Running head: PSYCHOLOGY FROM POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE

Positive Psychology: An Introduction

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Abstract

Introduction:
Positive psychology has its own ideas, theories, methods and scales. In this paper, I would like to present the current theory and research for only three of positive psychology ideas which could be taught through positive intervention. Each of those positive characters is measurable and teachable and could be a life habit (e.g., humanity, forgiveness, optimistic way, honesty, justice…).

Objective:
Three objectives are envisaged: (i) present a simple introduction to positive psychology (topics and associations etc..); (ii) introduce concept, assessment and results of three positive psychological topics (i.e., optimistic explanatory style, subjective well-being and character strengths); (iii) present the recent findings of some studies in western cultures (i.e., France, USA).

Method:
Analytic-descriptive approach in which the theoretical models and the most recent studies (tools, statistical treatment, main results) are presented.

Results:
Positive psychology is viewed as a recent field of research and intervention, in our cultures. Application of the principal of positive psychology would be extremely beneficial and lead to positive thinking, emotion and behaviour "good character".

Conclusion:
Using applied positive psychology, in near future, we hope to reduce the gap between the bad behavior and these virtues.

***Keyword**:* Positive Psychology, Character Strengths and Virtues, Well-being, Optimistic explanatory style.

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Positive Psychology: An Introduction

Positive psychology is the science of happiness and well-being. Instead of drawing on a "disease model" as traditional psychology does, this new positive science focuses on factors that enable people to feel good and flourish using their natural strengths to bring out the best in themselves. In fact, during the last years, positive psychology is becoming a big branch of psychology that "studies the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive". This positive science aims to favours and promotes research and application in areas such as : subjective well-being, optimistic explanatory style, character strength and virtues, flourishing, learned optimism, hope, resilience, quality of life, spirituality, happiness, coping abilities, positive mental health, emotions and positive experiences, etc.,…

Positive psychology has actually its own theories, models, methods and scales. In many western countries, during the last years, some institutions, organisations, universities and associations are interested to apply this science in different contexts (e.g., school, sport, health, work, etc...). Both of East London University and Pennsylvania University organize a Master in Applied Positive Psychology. National and International associations have been established by researchers from different branches (social, medical, experimental, educational, health and sport psychology). Many associations were established during the last years. For example, as a national association, the Australian Positive Psychology Association (APPA), New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology (NZAPP) and Italian Society of Positive Psychology (SIPP). In the last years, the European Network on Positive Psychology has organised 4 European congress (UK 2002; Italy 2004; Portugal 2006 and Croatia 2008). In 2006, Asian Conference and African

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conference have been organised in Hong Kong and South Africa. The Australia association has organised the Australia Positive Psychology and Well-Being Conference in 2008. This year, the First World Congress on Positive Psychology will be held in USA. It will be organised by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA).

The main aim of this paper is to present some of positive psychological topics regularly studied in the Western Cultures. It aims to present recent findings of some studies in Western Cultures (i.e., France, USA). More precisely, the aim of this paper would be (i) to develop concepts of only three positive psychological topics (i.e., optimistic explanatory style, subjective well-being, and strengths of character); (ii) to present the method used for assessing each concept (ii) to present some of the most recent findings in western cultures (i.e., France and USA). This paper does not like to present the correlation and consequences, development, enabling and inhibiting factors, gender, cross-national, and cross-cultural aspects. It would be more suitable to present these different aspects in a second paper.

I. Optimistic vs. Pessimistic Explanatory Style

What is meaning of Optimistic explanatory style *vs.* Pessimistic explanatory style? How can we evaluate it? Is it possible to evaluate the explanatory style for children and adolescents? Is it possible to be optimistic? "The general definition of explanatory style is simple: It is one's tendency to offer similar sorts of explanations for different events. We can identify a style only looking across different explanation; to the degree that individuals are consistent, we can speak of them as showing a style of explanation" (Peterson, Seligman, & Buchanan, 1995). It is the manner in which we routinely explain events in our lives, and it can drain our motivation, reduce our persistence, and get us vulnerable to depression. According to Gillham, Shatté, Reivich and Seligman (2000), our explanatory style can inspire us to resolve problems, make us resilient in face of adversity, and it is not a cause of problems but rather a dispositional risk factor (Peterson & Steen, 2002). Originally, proposed in the context of the attributional reformulation of learned helplessness theory (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978), explanatory style reflects the way that people usually explain bad or good events (e.g., Peterson, 2000; Peterson & Park, 1998; Peterson & Steen, 2002). More thoroughly, the explanatory style is a relatively stable manner of explaining – in terms of internality (internality vs externality), stability (stability vs instability) and globality (globality vs specificity) – a variety of positive and/or negative events which can occur, and in which the person is involved, like the inability to keep up training, a severe defeat, a reprimand from the coach, an argument with the partners, a victory in competition, etc.. As explanatory style research has progressed and theory has been modified,

the internality dimension has become of less interest (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989; Peterson, 1991, 2000; Peterson & Bossio, 2000; Peterson & Steen, 2002; Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin, Peterson & Salama-Younes, 2006). These more inconsistent and less reliable correlates have been dropped out in the recent studies (e.g., Peterson & Vaidya, 2001; Peterson, Bishop, Fletcher, Kaplan, Yesko, Moon, Smith, Michaels, & Michaels, 2001). However, according to Peterson (1991), it is possible to add some dimensions depending on the research topics which are aimed at. It goes the same way with the relationships between the different dimensions depending on whether they are independent or correlated. Another question is to be added to these questions: what is an optimistic explanatory style and what is a pessimistic explanatory style according to the answers provided by the person for the used questionnaire?

Optimistic Style versus Pessimistic Style: With the birth of the concept of "explanatory style", some researchers (e.g., Peterson 2000; Peterson et al., 1995) began to use the terms of "optimism" and "pessimism" to qualify some explanatory styles. Explanatory style does not necessarily mean anything to most people, but an optimistic view of the causes of events certainly does (Peterson & Park, 1998). For example in using only two dimensions (stability and globality), people who usually explain good events by causes that are stable in time ("it's going to last forever") and global in effect ("it's going to undercut everything that I do"), and who explain bad events with unstable and specific causes are said to have an optimistic explanatory style. People with the opposite attributional pattern are said to have a pessimistic explanatory style.

For evaluating the explanatory style, two methods exist. The first method for assessing the explanatory style is the Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations, called CAVE technique (Peterson, Luborsky, & Seligman, 1983). With this technique, famous, dead, or otherwise unavailable subjects can be studied as easily as undergraduate students, providing that a personally written document is available. The only requirement of the document is that it contains causal attributions made by the person being studied. According to Peterson et al. (1983), the CAVE technique involves two independent steps: extraction of verbatim event and causal explanation couplets; and rating of the causal statements on the internality, stability, and globality dimensions of explanatory style (see Reivich, 1995, for a review).

The second method is based on that postulate, the sum of the responses for the negative and positive scenarios of the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ, Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & Von Baeyer, 1979) or it's derivative (e.g., SASS, Sport Attributional Style Scale; Hanrahan, Grove, & Hattie, 1989; SPEESQ, Sport and Physical Education Explanatory Style

Questionnaire, Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin, Fontayne, & Famose, 2001; FSASQ Financial Services Attributional Style Questionnaire, Proudfoot, Corr, Guest,& Gray, 2001) was used for the different empirical researches as optimism / pessimism indicative. In other words, researchers having recourse to questionnaires add the scores (or work out their average) of the respondents for each dimensions on both scales, for the negative events.

For children and adolescents, the Child Attributional Style Questionnaire-Revised (CASQ and CASQ-R) have been developed in American culture (Kaslow, Tannenbaum, & Seligman, 1978). During more than three years, using many cross-cultural studies, the psychometric proprieties for the French versions of CASQ and CASQ-R is not satisfactory (Salama-Younes, Martin-Krumm & Roncin, 2003; 2004a;2004b). Using a short versions, Salama-Younes and his colleagues have concluded that children could gather not only two explanatory styles (optimistic vs pessimistic) but also 4 explanatory styles (optimistic vs neutral high vs neutral low vs pessimistic) (Salama-Younes, Martin-Krumm, Hanrahan & Roncin, 2006; Salama-Younes, Martin-Krumm, Lefoll & Roncin, 2008) (see, table 1). The effects of each style had been tested on the sport results (Salama-Younes, Hanrahan, Martin-Krumm & Roncin, 2008; Salama-Younes & Hanrahan, 2006) and on school results (Martin-Krumm & Salama-Younes, 2008; Salama-Younes, 2007).

Some of the most recent perspectives would be: (i) explanatory style was initially considered as a relatively general trait of personality. Some recent proposals suggest it should rather be considered as domain specific (e.g., school, health, sport). People no doubt have a variety of explanatory styles according to the context (Peterson & Park, 1998 ; Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin, Peterson & Famose, 2003; Martin-Krumm et al., 2006). For children, explanatory style is also considered as a specific variable (i.e., Salama-Younes, Hanrahan, 2006; Salama-Younes, Martin-Krumm, Hanrahan & Roncin, 2006; 2007). (ii) explanatory style would be as a distal variable, in other words a dispositional risk factor of helpless behaviour (e.g., Peterson & Steen, 2002). Though, in most of the studies the researchers give a proximal status to it, examining the correlations between the explanatory style and different variables or whether it predicts some dependant variables (Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin & Peterson, 2005; Martin-Krumm, Sarrazin, Peterson & Famose, 2003; Salama-Younes & al., 2008).

In sum, Seligman (1998; 2006) believes that explanatory style can be modified and changed. This concept would be then an important dimension for learning the optimistic explanatory style. Many studies confirmed that it is possible to modify the pessimistic explanatory style by the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). Many programs proposed as the Optimism

Program; Penn Resiliency Program optimism; ABCDE[3] (e.g., Buchanan, Gardenswartz & Seligman, 1999; Seligman, 1998).

II. Subjective Well-Being

How can we define well-being? What are the traditions to evaluate the subjective well-being? What are the multidimensional model and scales to evaluate it? What are the recent findings? The subjective well-being is the evaluation and declarations that individuals make about the quality of their lives that are based on the review, weighting, and summation of the quality of experiences, accomplishments, relationships, and other culturally relevant and valued ways of functioning in life (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). Subjective well-being research has been adult-centric and narrowly focused on happiness (e.g., Bradburn, 1969; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Diener & Emmons, 1985; Diener et al., 1999; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwartz, 1999). Although subjective well-being seems to be synonymous with emotions like happiness, there is increasing recognition of the different theoretical streams of inquiry guiding this important domain of inquiry (Keyes et al., 2002; McGregor & Little, 1998; Deci & Ryan 2008, Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993). Moreover, there is a growing body of research on the well-being of children and youth that is more inclusive (see Bornstein, Davison, Keyes, & Moore, 2003).

The study of subjective well-being has been divided into two streams of research, one that equates well-being with happiness and the other with human potential that, when realized, results in positive functioning in life. The streams of subjective well-being research grew from deeply ingrained, philosophically ancient, and fertile contemporary viewpoints that animate human thought and conduct. The first is the hedonic tradition that embodies human concerns with maximizing the amount or duration of positive, pleasant feelings while minimizing the amount or duration of negative, unpleasant feelings. The hedonic tradition is reflected in the stream of research on *emotional* wellbeing, which consists of perceptions of avowed happiness and satisfaction with life, and the balance of positive to negative affect over a period of time. Whereas happiness is based upon spontaneous reflections of pleasant and unpleasant affects in one's immediate experience, life satisfaction represents a long-term assessment of one's life (BiswasDiener & Dean, 2007; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008).

The second is the tradition of eudaimonia that animates human concerns with developing nascent abilities and capacities toward becoming a more fully functioning person and citizen. This tradition is reflected in the stream of research on *psychological* (Ryff, 1989) and *social* (Keyes, 1998) well-

[3] Using this method, author indicate that pessimistic explanatory style is going to be changed for French children (Salama-Younes, *in preparation*).

being that reflect how well individuals see themselves functioning in life. Ryff's (1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) multidimensional model includes six dimensions of psychological well-being indicates the challenges that individuals encounter as they strive to function fully and realize their unique talents. The six dimensions encompass a breadth of well-being: Positive evaluation of oneself and one's past life (i.e., self-acceptance), a sense of continued growth and development as a person (i.e., personal growth), the belief that one's life is purposeful and meaningful (i.e., purpose in life), the possession of intimate relationships (i.e., positive relations with others), the capacity to manage effectively one's life and surrounding world (i.e., environmental mastery), and a sense of self-determination (i.e., autonomy). Ryff Psychological Well-being Scales is the most used scale for evaluating these construct. Salama-Younes, Montazeri, Ismaïl and Roncin (2008); Salama-Younes, Ismaïl, Vergeer and Roncin (2008) have tested the psychometric proprieties for these six scales. Result indicated that the French version has not neither satisfactory factor structure nor a reliability for older adult. Keyes' (1998) multidimensional model of social well-being consists of five dimensions that indicate whether and to what degree individuals are functioning well in their social world (Keyes, 1998). The measures assess individual's sense of belongingness (i.e., social integration), sense of value to society (i.e., social contribution), sensibility and meaningfulness of the social world (i.e., social coherence), sense of potential for continued growth in social institutions and society (i.e., social actualization), and one's degree of comfort and acceptance of other people (i.e., social acceptance) Keyes Socical Well-being Scales is the most used for evaluating these construct.

Recently, though each dimension of subjective well-being represents an important domain of study in itself, Keyes (2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a,b) has also proposed that these scales collectively measure the presence and absence of mental health (see, figure 1). That is, mental health, like mental illness, is a syndrome of symptoms of subjective well-being. The diagnosis of states of mental health was modeled after the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) approach to the diagnosis of major depressive episode (MDE). That is, a diagnosis of depression is made when an individual's report of symptoms meet a diagnostic threshold, i.e., in this case, 5 of 9 symptoms experienced all the time or most of the time for a period of at least two consecutive weeks, at least one symptom represents depressed affect (i.e., depressed mood or anhedonia) and the remaining represent malfunctioning. Similarly, a diagnosis of mental health (i.e., flourishing in life) is made when an individual exhibits a high level on at least one symptom of hedonia and just over half of the symptoms of eudaimonia, i.e., positive functioning in life. Individuals are diagnosed as languishing in life

when they exhibit a low level on at least one symptom of hedonia and low levels on just over half of the symptoms of positive functioning. Individuals who are neither flourishing nor languishing in life are diagnosed as moderately mentally healthy (see, Keyes & al., 2008 ; Salama-Younes, Hanrahan, Ismaïl & Roncin, 2008 ; Salama-Younes, Ismaïl & Roncin, 2008). The items used to measure each facet of subjective well-being in adults were modified slightly to be appropriate for youth and included in the second wave of the Child Development Supplement (CDS-II). For example, factor analyses of the CDS-II subjective well-being items support the aforementioned threefold distinction. That is, the three factor model was the best-fitting model to these data, suggesting that measure of emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being reflect three distinct but correlated latent factors (Keyes, 2008). The correlations between the latent factors, as well between the subjective well-being scales, were modest and ranged from .57 to 71.

Using these multiple dimensions of mental health, Keyes (2002, 2003, 2005a, 2007) conceptualized a mental health continuum that includes three levels: flourishing, moderately mentally healthy, and languishing. This continuum can be measured either categorically through a diagnosis or continuously as a summary measure (Keyes, 2005a, 2007).

Categorically, people can be diagnosed as flourishing if they have high scores (defined as being in the upper third of normative scores) on one of the three emotional well-being scales and high scores on 6 of the 11 functional well-being dimensions. People can be diagnosed as languishing if they have low scores (defined as being in the lower third of normative scores) on one of the three emotional well-being scales and low scores on 6 of the 11 functional well-being dimensions. People are diagnosed as moderately mentally healthy if their scores are not extreme enough to be diagnosed as either flourishing or languishing. The continuous assessment method simply sums all scales of mental health together to form a composite index (see Keyes, 2006 for a review). Several studies revealed the same outcomes and conclusions whether they used the categorical diagnosis or the continuous assessment (Keyes, 2005a, 2005b, 2006). Specifically, missed days of work, cutbacks in the amount of work, limitations of activities of daily living, prevalence of cardiovascular disease, average number of chronic physical health conditions, and poor psychosocial functioning (i.e., high helplessness, low resilience, low goal formation, and low levels of intimacy) are lowest among flourishing individuals, intermediate among moderately mentally healthy individuals, and highest in languishing individuals (Keyes, 2002, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Robitschek and Keyes, 2007; Ismaïl, Salama-Younes & Roncin, 2008; Ismaïl, Salama-Younes, Hanrahan & Roncin, 2008). The Mental Health

Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF) was the method of measurement for all of these studies. This continuum has been used in many cultures (American, German, South African etc…). In French culture, the psychometric qualities of this continuum have been tested for both older adult and youth (Ismaïl et al, 2008; Salama-Younes, Ismaïl, Deflandre, Montazeri , Marivain & Roncin, 2009). [4]

III. Strength of Character and Virtues

What is meaning of Strength of character and virtues? How could we evaluate them? Is it only western or universal? The Strength of Character, Park and Peterson (2007) indicate that the new field of positive psychology requires equally new perspectives on theories and methods. As much as traditional approaches can contribute to the goals of positive psychology, there are additional issues to be considered when the subject matter of research entails thriving. They discuss, in many publications, these issues and how they bear on the assessment of character strengths. Although they have elsewhere argued that positive psychology is above all psychology, a social science with tried-and-true methods, we also address what is special when these methods are applied to the topic of optimal functioning.

Park and Peterson (2009) indicate that in recent decades, Western philosophy rediscovered the ethics of virtue, starting with Anscombe's (1958) critique that moral philosophy was incomplete because it was based on the notion of laws without any lawgiver. Virtue ethics is the contemporary philosophical approach to strengths of character. As psychologists, we find virtues a more interesting topic than laws. Virtues characterize people and the lives they actually lead (Yearley, 1990). Said another way, scientific psychology is not able to prescribe the morally good life, but it can describe the what, how, and why of good character.

For several years, Peterson and his colleagues have been involved in a project that describes important strengths of character and how to measure them as individual differences. Their research program is identified as the *Values in Action (VIA) Project*, after the organization—the VIA Institute—that sponsored the initial work. In its current form, the VIA Classification includes two dozen strengths of character on which their research has focused (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Different VIA measures comprise a family of assessment devices that measure individual differences in the strengths in the classification (Figure 1).

In their book "*Character strengths and virtues*: A handbook and

[4] Recently, the construct validity and reliability of some subjective well-being scales (i.e., MHC-SF, SWLS, SHS, VS and PWBS) have been tested in two Arabic countries (see, Salama-Younes, 2009; Salama-Younes, et al., 2009).

classification," Peterson and Seligman (2003; 2004) present a taxonomy of *character strengths* and virtues. For each character, they present specifically perspective, its principal component, a consensual definition of perspective, and discusses its theoretical traditions, measures, correlates and consequences, development, enabling and inhibiting factors, gender, cross-national, and cross-cultural aspects and deliberate interventions for cultivating perspective. The VIA classification of strengths is: 1. wisdom and knowledge (love of learning, open-mindedness, curiosity, creativity, perspective to be able to provide wise counsel to others; 2. courage (honesty, bravery, persistence and zest); 3. humanity (kindness, love, social intelligence); 4. justice (fairness, leadership, teamwork); 5. temperance (forgiveness, modesty, prudence, self-regulation); 6. transcendre (hope, humour, gratitude, religiousness, appreciation of beauty and excellence.

The psychometric properties of the VIA has been explored in many countries. It has been used to predict the academic honesty (Staats, Hupp & Hagely, 2008) and leadership (O'Neil, 2007). Peterson, Park and Seligman (2006) indicate that greater strengths of character are related with recovery from illness. Wong (2006) describes that *Strength*-Centered Therapy, a new therapeutic model based on the *positive psychology* of *character strengths* and virtues as well as social constructionist perspectives on psychotherapy. The contributions of the positive psychology of character strengths and social constructionist conceptualizations of psychotherapy are examined. It is argued that Strength- Centered Therapy might contribute to the revival of character strengths and virtues in psychotherapy.

Schwartz & Sharpe (2006) indicate that the contrasts view with the Aristotelian view that virtues are interdependent, that happiness (eudaimonia) requires all the virtues, and that more of a virtue is not always better than less. They argue that practical wisdom is the master virtue essential to solving problems of specificity, relevance, and conflict that inevitably arise whenever *character strengths* must be translated into action in concrete situations. They also argue that practical wisdom is becoming increasingly difficult to nurture and display in modern society, so that attention must be paid to reshaping social institutions to encourage the use of practical wisdom rather than inhibiting it.

Choong & Britton (2007) studied the co-variation between character strengths and psychological types as per the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) for Malaysian. Results show significant co-variations between nine signature strengths and single type dimensions namely, creativity (intuition), open-mindedness (thinking), love of learning (introversion), integrity (sensing and thinking), persistence (judging), vitality (extroversion), love (extroversion and feeling), fairness (sensing), and gratitude (extroversion).

Love, integrity, and gratitude also co-vary with multiple paired type combinations. Curiosity co-varies only with a single paired type combination (introverted intuition). Conclusion: There is meaningful co-variation between psychological type and character strengths. The discussion addresses the applicability of the results to coaching psychology.

In recent study, Van Eeden and others (2008) indicate that virtues are core characteristics valued by moral philosophers universally and strengths are less abstract psychological characteristics that serve as routes for achieving virtues. Enabling themes are factors that lead people to manifest given character strengths in given situations and hence contribute to virtues. Talents and abilities (e.g. intelligence) and characteristics not valued across cultures, were excluded from the classification system (Carr, 2004). The 24 strengths associated with 6 virtues can be assessed with the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) or the VIA-IS for youth (VIA-Y), both self report questionnaires. The character strength subscales of the VIA-IS all have good reliability in USA-studies, and the inventory is in further validation. The character strengths idea plays an important role in the new domain of positive psychology, and holds much promise for practice and research aimed at understanding and promoting psychological well-being and fulfillment of individuals and communities. According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), their research found a remarkable similarity in the relative endorsement of the 24 character strengths by adults around the world and from the USA. The most commonly endorsed strengths in 54 countries are kindness, fairness, authenticity, gratitude and open-mindedness, and the lesser strengths consistently include prudence, modesty and self-regulation. The correlations of the rankings from nation to nation, are strong (0.80+), -- indicating more cultural, ethnic, religious and economic similarities than differences, and seemingly points to a universality of human nature as manifested by character strengths. Another research indicate that some sub-scales of the French version of the VIA has not a satisfactory internal consistency (Salama-Younes & Marivain, 2009). In South Africa however, a more e-mic factor pattern emerged indicating an African collective-cultural system. Further research on this model and validation of measures thereof, is necessary in the South African context that includes cultural diversities not previously taken into account. As far as practical application is concerned the character strengths model could enhance the practice fields of developmental- and child psychology, clinical- and therapeutic psychology, educational psychology, industrial- and organizational psychology, health psychology, geriatric psychology, forensic psychology, pastoral- and community psychology and social psychology.

We must note that many thousands of youth and adult have replied VIA

on line. This self report questionnaire is translated and validated in many countries (i.e., in Swiss, Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park & Seligman, 2007; In South Africa, Van Eeden, Wissing, Dreyer, Park & Peterson, 2008; In France, Salama-Younes & Marivain, *in preparation*). Review of litterature confirm that VIA has not yet used or studied in the Arabic culture(s). Testing and comparing result among many countries may probably reveal something about universal human nature between eastern and western countries. Author is interesting to develop and test the psychometric proprieties of the Arabic version. This project needs the collaboration of many searchers from different countries.

Biswas-Diener (2006) indicate that the Values in Action (VIA) Classification, has recently been developed, and the current study evaluates these *character strengths* across cultures. Among 123 members of the Kenyan Maasai, 71 Inughuit in Northern Greenland, and 519 University of Illinois students, they found high rates of agreement about the existence, desirability, and development of these *strengths* of *character*. Despite these strong similarities, there were differences between and within cultures in terms of gender, the perceived importance of specific *strengths* (such as modesty), and the existence of cultural institutions that promote each *strength*.

Park, Peterson and Seligman (2004) have done in a web-based study of 117, 676 adults from 54 nations and all 50 US states, we investigated the relative prevalence of 24 different *strengths* of *character*. The most commonly-endorsed *strengths* in the USA were kindness, fairness, honesty, gratitude, and judgment, and the lesser *strengths* included prudence, modesty, and self-regulation. The profile of *character strengths* in the USA converged with profiles based on respondents from each of the other nations. Except for religiousness, comparisons within the US sample showed no differences as a function of state or geographical region. These results may reveal something about universal human nature and/or the *character* requirements minimally needed for a viable society.

In sum, Tan (2006) mentioned that several years ago, the millennial issue of the American Psychologist focused on the emerging science of *positive psychology*, referring to the study of *positive* emotion, *positive* character, and *positive* institutions. More recently, Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson provided a progress report on *positive psychology*, including some empirical validation of interventions. Seligman et al. (2008) also noted that there are significant developments in the field of *positive psychology* in terms of meetings, networks and centers, courses and degrees, and websites. Seligman has briefly described how *positive psychology* can be applied to prevention (*positive* prevention) and therapy (*positive* therapy). Seligman emphasizes

that a *positive psychology* approach to prevention and therapy-*positive* prevention and *positive* therapy will measure, understand and build the *positive* human traits or characteristics (virtues and *character strengths*) that make life worth living and that help individuals and communities not just survive or endure but also flourish. In conclusion, should counseling and psychotherapy? While it can be a welcome corrective and therefore can be put into practice in Christian counseling and psychotherapy, it also has dangers of encouraging more narcissism if we are not careful. In 16 mai IPPA call, Seligman (2008) indicate that positive psychology builds intellectual, social and physical capital for each one. He confirmed that the subjective well-being could be taught by positive interventions. Happiness as scientifically unwieldy dissolves into 3 component: *positive* emotion, *positive* character and *positive* institutions. Each is measurable and teachable. So, I think that in the near future, it would be interesting to evaluate and develop the utility of the different topic in our countries and cultures. Secondly, it would be interesting to explore and develop our positive intervention in order to improve feelings of well-being and health for our societies. We really need to apply and practice the positive human sciences in our life!

In sum, people search to be happy. So, in western thought, people have been discussing the question of human happiness and well-being for thousands of years. Judaism promotes a divine command theory of happiness: happiness and rewards follow from following the commands of the divine…. Christianity continued to follow the divine command theory of happiness, but with the addition of the Golden Rule as a divine command…. From our investigation, all of these positive character strengths must be reflected from religion's principal beliefs and practice. I mean here by religions the (Christianisty, Islam and Judaïsm). For example, in Quran, (Sûrah An-Nisâ, 26 and 58) "Worship Allâh an join none with him (in worship); and do good to parents, kinsflok, orphan, *Al-Masâkin* (the needy), the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and those (slaves) whom your right hands posses. Verily, Allaâh does not like such as are proud and boastful". "Verily, Allaâh commands that you should render back the trusts to those to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which he (Allâh) gives you! Truly, Allâh is ever All-Hearer, All-Seer". In conclusion, we must find that stimulation and tradition values strongly related to the behaviors that express them! In our culture, the perspective would be to study the similarities and differences, educate, develop and practice these good virtues. Positive psychology can be applied to prevention and therapy…

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Table 1
Types of Children's Explanatory Style and Percentages using the CASQ and CASQ-R
Salama-Younes, et al., (2004, 2006 and 2008).

Group	Neutral Low	Optimistic	Neutral High	Pessimistic
% Based on CASQ	36.7%	28.63%	15.23%	19.46%
% Based on CASQ-R	33.49%	20.06%	29.24%	17.21%
Events (positive/negative)	+/-	+/-	+ /-	+/-
Stability	Unst/Unst	St/Unst	St/St	Unst/ St
Globality/Specificity	Sp/Sp	Gl/Sp	Gl/Gl	Sp/ Gl
Internality/Externality	Ext/Ext	Int/Ext	Int/Int	Ext/In

Table 2

VIA Classification of Strengths (*Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Park & Peterson, 2009*)

1. wisdom and knowledge.
- creativity: thinking of novel and productive ways to do things
- curiosity: taking an interest in all of ongoing experience
- open-mindedness: thinking things through and examining them from all sides
- love of learning: mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge
- perspective: being able to provide wise counsel to others

2. courage
- honesty: speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way
- bravery: not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain
- persistence: finishing what one starts
- zest: approaching life with excitement and energy

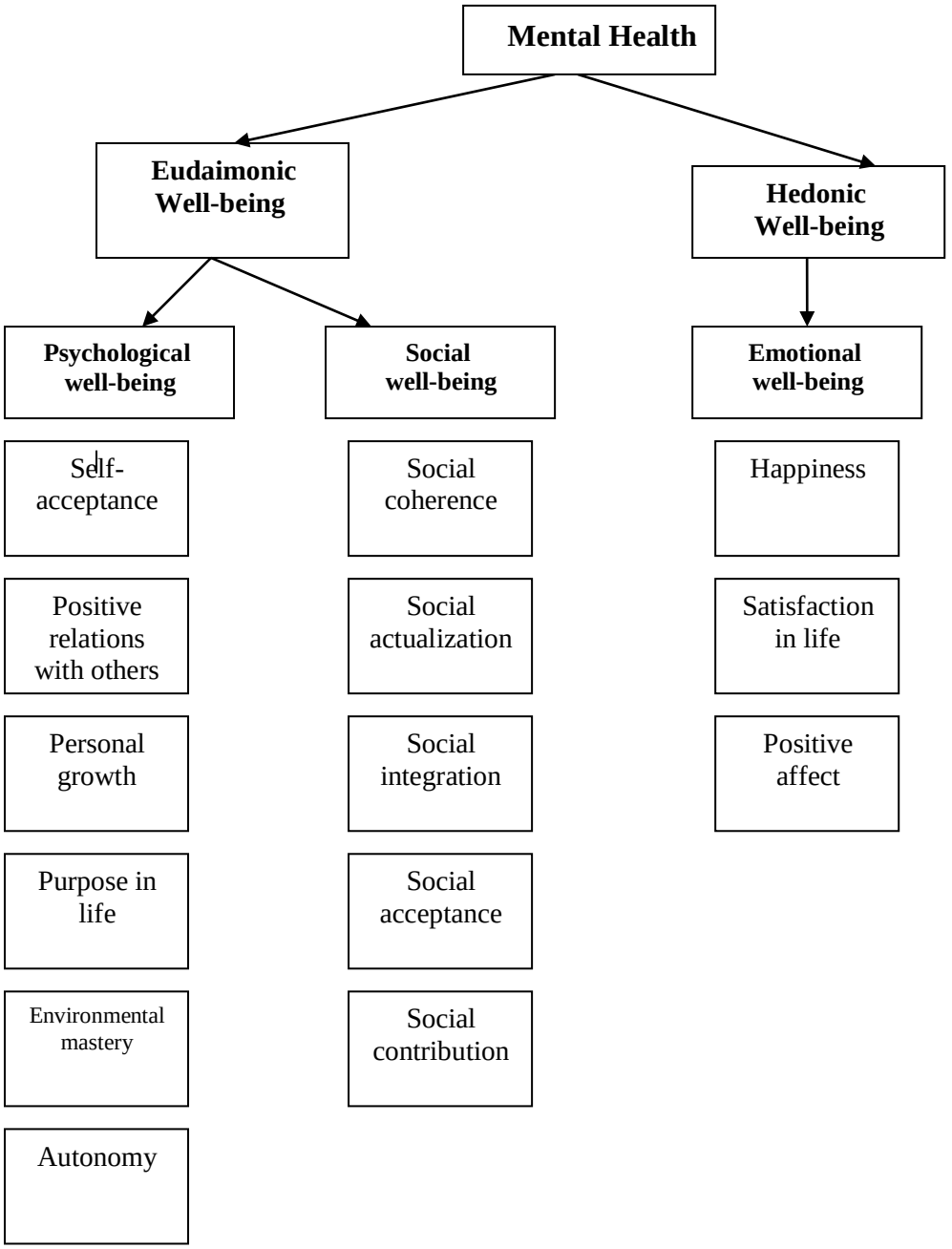
3. humanity
- kindness: doing favors and good deeds for others
- love: valuing close relations with others
- social intelligence: being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others

4. justice
- fairness: treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice
- leadership: organizing group activities and seeing that they happen
- teamwork: working well as member of a group or team

5. temperance
- forgiveness: forgiving those who have done wrong
- modesty: letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves
- prudence: being careful about one's choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted
- self-regulation: Regulating what one feels and does

6. transcendence
- appreciation of beauty and excellence: noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life
- gratitude: being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen
- hope: expecting the best and working to achieve it
- humor: liking to laugh and joke; bringing smiles to other people
- religiousness: having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life

***Figure 1*. Mental health model proposed by Keyes, 2002; 2006.**



ملخـص

أن علم النفس الإيجابي يشتمل على مجموعة من الأبحاث والنظريات والطرق والمقاييس الخاصة به.

أهداف البحث :

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تقديم مقدمة عن علم النفس الإيجابي (من حيث : مباحثه الأساسية ، جمعياته العلمية ، مؤتمراته الدولي) ، أهم المفاهيم والمقاييس والنتائج الخاصة بثلاث مباحث تنتمي إلى علم النفس الإيجابي والتي يمكن تعلمها واكتسابها كنمط لأسلوب الحياة (أسلوب التفسير التفاؤلي ، السعادة الذاتية ، إيجابيات وقوة الشخصية) ، وعرض نتائج بعض الدراسات الحديثة في هذه المباحث العلمية والتي تم دراستها في الثقافة الغربية (فرنسا والولايات المتحدة الأمريكية).

منهج البحث :

المنهج الوصفي التحليلي لبعض النماذج النظرية والدراسات الحديثة.

نتائج البحث :

تؤكد أن نماذج علم النفس الإيجابي سوف تكون مفيدة في اكتسابها وتعلمها كنمط إيجابي للتفكير والمشاعر والسلوك.

تطبيق مبادئ علم النفس الإيجابي سوف يساعد في تقليل الفجوة بين السلوكيات السيئة والسلوك الفاضلة.