The Good Life: An Examination of Emotional Intelligence, Relational Efficacy, Meaning in Life, and Satisfaction with Life.

Introduction:

The field of positive psychology is gaining acceptance as an empirical, yet holistic approach to the study of human functioning. Compared to a traditional focus of psychology, a key objective involves an in-depth, empirical understanding of the adaptive dimension of psychological functioning and development; subjective well-being (SWB) of individuals (Seligman & Czikszentmihalyi, 2002). Subjective well-being is a multi-faceted construct including both cognitive and affective processes (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). The three components of subjective well-being include: positive affect (PA); negative affect (NA); and satisfaction with life (SWL), a cognitive evaluation of one’s quality of life (Pavot & Diener, 1993). There is a growing interest in the role that cognitive processes play in one’s capacity to thrive and successfully negotiate interpersonal events and situations over the life course. Discovering predictors of quality of life will facilitate adaptive, positive development.

The current study will examine the relationships and predictive value between emotional intelligence (EI), relational efficacy (RE), and meaning in life (ML) with satisfaction with life (SWL). In particular, the study will investigate the role of relational efficacy, an individual’s perception of their ability to successfully navigate interpersonal relationships, as a predictor of life satisfaction.

Methodology:

First, a key objective of this potential study is to conduct student-mentored research. One or two undergraduate students will be recruited as unpaid research assistants to learn and assist with data collection, data entry, and analysis. Research assistants will be given an overview of the objectives of the study, and instructed to complete the CITI course before study is employed. At this time, research assistants have not been selected, but the IRB will be informed when students have been chosen.

Participants will comprise both traditional and non-traditional students representing a range of ages and ethnicities. Approximately 200 participants will be recruited to complete the surveys from lower and upper division courses at the RRHEC and Texas State University- San Marcos campus.

Participants will be informed of key objectives of the study including an overview of informed consent. Participants will be given information on the location where measures can be completed. Each consent form will be assigned a number that will correspond with the participants’ responses to measures. After participants read and sign the consent form, they will be given four questionnaires to complete. These questionnaires are Relational Efficacy Scale, Meaning of Life Scale, Emotional Intelligence Scale, and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. Participants will also answer questions regarding demographics.

Due to the nature of the study, there are no potential psychological or emotional risks anticipated for research participants. While breach of confidentiality is a potential risk factor in any study, safeguards will be taken to ensure the protection of participants’ identity. Questionnaires will be kept in a secure office and participants’ responses will be stored in a password protected file.

Data collected from the study will allow for a greater understanding of subjective well-being, and in particular, the satisfaction with life construct. Identifying scores of emotional intelligence, meaning of life, and relational efficacy that best predict life satisfaction will contribute new insights for adaptive human functioning, and inform a growing literature in an emerging field, positive psychology.