Psychological Characteristics in Diabetes: A Review*. *Current Diabetes Reports*, 6, 917-929.
- [8] Hu Y., Dai Y. J. and Fan F. M. (2015) *Study of Structure and Features of College Students' Life Value*. *Journal of Dalian University of Technology (Social Sciences)*, 1, 90-95.
- [9] Tejerina-Arreal M., Garcia-Gomez P. and Garcia-Guardia M. L. (2014) *Life Values Structure in a Spanish Sample of Adolescents*. *Anales De Psicologia*, 2, 627-632.
- [10] Steger M. F., Frazier P., Oishi S., et al. (2006) *The Meaning in Life Questionnaire: Assessing the Presence of and Search for Meaning in Life*. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1, 80-93.
- [11] Hu Y. (2016) *The Study on the Impact of College Students' Life Values on Suicidal Ideation*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 89-119.
- [12] Sonja L., Kennon M. S. and David S. (2005) *Pursuing Happiness: The Architecture of Sustainable Change*. *Review of General Psychology*, 2, 111-131.