1

INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY - I

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After learning this chapter, you will be able to understand:

- What is positive psychology?

- The need for a science of human strengths and virtues

- Illness ideology and various factors that ingrain illness ideology

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, the concept of positive psychology has been progressively gaining popularity among contemporary psychologists and has gradually developed firm roots as a separate branch of psychology. Though Malow was the first to use the term 'positive psychology' in 1954, it was Martin Seligman who reintroduced it in its new Avatar, in 1998 during his presidential address to the American Psychological Association.

He described positive psychology as the scientific study of factors that can help individuals, communities, as well as institutions to grow to their maximum potential. He propagated that instead of treating what is wrong with a person or lacking in a person, psychologists should concentrate on what a person wants to achieve and how to empower him to achieve his goals, e.g. happiness, meaning and purpose of life, gratitude, etc. He emphasized that normal people should be given equal importance as the people suffering from any of the disorders or negativity and dysfunctionality in life. Instead of concentrating energies on what is dysfunctional, psychologists should focus on the potential strengths of a person and how they can be used to enhance life satisfaction of a person.

1.2 NEED FOR A SCIENCE OF HUMAN STRENGTHS AND VIRTUES

Though it is believed that positive psychology originated from humanistic psychology and flourished in the nineties, it is actually in its nascent stage. Its roots can be traced to Aristotle's philosophical musings about all human beings born with the potential to be good, virtuous, and moral beings. Greek philosophy negated the idea that human beings are inherently selfish; instead, Aristotle held that if an individual behaves in an egoistic manner, he gets isolated from social relationships, and consequently, his quality of life suffers.

Later in the 1950s, Humanistic psychologists like Maslow, Roger and Fromm mooted the idea of formally studying happiness and flourishing in human life, to study normal healthy people more than mentally ill people. But there was no scientific basis for Aristotle's philosophical teachings, and there was not sufficiently strong empirical evidence generated by humanistic psychologists. Traditionally, psychology has been very emphatic about the use of scientific methods and empirical support for any theory; positive psychology did not take off until the twenty first century. Later on, as the realization grew that subjective positivity in human life can contribute to the growth of communities as well as lead to happier and more productive institutions, psychologists felt the need to scientifically test out the concepts propagated by positive psychology.

In the 1950s, psychologists started paying attention to improving the mental health of people and not just treating the patients after their mental health has deteriorated or any mental disorders have already taken place. It was realized that prevention is better than the cure.

Diener and Suh believed that a human being's personal well-being is influenced by various factors, such as cognitive factors, affective factors and contextual factors. The level of life satisfaction of a person depends upon how frequently he experiences positive or negative emotions. If he experiences positive emotions more frequently than negative emotions, then he will consider his life satisfaction to be high. They labelled it as 'Tripartite Model of Subjective Wellbeing' and published it in 1984.

In 1989, Carol Ryff expanded on this model and proposed that a human being's psychological wellbeing is influenced by six factors, and these six factors are measurable. These six factors are self-acceptance, continuous personal growth, purpose in life, positive good quality relations with others, cognitive and behavioural autonomy, and deft manipulation of the environment to satisfy their needs and in accordance with their values. In 1995, she published a scale to measure psychological well-being through the measurement of these six factors, and till today, it is extensively used in empirical studies of positive psychology.

Corey Keyes had worked with Carol Ryff, but in 2002 he published his own version of psychological wellbeing, especially mental health. He was of the opinion that mental health cannot be categorized as good or bad, as

being there or not. Instead, mental health can be thought of as a continuum with two extremes of flourishing on the positive side and languishing on the negative side. In between, there are various shades of these two extreme concepts. He presented a 'Tripartite Model of Mental Wellbeing', where he categorized mental well being into three categories –

a) Hedonic component:

The explained this by saying that all human beings tend to prolong positive feelings and reduce the duration of unpleasant feelings.

b) Eudaimonia component:

All human beings have a inherent desire to develop and polish their potential or incipient skills and abilities and reach their optimum level. Eudaimonia component has been very often covered by research on psychological and social wellbeing.

Keyes believed that if an individual displays at least one sign of hedonic and at least more than half the symptoms of eudaimonia, he can be labelled as having highly flourishing or good mental health. This model generated a lot of interest and received empirical support.

Many more researchers empirically studied the topics covered under positive psychology. For instance, the relationship between positive emotions and long life, the relationship between emotional health and stroke, etc. One can safely conclude that positive psychology is a subfield of psychology, as it has not deviated from the basic tenets of psychology that empirical evidence is of paramount importance. It has merely broadened its scope. Though all human beings are unique according to modern positive psychology, it believes that all human beings, throughout their lives, strive to enhance their skills, complexity and become perfect compared to their present level of skills, perfection, and complexity.

1.3 DECONSTRUCTION OF ILLNESS IDEOLOGY AND INCLUSION OF HUMAN STRENGTHS

Martin Seligman considered World War II a significant turning point in the history of psychology that changed the course of the knowledge gathered in psychology. Before World War II, psychologists were more focused on finding ways to nurture people's potential and ensure that people had sufficiently productive and satisfying lives. In this process, if they came across any mental illness, they worked on treating it, in some people too. These pursuits were much closer to the aim of modern positive psychology. But World War II changed the world socially, economically, geographically, and in many other ways. Clinical psychology started thriving as it started paying more attention to mental illness than mental health.

However, a brief look at the history of clinical psychology suggests that clinical psychology had gradually started altering its goals right at the beginning of the 20th century, and developments that took place during and after World War II merely accelerated the shift in the course of clinical psychology, and treatment of mental illness became the sole goal of clinical psychology. Right from the beginning of the 20th century, Freud's psychoanalysis and its allied theories such as attachment theory, ego psychology, etc. started ruling the practices of clinical psychologists as well as psychiatrists. Psychoanalysis is based on the presumption that all human beings are dominated by inherent evil, unruly psychic forces such as sexual and aggressive forces. People struggle to balance these forces right from birth, and any imbalance in them leads to psychological illness. As clinical psychology engulfed itself in psychoanalysis, it got mired in illness ideology. Its language too changed and it was merely treating the mental illness just as medical doctors treat physical illnesses.

Apart from the dominance of psychoanalysis, many other factors ingrain illness ideology in clinical psychology. For instance -

The Disease Model:

Before 1900, psychologists were more concerned with the measurement of various psychological problems, such as learning disabilities in children. Their training was dominated by psychometric theory. After 1909, psychoanalytic theory became more popular. Psychoanalytic theory emphasized on psychopathology.

Budding clinical psychologists did their internships under the guidance of psychiatrists working in psychiatric wards in hospitals. In a hospital or clinical environment, they developed the tendency to look at people visiting there as patients and not as clients. They looked for psychopathology in those people. Psychopathology was understood as any behavior or emotional state that is maladaptive and deviates from normal average behavior. Clinical psychology also believes that people suffering from acute psychological problems who visit hospitals and clinics are different, in nature and severity, from different normal populations, and their problems are also different from the problems of normal people. Clinical psychologists in this era ignored contextual factors, such as sociocultural aspects, while diagnosing mental illness. They believed that just as other medical problems have biological roots, mental disorders too are rooted in the organism.

Moreover, the language of clinical psychology became and remains the language of medicine and pathology, focusing more on abnormality than on normality.

At the beginning of the 1950s, many clinical psychologists realized that they could make a lucrative career by just curing mental illnesses. Until today, clinical psychologists have worked on the assumption of psychopathology. They ignore the fact that human beings have free will too. Instead, they believe that human beings are helpless victims of their biological and intrapsychic forces, and consequently, they should

surrender themselves to the care of an expert, be it a medical doctor, psychiatrist, or clinical psychologist. They themselves, as well as the laymen, consider them doctors of mentally sick people. These practitioners are well versed in various mental illnesses but have little knowledge of the mental health of normal healthy people and how to promote good mental health.

Evolutionary Perspective:

The evolutionary perspective states that the main objective of our lives is to remain alive and propagate our genes. Consequently, right from the caveman days until today, it is a natural human tendency to pay more attention to negative things around us and be alert to any potential danger. There is empirical evidence to suggest that the natural tendency to be alert dominates, directly or indirectly, all our thoughts, emotions and actions. For instance, we form impressions in the first few seconds about others' personalities based on their appearance. We pay more attention to negative information and remember it for a longer duration. Most of us are extreme critics of ourselves. We remember our shortcomings, mistakes, and disappointments much more than our strengths and achievements. From an evolutionary perspective, it is beneficial for us to have a negative bias.

Advent of Behaviourism:

In the early nineties, behaviourism started flourishing as a criticism of psychoanalysis. Behaviourists such as J. B. Watson and B.F. Skinner rejected the idea of free will. They believed all behavior is learned behavior and learning takes place depending on the consequences of actions taken. Behaviourists believed that all mental disorders are learned responses that can be treated with the principles of reinforcement.

The Social Deconstruction of the DSM:

Since 1952 onwards, the DSM has served as a handy book for all clinical psychologists. Over the decades, it has gone through various revisions, but no clinical psychologist can determine the diagnosis of a patient without using the DSM. Right from the first edition of the DSM, psychologists have acknowledged that there are no concrete criteria for differentiating normality from abnormality. Normality and abnormality are social constructs that are determined by the individuals, institutions and cultural norms of that time. So, what is considered abnormal in a particular society in a particular era may be considered normal in another society in another era. The same is true for the classification of mental disorders. That is why we cannot say that the DSM is a scientific objective instrument; instead, it is a document that reflects the social values of a particular time period while describing what is normality, and categorizing various mental disorders. Even the clinical psychologist is unconsciously influenced by his/her own social, cultural, political values while diagnosing a mental disorder. For example, in DSM I, homosexuality was categorized as a mental disorder but in later revisions of the DSM, it was not considered as a disease due to social pressure. In such a scenario, it becomes difficult to determine who should be the final authority in labelling a person with a

mental disorder or even deciding whether a person is normal or not. Some critics go to the extent of questioning the diagnosis of physical diseases too, as they believe that the diagnose of physical diseases is also influenced by the sociocultural background of the doctor. One can safely conclude that scientific knowledge is also not as objective as is desired and is basically social knowledge. Clinical psychologists need to re-examine their beliefs and practices about the categorization of human experiences based on the DSM.

Emergence of Positive Psychology:

Seligman et. al. (2000) issued a manifesto in the magazine American Psychologist: "Psychology is not just a branch of medicine concerned with illness or health; it is much larger. It is about work, education, insight, love, growth, and play."

Gradually, clinical psychology has started gravitating towards the prevention of mental illness rather than focusing on the treatment of mental illness. There is also the realization that while some mental illnesses can have roots in biological factors, medical illnesses may also have roots in psychological disorders. Therefore, paying attention to the prevention of mental illness can lead to better health. In other words, after 2000, there was a realization that if clinical psychology has to become positive clinical psychology, it has to pay as much attention to contextual factors as other causes of mental disorders and change its pathologically oriented language to a more positive orientation. Instead of holding a person responsible for his mental disorders and failure to adapt to external social environment, it must look at the external causes of pathology such as faulty cognition, affect and behavior patterns. Psychologists must also pay attention to larger social factors, such as culture and society as a whole, in which the person resides. They must give more emphasis to understanding what is best and courageous in an individual instead of closely scrutinizing the worst and weakest parts of their character.

This philosophical shift broadened the scope of psychology. People were no longer looking at psychologists as the doctors of mental disorders; rather, they started seeking out psychologists even if they wanted to improve the quality of their lives. Assisting in improving psychological health was no longer the domain of clinical psychologists; instead, other members of the social world, such as teachers, parents, social workers, coaches, etc., could significantly contribute to the improvement of psychological health in a person. Naturally, such help was not restricted to only clinics and hospitals. There was no stigma attached to seeking help for improving psychological health.

1.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we learned about what positive psychology is and the need for science of human strengths and virtues. We also learned about the illness ideology and many factors that lead to illness ideology. In this context, we discussed the disease model, evolutionary perspective, advent of

behaviourism, and the social deconstruction of the DSM. And, finally we also learned about the emergence of positive psychology.

1.5 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss positive psychology. Describe the need for science of human strengths and virtues.

2. Discuss deconstruction of illness ideology and inclusion of human strengths.

3. Write short notes on:

a) The disease model

b) Social deconstruction of DSM

c) Emergence of Positive Psychology

1.6 REFERENCES

- Snyder, C. R.; & Lopez, S. J. (2002). Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Snyder, C. R.; Lopez, S. J.; & Pedrotti, J. T. (2011). Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. New Delhi: Sage South Asia Edition.

******

2

INTRODUCTION TO POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY - II

Unit Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After learning this chapter, you will be able to understand:

•   Definitions, assumptions, and goals positive psychology

•   Different components and forms of a good life

•   Three pillars of positive psychology

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we looked at why the need for positive psychology emerged due to changing attitudes among psychologists and society as a whole. In this unit, we will look at what exactly positive psychology is and what its assumptions, goals, and features are.

2.2 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: DEFINITIONS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND GOALS

Definitions:

Martin Seligman & Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2002) defined positive psychology as "the scientific study of positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels that include the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life."

The American Psychological Association described positive psychology as a field of psychological theory and research that focuses on psychological states (e.g., contentment, joy), individual traits or character strengths (e.g., intimacy, integrity, altruism, wisdom), and social institutions that enhance subjective well-being and make life most worth living

16

"Positive psychology revisits 'the average person,' with an interest in finding out what works, what is right, and what is improving." - Sheldon and King (2001).

Positive psychology is the scientific study of ordinary human strengths and virtues. - Sheldon and King (2001).

Assumptions and Goals:

One of the basic assumptions of positive psychology is that psychology in general and clinical psychology in particular have become imbalanced, especially after World War I. It pays more attention to negativities, such as what is missing, dysfunctional or faulty, or illness, in a person's life than to the positive aspects of his life. If we look at the major research carried out and widely reported in psychology, it is about the negativities of life. For instance, research carried out on impression formation highlighted the fact that people pay more attention to negative information than to positive information about another person, no matter how small that negative information is compared to positive information. This is called 'trait negativity bias'. Evolutionary psychology explains this tendency as a survival tactic, that is beneficial for a person. The positives of life, such as trust, empathy, self-awareness, etc., are almost marginalized in psychology.

The second assumption of positive psychology is that human beings have the potential for good and that we are motivated to pursue a good life (Linley & Joseph,2006).

Furthermore, positive psychology assumes that human goodness and excellence are as genuine or real as disorders and distress are. So, human goodness and excellence merit as much attention from mental health practitioners as is given to disorders. It is high time that we challenge the disease model (Maddux,2002).

Positive psychology has concentrated on rebalancing the imbalanced focus of positivity and negativity in human life. Taking a cue from humanistic psychologists such as Roger and Maslow, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi emphasized that instead of focusing on pathologies, psychologists must realize that human beings have innate potential to develop positive character and move towards self-actualization. Seligman (2002) made three assumptions about human beings that became the core of positive psychology. These are –

1.   All human beings have human nature.

2.   Human beings' behavioural responses originate from their character.

3.   There is an equal possibility of human beings having good or bad character.

There are many examples in evolutionary psychology to suggest that human beings develop traits of cooperation, altruism, morality, and

goodness just as they are capable of developing traits of violence, murder, stealing, being selfish, etc.

Before the advent of positive psychology, right from Freud's time, Western psychology assumed human beings to be egoistic, hedonistic, and asocial individuals who are driven by selfish motivations and who use social relationships as merely tools to achieve their non-social or personal goals.

On the other hand, good character is the fundamental assumption of positive psychology. Aristotle was of the opinion that all human beings are motivated to protect their own as well as others' welfare. He believed that all human beings have virtue of thought and virtue of character. Virtue of thought grows gradually as we gain experiences in life, while virtue of character is an outcome of habits. In tandem with Aristotelian philosophy, positive psychology focuses on only the positive characteristics of human beings while not ignoring the possibility of negative aspects too. It assumes that human beings are inherently social and moral beings. Positive psychology assumes that virtues such as creativity, giftedness, wisdom, humanity, justice, courage and happiness are universal virtues that contribute to the quality of life of all human beings. Throughout their lives, human beings strive to realize these virtues as they are motivated to lead a good life and acquire wellbeing or happiness. Positive psychology does not believe that these virtues are inherent in human character; instead, they are developed through education and habit. But it assumes that all human beings are motivated to strive for optimal functioning and a meaningful life.

According to Seligman (2002), a good life is made up of three components

a) Positive connection to others or positive subjective experience:

The idea of a good life includes our ability to have good social relationships with other individuals as well as with society as a whole. This can be achieved through human beings' ability to love, be creative, forgive, be spiritual, and have happiness and life satisfaction.

b) Positive individual traits:

Positive individual traits include to be courageous, being humble, and having high integrity.

c) Life regulation qualities:

Life regulation qualities include those characteristics that help us control and regulate our daily activities in such a way that we can achieve our goals. For example, qualities such as a sense of individuality or autonomy, a high degree of healthy self-control, and wisdom to guide our behaviour.

Seligman (2002) suggested that happiness can be nurtured through a good life. A good life can be categorized into four different forms. These are -

a) Pleasant life:

He described it as a life that succeeds in having positive emotions about the past, present and future. A person is said to have a pleasant life if he/she can enjoy companionship, satisfy bodily needs, and enjoy the natural environment. Basically, a pleasant life is guided by hedonistic principles.

b) A good Life:

Seligman (2002) believed that a good life is the one in which an individual is able to use his special characteristics or his signature strengths and experience gratification in important areas of his life, such as relationships, work and leisure. In other words, a good life means that a person can live life without any hypocrisy and true to his own fundamental character. These signature strengths need not be inherent, they can be learned and nurtured. A good life means that a person gets opportunities to develop his own strengths and values and uses these strengths to promote his own and others' wellbeing. A person experiences happiness when he successfully meets the challenges of life, experiences a sense of competence and accomplishment, enjoys good relationships at work as well as in other social situations, and experiences growth and satisfaction.

c) Meaningful Life:

When an individual uses his special characteristics for a special cause or something that is larger than himself, it is called a meaningful life. However, defining the special cause that is larger than himself depends on the individual himself. A person cannot enjoy long lasting happiness if he does not have a meaningful life. An individual uses his signature strengths both in good life and in meaningful life, but the only difference is that in good life, he uses these strengths for his own growth, while in meaningful life, he uses them for the benefit of others or for higher goals. For example, Gandhiji used his signature strengths of self-regulation and perseverance for the higher goal of India's freedom from British Rule.

d) Full Life :

Full life is a combination of all other three lives explained above. It includes presently enjoying positive emotions such as love, trust, appreciation, etc. about the past life and future, getting lot of satisfaction from one's special characteristics or strengths and being able to use this signature strength for a cause larger than himself/herself. In other words, full life means functioning at your own optimal level of capacity. An individual having full life will enjoy positive experiences in life. Seligman believed that full life is not a static experience, it is a developmental state where an individual strives to realize his true potential and achieve perfection as much as possible.

Thus, positive psychology aims to not just treat the disorders and remove the distress but also to help build up satisfaction and happiness in a person's life and to help a person feel that his life is meaningful. This will

help not only in the recovery from pathology but also in the prevention of distress or pathology. It emphasizes that just removing illness does not mean that and individual automatically becomes healthy and competent. Psychologists need to help him thrive and achieve a meaningful and full life. Positive psychology asserts that human strengths such as courage, good interpersonal skills, optimism, integrity, faith, moral values, perseverance, the ability to have insight, and future-mindedness shield people from mental illness. People high in optimism, trust, and abundance of love face any hindrance or stress with calmness.

Goals of Positive Psychology:

Martin Seligman highlighted the following goals of positive psychology-

1. To alter the pivotal point of psychology from merely paying attention to fixing up the afflictions or worst things in life to building the best things in life.

2. To make the normal lives of people fulfilling and nurturing high talent as well as healing pathology

3. To improve understanding of positive human behaviors to balance the negative focus of much mainstream research & theory (Sheldon & King, 2001). Positive psychology does not deny the possibility of human beings having a bad character or being evil, but it aims to build on human strengths and virtues.

4. To develop an empirically-based conceptual understanding and language for describing healthy human functioning that parallels our classification and understanding of mental illness (Keyes, 2003).

5. To enhance present wellbeing.

6. To enhance strengths to either face or prevent future problems.

7. To make life meaningful and worth living.

8. To identify, focus on and boost the character strengths, virtues, and positive personality traits that boost the wellbeing and happiness of a person.

9. To identify and nurture the elements of positive psychology from various branches of psychology.

Ultimately, positive psychology aims to help people see their past as a source of knowledge and learning, on the basis of which they can make their realistic desired future in such a way that they experience joy and happiness in the mental, emotional, relational, spiritual, cultural, and spiritual areas of their lives.

Positive psychology believes optimal functioning is closely related to happiness or a good life. Positive psychology borrowed the concept of the good life from Aristotle's eudaimonia. Eudaimonia refers to a state of feeling well and being successful in being well. In other words, living life

at its best, developing in all areas of one's life, and being a fully functional individual.

2.3 SELIGMAN'S THREE PILLARS OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Now it can be concluded that there are three pillars of positive psychology. They are:

1. Positive subjective experiences:

such as joy, happiness with present life situations, contentment with the past, optimism, and hope for the future.

2. Positive individual characteristics:

such as personal strengths and human virtues, promote mental health. For example, ability to work and love, curiosity, creativity, self-awareness, self-regulation, courage, resilience, wisdom, compassion, emotional intelligence, being humble and modest, ability to show gratitude, etc.

3. Positive social institutions and communities:

that contribute to individual health and happiness through virtues like justice, good parenting, fairness, cohesiveness, and teamwork, generosity, responsibility and civility, nurturance and tolerance, open-mindedness, a sense of safety, etc. Examples of social institutions and communities can be families, schools, work organizations, government, etc. Positive organizations encourage critical thinking and continuously give opportunities for personal and professional upskilling and development.

At the end, we can say, that positive psychology is an upcoming field of psychology, that brings a refreshing change from pessimism, helplessness to hope, optimism and empowerment to the people seeking help from psychologists. It comes as no surprise that it is being applied in various fields of psychology and other social sciences.

2.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we discussed the definitions, assumptions and goals of positive psychology. In this context, we also learned about different components and forms of a good life proposed by Martin Seligman. We also discussed the three pillars of positive psychology as proposed by Martin Seligman at the end of this unit.

2.5 QUESTIONS

1. What are the different definitions of positive psychology? Discuss the assumptions and goals of positive psychology.

2. What are the different components of a good life? Discuss the various forms/categories of a good life.

3. Write short notes on:

a) Assumptions of positive psychology

b) Four different forms of a good life

c) Goals of positive psychology

2.6 REFERENCES

- Snyder, C. R.; & Lopez, S. J. (2002). Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Snyder, C. R.; Lopez, S. J.; & Pedrotti, J. T. (2011). Positive Psychology: The Scientific and Practical Explorations of Human Strengths. New Delhi: Sage South Asia Edition.

*****

3

POSITIVE SUBJECTIVE STATES - I

Unit Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

• Understand the concept of SWB

• Know the historical development of SWB

• Understand the various theoretical approaches to SWB

• Know the various correlates of and its influence on SWB

• Understand the history of research on Positive Emotions

23

- Understand the Broaden and Build theory of Positive Emotions

- Know how to increase the prevalence of Positive Emotions

3.1 INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Subjective well-being (SWB) is defined as 'a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life' (Diener, Lucas, & Oshi, 2002). There are two factors in SWB – cognitive and affective. The cognitive factor refers to one's evaluations about his or her life satisfaction in specific areas of life, such as family or work, and life satisfaction as a whole. The affective factor refers to the emotional responses to various life events.

Subjective well-being comprises of three components – positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. A person experiences high SWB when he experiences positive affect, low level of negative affect, and high life satisfaction. Positive affect refers to the experience of pleasant emotions, moods, and feelings (joy, pride, gratitude). Negative affect refers to the experience of unpleasant emotions (anger, disgust, fear).

Various philosophers and researchers have contributed to the understanding and development of the concept of SWB. To begin with, the Utilitarian focused on understanding the physical, mental and emotional aspects of pleasure and pain experienced by individuals. According to Jeremy Bentham, the essence of a good life is the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain.

Flugel (1925) recorded and studied the emotional reactions of people to various events and categorized them. George Gallup, Gerald Gurin and Hadley Cantril initiated the use of surveys as an assessment method on a large scale. After World War II, various researchers started using surveys with the general public regarding their happiness and life satisfaction.

Norman Bradburn (1969) showed that positive and negative affect have different correlates, are independent, and are not just opposites of each other; thus, implying that these two affects must be studied separately to gain a broader understanding of their implication on the SWB. Thus, just as the elimination of pain does not guarantee the experience of pleasure similarly reducing the experience of negative affect will not necessarily increase the experience of positive affect.

Since the mid -1980s, the study of SWB has grown rapidly and emerged as a scientific discipline. SWB emphasizes on the individuals and their evaluations of their life events. With the shift in trend from collectivism to individualism, the significance of SWB has increased. People all over the world have become concerned about their quality of life and not merely about their 'material' possessions. The development of various scientific methods has helped in the development of an applied discipline.

3.2 MEASURING SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING (SWB)

The earlier survey questionnaires were simplistic concerning single question about the happiness and life satisfaction of the people. The scores obtained from these questions about the overall evaluation of people's lives were found to be well converged (Andrew & Withey, 1976).

Over time, the multi-item scales were developed. These multi-item scales had greater validity and reliability as compared to the single-item scales. Factors like life satisfaction, pleasant affect, unpleasant affect and self-esteem were found to be distinct from each other by Lucas, Diener & Suh (1996).

One important issue with the use of self-report instruments is their validity. The use of other methods of assessment, like the expert ratings based on the interviews with participants, reporting feelings at random moments in day-to-day life, memories for positive and negative events in the participants' lives, reports obtained from family and friends and smiling were found to converge with the self-report measures by Sandvik, Diener & Seidlitz (1993).

The use of a multi-method battery to assess the SWB will be more beneficial than merely relying on multi-item questionnaires. A combination of various assessment methods, like participants' reports and experience sampling, can supplement the information obtained through the questionnaires and also aid in understanding how people construct their judgements about SWB.

Schwarz & Strack (1999) concluded that people's judgements about life satisfaction are not fixed and that they use the latest information to construct their judgements about life satisfaction. Certain information could be more important for some people and not so much for others. Thus, different people will base their judgements depending on what information seems important to them at that specific point in time. People from individualistic cultures are more likely to base their judgements on their level of self-esteem, whereas people from collectivistic cultures are more likely to base their judgements on the opinions of other people (Diener& Diener, 1995).

People's judgements about their life satisfaction may differ depending upon the type of information they seek to base their judgements on. Some people may focus more on the positive/ pleasant aspects of their lives, whereas others may focus more on the negative/problematic aspects. People also differ in terms of how much importance they assign to their emotions in basing their life satisfaction judgements (Suh & Diener, 1999). Thus, people's judgements about life satisfaction depend on different information that they consider important and this information may change over time.

Thomas & Diener (1990) found that people's judgements of life satisfaction and happiness, are influenced by their current mood, their

beliefs about happiness and how easily they can retrieve positive or negative information. Researchers have also differentiated between people making judgements about life satisfaction on the basis of momentary thoughts and feelings or a global assessment of the same.

According to Kahneman (1999), momentary evaluations offer more accurate judgements of SWB as they are less likely to be distorted by biases. On the other hand, the global evaluations are also important, as they offer insight into how an individual summarizes his or her life experiences as a whole. Thus, these two types of evaluations - specific and global – offer two distinct sets of information, pertaining to specific aspects of people's lives and global judgements about their life satisfaction.

3.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SWB

The various theories of happiness can be categorized into three groups:

i.   Need and goal satisfaction theories

ii.   Process or activity theories

iii.   Genetic or personality theories

3.3.1 Need and Goal Satisfaction Theories:

The central idea of the need and goal satisfaction theories is that happiness is experienced when there is the elimination of pain and gratification of the biological and psychological needs. These theories believe that individuals attain higher life satisfaction as they attain their goals or needs and move towards their ideal state. Omodei & Wearing (1990) found that there was a positive correlation between the satisfaction of needs in individuals and their degree of life satisfaction.

The concept of the pleasure principle put forth by Sigmund Freud and Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of motives represent this category of theories. These theoretical approaches posit that a reduction in the amount of tension and satisfaction of the various biological and psychological needs and goals of an individual causes happiness. Thus, according to these theories, happiness is an end state that is achieved when needs are met and goals are fulfilled.

3.3.2 Process or Activity Theories:

These theories posit that engagement in an activity can be a source or cause of happiness. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that people are happy when they are involved in activities that interest them and match their level of skill sets. This match between the activities and the skills leads to a state of mind called 'flow' and it is further said that people who experience this flow are the ones who experience a high degree of happiness.

Having significant life goals and being able to pursue them can lead to SWB (Emmons, 1986 & Little, 1989). It was found that people experience more happiness when they are involved in activities for intrinsic reasons (Sheldon, Ryan & Reis, 1996). Individuals who have significant goals in life are more likely to experience positive emotions, are more likely to be energy-driven and feel that their lives are more meaningful (McGregor & Little, 1998).

3.3.3 Genetic or Personality Theories:

These approaches believe that there is a component of stability in the levels of well-being and happiness experienced by people and that SWB is strongly influenced by genetic or personality factors. An individual's judgements about SWB reflect the cognitive and emotional reactions of his life circumstances, which can be relatively stable or short-lived. Hence, the researchers have to study both the aspects of SWB; long-term and momentary.

Diener & Larsen (1984) found that people's reactions change according to changes in circumstances, and those changes in reactions are reflected in their momentary SWB. The stable patterns of an individual's SWB can be predicted through the average of their momentary reports across various situations. They further found that people have specific emotional responses to various life circumstances and that these emotional responses are moderately to strongly stable over a period of time.

The stability and consistency of the SWB can be attributed to genetic factors; certain people are more likely to be happy or unhappy. Certain personality traits have been linked to SWB. Lucas & Fujita (2000) found that Extraversion is correlated strongly with pleasant affect and Neuroticism is associated with negative affect. Tellegen et al. (1988) studied the genetic influences on SWB. They studied and compared monozygotic twins who were reared apart with dizygotic twins who were reared apart, as well as with the monozygotic and dizygotic twins who were reared together.

They found that 40% of the variability in positive affect and 55% of the variability in negative affect could be predicted by genetic variation. The results could be attributed to environmental influences as well, but genetic factors play an important role in influencing the characteristic emotional responses to the various life circumstances (Tellegen et al., 1988).

Besides these theoretical explanations, the differences in the SWB can be attributed to various other factors as well. The stable individual differences in how people think about the world can lead to differences in SWB. Some people recall and process the pleasant aspects of their lives better than the unpleasant aspects. Some other factors, like the cognitive dispositions, optimism, the expectancy for control seem to influence the judgements of SWB.

3.4 CORRELATES OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

3.4.1 Demographic Correlates of SWB:

Although genetic factors and temperamental predispositions have an impact on the SWB; the other factors related to an individual also play an important role. This section explores the demographic correlates of SWB. Wilson (1967) found that the personality factors and the demographic factors both have an influence on the SWB. Campbell, Converse & Rodgers (1976) found that demographic factors like age, income, and education did not account for much variance in the SWB's judgements.

Diener & Diener (1996) and Diener et al. (1999) analysed the demographic correlates of SWB and came to the following conclusions – Demographic factors like age, sex and income are related to SWB, but their influence is usually small, and most people are moderately happy. Thus, it can be concluded the that demographic factors can distinguish between people who are extremely happy and people who are moderately happy.

An individual's goals and needs must be taken into consideration when understanding the relationship between income and SWB. If the person's material needs keep increasing more rapidly than their income, then the benefits of the rising income will be diminished or negligible. Age and gender are also related to the SWB, even if the effects are small, depending on what component of the SWB is being measured.

Other demographic factors like subjective perception of one's physical health, marital status and religious faith are also positively correlated with SWB. However, the way people perceive their health is more important than the objective reality; the effect of marital status varies for men and women, and similarly, the effect of religious activities will depend on the specific religious inclinations. Hence, it is important to study the individual components of SWB to understand its correlates (Diener et al., 1999).

3.4.2 Culture and SWB:

Not just the demographic factors, but the cultural factors also play an important role in SWB. In collectivistic cultures, self-esteem is not strongly associated with SWB (Diener & Diener, 1995) and extraversion seems to be less strongly associated with pleasant affect (Lucas et al., 2000). Cultural differences in the significance of personality congruence play an important role in SWB.

Personality Congruence is the extent to which the behaviour of a person is consistent with his feelings across various situations. The collectivistic cultures are less congruent than the individualistic cultures, and thus personality congruence is less strongly associated with SWB in the collectivistic cultures than the individualistic cultures (Suh, 1999). In collectivistic cultures, the opinions and wishes of a person's significant

others, rather than his own emotions, play an important role in determining the level of life satisfaction (Suh et al., 1998).

The cultural norms also exert an influence on the demographic correlates of SWB. When basic needs are not met, wealth can lead to increased SWB in poorer countries. People in the richer countries are more likely to be happier, but this could be because they have more luxuries and also high levels of equality, longevityand human rights.

Marriage is also an important correlate of SWB that is influenced by the cultural factor. Unmarried couples are happier than married couples in individualistic countries, whereas married couples are happier than unmarried couples in collectivistic cultures because of the social approval that comes with marriage (Diener et al., 2000).

Since SWB is crucial for being happy hence, several interventions are designed to boost SWB and eventually the happiness of an individual. Fordyce (1977, 1983) evaluated a program based on the idea that the SWB could be increased if people learned to imitate the characteristics of people who are happy and have high SWB. Characteristics of happy people include being organized, occupied, more socialization, having a positive outlook, and having a healthy personality. The study found lasting effects of this intervention. The programs for enhancing SWB can be effective, given that more efforts have to be directed towards the development, implementation, and evaluation of such interventions.

3.5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Positive Emotions refer to the pleasant or desirable responses to situations ranging from emotions like joy, contentment, interest, gratitude, love, etc. Positive emotions also indicate the absence of negative emotions like hate, anger, disgust, fear, etc. Positive emotions are capable of producing optimal functioning in an individual not just momentarily but over a longer period of time.

Positive emotions essentially play a very significant role in our lives. Hence, we must work towards cultivating positive emotions in ourselves and also promoting them in other people around us. Experiencing positive emotions is not an end state; rather, it is a means to achieve and improve physical and psychological health and, thereby, greater life satisfaction. Given the significant role positive emotions play in our lives and happiness; we need to focus on conducting research in this area. Before that, we also need to look into the historical development of the research conducted in the area of positive emotions.

3.5.1 Neglected Relative to Negative Emotions:

Traditionally, the focus of research in psychology has been to understand problem behaviours (disorders) and the causes and remedies for these problem behaviours. As a result of this, the focus has always been on understanding the negative emotions rather than the positive ones. When

negative emotions are experienced extremely, inappropriately, and over longer periods of time, they may cause the development of behaviours characterized by anxiety, phobias, aggression, depression, etc.

Another reason why positive emotions were given secondary importance is because most of the models assume that the emotions are associated with or followed by specific action tendencies. These specific action tendencies were assumed to be adaptive in nature and evolved over generations as they helped with survival.

Most of the specific action tendencies that were researched were those associated with the negative emotions. For example, fear is associated with escape, and anger is associated with physical aggression. The action tendencies that are associated with the positive emotions are not specific in nature; rather, they are non-specific and vague in nature. For example, joy is associated with activation and contentment is associated with inactivity; these action tendencies are too general to be specific (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).

3.5.2 Confused with related Affective States:

The distinction between positive emotions and the other affective states, like sensory pleasure and positive mood, has always been quite fuzzy. Various forms of sensory pleasure are confused with that of positive emotions because both involve physiological changes and a pleasant subjective feel; moreover, sensory pleasure and positive emotions often co-occur.

However, emotions are different from physical sensations. Emotions require some form of cognitive appraisal – assigning meaning to the event. As against that, pleasure can be caused merely by a change in the physical environment. Another distinction is that pleasure relies on body stimulation, whereas emotions can occur even in the absence of external physical stimulation.

Emotions and mood are conceptually quite different from each other. Emotions occupy the foreground of the consciousness, are short-lived, and have an object. Moods, on the other hand, occupy the background of the consciousness and are long-lasting and objectless or free-floating in nature (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996; Rosenberg, 1998).

3.5.3 Functions identified as Approach Behavior or Continued Action:

The previous experiences of positive emotions cause an individual to interact with their environment and engage in activities that are adaptive in nature from an evolutionary aspect. The connection between positive emotions and activity engagement leads people to experience positive affect (Diener & Diener, 1996). Without this experience of positive affect, people would be disengaged or unmotivated to interact with their environment.

Thus, the most common function of the positive emotions is to facilitate approach behaviour or continued action. The other positive affective states, like that of sensory pleasure and positive mood, also play a role in approaching behaviour or continuing action. The sensory pleasure motivates people to approach or continue engaging in activities that are biologically useful to them, similarly, positive moods motivate people to approach or continue engaging in the thoughts and actions that were initiated (Cabanac, 1971; Clore, 1994).

3.6 THE BROADEN-AND-BUILD THEORY OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Fredrickson (1998) put forth the Broaden-and-Build theory of Positive Emotions stating that positive emotions broaden people's thoughts and actions and help them build their personal resources. The traditional approaches to positive emotions largely confused them with the other affective states, trying to fit them into the general models of emotions and focusing on approach or continuation as their basic function.

This new model is based on the specific action tendencies that best describe the function of the negative emotions. A specific action tendency can be described as the consequence of a psychological process that helps narrow down the thought-action sequence by urging the person to act in a particular way. In a life-threatening situation, such a narrowed thought-action sequence helps the person make quick decisions and facilitates immediate actions. Such specific action tendencies triggered by the negative emotions, have helped our ancestors for their survival.

Positive emotions do not or very rarely occur during life-threatening situations; hence, a specific action tendency to narrow the thought-action sequence in order to facilitate quick decisions and action may not be required. On the contrary, positive emotions have a completely opposite effect; they broaden people's thought-action sequence, thus opening up a wide array of thoughts and actions. For instance, joy stimulates creativity, interest stimulates exploration, and contentment stimulates integration. Each of these sequences explains the ways in which positive emotions broaden the thought-action sequences.

The specific action tendencies triggered by the negative emotions have direct and immediate benefits that are adaptive for us in life-threatening situations. The specific action tendencies triggered by the positive emotions are indirect and long-term in nature, as the broadening helps us to build enduring resources. Positive emotions facilitate the building up of personal resources that range from physical, social, cognitive, emotional, and psychological resources (Fredrickson, 1998 & 2000).

This theory explains that, through the experience of positive emotions, people can evolve. As the following figure 1 explains, the experiences of positive emotions broaden the thought-action repertoires, which help people build enduring personal resources and transform them into more knowledgeable, creative, resilient, socially adaptable, and physically and

psychologically healthy individuals. The theory further explains that the initial experiences of positive emotions create upward spirals towards further experiences of positive emotions.

Figure 1.1 Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2002)
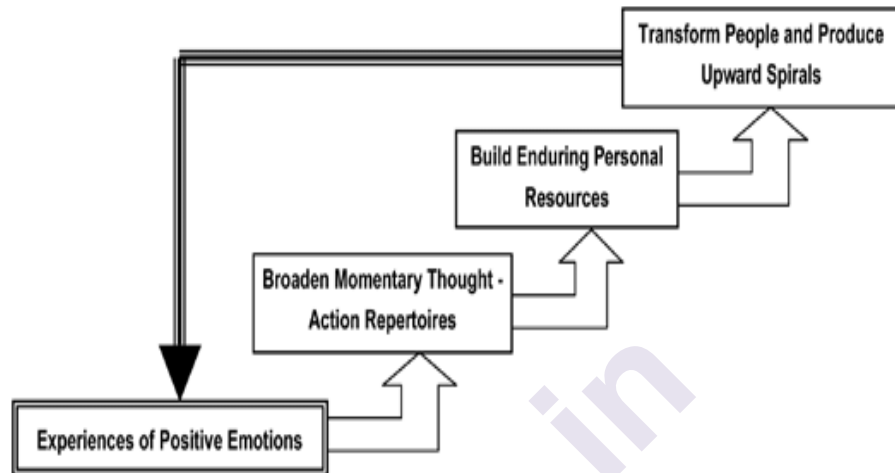
{**Source:** Fredrickson, B. L. (2002). Positive emotions. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press.}

3.6.1 The Broadening Hypothesis:

The broaden-and-build theory explains that the experiences of positive emotions broaden the person's momentary thought-action tendencies. To put it in simple words, positive emotions broaden the range of our thoughts and actions. Isen et al. (1985) found that positive emotions can impact the thoughts to become more inclusive, flexible, creative, and receptive and can produce more creative and variable actions.

The broadening hypothesis posits the win hypothesis, that positive emotions broaden the people's thought-action repertoires and the negative emotions narrow people's thought-action repertoires. The positive emotions widen the array of thoughts and actions, whereas the negative emotions narrow the array of thoughts and actions. Fredrickson & Branigan (2001) conducted an experiment to test the twin hypotheses.

They induced the specific emotions of joy, contentment, fear, and anger by showing the participants emotionally evocative short film clips. Participants were also a shown non-emotional film clip for the neutral condition for comparison. Immediately following each of the film clips, the breadth of the participants' thought-action repertoires was measured. They were asked to imagine themselves in situations where similar feelings (emotions) would arise and then to list what they would do in such situations.

The results showed that the participants in the two positive emotion conditions (joy and contentment) identified significantly more things that they would do compared to the participants in the two negative emotion conditions (fear and anger) and the participants in the neutral condition. The participants in the negative emotions condition named significantly fewer things than those in the neutral condition (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001).

3.6.2 The Building Hypothesis:

The broaden-and-build theory explains further that the experiences of positive emotions broaden the person's momentary thought-action tendencies, which help the person build enduring personal resources. Positive emotions build enduring personal resources in terms of physical, intellectual, and social resources.

The evidence suggesting a link between positive emotions and intellectual resources comes from individual differences in attachment styles. Children who receive secure attachment from their caregivers tend to be more flexible, persistent, and resourceful problem solvers compared to their peers (Arend et al. 1978; 1979). They are more likely to seek exploration of novel places and thus develop better cognitive maps of the places (Hazen & Durrett, 1982). These intellectual resources acquired in childhood extend into adulthood as well.

The experience of positive emotions broadens the thought-action repertoires and builds enduring personal resources, which together result in improved well-being for an individual. With improved personal resources, people learn better coping strategies and resilience that will be helpful in the face of adversities and stressful situations. This theory proposes that the positive emotions and the broadened thinking influence each other in a reciprocal manner, thus creating an upward spiral towards enhanced resilience and coping.

Fredrickson and Joiner conducted a study to understand the building hypothesis and concluded that, over time, positive emotions and broad-minded coping built on each other mutually. The broaden-and-build theory explains that experiences of positive emotions can build enduring psychological resilience and trigger the upward spiral towards psychological and emotional well-being. Thus, positive emotions not only make people feel good at the present moment but also increase the likelihood of people being happy in the future.

3.6.3 The Undoing Hypothesis:

The broaden-and-build theory states that the experiences of positive emotions broaden the person's momentary thought-action repertoires whereas the negative emotions narrow the thought-action repertoires; hence, the positive emotions can also function in ways to 'undo' the effects of the negative emotions. This is called the undoing hypothesis (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998).

The key components of positive and negative emotions cannot coexist simultaneously because a person's momentary thought-action repertoire cannot be simultaneously narrow and broad. The mechanism responsible for this incompatibility could be the 'broadening'. The positive emotions broaden the person's thought-action repertoire, which will loosen the hold gained by the negative emotions on the person's mind and body, by undoing the preparation for specific action.

Fredrickson et al. (2000) conducted an experiment to test the undoing hypothesis. The participants were first induced to feel a highly arousing negative emotion, and then, by random assignment, they were immediately induced to feel mild joy, contentment, neutrality, or sadness by watching short, emotionally evocative film clips. The results showed that the participants in the mild joy and contentment conditions (two positive emotion conditions) exhibited faster cardio-vascular recovery than those in the neutral control condition and faster than those in the sadness condition.

The positive and neutral films do not differ in what they do to the cardio-vascular system; they differ in what they can undo within the cardio-vascular system. The two distinct types of positive emotions (mild joy and contentment) were capable of undoing the cardio-vascular effects of the negative emotions because the positive emotions broadened the people's thought-action repertoire.

There are individual differences in the ability to make use of the undoing effect of positive emotions. Block & Kremen (1996) found that people who score high on the self-report measures of psychological resilience show faster cardio-vascular recovery after negative emotional arousal as compared to people who score low on psychological resilience.

Highly resilient people experience more positive emotions than less resilient people. The experience of the positive emotions helps them bounce back from the negative emotional arousal. Thus, resilient people are experts at harnessing the undoing effect of positive emotions.

3.7 INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

There are no techniques or interventions directly based on the broaden-and-build theory for increasing the prevalence of positive emotions. However, the broaden-and-build theory can explain the effectiveness of the existing techniques that can be reframed to increase the prevalence of positive emotions.

There are no direct methods for inducing emotions among people. All the emotion - inducing techniques are indirect in nature; they often focus on one component of the multi-component system. Emotions typically arise from the appraisals of the personal meaning of a specific event; thus, the most useful emotion - inducing technique is to shape the person's appraisals of a situation. The most effective technique is to recall situations that elicit certain emotions. The other emotion-inducing

techniques include a facial or muscle configuration, a physiological state, or a mode of thinking.

The interventions that have been discussed in this section are practicing relaxation and increasing pleasant activities.

3.7.1 Practicing Relaxation:

The various relaxation techniques range from meditation and yoga to imagery exercises and progressive muscle relaxation. These techniques have been shown to produce relaxation and help treat problems caused or exacerbated by negative emotions. The relaxation techniques are highly effective as they initiate the positive emotion of contentment (Fredrickson, 2000).

Contentment is a positive emotion that elicits cognitive changes rather than physical changes. It integrates the present moment with the experiences into an enriched appreciation of one's place in the world (Fredrickson, 1998 & 2000). The relaxation techniques create conditions for experiencing the positive emotions by inducing the key components of contentment.

The Mediation exercises induce a state of mindfulness (full awareness of the present moment) that resembles the characteristic of contentment. The use of Imagery exercises focuses on specific situations (nature, previous experiences) known to be frequent precursors of contentment. The use of Progressive Muscle Relaxation creates a tension-release sequence that gives way to relaxed contentment.

The various relaxation techniques induce the components of contentment, which further increases the probability of a multi-component experience of contentment. The relaxation techniques are effective in treating problems caused by negative emotions because of the undoing effect of the positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2000). In the long term, the use of relaxation techniques can be useful for psychological growth and well-being.

3.7.2 Increasing Pleasant Activities:

The behavioural theories suggest that depression is caused by a deficit in response-dependent positive reinforcement. The interventions focusing on increasing pleasant activities are based on behavioural theories. The various interventions include increasing the engagement in pleasant activities like being physically active (exercising), being creative, being close to nature, and socializing.

These interventions place emphasis on pleasant activities and not on pleasant subjective experiences (positive emotions). Although pleasant activities are capable of producing positive emotions, to what extent it happens depends on the subjective meanings attached by the individuals to those activities. The effectiveness of these interventions can be accelerated

by increasing pleasant activities and connecting them to the broadening and building effects of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2000).

Folkman (1997) suggested that positive emotions result from finding positive meaning. People find positive meaning in the activities and events of day-to-day life by associating those events and activities with positive values. In this context, engaging in physical activity can be viewed as a personal achievement; attending a social event can be viewed as an opportunity to connect with other people; and being close to nature can be seen as a shift from monotonous activities. Finding positive meaning in such ways can produce experiences of contentment, joy, love, and other positive emotions.

Finding positive meaning can produce significant therapeutic effects and cause improvements in physical as well as psychological health and well-being. Fredrickson (2000) argued that finding positive meaning produces positive emotions that broaden the modes of thinking and build enduring personal resources. The intervention strategies focusing on increasing pleasant activities can be used to focus more directly on finding positive meaning and experiencing positive emotions.

The broaden-and-build theory emphasizes the ways in which positive emotions are significant elements of optimal functioning and hence essential aspects of positive psychology. The important contribution that this theory makes is that it is important to cultivate positive emotions in our lives and those around us, which can transform us into better people and lead better lives.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this unit, we began by discussing the concept of subjective well-being, its historical development, and the various methods of measuring it. After that, we discussed the three major theoretical approaches to explaining and understanding subjective well-being, followed by understanding the influence of the various correlates of SWB, like demographic factors and cultural factors.

We then discussed the significance of positive emotions in the field of positive psychology and in our lives. Then we discussed the historical development of research in the area of positive emotions as opposed to that of negative emotions. We learned in detail about the Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions put forth by Fredrickson; we understood the various concepts and the hypothesis testing related to the theory. In the end, we also discussed the various intervention strategies to increase the prevalence of positive emotions by practicing relaxation techniques and by increasing the pleasant activities in our lives.

3.9 QUESTIONS

1. What is subjective well-being? Write a note on the development and measurement of the concept.

2. Write a detailed note on the various theoretical approaches to subjective well-being.

3. Discuss the historical development of Positive emotions.

4. Discuss the Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions in detail.

5. What are the various intervention programs for increasing positive emotions?

3.10 REFERENCES

*   Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., & Oishi, S. (2002). Subjective well-being: The Science of happiness and life satisfaction. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 63–73.

*   Fredrickson, B. L. (2002). Positive emotions. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 120–134.

*****

POSITIVE SUBJECTIVE STATES - II

Unit Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of Flow.

- Understand the concepts of self and development in the context of flow.

- Methods of measuring the flow and autotelic personality.

- Understand the nature, obstacles and facilitators of flow.

- Various interventions that can foster flow.

- Understanding the significance of optimism.

- Components of Hope Theory.

- Hope theory in perspective with other positive psychology theories.

- Application of hope theory to different areas.

4.1 OPTIMAL EXPERIENCE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

The concept of flow, is one of the significant areas of positive psychology, providing an understanding of the experiences during which individuals are fully involved in that moment. As per the concept of flow, an ideal life is one in which there is total involvement in the present moment (in what one does).

4.1.1 The Flow Concept:

The work in the area of flow began with research to understand the phenomenon of 'autotelic' activity (auto means self and telos means goals). There had been no systematic study of the subjective phenomenology of intrinsically motivated activity. Csikszentmihalyi started studying the creative process in the 1960s. He investigated the nature and conditions of enjoyment by interviewing chess players, rock climbers, painters, dancers, and others who were pursuing an activity because of entertainment as the primary factor.

Based on this, the following characteristics of optimal experience and proximal conditions were identified (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The conditions of the flow include:

- Perceived challenges or opportunities for action; a sense that one is engaging in challenges that are appropriate to their level of capacities.

- Definite and proximal goals and immediate feedback about the progress being made.

39

The subjective experience of being 'in flow' is characterized by the following:

- Focused concentration on the task one is doing in the present moment

- Combining actions and awareness

- Loss of awareness of oneself

- A sense of control over one's actions

- A sense that time is passing faster than normal.

- Experience of activity as being intrinsically rewarding.

An individual operates at his full capacity when in flow; this state is characterized by dynamic equilibrium. This requires establishing a balance between perceived action capacities and perceived action opportunities (Berlyne, 1960; Hunt, 1965). When the challenges exceed the skills, one becomes vigilant and anxious, and when the skills exceed the challenges, one gets relaxed and then bored. Feedback about the changing relationship with the environment is provided by the change in subjective state. The experience of either anxiety or boredom allows the person to adjust his skills and challenges in order to remain in the flow.

The research on the concept of flow has been conducted in the areas of science, aesthetics, sports, literary writing, and other areas (where fostering positive experiences is especially important), and it was found that the experience is the same across different types of activity, culture, class, age or gender, (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990).

During the 1980s, the research work in the area of the concept of flow was assimilated into the scope of psychology within the framework of the humanistic approaches as put forth by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, emphasizing on the intrinsic motivation (McAdams, 1990). According to the humanistic perspective, an individual was viewed as a self-regulating being, and his interaction with the environment was considered crucial. This assumption was similar to that of the concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998).

Magnusson & Stattin (1998) stated that the most important concept in the flow model is that of interactionism, which emphasizes the dynamic system of the individuals, environment and the interaction between the individual and the environment. The organized set of challenges and the corresponding set of skills result in an optimal experience. The activities provide opportunities for action, and effectively engaging in the challenges depends on the possession of the relevant capacities for action.

Csikszentmihalyi (1985) emphasized the concept of emergent motivation, in which the direction of the unfolding flow experience is influenced by both the person and the environment. What happens at a given moment is responsive to what happened immediately before the interaction; the

motivation is emergent because the proximal goals arise out of the interaction, and the long-term goals may emerge out of new interests.

Another important element in the flow model is subjectivity. The experience is determined by the subjectively perceived opportunities and capacities for action. There is no objectively defined body of information or set of challenges, but rather information that has been selectively attended to and perceived opportunities for action. Thus, it is the subjective challenges and the subjective skills that influence the quality of a person's experience.

4.1.2 Flow, Attention and the Self:

The model of experience, consciousness, and the self was developed in conjunction with that of the flow concept (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). This model states that people have to deal with an overwhelming amount of information in their day-to-day lives. The complex system that has evolved for selecting, processing, and storing information is consciousness. With the selective investment of attention, the information is retained in the consciousness. The attended information then appears in the awareness – this system includes all the processes that take place in the consciousness like cognition, thinking, reasoning, emotion, etc. The memory system then stores and retrieves the information; thus, the subjective experiences are the context of consciousness.

The concept of self emerges when consciousness comes into existence and becomes aware of itself in terms of information about the body, subjective states, past memories, and the future. Mead distinguished between two aspects of self – the knower (the I) and the known (the me). The knower (I) is the sum of one's conscious processes, and the known (me) is the information about oneself that enters awareness when one becomes the object of one's attention.

The consciousness provides us with a measure of control; it is the clutch between the programmed instructions and the adaptive behaviour (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). It basically balances between the genetic and cultural guides to action and a set of goals that have been chosen by the individual. The attentional processes shape the person's experiences by making choices; making choices is crucial because it limits the amount of information that can be processed by the consciousness.

Attention plays an important role in the process of entering flow and staying in flow. Entering flow is a function of how attention was focused in the past and how it is focused in the present. Interests, proximal goals, immediate feedback and manageable challenges influence the process. Staying in flow requires your attention to be held. Apathy, boredom and anxiety are functions of how attention is being structured at a given time.

4.1.3 Flow, Complexity and Development:

There is a sense of complexity when the attentional processes are completely absorbed in the challenges at hand; the thoughts, feelings and the actions are in synchronization and the subjective experience is both differentiated and integrated.

The flow state is intrinsically rewarding, so it causes the individual to replicate the flow experiences and introduces a selective mechanism into psychological functioning that fosters growth. As the people master their current challenges, they develop greater levels of skills, and in order to continue experiencing flow, they have to identify and engage in more complex challenges.

The teleonomy of self is based on the growth principle, the optimal level of challenge stretches existing skills and results in a more complex set of capacities for action. The teleonomy of self is also based on the source of new goals, interests, and new capacities for action in relation to the existing interests (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 1999).

4.1.4 The Autotelic Personality:

The flow model focuses on phenomenology rather than personality. The important goal is to understand the dynamics of an experience and the conditions under which it is optimal. The ability to experience flow is universal; however, there are individual differences in the frequency of reported flow and the quality of their experiences.

Csikszentmihalyi recognized the possibility of an autotelic personality. This type of personality is characterized by people who like to do things for their own sake rather than to achieve any external goals. Such personalities are characterized by a set of skills that enable an individual to enter and stay in the flow.

These groups of metaskills include curiosity, interest in life, persistence, low self-centeredness and being driven by intrinsic motivation.

4.2 MEASURING FLOW AND AUTOTELIC PERSONALITY

There are various methods for measuring the intra-individual and inter-individual differences in the frequency of flow. There are measures for assessing the individual differences in the autotelic personality, which is a predisposition to experience flow.

4.2.1 Measuring Flow:

There has been very limited research on the systematic investigation of the subjective experiences, and the focus has shifted recently to studying the subjective experiences of the individuals. The three methods to study the subjective phenomenon of flow are interviews, questionnaires and the Experience Sampling Method (ESM).

Interview:

Csikszentmihalyi developed and studied the concept of flow through the various qualitative interviews of the subjective experiences of the people while a particular activity has been going on. The semi-structured interviews provide a detailed insight into the account of flow experiences in the real life. Interviews are crucial tools for identifying, segregating and describing the factors and their dynamics in the flow experience.

Questionnaire:

The paper-pencil tests are utilized when the goal is not to identify but to measure the factors or dimensions of the flow experience and also to understand the individual differences in its occurrence across individuals or contexts. Two such measures are The Flow Questionnaire and The Flow Scale.

The Flow Questionnaire involves presenting the individuals with various passages describing the flow state and then asking questions about whether they have had any such experience, how frequently, and in what context/activity. The passages are actually derived from the interviews conducted about the flow activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). The Flow Scale (Mayers, 1978) asks the respondents about the frequency with which they have experienced each of the dimensions of the flow experience. This tool has been used to understand the extent of the dimensions of the flow experience across different contexts and activities.

The Experience Sampling Method:

The measures of interviews and questionnaires are limited in nature as they rely on the retrospective reconstruction of past experiences and also require the participants to rely on their typical subjective experiences of the flow experience and then estimate the frequency and intensity of the experience.

Csikszentmihalyi & Larson (1987) developed a tool to aid the study of situated, optimal experience. In this technique, the participants are provided with paging devices like pagers, programmed watches or handheld computers. At regular (preprogrammed) intervals, the participants are signaled to complete a questionnaire describing the moment when they were paged. This method relies on samples from actual everyday experiences.

The aim of ESM is to focus on the sampling activities along with the cognitive, emotional and motivational states that can contribute to building a systematic phenomenology. The ESM studies of flow have focused on the sampled moments when the conditions for flow exist and when the flow is reported.

Csikszentmihalyi (1975/2000) conducted the first mapping of the phenomenological landscape in terms of the perceived challenges and skills and identified the three areas of experience – a flow channel (when

the challenges and skills match), a region of boredom (when the opportunities for action related to the skills drop), and a region of anxiety (when the challenges increasingly exceed the capacities for action).

The flow is expected to occur when individuals perceive greater opportunities for action than they encounter in their daily lives and have adequate skills to engage them. This understanding led to the identification of a fourth area of experience – apathy (associated with low challenges and correspondingly low skills). In essence, apathy is the opposite of flow, characterized by stagnation and attentional diffusion.

4.2.2 Measuring the Autotelic Personality:

In simple words, an autotelic personality is one with a disposition to experience flow. The time spent in flow experiences has been the most widely used measure of the general propensity towards flow. The time in flow experience also refers to the range of action opportunities that are available in the individual's environment during the sampling phase.

The autotelic personality has been operationalized as the disposition for intrinsic motivation in high-challenge, high-skill situations. Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde & Whalen (1993) defined autotelic personality as the conjunction of receptive and active qualities including sentience, understanding, achievement and endurance. These factors jointly account for the qualities of openness to new challenges and readiness to engage and persist in challenging activities that contribute to getting into and staying in the flow.

4.3 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN FLOW RESEARCH

The recent developments in research in the study of flow phenomena are as follows:

4.3.1 Consequence of Flow:

The Flow model states that when a person experiences flow, he is encouraged to persist in and return to the activity because of the experiential rewards involved, which eventually fosters the growth of the skill over time. The flow experience has been associated with commitment and achievement, providing evidence for a relationship between quality of experience and persistence in an activity (Carli et. al., 1998; Mayers, 1978).

The time spent in flow experiences can predict the level of self-esteem, as the self grows through flow experiences. Mastering the challenges of daily life not only enhances the positive outcomes but also protects against the negative ones (Schmidt, 2000). The quality of experience in everyday life in terms of subjective challenges also has an impact on physical health. The amount of physical pain was correlated with the time spent in anxiety among the girls, whereas it was correlated with the time spent in apathy among the boys (Patton, 1999).

4.3.2 The Nature and Dynamics of Flow:

There are two kinds of experiences that are intrinsically rewarding: those that involve the conservation of energy (relaxation) and those that involve the use of skills to grab opportunities (flow). These two strategies (relaxation and flow) are important aspects of human existence, and they both stimulate different or opposite behaviours. The two aversive situations that individuals are evolutionarily programmed to avoid are those when we feel overwhelmed (anxiety) or when we have nothing to do (apathy). From an individual's perspective, the flow is a self-justifying experience and also an end in itself. It includes the key experiential variables like concentration, enjoyment, the wish to perform the activity, self-esteem, and perceived significance for the future.

4.3.3 Obstacles and Facilitators to Flow:

This section focuses on the various obstacles to optimal experience, the facilitators, and the causes of flow.

Preference for Relaxation versus Flow:

The quality of the flow experience seems to be more positive with low challenge and high skills domain. When the challenge is high, it becomes a stress rather than an opportunity for action. On the other hand, reducing the level of challenge becomes an attractive option. Hence, motivation and happiness are higher in a low-challenge, high-skill situation than when the challenges and skills are both high (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1993).

Attitudes towards Work and Play:

The flow research has focused on the work-play distinction because of its connection with subjective experience. Csikszentmihalyi (1975/2000) found that work and play can cause deep flow experiences since both work and play can provide a structured source of challenges in life.

LeFevre (1988) studied a sample of heterogenous adult workers. The dimensions of subjective experience like concentration, feeling happy, strong, creative and satisfied were found to be significantly positive in high-challenge, high-skills situations at work than at leisure and the opposite was true for the time spent in low-challenge, low-skills situations. Work time was dominated by efficacy experiences and leisure time was dominated by experiences of apathy.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) studied the students from grades 6 to 12 to understand their attitudes towards work and play. It was found that motivation in the experiences that were regarded as work was lower than motivation in the experiences that were regarded as play; however, the work-like experiences were associated with high concentration, importance to the future and self-esteem. Both work and play were viewed as more positive experiences than any other activities.

Autotelic Personality:

There are individual differences in the time spent on the flow. Individuals who are most motivated in high-challenge, high-skill situations might be referred to as autotelic individuals. Hektner (1996) put forth that the autotelics were least happy and motivated in low-challenge, low-skill situations (apathy), whereas the non-autotelics did not find the apathy-inducing situations aversive. The autotelics have more well-defined future goals and more positive cognitive and affective states; they experience less stress in the flow experience.

Autotelic Families:

There has been an increasing amount of interest in understanding how the autotelic personality is being shaped. An autotelic personality is developed through a complex family environment that continuously provides support and challenge. Such families typically spend more time in high-challenge, high-skill situations rather than low-challenge, low-skill situations (Rathunde, 1988).

Individuals from such families have a sense of being in control of their actions and have more positive experiences while performing productive activities. The early schooling experience is also important in the development of the autotelic personality; such educational programs foster skills and propensities to flow through the identification of interest areas among the students.

4.4 INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAMS TO FOSTER FLOW

Researchers have been keen on how to implement their findings in applied settings. The findings of the flow research have been utilized in applied contexts through two distinct approaches to interventions. i) shape activity structures and environments to foster the flow, and ii) assist people in finding the flow.

The findings of the flow research have been directly applied to educational settings. The Key School, Indianapolis (elementary and middle school), seeks to provide a learning environment that can foster flow experiences and help the students develop interests, capacity, and propensity for flow experiences (Whalen, 1999). The students can choose and engage in the activities of their choice, and the teachers help them through the process of selection of activities and the challenges faced by them in order to help the children face new challenges and develop capacities that foster growth.

Another area for applying the findings of the flow research is psychotherapy. The flow theory provides a tool for identifying the patterns in everyday experiences and the ways in which these patterns could be transformed. It also provides for feedback, which is essential to understanding the extent of the change. Further, it helps identify activities that are intrinsically motivating and increases the optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1987).

The use of flow principles facilitates the therapeutic procedure to reorient towards building interests, strengths, skills and confidence. The goal is to foster a state of flow to help individuals identify the activities that interest them and be able to invest their attentional resources in these activities.

4.4.1 Attentional Processes and Meaningful Goals:

There is a dearth of research to understand the exact nature of the qualities, skills, and dispositions that characterize the individuals who are able to find flow in their lives. The attentional processes play a significant role in making a unified action and experience possible. The most crucial aspect is the capacity to regulate and direct one's attention also known as the self-regulation of the attention.

Individual differences in the preferences and experiences of flow emerge through childhood. It is crucial to conduct research to identify the qualities and experiences among those who develop the propensity for flow as opposed to those who prefer the state of relaxation, control or apathy rather than engaging in challenging activities.

There is also a need to look into the amorality of flow because there is a possibility that people can seek flow in activities or challenges that are neutral or destructive for themselves, others and society at large.

4.4.2 Forms of Flow:

The definition of when an individual is considered to be in the flow state is based on state measures like cognition, affect and motivation, as well as situational measures like skills and challenges.

Having said this, the research on the experience of flow has focused only on the individual experiences of flow while performing various activities. There is a need to identify and understand the shared flow as experienced by a group of individuals, like that of a community. Another area for research could be the microflow activities involved in activities like that of doodling. There is a lack of research with respect to the dimensions, dynamics, conditions, functions and subsequent effects in these areas.

4.5 OPTIMISM

The most fundamental difference between the optimists and the pessimists is that the optimists expect positive things to happen, whereas the pessimists expect negative things to happen. There are several other differences in terms of how they approach problems and the ways in which they cope with these problems.

The Expectancy Value approach tries to explain the underlying influences on optimism and pessimism. The theories of expectancy value believe that behaviour is determined by the pursuit of goals. Goals are states that are viewed as either desirable or undesirable by the people. The importance of the goal determines its value in terms of motivation for the person, so

there will be no behaviour in the absence of a goal. The expectancy refers to the perceived confidence in the attainability of a goal.

There are different types of goals, from general to specific, from concrete to abstract, and each of the goals produces a variation of expectancies. These expectancies are crucial for understanding and measuring the optimism. The first approach is to ask people directly to estimate the extent to which they think their future outcomes will be good or bad (Scheier & Carver, 1992). The second approach is based on the assumption that people's expectancies for future outcomes will depend on the causes of the events that happened in their past (Selingman, 1991).

Although both approaches have their differences, there are certain commonalities too. Both approaches believe that optimism refers to the expectation of good outcomes and pessimism refers to the expectation of bad outcomes. Both approaches believe that the expectancies determine people's actions and experiences.

Thus, optimism and pessimism are basic domains of a personality that influence how people conceive and approach the events in their lives. It also influences how people approach challenging situations and the actions that they engage in while dealing with these challenging situations.

4.5.1 Optimism and Subjective Well-Being (SWB):

People experience a wide range of emotions when they face adversity or a challenging situation. These emotions can range from eagerness and excitement to anxiety and anger. In such situations, the optimists expect positive outcomes, whereas the pessimists expect negative outcomes. A lot of studies have been conducted to understand the relationship between optimism and SWB.

Carver & Gaines (1987) studied the development of depressive symptoms after childbirth among women. They found that optimism was associated with lower depressive symptoms in the initial assessment and also predicted lower levels of depressive symptoms postpartum. This suggests that optimism develops a resistance against the experience of depressive tendencies. Scheier et al. (1989) studied men undergoing and recovering from coronary artery bypass surgery. It was found that the optimists reported less hostility and depression before surgery and a greater sense of relief, happiness and satisfaction post-surgery.

Carver et al. (1993) studied the adjustment for early breast cancer among women. It was concluded that optimism predicted the initial lower levels of distress before surgery and also later resilience against the distress during the follow-up period post-surgery. Cozarelli (1993) studied the emotional adjustment to abortion. It was found that the optimists had lower levels of pre-abortion depression and better post-abortion adjustment than the pessimists.

Given et al. (1993) studied cancer patients and their caregivers. It was concluded that optimism has a positive effect on the psychological well-

being of people with cancer and also influences the well-being of their caregivers. The caregivers' optimism was related to lower levels of depressive tendencies and a lower negative impact on their physical health and the daily lives of the caregivers.

Aspinwall &n Taylor (1992) studied how college students adjusted in their first semester at college. It was found that a high level of optimism at the beginning of the semester predicted lower levels of psychological distress at the end of the semester. All the studies indicate that there is a strong association between optimism and subjective well-being in the face of adversity and challenging situations.

4.5.2 Optimism, Pessimism and Coping:

When we say that the optimists experience less amount of distress while dealing with challenging situations as compared to the pessimists, does this mean that the optimists can handle or deal with these situations in ways that help them adapt better as compared to the pessimists. The optimists expect positive outcomes whereas, the pessimists expect negative outcomes. Optimists are more confident about the outcomes while handling adversity, while pessimists are doubtful about the outcomes in similar situations. Thus, the optimists and the pessimists differ in terms of their coping reactions and strategies.

Scheier (1986) studied coping among students in stressful situations. It was found that optimism was associated with problem-focused coping when the situation was perceived as controllable, optimism was associated with positive reframing when the situation was viewed as uncontrollable and optimism was inversely correlated to the use of denial or distancing from the problem. These findings suggest that optimists have better coping mechanisms than pessimists.

Carver et al. (1993) studied the differences in dispositional coping styles among the optimists and the pessimists. The optimists reported being active, planful, and using problem-focused coping, whereas the pessimists reported using disengagement, denial, and lessening awareness (through substance use) for coping. Thus, optimists are approachable copers, whereas pessimists are avoidant copers. Strutton & Lumpkin (1992) studied coping in the workplace and found that the optimists use problem-focused coping (acceptance, tension-reduction), whereas the pessimists use emotion-focused coping (withdrawing, distancing, self-blame).

Litt et al. (1992) studied coping with failed in vitro fertilization. It was found that pessimists used escape as a coping mechanism and experienced higher levels of distress than optimists. Taylor et al. (1992) studied coping among the patients of AIDS and found that optimism was associated with active coping strategies like acceptance rather than escapism; it also predicted a tendency to seek information and plan for recovery.

The coping responses associated with optimism and pessimism are strongly associated with distress. The coping mechanisms that are generally used by the optimists like acceptance, reframing, humour are

inversely correlated to levels of distress and the coping mechanisms that are generally used by pessimists like denial, disengagement are positively correlated to the levels of distress (Carver et al., 1993).

Aspinwall & Taylor (1992) studied the coping among the students and found that optimistic students were more likely to use active coping and pessimistic students were more likely to use avoidance coping. Active coping led to better adjustment, while avoidance coping led to poorer adjustment. Park et al. (1997) studied adjustment among pregnant women. It was found that optimistic women were more likely to engage in constructive thinking, which was inversely correlated to experience of anxiety.

In conclusion, the optimists tend to use problem-focused coping (acceptance, positive reframing, and use of humor), and the pessimists tend to use emotion-focused coping (denial and disengagement). Thus, the active efforts of acknowledging the existence of problems provide a benefit to the optimists while dealing with the problems through the development of adaptive parameters to lead the life.

Promoting Well-Being:

The pro-active processes aid in promoting well-being and good health and do not just deal with adversity. Optimists tend to rely on problem-focused coping during adversities, but they also take active steps to ensure a positive quality of life.

Shepperd, Maroto & Pbert (1996) studied patients in cardiac rehabilitation and found that optimism was related to higher success in reducing the levels of saturated fat and increase in exercise. Among the people with no specific health concerns, it was found that optimism is related to behaviours related to reducing health risks and promoting health (Robbins et al., 1991).

Optimists are selective while attending to the risks; they focus only on those that are applicable to them. They exhibit elevated vigilance in situations when the risk or threat is high and truly meaningful.

Pessimism and Maladaptive Behaviours:

The pessimists engage in behaviours that reflect a tendency to deny, disengage or give up instead of dealing with the problems; they are also less likely to make efforts to engage in promoting their health and well-being.

Substance use reflects a tendency to give-up, as a way to escape from problems. The pessimists are more likely to engage in a pattern of maladaptive behaviours like substance use in response to adversaries or challenging situations. Ohannessian et al. (1993) studied people with a family history of alcoholism. It was found that the pessimists were more likely to report drinking problems and were more likely to drop out of the rehabilitation program and go back to drinking than the optimists.

Another maladaptive behaviour that has been researched is an extreme form of giving up behaviour – suicide. Sometimes people just don't give up on specific life goals; rather, they give up on all the goals that make up their lives. Beck et al. (1985) concluded that some people are more vulnerable to suicide compared to others. Depression is considered the best indicator for suicide prediction, but actually pessimism is a stronger predictor for suicide.

Thus, research suggests that pessimism can lead to maladaptive and self-defeating behaviours among people. They tend to engage in avoidance coping, health damaging behaviours and also extreme escape from life altogether.

4.5.3 Is Optimism always better than Pessimism?

The optimists expect positive outcomes out of life situations; they are better at coping with challenging situations, experience less amount of distress and focus on developing adaptive and healthy ways to lead their lives. All this makes us believe that optimists are better than pessimists. However, there are certain circumstances when optimists are only slightly better than pessimists, or in no position of advantage or may even be worse off than the pessimists.

Too much optimism can cause people to underestimate or even ignore the possibility of threat or risk and overestimate their ability to cope with a challenging situation (Tennen & Affleck, 1987). Perkins et al. (1993) & Goodman et al. (1995) studied adolescent girls who were at risk for developing HIV infection. The participants who were high in optimism were less likely to seek information about HIV testing than those who were low in optimism.

The beliefs held by optimists might be more vulnerable to shattering as compared to those held by pessimists as pessimists expect negative outcomes, the adversity is in line with their expectations. It might be more difficult for the optimists to rebuild their assumptions, which might cause a delay or difficulty in dealing with the loss. However, there is not much literature available to confirm these hypotheses.

4.5.4 Can Pessimists become Optimists?

If almost all the research studies confirm that optimism is better than pessimism, then it would be advantageous to become an optimist! The role of genetics and early childhood experiences has been researched to understand the pathways for optimism. Twin studies have suggested that optimism is influenced genetically and displays heritability (Plomin et al., 1992). Optimism has been found to be related to the traits of neuroticism and extraversion, both of which are influenced genetically (Scheier et al.,1994).

Another important contributor to the development of optimism is early childhood experiences. Erik Erikson (1968) emphasized that the virtue of trust develops in an infant who can experience the world as predictable.

The Attachment theorists have emphasized the role of the secure relationship by the early caregivers, insecurity of attachment is associated with pessimism (Bowlby, 1988). Optimism as a quality is relatively permanent and pervasive, whether it is genetically determined or acquired through early childhood experiences.

The cognitive-behavioural therapies have tried to change pessimists into optimists by applying the basic concepts to the treatment of depression and anxiety (Beck, 1967). The basic aim of the CBT is to identify and modify the maladaptive cognitions and make them more positive to reduce the distress they cause.

The personal efficacy training focuses on the training and development of specific competencies (assertiveness training, social skills training, problem solving, decision making etc). These training programs specifically target the thoughts and behaviours that are related to pessimism in general. The main aim of such programs is to develop positive and realistic expectations and set specific goals.

4.6 HOPE THEORY

The Hope theory emphasizes the perception that one can reach the desired goals; it includes two components, namely, goal-directed thought-pathways and agency. The hope theory proposes focusing on the belief that one can find the pathways to desired goals and become motivated to use those pathways. Hope plays an important role in regulating the emotions and the well-being of people.

4.6.1 Goals:

All our actions are goal-directed and goals are the cognitive component of the hope theory. Goals are the targets of the mental-action sequences. Goals may be long-term or short-term, but they should have significant value to occupy the thoughts. Goals should be attainable, but at the same time there has to be an element of uncertainty because hope works best when the attainment of goals is intermediate in nature (Averill et al., 1990).

4.6.2 Pathways Thinking:

In order to attain the goals, it is imperative that people view themselves as capable of generating the routes towards attaining the goals. This process is called pathways thinking. It refers to one's perceived capability to generate workable routes to be able to attain the desired goals. To be able to encounter and deal with the impediments to attaining the desired goals, it is beneficial to develop more than one pathway to the desired goals.

4.6.3 Agency Thinking:

Agency refers to the perceived capacity to utilize the pathways in order to reach the desired goals. Agency is essentially the motivational component of the hope theory. The agentic thinking involves the two components of

initiating to move along the pathway and continuing to move along that pathway. Agentic thinking plays an important role when encountering an impediment, as it channelizes the person to apply the motivation to the best alternate pathway.

4.6.4 Adding Pathways and Agentic Thinking:

Snyder et al. (1991) put forth the idea that hope is a positive motivational state that is based on the successful interaction between the agency (goal-directed energy) and the pathways (the plan to meet the goals). The pathways thinking facilitates the agency thinking, which in turn facilitates the pathways thinking and so on. Thus, the pathway and agency thoughts are complementary and iterative over the course of a sequence of goal-directed cognitions.

4.6.5 Hope, Impediments and Emotion:

Most of the approaches have viewed hope as an emotion, and the hope theory has emphasized the thinking process (Farina et al., 1995). Thus, it proposes that the goal-pursuit cognitions cause the emotions. People who have attained their goals by overcoming the impediments experience positive emotions, whereas those who are unable to attain their goals due to the impediments experience negative emotions. Further, people who experience negative emotions due to the perceived lack of progress towards attaining the goals also experience a reduction in their perceived well-being.

4.6.6 Hope Model:

A new-born child undertakes the pathways thinking soon after its birth so as to make sense of the things happening around them. These evaluations improve over the course of childhood, and then the children are capable of understanding the causation. Approximately around 1 year, the child experiences what is called the psychological birth, which is the realization that the child is separate from other entities. This realization is also responsible for another insight: that the child can cause a chain of events and that the self is viewed as a causal instigator. The acquisition of goal-directed thought is very significant for the survival of the child. The significant others, like the parents, caregivers, teachers, and other elements of society, are involved in teaching hopeful thinking.

The temporal sequence of the goal-directed thought patterns in the hope theory is as follows (Figure 4.1)
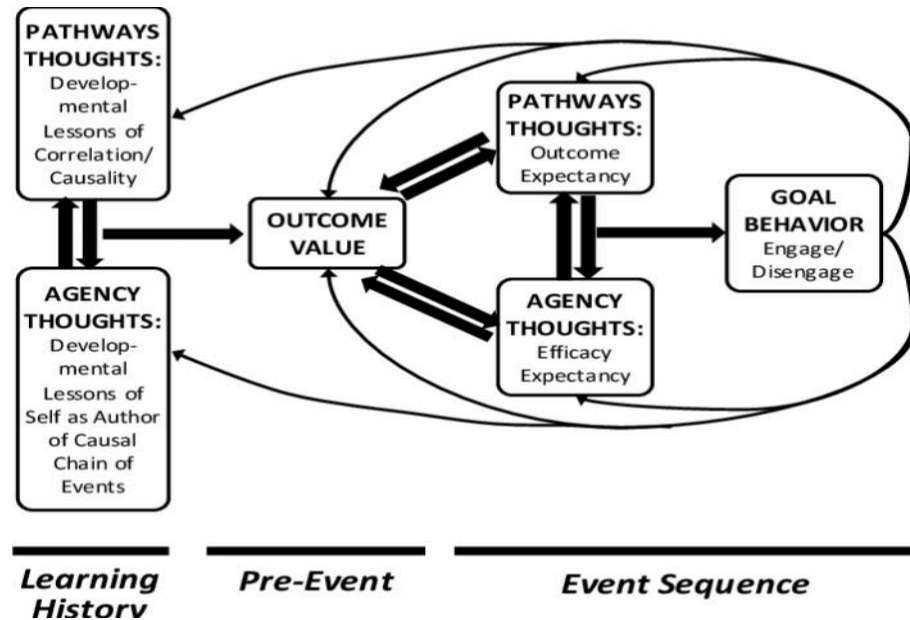
Figure 4.1 Temporal Sequence of Goal-Directed Thought Patterns

Source: Agency and Pathways goal-directed thoughts in Hope theory (Snyder, 2000)

The outcome value is crucial in the pre-event analysis. When the expected outcomes have high importance and are capable of demanding continuous mental attention, the person moves to the phase of event-sequence analysis in which the pathways and the agency thoughts reiterate. This iterative process of pathways and agency thinking might cycle back in order to make sure that the outcome remains significantly important to guarantee goal-directed processing.

The pathways and the agency thoughts continue to alternate and aggregate throughout the event sequence in order to influence the subsequent success in the goal-pursuit. The hope theory involves an inter-related system of goal-directed thinking that is responsive to the feedback at various points in the sequence. The feedback process is composed of the specific emotions that result from the successful or unsuccessful goal-attainment.

4.7 HOPE THEORY AND OTHER POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THEORIES

This section tries to understand the hope theory in comparison with and in relation to the other positive psychology theories. The similarities between the hope theory and the other theories are significant enough to establish that the hope theory is a part of the positive psychology theories. At the same time, the hope theory should also have significant differences so as to avoid the theoretical overlap with the other existing theories.

4.7.1 Optimism: Seligman:

In the theory of optimism, the attribution process and the attributional style are of prime importance (Seligman, 1991). The optimistic

attributional style involves focusing on external, variable, and specific factors for failures instead of focusing on internal, stable, and global factors. Thus, the theory implicitly conveys that optimistic people are attempting to distance themselves from the negative outcomes.

The hope theory focuses on attaining the desired future positive outcomes with an emphasis on agency and pathways-thoughts about the desired goals. It explicitly emphasizes the etiology of positive and negative emotions.

4.7.2 Optimism: Scheier & Carver:

Optimism is a goal-based approach that occurs when an outcome has significant value (Scheier & Carver, 1985). According to this model of optimism, people are capable of moving towards desirable goals and away from undesirable goals. This theory emphasizes agency-like thoughts and views the outcome expectancies as the prime elicitors of goal-directed behaviors. The hope theory gives equal emphasis to pathways and agency-thoughts; it also describes the etiology of positive and negative emotions, whereas the optimism theory does not.

4.7.3 Self-Efficacy: Bandura:

When a goal-related outcome is significant enough to capture the attention, self-efficacy is activated (Bandura, 1982). According to this theory, cognitive processing focuses on the situation-specific goals and the analysis of the relevant contingencies in a particular goal-attainment situation (outcome expectancy). The hope theory also focuses on the goal emphasis and the pathways thinking, which is a self-analysis of one's capabilities to think of the initial route and later on, additional routes. The concept of efficacy expectancies is similar to that of agency thought, which is the evaluation of the capacity to carry out actions inherent in the outcome expectancies.

The self-efficacy theory posits that situational self-efficacy (similar to the agency thoughts in the hope theory) is the last and most important cognitive step before initiating goal-directed action. Whereas, in the hope theory, both agency and pathways thoughts are significant before and during the goal-attainment pursuit. The hope theory explicitly emphasizes that emotions are the result of goal-directed thoughts, whereas the efficacy theory does not address the issue of emotions.

4.7.4 Self-Esteem:

Self-esteem is the personal judgement of worthiness; it refers to the person's appraisals of their overall effectiveness in the conduct of their lives (Hewitt, 1998). The self-esteem models emphasize goal-directed thoughts and that an activity must be valued to implicate self-esteem. The hope theory also emphasizes the analysis of the goal-pursuit process that elicits emotions (esteem); however, hope enhances the prediction of various positive emotions beyond just self-esteem.

4.7.5 Problem-Solving:

According to the problem-solving theory, the identification of a desired goal (solution to the problem) is explicit, and the significance of the goal involved is implicit. Also, the emphasis is on finding a pathway to identify the problem-solving solution. Similarly, in the hope theory, agentic thinking is posited to provide the motivation to activate the pathways-thoughts (problem-solving). The problem-solving theories do not focus on the emotions, whereas the hope theory believes that the emotions result from the perceived success in goal pursuits.

4.7.6 Applications of the Hope Theory:

The hope theory and its concepts can be applied to many areas for understanding and enhancing adaptive ways of functioning. In educational settings, hopeful thinking can help students enhance their capabilities and find pathways to desired educational goals, as well as the motivation to pursue those goals. Hopeful thinking can aid students in remaining focused on the task and not being distracted due to self-deprecatory thoughts and emotions (Snyder, 1999).

Sports psychologists can use the hope theory for training athletes in individual and team sports. High-hope thinking enables an athlete to find the best routes to goal attainment and the motivation to use those routes. Two athletes may have similar talents, but the ones who are more hopeful will be more successful and will be able to cope better during stressful situations in competitions (Curry & Snyder, 2000).

Health psychology focuses on promoting and maintaining good health, as well as on the prevention and treatment of existing illnesses. Hope is a very significant factor in all the above areas. Hope can play an important role in primary and secondary prevention. Primary prevention intends to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of physical or psychological health issues. Secondary prevention intends to reduce, contain, or eliminate the problems after they have occurred (Snyder et. al, 2000).

Hope theory could be used for a better understanding of the concept of adjustment and the approaches to facilitating it. Just as hope is helpful for physical health, it can also be helpful for psychological health. Hope contributes to the ability to establish clear goals, determine the pathways to attain those goals, and motivate oneself to work towards the attainment of those goals (Snyder, 2000).

Hope can be effective for establishing connections through interactions because goal-attainment can occur only in the context of the social environment. Hope can be inculcated among the children through their interactions with their parents, caregivers, teachers, and peers. Higher levels of hope can be related to perceived social support, social competence, less loneliness, and thus more connectedness (Sympson, 1999).

Hope theory can be applicable across different psychotherapeutic approaches. Irrespective of the specific approach, the client will benefit more from learning agentic and pathways goal-directed thinking. Hope is also associated with finding meaning in life. Meaning in life can be obtained through any of the three values – creative, experiential and attitudinal (Frankl, 1965). Self-reflections about the goals that have to be obtained and the perceived progress can help a person to construct the meaning in his or her life (Snyder, 1999).

4.8 SUMMARY

In this unit; we began by discussing the concept of flow and optimal experience, their role in development, and the various methods of measuring flow. We also discussed about Autotelic personality and its characteristics. We have also discussed the nature and correlates of flow, the obstacles to the experience of flow, and the facilitators who foster the experience of flow.

We then discussed the concept of optimism in detail and understood the various correlates of optimism and the relationship between them. We later discussed the concept of hope, the hope model, and the various components that make up the hope model. We critically evaluated the hope theory and compared it with the other theories in positive psychology to understand the similarities and differences, and finally we discussed the applications of the hope theory to the different areas.

4.9 QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by 'Flow'? Discuss the concepts of the "Flow Model".

2. What are the different methods of measuring flow? What is meant by Autotelic Personality?

3. Discuss the various obstacles to and facilitators of flow.

4. Write a detailed note on Optimism.

5. Explain the Hope model and discuss the various components of the Hope model.

6. Write a note on the applications of the Hope theory.

4.10 REFERENCES

*   Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F., (2002). Optimism. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 231–243.

- Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M., (2002). The Concept of Flow. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 89–105.

- Snyder, C. R., Rand, K. L., & Sigmon, D. R., (2002). Hope Theory: A Member of the Positive Psychology Family. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of Positive Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 257–276.

*****

5

POSITIVE INDIVIDUAL TRAITS – I

Unit Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, the learner will understand the following concepts:

- What is Self-efficacy?

- Why is it important to study self-efficacy?

- Relationship between self-efficacy and health and self-regulation

- History of Creativity

- Assessment of creativity

- Practical applications of creativity

- Theoretical issues related to creativity

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The term self-efficacy became common in psychology and related fields when Albert Bandura in 1977 published his work titled "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change,". Since then, hundreds of articles on every aspect of self-efficacy have appeared in journals devoted to psychology, sociology, public health, medicine, nursing, and other fields. In this chapter, we will address three basic questions: What is self-efficacy? Where does it come from? Why is it important? The term self-efficacy is of recent origin, but interest in beliefs about personal control has a long history in philosophy and psychology. Spinoza, David Hume, John Locke, William James, and Gilbert Ryle have all tried to understand the role of "volition" and "the will" in human behavior (Russell, 1945; Vessey, 1967).

In this century, the theories of achievement motivation (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953), social learning (Rotter, 1966), and helplessness (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) are just a few of the many attempts to explore relationships between perceptions of personal competence and human behavior, as well as psychological well-being (Skinner, 1995).

Bandura's 1977 article formalized the notion of perceived competence as self-efficacy and offered a theory of how it develops and influences human behavior. Bandura offered a construct that had intuitive and common-sense appeal, and he defined this common-sense notion clearly and embedded it in a comprehensive theory.

Creativity is appreciated everywhere (Sternberg & Lubart, 1996), whether at home, school, work, or play. Rarely is creativity perceived as a negative quality for a person to possess.

Likewise, people vary considerably in the amount of creativity that they can display. Whereas some students just put together papers and projects, others display a lot of impressive imagination and wit. Some inventors may feel okay by just making minor improvements to already established technologies; others may devise path-breaking inventions that dramatically transform our daily lives.

Creativity is highly valued as a human resource. Most modern societies encourage their citizens to exhibit creative behavior. At the most basic level, patent and copyright laws have been implemented so as to allow individuals to enjoy the fruits of their creative labors. At an even higher level of creative achievement, there are the honors and awards bestowed upon the most outstanding exemplars of creativity. Thus, the Nobel Prizes are awarded to the best creators in the sciences and literature, and each major literary tradition will have its own set of special prizes recognizing their best writers (Pulitzer, Cervantes, Goethe, etc.). Likewise, the Academy Awards and Golden Globe Awards are granted to those who create the most notable films.

It is usually seen that the worth of creative behavior continues for a long even after the creator has died. If the accomplishment is truly exceptional, the creator may "go down in history" as a "creative genius." These are people who have left a "name behind," such as Michelangelo, Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and Beethoven.

When a culture has many eminent creators, it is said to exhibit a "golden age," whereas when examples of creative genius become few and far between, the culture is said to have entered a "dark age." Hence, creativity is often viewed as a human capacity that has both individual and sociocultural utility and value.

In this chapter, we will examine what psychologists know about this crucial phenomenon. We will begin by narrating the history of the concept, and then discuss how creativity can be measured. Finally, we will review some of the key empirical findings as well as some of the central theoretical issues.

5.2 DEFINING SELF-EFFICACY

If we can differentiate between self-efficacy and other related constructs, then only we can begin to understand the term "self-efficacy". One of the best ways to get a clear sense of how self-efficacy is defined and measured is to distinguish it from related concepts.

Self-efficacy is not a perceived skill. It is rather what I believe I can do with my skills under certain conditions. It is concerned not with my beliefs about my ability to perform specific and trivial motor acts but with my beliefs about my ability to coordinate and orchestrate skills and abilities in changing and challenging situations.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not simply predictions about behavior. Self-efficacy is concerned not with what I believe I will do but with what I believe I can do.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not causal attributions. Causal attributions are explanations for events, including my own behavior and its consequences. Self-efficacy beliefs are my beliefs about what I am capable of doing.

Self-efficacy is not an intention to behave or an intention to attain a particular goal. An intention is what I say I will probably do, and research has shown that intentions are influenced by a number of factors, including, but not limited to, efficacy beliefs (Maddux, 1999).

Self-efficacy is not self-esteem. Self-esteem is what I believe about myself and how I feel about what I believe about myself. Efficacy beliefs in a given domain will contribute to my self-esteem only in direct proportion to the importance I place on that domain.

Self-efficacy is not a motive, drive, or need for control. I can have a strong need for control in a particular domain and still hold weak beliefs about my efficacy in that domain.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not outcome expectancies (Bandura, 1997) or behavior-outcome expectancies (Maddux, 1999b). A behaviour outcome expectancy is my belief that a specific behavior may lead to a specific outcome in a specific situation. A self-efficacy belief, simply put, is the belief that I can perform the behaviour that produces the outcome.

Self-efficacy is not a personality trait. Most conceptions of competence and control—including self-esteem (Hewitt, 2002), locus of control (Rotter, 1966), optimism (Carver & Scheier, 2002), hope (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002), hardiness (Kobasa, 1979), and learned resourcefulness (Rosenbaum, 1990) - are conceived as traits or trait-like.

Self-efficacy is defined and measured not as a trait but as beliefs about the ability to coordinate skills and abilities to attain desired goals in particular domains and circumstances. Measures of "general" self-efficacy have been developed (e.g., Sherer et al., 1982; Tipton & Worthington, 1984) and are frequently used in research, but they have not been as useful as more specific self-efficacy measures in predicting what people will do under more specific circumstances (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, 1995).

5.3 WHERE DOES SELF-EFFICACY COME FROM?

Self-efficacy is not a genetically endowed trait. Self-efficacy beliefs develop over time and through experience. The development of such beliefs begins in infancy and continues throughout life. Understanding how self-efficacy develops requires understanding a broader theoretical background.

The social cognitive theory explains self-efficacy in the best possible manner. Social cognitive theory is an approach to understanding human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion that assumes that we are active shapers of rather than simply passive reactors to our environments (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Barone, Maddux, & Snyder, 1997).

Social cognitive theory has four important aspects:

- We have powerful cognitive capabilities that allow experience, the development of courses of action, the prediction of outcomes, and the communication of complex ideas and experiences to others. We can also engage in self-observation and can analyse and evaluate our own behavior, thoughts, and emotions. We can also self-regulate ourselves.

- Environmental events, personal factors (cognition, emotion, and biological events), and behaviors are reciprocal influences. We respond cognitively to environmental events. Cognition helps us to exercise control over our own behavior, which then influences the environment and also our cognitive, affective, and biological states.

- Self and personality are socially embedded. These are perceptions of our own and others' patterns of social cognition, emotion, and action as they occur in patterns of situations. Self and personality are created during interactions, and they change through these interactions.

We are capable of self-regulation. We choose goals and regulate our behavior in the pursuit of these goals. At the heart of self-regulation is our ability to anticipate or develop expectancies—to use past knowledge and experience to form beliefs about future events and states and beliefs about our abilities and behavior.

It is suggested that the early development of self-efficacy is influenced by two interacting factors.

First, it is influenced by the development of the capacity for symbolic thought, particularly the capacity for understanding cause-and-effect relationships and the capacity for self-observation and self-reflection. The development of a sense of personal agency begins in infancy. Children must learn that one event can cause another event, that they are separate from other things and people, and that, therefore, they can be the origin of actions that affect their environments. As children's understanding of language increases, so does their capacity for symbolic thought and, therefore, their capacity for self-awareness and a sense of personal agency (Bandura, 1997).

Second, the development of efficacy beliefs is influenced by the responsiveness of environments, especially social environments, to the infant's or child's attempts at manipulation and control. Environments that are responsive to the child's actions facilitate the development of efficacy beliefs, whereas nonresponsive environments retard this development. The development of efficacy beliefs encourages exploration, which in turn enhances the infant's sense of agency. The child's social environment (especially parents) is usually the most responsive part of his or her environment.

Thus, children usually develop a sense of efficacy from engaging in actions that manipulate the people around them, which then generalizes to the non-social environment (Bandura, 1997). Parents can facilitate or hinder the development of this sense of agency not only by their responses to the infant's or child's actions, but also by encouraging and enabling the child to explore and master his or her environment.

Efficacy beliefs and a sense of agency continue to develop throughout the life span as we continually integrate information from five primary sources.

5.4 INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION FROM FIVE PRIMARY SOURCES

Performance Experiences:

We display self-efficacy in our own attempts to control our environments. This is the most powerful source of self-efficacy information (Bandura, 1977; 1997). When our attempts at controlling the environment are successful, we attribute this to our own efforts, which strengthens our self-efficacy for that behaviour or domain. Perceptions of failure at control attempts usually diminish self-efficacy.

Vicarious Experiences:

Our self-efficacy beliefs are influenced when we observe the behavior of others and the consequences of those behaviors. Observation helps us use this information to form expectancies about our own behavior and its consequences, depending primarily on the extent to which we believe that we are similar to the person we are observing (Bandura, 1997).

Imaginal Experiences:

Williams (1995) maintained that we can influence our self-efficacy beliefs by imagining ourselves or others behaving effectively or ineffectively in hypothetical situations. Such images may be formed from actual or observed experiences with situations similar to the one anticipated, or they may be induced by verbal persuasion, as when a psychotherapist guides a client through imaginal interventions such as systematic desensitization and covert modelling (Williams, 1995).

Verbal Persuasion:

Efficacy beliefs are influenced by what others say to us about what they believe we can or cannot do. The potency of verbal persuasion as a source of self-efficacy expectancies will be influenced by such factors as the expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the source, as suggested by decades of research on verbal persuasion and attitude change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Physiological and Emotional States:

Physiological and emotional states influence self-efficacy when we learn to associate poor performance or perceived failure with aversive physiological arousal and success with pleasant feeling states. It means that when we become aware of unpleasant physiological arousal, we are more likely to doubt our competence. On the other hand, if our physiological states are pleasant or neutral, we are likely to feel confident in our ability to handle the situation at hand. (e.g., Bandura, 1986, 1997).

5.5 WHY IS SELF-EFFICACY IMPORTANT?

Self-efficacy beliefs are important in hundreds of ways. We will focus here on the following areas:

- self-efficacy and psychological adjustment;

- self-efficacy and physical health;

- self-efficacy and self-regulation;

- self-efficacy and psychotherapy

Self-Efficacy and Psychological Adjustment:

Most philosophers and psychological theorists agree that a sense of control over our behavior, our environment, and our own thoughts and feelings is

essential for happiness and a sense of well-being. It can be said that when we have control over our environment, behavior, thoughts, and emotions, we are better able to meet life's challenges, build healthy relationships, and achieve personal satisfaction and peace of mind.

Feelings of loss of control are common among people who seek the help of psychotherapists and counsellors.

In many common psychological problems, self-efficacy beliefs play a major role. They are also important for successful interventions for these problems. Low self-efficacy expectancies are an important feature of depression (Bandura, 1997; Maddux & Meier, 1995). Anxiety and avoidant behavior are often the direct results of low self-efficacy expectancies for managing threatening situations (Bandura, 1997; Williams, 1995).

People who have strong confidence in their abilities to perform and manage potentially difficult situations will approach those situations calmly and will not be unduly disrupted by difficulties.

Self-Efficacy and Physical Health:

Health and medical care in our society are gradually putting more emphasis on preventing disease and promoting good health. Most strategies for preventing health problems, enhancing health, and hastening recovery from illness and injury involve changing behavior.

Self-efficacy research has shown how and why people adopt healthy and unhealthy behaviors and how to change behaviors that affect health (Bandura, 1997). Beliefs about self-efficacy influence health in two ways:

First, self-efficacy influences the adoption of healthy behaviors, leaving behind unhealthy behaviors, and the maintenance of behavioural changes in the face of challenge and difficulty.

Major theories of health behaviour include self-efficacy as a key component towards improving health and well-being. In addition, researchers have shown that enhancing self-efficacy beliefs is crucial to successful change and maintenance of virtually every behaviour crucial to health, including exercise, diet, stress management, safe sex, smoking cessation, overcoming alcohol abuse, compliance with treatment and prevention regimens, and disease detection behaviors such as breast self-examinations (Bandura, 1997; Maddux et al., 1995).

Second, self-efficacy beliefs influence a number of biological processes that, in turn, influence health and disease (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs affect the body's physiological responses to stress, including the immune system (Bandura, 1997; O'Leary & Brown, 1995).

Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation:

Social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory assume that human beings have the capacity for self-regulation, and studies of people who have

overcome difficult behavioural problems without professional help provide evidence for this capacity (e.g., Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 1994).

Research on self-efficacy has shown how we guide our own behaviour in the pursuit of happiness. Self-regulation depends on three interacting components (Bandura, 1986):

- goals or standards of performance,

- self-evaluative reactions to performance, and

- self-efficacy beliefs.

Goals are essential to self-regulation because we attempt to regulate our actions, thoughts, and emotions to achieve desired outcomes. Goals provide us with standards against which to monitor our progress and evaluate both our progress and our abilities (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002).

Self-evaluative reactions are important in self-regulation because our beliefs about the progress we are making (or not making) towards our goals are major determinants of our emotional reactions during goal-directed activity. These emotional reactions, in turn, can enhance or disrupt self-regulation. The belief that we are ineffective and making poor progress towards a goal produces distressing emotional states (e.g., anxiety, depression) that can lead to cognitive and behavioral ineffectiveness and self-regulatory failure. Strong self-efficacy beliefs and strong expectations for goal attainment, however, usually produce adaptive emotional states that, in turn, enhance self-regulation.

Self-efficacy beliefs influence self-regulation in several ways. First, our level of self-efficacy influences the goals we set. The higher my self-efficacy is in a specific achievement domain, the loftier will be the goals that I set for myself in that domain.

Second, self-efficacy beliefs influence our choices of goal-directed activities, expenditure of effort, persistence in the face of challenge and obstacles (Bandura, 1986; Locke & Latham, 1990), and reactions to perceived discrepancies between goals and current performance (Bandura, 1986). If I have strong efficacy beliefs, I will be relatively resistant to the disruptions in self-regulation that can result from difficulties and setbacks, and I will persevere. Perseverance usually produces desired results, and this success then increases my sense of efficacy (Masten and Reed, 2002).

Third, self-efficacy for solving problems and making decisions influences the efficiency and effectiveness of problem-solving and decision making (Heppner & Lee, 2002). When faced with complex decisions, people who have confidence in their ability to solve problems use their cognitive resources more effectively than those people who doubt their cognitive skills (e.g., Bandura, 1997). Such efficacy usually leads to better solutions and greater achievement.

Self-Efficacy and Psychotherapy:

Here, the term psychotherapy is used to refer to professionally guided interventions designed to enhance psychological well-being. It also acknowledges that self-regulation plays an important role in all interventions. In fact, most professionally guided interventions are designed to enhance self-regulation because they are concerned with helping individuals gain or regain a sense of efficacy over important aspects of their lives (Frank & Frank, 1991). Different interventions, or different components of an intervention, may be equally effective because they equally enhance self-efficacy for crucial behavioural and cognitive skills (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Maddux & Lewis, 1995).

Self-efficacy theory emphasizes the importance of arranging experiences designed to increase the person's sense of efficacy for specific behaviors in specific problematic and challenging situations. Self-efficacy theory suggests that formal interventions should not simply resolve specific problems but should provide people with the skills and sense of efficacy to solve problems themselves. Some basic strategies for enhancing self-efficacy are based on the four sources of self-efficacy previously noted.

5.6 BASIC STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING SELF-EFFICACY

Performance Experience:

It is a good idea to provide people with actual evidence of their success because when people can see themselves coping effectively with difficult situations, their sense of mastery is likely to improve. These experiences are likely to be most successful when both goals and strategies are specific. Goals that are concrete, specific, and proximal (short-range) provide greater incentive, motivation, and evidence of efficacy than goals that are abstract, vague, and set in the distant future (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002). Specific goals allow people to identify the specific behaviors needed for successful achievement and to know when they have succeeded (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002; Locke & Latham, 1990).

Verbal Persuasion:

Most psychological interventions rely on verbal persuasion to enhance a client's self-efficacy and encourage small risks that may lead to small successes. In cognitive-behavioral therapies, the therapist engages the client in a discussion of the client's dysfunctional beliefs, attitudes, and expectancies and helps the client see the irrationality and self-defeating nature of such beliefs. The therapist encourages the client to adopt new, more adaptive beliefs and to act on these new beliefs and expectancies. As a result, the client experiences the successes that can lead to more enduring changes in self-efficacy beliefs and adaptive behavior.

Vicarious Experience:

Vicarious and imaginal means can be used to teach new skills and enhance self-efficacy for those skills. For example, modeling films and videotapes have been used successfully to encourage socially withdrawn children to interact with other children. The child viewing the film sees the model child, someone much like himself, experience success and comes to believe that he, too, can do the same thing (Conger & Keane, 1981). In vivo modeling has been used successfully in the treatment of phobic individuals.

Common everyday examples of the use of vicarious experiences to enhance self-efficacy include advertisements for weight-loss and smoking cessation programs that feature testimonials from successful people. The clear message from these testimonials is that the listener or reader can also accomplish this difficult task. Formal and informal "support groups"— people sharing their personal experiences in overcoming common adversity such as addiction, obesity, or illness— also provide forums for the enhancement of self-efficacy.

Imaginal Experience:

It might be difficult to get real models, but imagination is an easily available resource. Imagining ourselves engaging in feared behaviors or overcoming difficulties can be used to enhance self-efficacy. For example, cognitive therapy for anxiety and fear problems often involves modifying visual images of danger and anxiety, including images of effectively coping with the feared situation. Imaginal (covert) modelling has been used successfully in interventions to increase assertive behavior and self-efficacy for assertiveness (Kazdin, 1979). Systematic desensitization and implosion are traditional behavioural therapy techniques that rely on the ability to imagine effectively coping with a difficult situation (Emmelkamp, 1994). Because maladaptive distorted imagery is an important component of anxiety and depression, various techniques have been developed to help clients modify the distortions and maladaptive assumptions contained in their visual images of danger and anxiety. A client can gain a sense of control over a situation by imagining a future self that can deal effectively with the situation.

Physiological and Emotional States:

We usually feel more self-efficacious when we are calm than when we are aroused and distressed. Thus, strategies for controlling and reducing emotional arousal (specifically anxiety) while attempting new behaviors should increase self-efficacy and increase the likelihood of successful implementation. Hypnosis, biofeedback, relaxation training, meditation, and medication are the most common strategies for reducing the physiological arousal typically associated with low self-efficacy and poor performance.

5.7 ENHANCING THE IMPACT OF SUCCESS

Success is a subjective term, and usually, it is judged by observers and not always by the performer. Nor do such accomplishments automatically enhance efficacy beliefs. We often discount self-referential information that is inconsistent with our current self-views (Barone et al., 1997; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Thus, when we feel distressed and believe we are incompetent and helpless, we are likely to ignore information from therapists, family, friends, and our own behavioural successes that is inconsistent with our negative self-beliefs (Barone et al., 1997; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Therefore, we need to make concerted efforts to increase success experiences, but we also must learn to interpret that success as success and as the result of our own efforts.

We can interpret success experiences more effectively in three ways.

1. Viewing competence as incremental, not fixed:

If we view competence as a set of skills to be performed in specific situations rather than as a trait, and as acquirable through effort and experience rather than as fixed, we are more likely to persist in the face of obstacles to success (Dweck, 2000). The perception that competence is incremental and can be increased by experience can be enhanced by comparing recent successful coping strategies with past ineffective behaviors. Therefore, we need to be continually vigilant for success experiences and actively retrieve past successes in times of challenge and doubt.

2. Changing causal attributions:

Causal attributions are explanations we provide ourselves for our own behavior and the behavior of others. Causal attributions influence self-efficacy and vice versa (Maddux, 1999b). For this reason, we should attribute successes to our own effort and ability rather than to environmental circumstances or to the expertise and insights of others (Forsterling, 1986; Goldfried & Robins, 1982; Thompson, 1991).

3. Encouraging minor distortions:

Beliefs about self and world need not always be accurate to be adaptive. Psychological adjustment is enhanced by minor distortions in the perception of control over important life events (e.g., Taylor & Brown, 1988). Strong beliefs in self-efficacy can be self-confirming because such beliefs encourage us to set challenging goals, persist in the face of obstacles, attend to efficacy-enhancing information, and select efficacy-enhancing environments. Encouraging discouraged people to believe that they are more competent than they think they are (based on their own observations) may prompt them into action and lead to efficacy-enhancing success.

5.8 COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Throughout this chapter, efficacy beliefs were discussed in relation to individuals. Positive psychology and social cognitive theory both emphasize the social environment of the individual. For this reason, the concept of efficacy cannot remain locked inside a person.

Accomplishing important goals in groups, organizations, and societies has always depended on the ability of individuals to identify the abilities of other individuals and to harness these abilities to accomplish common goals.

Self-efficacy theory recognizes that no man or woman is an island and that there are limits to what individuals can accomplish alone. This idea is captured in the notion of collective efficacy, a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment (Bandura, 1997; Zaccaro, Blair, Peterson, & Zazanis, 1995). It can be said that collective efficacy is the extent to which we believe that we can work together effectively to accomplish our shared goals.

5.9 CREATIVITY

History of Creativity:

Ebbinghaus (1908) once said that creativity has a long past but a short history, especially as a research topic in psychology. We will begin by discussing the history of creativity as a recognized human behavior and then trace the history of psychological research on the topic.

The Origins of Creativity as a Cultural Phenomenon

The topic of creativity is so important, yet it is surprising to learn that it is actually a somewhat recent concept. It is not listed among the classic human virtues, for example. The philosophers of ancient Greece listed prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, whereas the Christian theologians added faith, hope, and love—but creativity is entirely overlooked. Part of the reason for this neglect is that creativity was originally conceived as a characteristic of the divine creator rather than an attribute of human beings. In the biblical book of Genesis, for instance, God is portrayed as the Creator of the cosmos, the earth, and all life. The Romans are responsible for a concept that is closely related to creativity— that of genius.

According to Roman mythology, each individual was born with a guardian spirit who watched out for the person's fate and distinctive individuality. With time, the term was taken to indicate the person's special talents or aptitudes.

Although in the beginning everybody could be said to "have a genius," at least in the sense of possessing a unique capacity, the term eventually began to be confined to those whose gifts set them well apart from the

average. The expression "creative genius" thus unites two concepts with Greek and Roman roots pertaining to how the spiritual world permeates human affairs.

The Origins of Creativity as a Research Topic:

When we look at the history of psychology, we find psychologists discuss creative thought and behaviour very rarely. William James (1880) described the creative process in terms of Darwinian theory (Campbell, 1960). In the 20th century, the Gestalt psychologists—most notably Wolfgang Kohler and Max Wertheimer - displayed an interest in creative problem-solving. Behaviorists, like B.F. Skinner were also attracted to the concept of creativity. The cognitive psychologist Herbert A. Simon (1986), the personality psychologist David C. McClelland (1962), and the humanistic psychologists Carl Rogers (1954), Abraham Maslow (1959), and Rollo May (1975) also showed interest in the topic of creativity.

Of all the psychologists, J. P. Guilford (1950) addressed the topic of creativity the most. Guilford also made many direct contributions to the research literature by devising instruments for assessing individual differences in creativity (Guilford, 1967).

The topic of creativity can now be considered a legitimate topic for scientific inquiry in mainstream psychological research.

5.10 MEASUREMENT APPROACHES

As far as the definition of creativity is concerned, creativity is usually said to entail the generation of ideas that fulfil the two following conditions:

Creativity must be original:

These days, no one can be called "creative" who decides to "reinvent the wheel," nor can one earn that ascription for writing the lines "To be, or not to be." Creative ideas are novel, surprising, unexpected— sometimes even shocking. Originality is a necessary but not sufficient criterion for creativity, which brings us to the second condition.

Creativity must be adaptive:

Someone who decides to make a blimp out of solid concrete can no doubt claim considerable originality, but whether this strange idea "can fly" is quite a different matter.

Given the general definition of creativity as "adaptive originality," how can it be best measured? Researchers studying creativity have not agreed on the optimal instrument for assessing individual differences in this trait (Hocevar & Bachelor, 1989). The reason for this lack of consensus is that creativity can manifest itself in three distinct ways.

First, creativity may be viewed as some kind of mental process that yields adaptive and original ideas (e.g., Sternberg & Davidson, 1995; Ward, Smith, & Vaid, 1997). Second, it can be seen as a type of person who

exhibits creativity (e.g., Gardner, 1993; Wallace & Gruber, 1989). Third, creativity can be analyzed in terms of the concrete products that result from the workings of the creative process or person (e.g., Martindale, 1990; Simonton, 1980, 1998). Each of these three manifestations suggests rather distinct measures, as will become apparent next.

5.10.1 The Creative Process:

If the emphasis is on the thought processes that yield creative ideas, then the best assessment approach should be to tap individual differences in access to these processes. This was the approach adopted by Guilford (1967), who began by proposing a profound distinction between two kinds of thinking. Convergent thought involves the convergence on a single correct response, such as is characteristic of most aptitude tests, like those that assess intelligence. Divergent thought, in contrast, entails the capacity to generate many alternative responses, including ideas of considerable variety and originality.

Guilford and others have devised a large number of tests to measure the capacity for divergent thinking (Torrance, 1988; Wallach & Kogan, 1965). Typical is the Alternate Uses test, in which the subject must come up with many different ways of using a common object, such as a paper clip or brick.

Another test that views the creative process in a manner similar to divergent thinking is the Remote Associates Test, or RAT, of Mednick (1962). This test was based on the premise that creativity involves the ability to make rather remote associations between separate ideas.

Highly creative individuals were said to have a flat hierarchy of associations in comparison to the steep hierarchy of associations of those with low creativity. A flat associative hierarchy means that for any given stimulus, the creative person has numerous associations available, all with roughly equal probabilities of retrieval.

Because such an individual can generate many associative variations, the odds are increased that he or she will find the one association that will make the necessary remote connection. The RAT can therefore be said to operate according to an implicit variation-selection model of the creative process.

Many investigators have tried to validate these divergent-thinking tests against other criteria of creative performance (Crammond, 1994). Although the researchers in these validation studies have had some modicum of success, it also has become clear that generalized tests do not always have as much predictive validity as tests more specifically tailored to a particular domain of creativity (Baer, 1993; 1994; Baer, 1998; Plucker, 1998).

Creativity in music, for example, is not going to be very predictable on the basis of how many uses one can imagine for a toothpick.

5.10.2 The Creative Person:

It is said that the creative individual is distinctively different in various personal characteristics. Creative people display personality profiles that depart from those of the average person (Barron & Harrington, 1981).

Creative personalities tend to possess those characteristics that most favour the production of both numerous and diverse ideas. In particular, creative individuals tend to be independent, nonconformist and unconventional; they also tend to have wide interests, greater openness to new experiences, and more conspicuous behavioral and cognitive flexibility and boldness (Simonton, 1999).

The major complication in this general picture is that the personality profiles of artistic creators tend to differ noticeably from those of scientific creators (Feist, 1998). In a nutshell, creative scientists tend to fall somewhere between creative artists and non-creative personalities in terms of their typical traits.

Several measures of creativity are based on personality scales, such as the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (Cattell & Butcher, 1968) or the Adjective Check List (Gough, 1979). The personality contrasts between creative and non-creative individuals may partially reflect significant differences in their biographical characteristics, including family background, educational experiences, and career activities. As a consequence, some psychometricians have designed instruments based on biographical inventories (Schaefer & Anastasi, 1968; Taylor & Ellison, 1967). For instance, creative people often report having much broader interests and a wider range of hobbies than is the case for their less creative colleagues.

5.10.3 The Creative Product:

It can be said that the ultimate criterion for determining whether someone can be considered creative or not depends on whether that individual has successfully generated a product that meets both requirements of creative behavior— originality and adaptiveness. This product-based assessment is more direct and objective, but it also has more than one operational definition.

One approach is to simply ask individuals to identify what they would consider samples of their creative activities, such as poems, paintings, and projects (Richards, Kinney, Lunde, Benet, & Merzel, 1988).

Another approach is to have research participants generate creative products under controlled laboratory conditions and then have these products evaluated by independent judges (Amabile, 1982).

These two operational definitions have the advantage that they are best designed to assess individual differences in more everyday forms of the phenomenon. Yet it is obvious that at higher levels of creative activity, the investigator can go beyond a participant's self-report or a judge's

subjective evaluation. Inventors hold patents, scientists publish journal articles, dramatists write plays, directors create movies, and so forth. Hence, cross-sectional variation in creativity can be assessed in terms of individual differences in the output of such professionally or culturally acknowledged works (Simonton, 1991). Investigators may count total output (quantity), select output (quality), or output influence (impact). For example, researchers of scientific creativity may tabulate the total number of publications, just those publications that are actually cited in the literature, or the total number of citations those publications have received (Feist, 1993). Researchers have demonstrated quite conclusively that these three alternative measures correlate very highly with each other (Simonton, 1992b).

If creative persons have generated a substantial body of highly influential products, it is inevitable that they should attain eminence for their accomplishments (Simonton, 1991). In fact, the single most powerful predictor of eminence in any creative domain is the number of works an individual has contributed (Simonton, 1977). Accordingly, sometimes cross-sectional variation in creativity will be assessed using a variety of eminence indicators (Cox, 1926). These may include expert ratings, the receipt of major honours, or having entries in biographical dictionaries and encyclopaedias (Simonton, 1976).

5.11 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Judging from the previous section, we can say that the assessment of creative behaviour is one area that still requires a lot of research work. One of the most critical findings in the empirical research is that the alternative measures of creative behaviour tend to display fairly respectable inter-correlations (Eysenck, 1995; Simonton, 1999). In other words, creative products tend to emerge from creative persons who use the creative process in generating their output.

The correlations are not perfect, but they do suggest that each instrument is gauging the same fundamental reality. Consequently, the various measures often yield the same general conclusions about the nature of human creativity. For example, considerable literature exists on the relationship between age and creativity (Simonton, 1988). Despite some differences due to the creative domain and other factors, pretty much the same developmental trends are observed for product- and process-based measures (Dennis, 1966).

Whether we are counting creative products or assessing the capacity for divergent thinking, longitudinal changes in creativity display a curvilinear function. The only major discrepancy is that creativity according to the productivity definition can undergo a resurgence in the latter years of life but has no counterpart according to the psychometric definition (Simonton, 1989).

It is important here to discuss two sets of empirical findings that have special relevance to the positive psychology of creativity. These concern early trauma and psychological disorders.

Early Trauma:

According to the empirical literature, child prodigies and intellectually gifted children tend to have enjoyed rather happy childhoods (Feldman & Goldsmith, 1986; Terman, 1925). That is, their parents provided them with financially comfortable homes and ample intellectual and aesthetic stimulation; their parents had stable marriages, and the children were both physically healthy and educationally successful. Yet when researchers turn to highly creative individuals, a rather contrasting picture emerges (Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962). The family may have experienced severe economic ups and downs, and the parents' marriage may have fallen far short of the ideal; the child may have been sickly or have endured some physical or cognitive disability (Roe, 1953). More remarkably, the early development of the future creator may have been plagued by one or more traumatic experiences, such as the loss of one or both parents in childhood or adolescence (Eisenstadt, 1978; Roe, 1953). Yet what makes these findings all the more intriguing is that the same developmental events are also associated with negative life outcomes, such as juvenile delinquency or suicidal depression (Eisenstadt, 1978).

This peculiar paradox suggests that, under the right conditions, exposure to traumatic or difficult experiences early in life can make a positive contribution to the development of creative potential (Simonton, 1994). Perhaps those who have the capacity to "rise to the challenge" will benefit, and creativity itself may be an adaptive response to such circumstances (Eisenstadt, 1978). Events that might have yielded a societal misfit instead produce an individual who can respond constructively with the adulthood of creative achievement rather than disappointment or alienation.

Psychological Disorder:

One of the oldest debates in the study of creativity is the "mad-genius controversy" (Prentky, 1980). As far back as Aristotle, thinkers have speculated that outstanding creativity is associated with psychopathology. This view has persisted in more modern times, as is evident in psychoanalytic psycho-biographies of creative geniuses.

Not every psychologist agrees with this view, however. Humanistic psychologists, in particular, tend to see creativity as a symptom of mental health, not illness (Maslow, 1959). Based on the empirical research on this issue, it appears that there is some truth in both viewpoints (Eysenck, 1995).

On the one hand, the rates of apparent psychological disorder in samples of highly creative individuals do seem to be somewhat higher than in the general population (Eysenck, 1995).

On the other hand, empirical research also suggests that creativity and psychopathology are by no means equivalent (Rothenberg, 1990). For one thing, creative individuals often have character traits, such as high ego strength, that are not found in clinical populations (Barron, 1969; Eysenck, 1995). However bizarre their thoughts or behaviors may be, creators remain in self-command—even exploiting their eccentricities for creative ends. In addition, their symptomatology is below pathological levels (Barron, 1969; Eysenck, 1995).

It can be said that events and traits that might severely disable or retard personal development can sometimes be converted into forces for positive growth. Or, if that is too strong an inference, one can safely infer the following optimistic alternative: Such events and conditions need not prevent the development of exceptional creativity. Indeed, people can be phenomenally robust, as they transform "liabilities" into assets.

5.12 THEORETICAL ISSUES

Despite the abundance of empirical findings, creativity researchers continue to struggle with profound theoretical questions, two of which involve nature versus nurture and small-c versus big-C creativity.

The Nature-Nurture Issue:

Is creativity born, made, or some combination of the two? Galton (1869) introduced this question in his book Hereditary Genius, and he later coined the terms nature and nurture in his book English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture (1874). Subsequent researchers have suggested that creativity reflects a complex interaction of genetic and environmental factors (Eysenck, 1995; Simonton, 1999b). For example, genes may contribute to creativity according to a multiplicative rather than a simple additive model (Lykken, 1998; Simonton, 1999). As a further complication, it may very well be that various environmental influences interact with genetic factors in equally complex functional relationships (Eysenck, 1995).

It is said that creative development requires a specific congruence between genetic inheritance and environmental stimulation. This genetic-environmental determination helps to explain why creativity may display a highly skewed cross-sectional distribution in the general population (Simonton, 1999b).

When optimal creative development requires a precise configuration of many different factors, it becomes more difficult for people to emerge who have the total package.

Small-c Versus Big-C Creativity:

Small-c creativity enhances everyday life and works with superior problem-solving skills, whereas big-C creativity makes lasting contributions to culture and history. In the first case, we are speaking of the creative person, whereas in the latter case, we are talking about the

creative genius. The problem is to find out whether these two creative behaviors are qualitatively or quantitatively distinct. If everyday creativity is qualitatively different from genius-level creativity, then the personal attributes underlying the first may be different from those responsible for the second (e.g., any tendency towards psychopathology).

If the two are only quantitatively different, however, then the factors that predict levels of small-c creativity would also predict levels of big-C creativity. The evidence to date supports the notion that these two grades represent regions on a continuous scale of creative activity (Eysenck, 1995).

5.13 PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

If creativity is a highly desirable human characteristic, then it certainly would be valuable to know how to facilitate it. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that a considerable amount of research has focused on how people can become more creative. These creativity enhancement methods have been aimed at childhood and adolescence as well as adulthood.

Early Development:

Children are naturally creative. Creativity appears in their fantasy play, for example. It is often said that the pressure to behave, grow up, and mature stifles creative capacities. As such, children get the message that their creative practices are childish in the eyes of adults. This view of creative development is consistent with creative adults' tendencies to exhibit childlike traits such as openness to experience, playfulness, and rich imagination (Feist, 1998). This view also suggests that if the goal is to enhance creativity, the place to begin would be the home, and the place to continue such creativity lessons would be the school. In the former case, parents should encourage their children's creative activities, even if this means that the parents must relinquish considerable control over how their children spend their time (e.g., perhaps paying little attention to school homework). In the latter case, more attention would have to be given to the development of educational systems that nurture rather than inhibit creative classroom expressions and behaviors.

Many researchers have proposed that the primary goal should be to identify those children with the most creative potential and then place them in special programs for the gifted and talented (Winner, 1996). Although this implication might seem elitist, it may be more practical than trying to make every child into a little creative genius.

The practical advantage of more selective programs becomes especially apparent when we take into consideration the tremendous amount of investment required to convert the promise of youth into the accomplishments of maturity.

Adult Encouragement:

Adults vary greatly in their creative potential. Some may have very little capacity for generating new ideas; others may have enough to adapt well to everyday problems at home and at work; whereas still others will attain levels worthy of the designation "creative genius." These individual differences do not operate in isolation, however, as there are various situational factors that enhance or inhibit the realization of creative potential. In this latter regard, many psychologists have investigated some of these situational influences. For example, a person's creativity is affected by extrinsic rewards, evaluative supervision, and time pressure (Amabile, 1996). Such factors often operate in very complex ways to raise or lower creativity. For instance, rewards can harm creativity under some circumstances but enhance it under different conditions (Eisenberger & Cameron, 1996).

As far as creating an environment for creative work is concerned, some researchers have concentrated on the political, economic, cultural, and social conditions that most favor the emergence and maintenance of eras in which creativity blossoms across many creative endeavors (Simonton, 1992). Thus, to the degree that these events are under the control of a nation's leaders, countries can adopt policies that discourage or encourage creativity among their citizens.

5.14 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have learned about the role of self-efficacy beliefs, psychological adjustment and maladjustment, physical health, and self-guided and professionally guided behaviour change. Two broad avenues of future research can be suggested.

First, positive psychology emphasizes the development of positive human qualities and the facilitation of psychological health and happiness over the mere prevention or remediation of negative human qualities and human misery.

It also embraces the notion that individuals can be self-initiating agents for change in their own lives and the lives of others. The emphasis of social cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory on the development of enablement—providing people with skills for selecting and attaining the life goals they desire—over prevention and risk reduction is consonant with both of these emphases.

Self-efficacy research concerned with enhancing our understanding of self-regulation will enhance our understanding of how to provide people with these enablement skills.

Second, positive psychology emphasizes the social embeddedness of the individual and acknowledges that my individual success and happiness depend to a large degree on my ability to cooperate, collaborate, negotiate, and otherwise live in harmony with other people. In addition, the ability of businesses, organizations, communities, and governments (local, state, and

national) to achieve their goals will increasingly depend on their ability to coordinate their efforts, particularly because these goals often conflict.

For this reason, collective efficacy—including collective efficacy in organizations and schools and efficacy for social and political change—provides numerous important questions for future research. In a world in which communication across the globe often is faster than communication across the street, and in which cooperation and collaboration in commerce and government are becoming increasingly common and crucial, understanding collective efficacy will become even more important.

The simple yet powerful truth that children learn from The Little Engine That Could have been amply supported by over two decades of self-efficacy research—namely, that when equipped with an unshakable belief in one's ideas, goals, and capacity for achievement, there are few limits to what one can accomplish. As Bandura (1997) has stated, "People see the extraordinary feats of others but not the unwavering commitment and countless hours of perseverant effort that produced them". They then overestimate the role of "talent" in these accomplishments while underestimating the role of self-regulation. The message of research on self-efficacy is the simple, powerful truth that confidence, effort, and persistence are more potent than innate ability (Dweck, 2000). In this sense, self-efficacy is concerned with human potential and possibilities, not limitations.

Creativity is highly valued as a human resource. Most modern societies encourage their citizens to exhibit creative behavior. At the most basic level, patent and copyright laws have been implemented so as to allow individuals to enjoy the benefits of their creative work. Honors and awards are also given to the most outstanding exemplars of creativity. Thus, the Nobel Prizes are awarded to the best creators in the sciences and literature, and each major literary tradition will have its own set of special prizes recognizing its best writers (Pulitzer, Cervantes, Goethe, etc.). Likewise, the Filmfare Awards and some other awards are granted to those who create the most notable films.

It is usually seen that the worth of creative behavior continues for a long time after the creator has died.

J. P. Guilford (1950) addressed the topic of creativity in detail. Guilford also made many direct contributions to the research literature by devising instruments for assessing individual differences in creativity (Guilford, 1967). In the latter half of the 20th century, interest in creativity steadily grew and diversified, such that researchers were covering a fairly wide range of subtopics (Feist & Runco, 1993).

As far as the assessment of creative behaviour is concerned, it is one area that still requires a lot of research work. In this regard, three aspects have been studied: the creative person, the creative product, and the creative process. Research has found that these measures of creative behaviour display fairly respectable inter-correlations (Eysenck, 1995; Simonton, 1999). In other words, creative products tend to emerge from creative

persons who use the creative process in generating their output. The correlations are not perfect, but they do suggest that each instrument is gauging the same fundamental reality.

Researchers have also focused their attention on the topics of nature versus nurture and small-c versus big-C creativity. Is creativity born, made, or a combination of the two? Galton (1869) introduced this question in his book Hereditary Genius, and he later coined the terms nature and nurture. Researchers have suggested that creativity reflects a complex interaction of genetic and environmental factors (Eysenck, 1995; Simonton, 1999).

It is said that creative development requires a specific congruence between genetic inheritance and environmental stimulation. This genetic-environmental determination helps to explain why creativity may display a highly skewed cross-sectional distribution in the general population (Simonton, 1999).

Small-c creativity enhances everyday life and works with superior problem-solving skills, whereas big-C creativity makes lasting contributions to culture and history.

If creativity is a highly desirable human characteristic, then it certainly would be valuable to know how to facilitate it. A considerable amount of research has focused on how people can become more creative. These creativity enhancement methods have been aimed at childhood and adolescence as well as adulthood.

5.15 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Define the term self-efficacy and discuss where it comes from.

2. Write a note on the integration of information from five primary sources and their role in self-efficacy.

3. Why is self-efficacy important? Discuss.

4. Write a note on some basic strategies for enhancing self-efficacy.

5. Write a note on the history of creativity research.

6. Discuss various measurement approaches to assess creative behaviour.

7. Discuss the role of early trauma and psychological disorders in creative behaviour.

8. What are some practical applications of the research related to creativity?

5.16 REFERENCES

- Handbook of Positive Psychology Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopez. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (2002).

*****

<div style="text-align: right;">

6

</div>

POSITIVE INDIVIDUAL TRAITS – II

Unit Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After learning this chapter, learners will understand the following concepts:

- Definition of wisdom

- Theories of wisdom

- The Berlin Wisdom Project

- Directions for future wisdom-related research   81

- Concepts of altruism and empathy

- Empathy altruism hypotheses

- Prosocial motivation

- Implications of empathy altruism relationship

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Towards a Positive Psychology of Optimal Development

In the history of the humanities, questions of perfection and optimality in human behavior and human development have always been part of the intellectual agenda. Many philosophers and theologists participated in the research related to perfection and optimality (Brandtsta¨dter & Schneewind, 1977). Since the times of secularization and subsequently the advent of evolutionary biology, the answers to questions of perfection and optimality have became more and more relative and uncertain.

Perfection and Optimality: A Dilemma for Psychology

These days, it is not uncommon for behavioral scientists and scholars to argue the case for absolute perfection and optimality. It is now common to promote a tolerant conception of human rights and also the recognition of contextual variations in form and function, as well as culturally based differences in the criteria of adaptive fitness. Behavioral and social scientists have developed a preference for emphasizing particularities and the importance of flexibility in making decisions about what is right and wrong (Shweder, 1991). There are exceptions to this reluctance in the psychological research community to specify the foundation of optimality.

Altruism refers to a form of motivation for human beings where it benefits another human being. Some biologists and psychologists speak of altruistic behavior which means behavior that benefits another human being. If one's ultimate goal in benefiting another is to increase the other's welfare, then the motivation is altruistic. If the ultimate goal is to increase one's own welfare, then the motivation is egoistic.

Is Altruism Part of Human Nature?

Humans devote much time and energy to helping others. We send money to rescue famine victims —or to save animals. We stay up all night to comfort a friend who has just suffered a broken relationship. We stop on a busy highway to help a stranded motorist change a flat tyre. Why do humans help? Of course, often the answer is easy. We help because we have no choice, because it is expected, or because it is in our own best interest. We may do a friend a favour because we do not want to lose the friendship or because we expect to see the favour reciprocated.

It is very difficult to answer such questions as to why we help. We want to know whether our helping is always and exclusively motivated by the prospect of some benefit for ourselves, however small. It will be

interesting to know whether anyone ever helped another human being out of genuine concern without any self-interest.

Proponents of egoism maintain that everything we do, no matter how noble and beneficial to others, is really directed towards the ultimate goal of self-benefit. Proponents of altruism maintain that under some circumstances, humans are capable of a qualitatively different form of motivation: motivation with the ultimate goal of benefiting someone else and not thinking about self-benefit.

Whether altruism exists is not a new question. This question has been central in Western thought for centuries, from Aristotle (384–322 b.c.) and David Hume (1711–1776) to Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). The majority view among Renaissance and post-Renaissance philosophers, and more recently among biologists and psychologists, is that we are, at heart, purely egoistic—we care for others only to the extent that their welfare affects ours.

The many forms of self-benefit that can be derived from helping to make the case for universal egoism seem very persuasive. Some forms of self-benefit are obvious, such as when we get material rewards and public praise or when we escape public censure. But even when we help in the absence of external rewards, we may still benefit. Seeing someone in distress may cause us to feel distressed, and we may act to relieve that person's distress as an instrumental means to relieve our own. Alternatively, we may gain self-benefit by feeling good about ourselves for being kind and caring, or by escaping the guilt and shame we might feel if we did not help.

Even heroes and martyrs can benefit from their acts of selflessness. Consider the soldier who saves his comrades by diving on a grenade or the man who dies after relinquishing his place in a rescue craft. These individuals may have acted to escape anticipated guilt and shame for letting others die. They may have acted to gain the admiration and praise of those left behind—or benefits in an afterlife. Perhaps they simply misjudged the situation, not thinking that their actions would cost them their lives.

To suggest that heroes' noble acts could be motivated by self-benefit may not seem correct, but the possibility must be faced if we are to responsibly address the question of whether altruism exists.

6.2 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF WISDOM

Interest in the concept of wisdom emerged because of a one-sided focus on the negative in gerontological research in the 1960s and 1970s (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). The dominant focus of aging research during that period was on counting "the wrinkles and failures" of humans as they grow older. There were very few instances in which ageing and its potentially positive manifestations were examined. The exception was

Erik Erikson's (1968) theoretical work that focused on generativity and wisdom as central tasks of adult life (M. Baltes & Baltes, 1977; Ryff,1995).

A major reason for the psychological theory of wisdom was the explicit commitment to understand what might be positive in adult development and ageing.

In research on subjective beliefs about ageing, wisdom turned out to be one of the very few characteristics for which people expect a positive trajectory in late adulthood (Heckhausen, Dixon, & Baltes, 1989).

The early research into the positivity of old age involved cognitive training studies to understand the role of practice deficits and the latent learning potential of the older population in the sense of plasticity (Baltes & Lindenberger, 1988). In this research, it was demonstrated that, at least up to age 80 or so, many older adults possess more cognitive reserves (plasticity or learning potential) than we usually expect, although some losses in plasticity were also observed with advancing age.

6.3 WISDOM AS A TOPIC OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE ABOUT THE GOOD LIFE

Wisdom has been discussed and studied in philosophy and religion for thousands of years (Assmann, 1994; Kekes, 1995; Rice, 1958). More recently, scholars from other disciplines such as cultural anthropology, political science, education, and psychology have also shown interest in wisdom. One can say that wisdom is becoming a centre of trans-disciplinary discourse (Agazzi, 1991).

In defining and studying wisdom, it is important to know about the nature of its structure and function of wisdom. It is important to mention here that there is a scientific limit to the study of wisdom. Researchers do not maintain that a psychological theory will ever capture wisdom in its full-blown cultural complexity. It can be said that, at a high level of analysis, the concept of wisdom appears to be culturally universal. To illustrate, Table 6.1 summarizes the characteristics of historical studies of wisdom found in Asian, African, and Western traditions (Baltes, 1993; Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Wisdom addresses important and difficult questions and strategies about the conduct and meaning of life.

Wisdom includes knowledge about the limits of knowledge and the uncertainties of the world.

Wisdom represents a truly superior level of knowledge, judgement, and advice.

Wisdom constitutes knowledge with extraordinary scope, depth, measure, and balance.

Wisdom involves a perfect synergy of mind and character, that is, an orchestration of knowledge and virtues.

Wisdom represents knowledge used for the good or well-being of oneself and that of others.

Wisdom, though difficult to achieve and to specify, is easily recognized when manifested.

Table 6.1 General Criteria Derived from an Analysis of Cultural-Historical and Philosophical Accounts of Wisdom.

Source: Handbook of Positive Psychology Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopez. (2002)

6.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF WISDOM: FROM IMPLICIT TO EXPLICIT THEORIES

Because of its enormous cultural and historical heritage, a psychological definition and operationalization of wisdom are extremely difficult. This is why many wisdom researchers have restricted their research efforts to laypersons' implicit theories of wisdom (Clayton & Birren, 1980). Empirical research based on explicit theories of wisdom-related behaviour is relatively rare.

6.4.1 Implicit Theories:

Implicit theories are the beliefs or mental representations that people have about wisdom and the characteristics of wise people. In studies on implicit beliefs about wisdom and wise persons, there is a high degree of overlap in the core aspects of wisdom.

There are cognitive, social, motivational, and emotional components in implicit beliefs (Birren & Fisher, 1990; Kramer, 2000). The cognitive components include strong intellectual abilities, rich knowledge and experience in matters of the human condition, and the ability to apply one's theoretical knowledge practically. Socioemotional components

include good social skills, such as sensitivity and concern for others, and the ability to give good advice. The motivational component refers to the good intentions that are usually associated with wisdom. That is, wisdom aims at solutions that optimize the benefit of others and oneself.

Sternberg (1998) believed in the implicit theory of wisdom. Sternberg emphasized the role of "balance." Specifically, wisdom is conceptualized as the application of tacit knowledge towards the achievement of a common good achieved through a balance among multiple interests, including one's own and those of others.

6.4.2 Explicit Theories:

The second cluster of wisdom theories represents explicit psychological theories (Baltes & Smith, 1990). They are meant to focus on cognitive and behavioural expressions of wisdom and the processes involved in the joining of cognition with behavior.

Table 6.2 Implicit Beliefs about Wise People: Four Dimensions

Factor 1 Exceptional knowledge about wisdom acquisition

- *comprehends the nature of human existence*
- *tries to learn from his or her own mistakes*

Factor 2   Exceptional knowledge about use of wisdom

- *knows when to give/withhold advice*
- *is a person whose advice one would solicit for life problems*

Factor 3 Exceptional knowledge about context of life

- *knows that life priorities may change during the life course*
- *knows about possible conflicts among different life domains*

Factor 4   Exceptional personality and social functioning

- *is a good listener*
- *is a very humane person*

Source: Handbook of Positive Psychology Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopez. (2002)

Explicit theories develop models of wisdom by means of the quantitative operationalization of wisdom-related thought and behavior—as well as the derivation of hypotheses that can be tested empirically (e.g., about predictors of behavioral expressions of wisdom).

The theoretical and empirical work on explicit psychological conceptions of wisdom can be roughly divided into three groups:

a) the conceptualization of wisdom as a personal characteristic or a personality disposition (Erikson, 1959; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1998);

b) the conceptualization of wisdom in the neo-Piagetian tradition of post-formal and dialectical thinking (Alexander & Langer, 1990); and

c) the conceptualization of wisdom as an expert system dealing with the meaning and conduct of life, as advocated in the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm (Baltes & Smith, 1990).

6.5 THE BERLIN WISDOM PROJECT: WISDOM AS EXPERTISE IN THE FUNDAMENTAL PRAGMATICS OF LIFE

The Content Domain of Wisdom:

The Berlin Wisdom Project conceptualizes wisdom as expertise in the meaning and conduct of life. The contents to which this expertise of wisdom refers are the "fundamental pragmatics of life," that is, knowledge about the essence of the human condition and the ways and means of planning, managing, and understanding a good life (Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 1993, 2000). Examples of the fundamental pragmatics of life include knowledge and skills about the conditions, variability, ontogenetic changes, and historicity of human development; insight into obligations and goals in life; knowledge and skills about the social and situational influences on human life; as well as knowledge and skills about the finitude of life and the inherent limits of human knowledge.

Researchers agree that wisdom has a clear conceptual core and that its manifestations can be evaluated. As our empirical studies show, most people, after some training, are able to reach high levels of consensus in their evaluation of wisdom-related products.

Antecedents of Wisdom:

There are three broad domains of antecedents or determining factors—each comprising internal and external factors and processes that are influential in the development of wisdom at the level of individuals.

The three domains of ontogenetic conditions and processes that influence the development of wisdom are facilitative experiential contexts,

expertise-relevant factors, and person-related factors (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000).

Facilitative experiential contexts for the development of wisdom include chronological age, education, parenthood, professions that require individuals to strengthen their skills in social-emotional intelligence, familiarity with books such as autobiographical novels, or the historical period, which varies along dimensions of salience and facilitation in matters of the human condition.

A second domain that is central to the development of wisdom refers to expertise-relevant factors such as experience in life matters, organized tutelage, the availability of mentorship in dealing with life problems, and motivational factors such as a general interest in aspects of human life or a motivation to strive for excellence.

Finally, the third factor is person-related factors, which include basic cognitive processes, aspects of intelligence, creativity, flexible cognitive styles, and personality dispositions such as openness to experience or ego strength.

These three domains of ontogenetic influences are interrelated, and different combinations of the domains may lead to similar outcomes. Thus, there is no single "optimal" pathway but rather several different ways to acquire wisdom. Nevertheless, it is assumed that there is productive collaboration among the relevant factors.

6.5.1 The Berlin Wisdom Paradigm:

The paradigm for assessing wisdom comprises the following three core features:

a) Study participants are confronted with the difficult life problems of fictitious people under standardized conditions. Specifically, they are asked to read short vignettes about problems of life management, planning, and review.

b) Participants are then instructed to think aloud about those life problems, and their responses are tape-recorded and transcribed.

c) A selected panel of trained judges then rates the protocols according to five criteria that were developed based on the general theoretical framework outlined.

As an illustration, two responses that would be scored as either high or low on wisdom are presented in Table 6.3.

A 15-year-old girl wants to get married right away. What should one/she consider and do?

Low Wisdom-Related Score

A 15-year-old girl wants to get married? No, no way, marrying at age 15 would be utterly wrong. One has to tell the girl that marriage is not possible. It would be irresponsible to support such an idea. No, this is just a crazy idea.

High Wisdom-Related Score

Well, on the surface, this seems like an easy problem. On average, marriage for a 15-year-old girl is not a good thing. But there are situations where the average case does not fit. Perhaps in this instance, special life circumstances are involved, such that the girl has a terminal illness. Or the girl has just lost her parents. And also, this girl may be living in another culture or historical period. Perhaps she was raised with a value system different from ours. In addition, one has to think about adequate ways of talking with the girl and to consider her emotional state.

Source: Handbook of Positive Psychology Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopez. (2002)

6.5.2 A Family of Five Criteria for the Evaluation of Wisdom-Related Material:

Snyder and Lopez have developed five qualitative criteria that can be used for evaluating wisdom in any kind of material.

The first two criteria derive from the view of wisdom as an expert system. They are factual (declarative) knowledge and procedural knowledge. Factual knowledge related to wisdom includes topics like human nature, lifelong development, interpersonal relations, social norms, and individual differences in development and outcomes. Procedural knowledge comprises strategies and heuristics for dealing with life problems, for example, heuristics for the structuring and weighing of life goals, ways to handle conflicts, or alternative backup strategies. These two knowledge criteria are basic criteria—they are necessary but not sufficient for achieving wisdom.

The three other criteria are referred to as "meta-criteria". These are as follows:

Life - span contextualism refers to knowledge about the many different themes and contexts of human life (education, family, work, friends, etc.),

their interrelations, and cultural variations. This criterion includes a life - span perspective, for example, regarding changes in the relevance of different domains and in motivational priorities during ontogeny from birth into old age.

Value relativism and tolerance refer to the acknowledgment of individual and cultural differences in values.

Recognition and management of uncertainty refer to knowledge about the limitations of human information processing and about the low predictability of occurrences and consequences in human life. Wisdom-related knowledge involves knowledge not only about such uncertainties but also about ways to deal with them.

### 6.5.3 Selected Findings from the Berlin Wisdom Project:

Now we will discuss results regarding the relationship between age and wisdom-related performance, the influence of professional experience on wisdom-related performance, the performance of persons nominated as wise, the main variables that predict wisdom-related performance, and the activation of wisdom-related knowledge in the context of intervention or optimization research.

Age and Wisdom-Related Performance:

A lot of research has been done in the area of positive aspects of human ageing. The following figure (6.1) summarizes the findings of several studies based on heterogeneous samples in terms of educational and socioeconomic backgrounds and represents the life span from adolescence to old age. The data are cross-sectional.

Findings suggest that wisdom-related performance, as measured by the Berlin Wisdom Paradigm, increases sharply during adolescence and young adulthood (i.e., between 15 and 25 years) but, on average, remains relatively stable during middle adulthood and young old age (i.e., between 25 and 75 years). Peak performances are more likely in the 50s and 60s (Baltes, Staudinger, Maercker, & Smith, 1995). Data also suggest that wisdom-related performance may decline in very old age, at the average age of 75.

Figure 6.1 A cross-sectional study of wisdom-related performance.
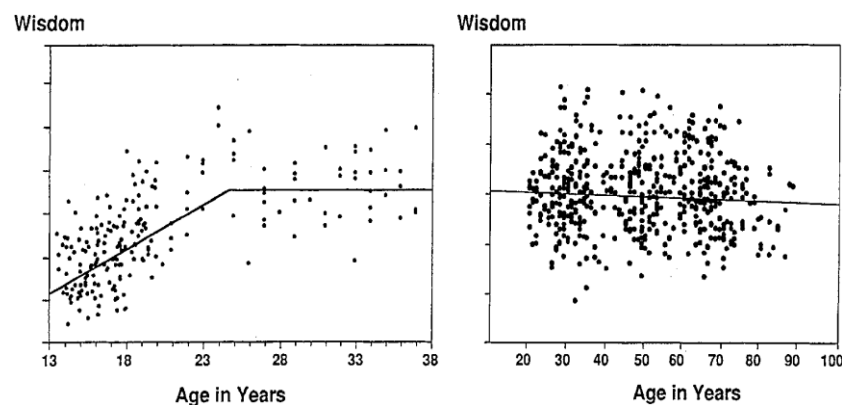
Note: The left panel shows data from Pasupathi, Staudinger, and Baltes (2000). The right panel summarizes results from several studies with adult samples (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Staudinger, 1999).

Source: Handbook of Positive Psychology Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopez. (2002)

The Role of Professional Experience:

Researchers investigated the members of a profession whose training and professional practice both involved continued and varied experience with difficult life problems, namely, clinical psychologists (Smith, Staudinger, & Baltes, 1994). These clinical psychologists were compared with professionals from fields in which training and everyday job tasks were not specifically dedicated to dealing with difficult problems concerning life meaning and conduct. Clinical psychologists showed higher levels of wisdom-related performance than members of other professions. It is important to consider that the relatively higher level of wisdom-related performance displayed by clinical psychologists may not only be due to training and profession-related experiences. Rather, members of a profession may represent a selective group of people in terms of personality, motivation, and intellectual abilities.

Predictors of Wisdom-Related Performance:

Wisdom requires and reflects the combination of several domains of human functioning. On the level of person-related factors, this includes integration of intellectual abilities, personality dispositions, and characteristics representing the interface between intelligence and personality.

Staudinger, Lopez, and Baltes (1997) investigated the joint effects of these three broad domains of person-related factors on wisdom-related performance and found that cognitive styles (Sternberg, 1996) and creativity showed the strongest correlations to wisdom-related performance. Judicial style (preference for evaluating and comparing) and progressive style (willingness to move beyond existing rules and tolerance for ambiguity) turned out to be the cognitive styles most predictive of wisdom. This finding indicates that our wisdom-related measures share a relatively high amount of unique variance: wisdom is different from a combination of adaptive abilities and characteristics related to standard measures of personality, intelligence, and their interface.

6.6 Linking Wisdom to Psychological Theories of Motivation and Values:

In this section, we will briefly describe several theoretical schemes of values, desirable motivational dispositions, and self-directed strengths as developed in psychological research. Subsequently, we will specify their potential linkages to the wisdom construct.

6.6.1 Psychological Theories of Values:

Numerous value researchers have relied on the value theory developed by Milton Rokeach (1973). This theory is based on the following definition of value: "A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973). Rokeach distinguished two types of values. Values about modes of conduct, which he also called instrumental values, refer to beliefs about which means (e.g., being honest, courageous, or modest) lead to certain desirable outcomes. In contrast, values about end states of existence, also called terminal values, refer to desirable life outcomes themselves (e.g., salvation, a world at peace).

Although Rokeach has concentrated his attention on the distinction between instrumental and terminal values, he considered that instrumental and terminal values can be broken down further according to whether they refer to individual well-being or to other people's well-being.

Instrumental values with a self-focus were called competence values (e.g., being ambitious, intellectual, independent); those with a focus on other people's well-being were called moral values (e.g., being helpful, forgiving, polite).

Similarly, terminal values with a self-focus were called "personal values" (e.g., self-respect, a comfortable life, freedom), and those with an other-focus were labelled "social values" (e.g., equality, national security, a world at peace).

Rokeach's ideas about the origins and development of values suggest—as the wisdom concept would imply—that the distinction between self-and other-centred values may be of fundamental importance.

Rokeach and Schwartz consider individual needs and social demands as driving forces in the development of personal values. Research suggests that the coordinated and balanced pursuit of self-serving and other-serving values is a central contributor to positive development and a good life (Sternberg, 1998). Thus, in contrast to past approaches to defining personal values, a wisdom-informed classification would consider the differentiation between self-serving and other-serving values to be most fundamental.

From the perspective of the concept of wisdom, value theories are limited in that they have little to say about the interplay of self-serving versus other serving values. How self- and other-serving values may be orchestrated in the service of optimal functioning and a good life is important to understand from the perspective of wisdom research. In other words, the concept of wisdom provides a meta-perspective on the organization of personal values.

Views from Wisdom on Personal Values and Positive Life Span Development

In this section, we shall discuss two of the seven core features of wisdom (Table 6.1) in more detail: (a) orientation towards the common good involving the well-being of oneself and others, and (b) a balanced, holistic, and integrated view of the world of human affairs.

Wisdom is inherently an intrapersonal and interpersonal concept. On the one hand, wisdom entails knowledge about how we can lead a personally meaningful and satisfying life. Consistent with this idea, Garrett (1996) proposes the following definition of wisdom: "Wisdom is that understanding which is essential to living the best life".

The more wisdom a person has, the more likely it is that he will succeed in living a good life".

On the other hand, a concern with interpersonal issues is equally part of the core of wisdom. Wisdom is not knowledge used for individual well-being alone; it is also used for the well-being of others (Kekes, 1995).

It can be said that wisdom considers the ancient idea of a good life, in which conceptions of individual and collective well-being are tied together, and it involves the insight that one cannot exist without the other (Maslow, 1970).

6.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There has not been much research on the connections between wisdom and personal values. Does wisdom-related knowledge make a difference in a person's system of self-and other-serving values? How many and which self- and other-serving values do wise persons have? It also remains to be seen whether people with different degrees of wisdom-related knowledge differ in specific types of self-and other-serving values. Wisdom may make a difference in terms of what researchers of morality and human motivation may call more highly developed self- and other-regarding values (e.g., other-serving values that reflect more abstract moral principles or self-serving values that refer to an individual's self-actualization).

It will be interesting to empirically investigate how many and what types of personal values people who approach wisdom-like qualities may hold. Equally important is the question of whether wiser people are particularly efficient in applying and pursuing their self- and other-serving values.

6.8 EMPATHY AND ALTRUISM

Empathic Emotion: A Possible Source of Altruistic Motivation

The most frequently mentioned possible source of altruistic motivation is usually an other-oriented emotional reaction to seeing another person in need. This reaction has been called "empathy", "sympathy", "sympathetic distress", "tenderness", "pity" or "compassion". For the purpose of our discussion in this chapter, we shall call this other-oriented emotion empathy.

Empathy can be defined as "an other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else". If the other is perceived to be in need, then empathic emotions include sympathy, compassion, softheartedness, tenderness, and the like. It is important to distinguish this other-oriented emotional response from a number of related psychological phenomena.

6.9 EMPATHIC EMOTION RELATED CONCEPTS

1) Knowing another person's internal state:

including thoughts and feelings. Some clinicians and researchers have called knowing another person's internal state "empathy" (Brothers, 1989; de Waal, 1996). Others have called this knowledge "being empathic", "accurate empathy" or "empathic accuracy". Empathic emotion requires that one think one knows the other's state because empathic emotion is based on a perception of the other's welfare.

2) Assuming the posture of an observed other:

Assuming the physical posture or attitude of an observed other is a definition of empathy in many dictionaries. Among psychologists, however, assuming another's posture is more likely to be called "motor mimicry" (Bavelas, Black, Lemeray, & Mullett, 1987); "physiological sympathy" (Ribot, 1911); or "imitation" (Becker, 1931). Feeling empathic emotion may be facilitated by assuming another's posture, but assuming the other's posture is neither necessary nor sufficient to produce empathy as we are using the term.

3) Coming to feel as another person feels:

Feeling the same emotion that another person feels is also a common dictionary definition of empathy, and it is a definition used by some psychologists (Berger, 1962; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987). Freud defined empathy as "emotional identification" (Freud, 1922).

Although feeling as the other feels may be an important stepping stone to the other-oriented feeling that has been claimed to be a source of altruism, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient precondition (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997).

4) Intuiting or projecting oneself into another's situation:

Projecting oneself into another's situation is the psychological state referred to by Lipps (1903) as Einfu- lung and for which Titchener (1909) originally coined the term "empathy." This state has also been called "projective empathy" (Becker, 1931).

5) Imagining how another is feeling:

Wispe (1968) called imagining how another is feeling "psychological" empathy. Stotland (1969) spoke of this as a particular form of perspective-taking—an "imagine him" (or, more generally, an "imagine other")

perspective. Experimental instructions to adopt this imagine-other perspective often have been used to induce empathic emotion in participants in laboratory research (Batson, 1991; Davis, 1994).

6) Imagining how one would think and feel in the other's place:

Mead (1934) called this act of imagination "role-taking" and sometimes "empathy". In the Piagetian tradition, imagining how one would think in the other's place has been called either "perspective-taking" or "decentering" (Piaget, 1932/1965). When attending to another person in distress, an imagine-other perspective stimulates the other-oriented emotional response that we are calling empathy, whereas an imagine-self perspective may stimulate empathy but is also likely to elicit more self-oriented feelings of personal distress (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997).

7) Being upset by another person's suffering:

The state of personal distress evoked by seeing another in distress has been given a variety of names. It has been called "sympathetic pain" (McDougall, 1908); "promotive tension" (Hornstein, 1982); "unpleasant arousal occasioned by observation" (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981); and "empathy" (Krebs, 1975). Here, one does not feel distressed for the other or distressed as the other but feels distressed by the state of the other.

These seven empathy concepts have been listed for three reasons. First, it is important to point out the range of psychological states to which the term empathy has been applied. Second, to distinguish each of the seven other empathy concepts from the other-oriented emotional response that has been claimed to be a source of altruistic motivation. Third, to suggest how each of the other seven concepts relates to this empathic emotional response.

Although distinctions among the seven concepts in the empathy cluster are sometimes subtle, there seems little doubt that each of these states exists.

6.10 TESTING THE EMPATHY-ALTRUISM HYPOTHESIS

The claim that feeling empathic emotion for someone in need evokes altruistic motivation to relieve that need has been called the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1987, 1991). According to this hypothesis, the greater the empathic emotion, the greater the altruistic motivation.

Evidence supports the idea that feeling empathy for a person in need leads to increased helping of that person (Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Batson, 1991). Observing an empathy-helping relationship, however, does not tell us about the nature of the motivation that underlies this relationship. Increasing the other person's welfare could be an ultimate goal, an instrumental goal sought as a means to the ultimate goal of gaining one or more self-benefits, or both. That is, the motivation could be altruistic, egoistic, or both.

Three general classes of self-benefits can result from helping a person for whom one feels empathy. Helping enables one to (a) reduce one's empathic arousal, which may be experienced as aversive; (b) avoid possible social and self-punishments for failing to help; and (c) gain social and self-rewards for doing what is good and right.

The empathy-altruism hypothesis does not deny that these self-benefits of empathy-induced helping exist. This hypothesis claims that, with regard to the motivation evoked by empathy, these self-benefits are unintended consequences of reaching the ultimate goal of reducing the other's needs.

Advocates of egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis disagree; they claim that one or more of these self-benefits is the ultimate goal of empathy-induced helping. In the past two decades, more than 25 experiments have tested these three egoistic alternatives to the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

6.10.1 Aversive-Arousal Reduction:

The most frequently proposed egoistic explanation of the empathy-helping relationship is aversive-arousal reduction. According to this explanation, feeling empathy for someone who is suffering is unpleasant, and empathically aroused individuals help in order to eliminate their empathic feelings. Benefiting the person for whom empathy is felt is simply a means to this self-serving end.

Researchers have tested the aversive-arousal reduction explanation against the empathy-altruism hypothesis by varying the ease of escaping further exposure to a person in need without helping. Because empathic arousal is a result of witnessing the person's suffering, either terminating this suffering by helping or terminating exposure to it by escaping should reduce one's own aversive arousal. Escape does not, however, enable one to reach the altruistic goal of relieving the other's distress. Therefore, the aversive-arousal explanation predicts the elimination of the empathy-helping relationship when escape is easy; the empathy-altruism hypothesis does not. Results of experiments testing these competing predictions have supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis, not the aversive-arousal reduction explanation. These results doubt this popular egoistic explanation (Batson, 1991).

6.10.2 Empathy-Specific Punishment:

A second egoistic explanation maintains that people learn through socialization that there is an obligation to help, and if you don't do so then there is shame and guilt for failure to help. Hence, there is this feeling of empathy for someone in need. As a result, when people feel empathy, they say to themselves, "What will others think—or what will I think of myself—if I don't help when I feel like this?" And then they help out of an egoistic desire to avoid these empathy-specific punishments.

6.10.3 Empathy-Specific Reward:

The third major egoistic explanation maintains that people learn through socialization that special rewards in the form of praise, honour, and pride are there for helping a person for whom they feel empathy. As a result, when people feel empathy, they think of these rewards and help out of an egoistic desire to gain them. The general form of this explanation has been tested in several experiments but has not received much support (Batson et al., 1988).

One variation on an empathy-specific reward explanation was proposed by Smith, Keating, and Stotland (1989). They proposed that rather than helping to gain the rewards of seeing oneself or being seen by others as a helpful person, empathically aroused individuals help in order to feel joy at the needy individual's relief: "It is proposed that the prospect of empathic joy, conveyed by feedback from the help recipient, is essential to the special tendency of empathic witnesses to help. The empathically concerned witness helps in order to be happy" (Smith et al., 1989).

Experimental evidence has failed to support this empathic-joy hypothesis. Instead, experimental results have consistently supported the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson et al., 1991; Smith et al., 1989).

Conclusion from Empathy-Altruism Research:

Reviewing the empathy-altruism research, as well as recent literature in sociology, economics, political science, and biology, Piliavin and Charng (1990) observed that egoistic motives are not important, rather, theory and data now prove that true altruism—acting with the goal of benefiting another—does exist and is a part of human nature. It can be said that the empathy-altruism hypothesis should be accepted as true.

6.11 OTHER POSSIBLE SOURCES OF ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATION

Several studies have proposed other sources of altruistic motivation, including an "altruistic personality" (Oliner & Oliner, 1988), principled moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976), and internalized prosocial values (Staub, 1974).

There is some evidence that each of these potential sources is associated with increased motivation to help, but as yet it is not clear that this motivation is altruistic. It may be, or it may be an instrumental means to the egoistic ultimate goals of maintaining one's positive self-concept or avoiding guilt (Batson, 1991).

Two Other Possible Prosocial Motives

Two other sources that have been studied are collectivism and principalism.

6.11.1 Collectivism:

Collectivism is motivation to benefit a particular group as a whole. The ultimate goal is not to increase one's own welfare or the welfare of the specific others who are benefited; the ultimate goal is to increase the welfare of the group.

As with altruism, what looks like collectivism may actually be a form of egoism. Maybe attention to group welfare is simply an expression of enlightened self-interest. After all, if one recognizes that ignoring group needs and the public good in the headlong pursuit of self-benefit will lead to less self-benefit in the long run, one may decide to benefit the group as a means to maximize overall self-benefit.

Appeals to enlightened self-interest are commonly used by politicians and social activists to encourage responses to societal needs: they warn of the long-term consequences for oneself and one's children of pollution and squandering natural resources; they remind that if the plight of the poor becomes too severe, the well-off may face revolution. Such appeals seem to assume that collectivism is simply a form of egoism.

The most direct evidence that collectivism is independent of egoism comes from research by Dawes, van de Kragt, and Orbell (1990). They examined the responses of individuals who had been given a choice between allocating money to themselves or to a group. Allocation to oneself maximized individual but not group profit; allocation to the group maximized collective but not individual profit. Dawes et al. found that if individuals faced with this dilemma made their allocation after discussing it with other members of the group, they gave more to the group than if they had no prior discussion. Moreover, this effect was specific to the in-group with whom the discussion occurred; allocation to an out-group was not enhanced.

Based on this research, Dawes et al. (1990) maintained that collectivist motivation was independent of egoism. There is reason to doubt, however, that their procedure effectively ruled out self-rewards and self-punishment associated with conscience. We may have a norm that says "share with your buddies" rather than one that simply says "share." So, although this research is important and suggestive, more and better evidence is needed to justify the conclusion that collectivist motivation is not reducible to egoism.

6.11.2 Principalism:

Most moral philosophers argue for the importance of a prosocial motive other than egoism. Philosophers reject the idea of empathy-induced altruism because feelings of empathy, sympathy, and compassion are judged to be too fickle and too circumscribed. Empathy is not felt by everyone in need, at least not to the same degree. They also do not like the idea of collectivism because group interests are bound by the limits of the group.

This moral motivation has been called principlism (Batson, 1994). Kant (1785/1898) maintained that the concern we show for others that appears to be prompted by duty to principle may actually be prompted by self-love. The goal of upholding a moral principle may only be an instrumental means to reach the ultimate goal of self-benefit. If this is true, then principle-based motivation is actually egoistic.

The self-benefits of upholding a moral principle are very clear. One can gain the social and self-rewards of being seen and seeing oneself as a good person. One can also avoid the social and self-punishment of shame and guilt for failing to do the right thing.

The issue here is the same one faced with altruism and collectivism. Once again, we need to know the nature of a prosocial motive. Is the desire to uphold justice (or some other moral principle) an instrumental goal on the way to the ultimate goal of self-benefit? If so, then this desire is a subtle and sophisticated form of egoism.

Results of recent research suggest that people often act so as to appear moral while, if possible, avoiding the cost of actually being moral; this sham morality has been called moral hypocrisy (Batson et al., 1997). Results of this research also suggest that, if moral motivation exists, it is easily overpowered by self-interest.

6.12 TOWARDS A GENERAL MODEL OF PROSOCIAL MOTIVATION

Staub (1989) and Schwartz (1992) have for many years emphasized the importance of values as determinants of prosocial behavior. Batson (1994) has proposed a general model that links prosocial values and motives: The value underlying egoism is enhanced personal welfare; the value underlying altruism is enhanced welfare for one or more individuals as individuals; the value underlying collectivism is enhanced group welfare; and the value underlying principlism is upholding a moral principle.

Some experiments have provided evidence for the predicted link between empathic emotion— a source of altruistic motivation—and valuing another individual's welfare (Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995).

Prosocial values are usually assumed to be mutually supportive and cooperative; concern for the welfare of others and concern for the welfare of society are assumed to be moral (Hoffman, 1989; Staub, 1989).

To entertain the possibility of multiple prosocial motives (egoism, altruism, collectivism, and principlism) based on multiple prosocial values (self, other, group, principle) begs for a better understanding.

Based on research to date, it appears that empathic feelings are not a product of self-other merging (Batson, Sager, et al., 1997), but the effect on one's self-concept of caring for people, groups, and principles is not, as yet, well understood.

6.13 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE EMPATHY- ALTRUISM RELATIONSHIP

It is clear that empathy- altruism relationship has broad theoretical implications. Universal egoism—the assumption that all human behavior is ultimately directed towards self-benefit—has long dominated not only psychology but also other social and behavioral sciences (Campbell, 1975). If individuals feeling empathy act with the ultimate goal of increasing the welfare of another, then the assumption of universal egoism must be replaced by a more complex view of motivation that allows for both altruism and egoism.

Research has proved that we have the potential to care about others' welfare. The empathy-altruism relationship forces us to face the question of why empathic feelings exist. What evolutionary function do they serve? The most plausible answer relates empathic feelings to parenting among higher mammals, in which offspring live for some time in a very vulnerable state (de Waal, 1996). If parents were not interested in the welfare of their offspring, these species would quickly die out. Empathic feelings for offspring—and the resulting altruistic motivation— may promote one's reproductive potential not by increasing the number of offspring but by increasing the chance of their survival.

Empathic feelings extend well beyond one's own children. From an evolutionary perspective, this extension is usually attributed to cognitive generalization whereby one "adopts" others, making it possible to evoke the primitive and fundamental impulse to care for progeny when these adopted others are in need (Batson, 1987). Such cognitive generalization may be facilitated by human cognitive capacity, including symbolic thought, and the lack of evolutionary advantage for sharp discrimination of empathic feelings in early human small hunter-gatherer bands.

6.14 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE EMPATHY- ALTRUISM RELATIONSHIP

The empathy-altruism relationship also has broad practical implications. Given the power of empathic feelings to evoke altruistic motivation, people may sometimes suppress or avoid these feelings. Loss of the capacity to feel empathy for clients may be a factor, possibly a central one, in the experience of burnout among caseworkers in the helping professions (Maslach, 1982). Aware of the extreme effort involved in helping or the impossibility of helping effectively, these case workers—or nurses caring for terminal patients, or even pedestrians confronted by the homeless— may try to avoid feeling empathy in order to avoid the resulting altruistic motivation (Shaw, Batson, & Todd, 1994).

More positively, the empathy-altruism relationship suggests the use of empathy-based socialization practices to enhance prosocial behavior, practices that are very different from the currently dominant practices

involving inhibition of egoistic impulses through shaping, modelling, and internalized guilt (Batson, 1991).

At a societal level, experiments have indicated that empathy-induced altruism can be used to improve attitudes toward stigmatized outgroups. Empathy inductions have been used to improve racial attitudes, as well as attitudes towards people with AIDS, the homeless, and even convicted murderers (Batson, Polycarpou, et al., 1997).

Empathy-induced altruism has also been found to increase cooperation in a competitive situation (Prisoner's Dilemma)—even when one knows that the person for whom one feels empathy has acted competitively (Batson & Ahmad, 2001; Batson & Moran, 1999).

6.15 SUMMARY

Human beings have always strived for perfection, optimal human behavior, and human development. Many philosophers and theologists participated in the research related to perfection and optimality (Brandtsta¨dter & Schneewind, 1977). Although, these days it is uncommon for behavioural researchers and scholars to argue the case for absolute perfection and optimality. It is considered better to promote a tolerant conception of human rights and also the recognition of contextual variations in form and function. Behavioral and social researchers have developed a preference for emphasizing particularities and the importance of flexibility in making decisions about what is right and wrong (Shweder, 1991). There are exceptions to this reluctance in the psychological research community to specify the foundation of optimality.

In research on subjective beliefs about ageing, wisdom turned out to be one of the very few characteristics for which people expect a positive trajectory in late adulthood.

The first exploration into the positivity of old age involved cognitive training studies to understand the role of practice deficits and the latent learning potential of the older population in the sense of plasticity. In this research, it was demonstrated that, at least up to age 80 or so, many older adults possess more cognitive reserves (plasticity or learning potential) than one typically expects. Greatly influenced by the work of Vivian Clayton (Clayton & Birren, 1980), the concept of wisdom became the rallying point for the subsequent search for the hidden treasure of old age.

Psychologists have proposed implicit and explicit theories to explain wisdom. Implicit theories are the beliefs or mental representations that people have about wisdom and the characteristics of wise people. The second cluster of wisdom theories represents explicit psychological theories. They are meant to focus on cognitive and behavioural expressions of wisdom and the processes involved in the joining of cognition with behaviour.

Berlin Wisdom Project conceptualizes wisdom as expertise in the meaning and conduct of life. Our conceptualization of wisdom as expertise signals

that we expect most people not to be wise. What we expect, however, is that the behavioral expressions we observe in individuals can be ordered on a "wisdom scale." As per Berlin Project, the paradigm for assessing wisdom comprises three core features: (a) Study participants are confronted with the difficult life problems of fictitious people under standardized conditions. Specifically, they are asked to read short vignettes about problems of life management, planning, and review. (b) Participants are then instructed to think aloud about those life problems, and their responses are tape-recorded and transcribed (c) A selected panel of trained judges then rates the protocols according to five criteria that were developed based on the general theoretical framework outlined.

As far as future research related to wisdom is concerned, there has not been much research on the connections between wisdom and personal values. Does wisdom-related knowledge make a difference in a person's life? Wisdom may make a difference, particularly in terms of what researchers of morality and human motivation may call more highly developed self- and other-regarding values (e.g., other-serving values that reflect more abstract moral principles or self-serving values that refer to an individual's self-actualization). There are a lot of things that need to be solved. Let us hope that this chapter has contributed to a better understanding of why the concept of wisdom is being revisited, and it certainly holds much promise.

Why do people help others, even at a considerable cost to themselves? What does this behavior tell us about the human capacity to care, about the degree of interconnectedness among us, and about how social an animal we humans really are? These classic philosophical questions have resurfaced in the behavioral and social sciences in the past several decades. Psychological research has focused on the claim that empathic emotion evokes altruistic motivation—motivation with the ultimate goal of increasing another's welfare.

To understand this research, it is important to distinguish empathic emotion—an emotional state congruent with the perceived welfare of another person—from a number of other empathy concepts. We identified seven other empathy concepts: knowing another person's internal state; assuming the physical posture of an observed other; coming to feel as another person feels; projecting oneself into another's situation; imagining how another is feeling; imagining how one would think and feel in another's place, and being upset by another person's suffering.

The empathy-altruism hypothesis states that empathic emotion evokes altruistic motivation. Results of the over 25 experiments designed to test this hypothesis against various egoistic alternatives have proven remarkably supportive, leading to the tentative conclusion that feeling empathy for a person in need does indeed evoke altruistic motivation to help that person.

Sources of altruistic motivation other than empathy also have been proposed, but as yet there is no compelling research evidence to support

these proposals. Thinking beyond the egoism-altruism debate, two additional forms of prosocial motivation seem especially worthy of consideration: collectivism and principlism. Collectivism—motivation with the ultimate goal of benefiting some group or collective as a whole— has been claimed to result from group identity. Principlism— motivation with the ultimate goal of upholding some moral principle—has long been advocated by religious teachers and moral philosophers.

Whether either is a separate form of motivation, independent of and irreducible to egoism, is not yet clear. Research done to test the independent status of empathy-induced altruism may serve as a useful model for future research assessing the independent status of collectivism and principlism.

We know more now than we did a few years ago about why people help. As a result, we know more about human motivation, and even about human nature. These are substantial gains. Still, many questions remain about the emotional and motivational resources that could be tapped to build a more caring, humane society. Providing answers to these questions is an important agenda item for positive psychology.

6.16 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on psychological theories of wisdom.

2. Discuss the Berlin Wisdom project.

3. What is the relationship of wisdom with age and professional experience? Discuss research studies.

4. Is altruism part of human nature? Discuss.

5. Discuss all seven empathic emotion-related concepts.

6. Discuss the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Give studies conducted by researchers.

6.17 REFERENCES

• Handbook of Positive Psychology Edited by C. R. Snyder, Shane J. Lopez. (2002).

*****

POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS– I

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand positive schooling and gain deeper insight into the positive and negative impact that schooling can have.

- Discuss ageing and the role of family in healthy ageing.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 Positive Schooling:

Positive psychology's tenets are strongly emphasised in educational settings. The traditional term for "education," schooling, conveys the advantage of including the entire society in educating children. This chapter will focus on the negative views held by some people about

teachers and their work, explore the characteristics of those few truly bad teachers, and examine the six important components of effective schools.

7.1.2 What is positive schooling?

Positive schooling/ education is an approach to education that draws on positive psychology's attention to individual strengths and motivation to facilitate learning. Positive schooling teachers employ methods that focus on the well-being of individual students, in contrast to traditional school approaches in which teachers attempt to tailor their material to a mythical "average" student and move the class through the material using a single teaching and testing style.

7.1.3 Theoretical Approaches Of Positive Schooling:

Though positive psychologists may not have been known in early times, a number of early psychologists and thinkers paved the way for the use of positive psychology methods in the classroom. One of the pioneers in the field of positive education was John Dewey. John Dewey acknowledged that the foundational institutions for the growth of democracy are schools. He criticised the oppressive environment seen in schools, particularly primary and secondary institutions, and underlined the value of encouraging students' capacity to take in information and recreate it in their minds. He advanced the constructivist theory, which contends that every student should take information and imaginatively develop it in accordance with their unique skills and viewpoints. This method goes against the conventional idea of education, which holds that professors should communicate directly with their students in order to impart knowledge. In conclusion, Dewey's theory of education, which is comparable to progressive education, suggests that people learn best in settings that are applicable to the real world and that enable them to learn practical problem solving.

The Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) model adopts a prevention and intervention approach that emphasizes the importance of building prosocial skills in addition to reducing bad behaviour. At the universal level, strategies for defining expected behaviours, teaching expected behaviour, encouraging and practicing appropriate behaviours, and consistency across school systems are all included. The provision of specialized assistance to at-risk individuals and groups is the second level. The last level worries people who continue in their awful way of behaving and includes utilitarian conduct evaluations, guidance-based plans, and aggregate exhaustive plans including families and local area organizations. PBS can be implemented at the district or even state level (SWPBIS). As of late, nearby educational systems and even state divisions of schooling have been showing rising revenue from PBS on the grounds that the program requires little preparation time and restricted cash and staff.

Check Your Progress:

1. Define positive schooling.

2. Discuss the Positive Behaviour support Model

7.1.4 Negative Psychology:

According to Zimbardo (2005), "When given the honour and privilege of teaching, some teachers bore rather than inspire, settle for the lowest common denominator rather than aspire to the highest possible numerator, and take the job for granted rather than being continually amazed at the blessings and sins against all the minds they have closed, misinformed, and alienated from education."

Some factors that determine teacher quality: a teacher's relevant educational background and degrees, which are two of the most influential sources.

Apart from a poor educational background, some of the other reasons include: Burnout: a time when the teacher loses motivation after repeatedly encountering obstacles and a lack of support. However, there is no excuse for a teacher to not resolve the burnout. When it comes to their students' enthusiasm and preparation, teachers who continue to simply "send it in" are difficult to sympathize with. In addition to the fact that they neglected to educate developmental youthful personalities when they were generally open to the fervour of learning, they additionally may have switched off these personalities forever.

Even though such teachers are uncommon, even one is excessive. It would be bad enough if these poor teachers merely hindered their students' learning; however, they may also cause psychological harm.

Tragically, students may become unwilling participants in self-fulfilling prophecies in which they fail socially and academically. As a result, as passionate as we are about ensuring that our teachers' and students' minds and classrooms are filled with positive psychology, we are equally zealous about ensuring that poor teachers are identified very early in their careers and either taught how to change or told to leave the classroom. However, positive education is not universally recognized as an effective teaching method.

7.1.5 Components of Positive Schooling:

According to Lopez, Janowski, & Wells (2005), philosophers like Benjamin Franklin, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and John Dewey emphasized the strengths of students. Although Alfred Binet (Binet & Simon, 1916) is frequently regarded as the founder of the concept of mental age, he also emphasized the development of student skills rather than solely addressing weaknesses. Similarly, Elizabeth Hurlock (1925) emphasized praise as being more influential than criticism in determining the efforts of students. In a similar vein, Arthur Chickering (1969) sought to comprehend the development of students' abilities, and Lewis Terman (Terman & Oden, 1947) investigated the thinking of truly brilliant students throughout his entire career. All the more recently, Donald

Clifton has distinguished and later developed the specific abilities of understudies as opposed to zeroing in on their shortcomings.

Care, Trust, And Respect For Diversity:

Since students thrive in such a school setting, it is of the utmost importance to have a trusting and supportive atmosphere. Students require teachers who are always available and responsive as role models. Teachers have paid a lot of attention to trust in the classroom, and everyone agrees that it helps students' performance as well as their mental health (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Collins, 2001).

Watson and Ecken (2003) advocate for developmental discipline. This is based on the idea of attachment theory, which says that caregivers should help students who have insecure attachments. According to Watson and Ecken, "The most important goal in the socialization of children is the building of caring and trusting relationships."

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students feel safe in their classrooms. They should try not to become sceptical about understudies since it leads to a sabotage of trust that is so significant for learning. Students frequently choose to misbehave rather than appear dumb in front of their peers and face any consequences. Positive teachers, as a result, strive to project a positive image of their students in their interactions with them. Students won't take the risks that are so crucial to learning if they don't know that the teacher is respected. When a teacher is quiet and attentive to the perspectives of the students in a class, it sometimes yields the best teaching results.

Goals (Content):

Extensive research by Stanford University professors on the responses of students from kindergarten to college demonstrates that goals can be used to target students' learning efforts. Additionally, such objectives are especially beneficial when teachers and students agree on them (Dweck, 1999; Latham and Locke, 2002). Goals that are within a reasonable range of difficulty foster productive learning, particularly when they can be tailored to particular students (or groups of students). Students need to feel like they have some input in how their teachers run their classes. Of course, the goals for the classroom are set by the teachers, but they should also take into account how their previous students reacted.

It is also helpful to break up a larger learning objective into smaller, more manageable subgoals that can be worked on in stages and to make the objectives understandable and concrete. In a similar vein, as we discussed in the preceding section in relation to issues related to diversity, teachers who allow group activities in which students must cooperate with one another to determine a portion of their students grades facilitate goal setting. Again, the "jigsaw classroom" paradigm of Aronson is very helpful for setting such goals.

Plans:

Plans and motivation coincide with each other. Teaching, like science, is built on the accumulation of ideas. Teachers must carefully plan their lessons. The student has learned the particular material by solving the mystery. Another factor in increasing students' motivation is to make the material relevant to them (Buskist et al., 2005). At the most fundamental level, at the point when the course data is applicable, understudies are bound to go to class, focus, and offer remarks during the talks (Lowman, 1995; 1999, Lutsky). Instructors can make classroom demonstrations and at-home investigations of various phenomena that are applicable to situations that students encounter outside of the classroom to increase material relevance. At the beginning of a semester, some instructors conduct surveys in which students are asked to describe both positive and negative life events.

Motivation:

In order for teachers to carry out the plans they have created for their classes, they need to be enthusiastic about the materials they use. Instructors show a lot of love for their students. Consequently, when educators make example objectives and plans intriguing to themselves, their understudies effectively can get on this energy.

Teachers who are motivated are attentive to their students' requirements and reactions. Students' inquiries are also taken very seriously by strengths-based instructors, who strive to provide the best possible responses. It is energizing for the class to be informed that, although the instructor does not know the answer to a student's question at that time, he or she will make every effort to locate it. The teacher then conducts further research to discover the answer to the question and presents it during the subsequent class period; such responsiveness is typically greatly appreciated by students. Praise is a powerful motivator. However, it is preferable to deliver this privately because a particular student may feel uneasy being singled out in front of their peers. Students' propensities to compete with one another may also be increased by public praise. A good time to praise the student for asking good questions or to observe the student's good work or progress outside of the classroom is during an office visit or meeting.

Hope:

Learning expands, and students feel more empowered when they develop this mindset. As a result, students are empowered to solve problems throughout their lives. This "learning how to learn" stems not only from the "I can" motivation but also from goals-directed pathways thinking. Therefore, positive psychology instruction not only imparts the material covered in the course but also inspires students to have hope. The attic of the positive schoolhouse represents hope. Hopeful students believe that their education will not end when they leave the classroom. Or, on the other hand, maybe it is better to say that confident reasoning knows no walls or limits in the existence of an understudy who learns constantly.

Societal Contributions:

It is essential for students to comprehend that they are part of a larger social scheme in which they impart their knowledge to others. These societal contributions are the long-term "paybacks" that education teaches people to give to those around them, whether it's teaching children to be positive thinkers or sharing new ideas and excitement with a lot of people they meet over their lifetimes.

As a result, students become teachers who continue to impart their knowledge to others through positive education. The advantages of learning are conveyed to a wide range of other individuals in this manner. Therefore, in positive education, students become teachers of others.

7.1.6 The Strenghts Quest Model: A Model Example Of Positive Schooling:

Strengths Quest is a program designed to help high school and college students succeed in their academic endeavours and in life as a whole by developing and engaging them. The American Psychological Association has hailed Don Clifton as both the "grandfather" of positive psychology and the "father" of the strengths-based approach to psychology (McKay & Greengrass, 2003). Professor Clifton always seemed to have a crucial and distinct question, in contrast to the intellectual and applied currents of the 1950s through the 1990s, which floated in the murky waters of weakness-oriented psychology. What would happen if we focused on people's good qualities rather than their bad ones?

The Strengths Quest Program is centred on this question. Naturally, this positive approach stands in contrast to the traditional approach to education, in which students are taught, both explicitly and implicitly, that they must "fix" their shortcomings in order to pass (Anderson, 2005). The Strengths Quest Program energizes students in terms of the hope and related motivations discussed in the previous section. This is a result of students realizing that they are believed to possess the natural cognitive abilities needed to succeed in school.

According to Schmidt & Rader (1999), the StrengthsFinder assessment method has been used in more than 100 studies to accurately predict a variety of outcome markers. Furthermore, this method has been extensively empirically validated (Lopez, Hodges, & Harter, 2005).

In the second and third stages of this educational approach, students work on their signature strengths as identified by the five strongest StrengthsFinder themes. Research found that students and high achievers (1) clearly recognize their talents and develop them; (2) put their strengths to use in areas where they match up well with one's natural talents and interests; and 3) come up with ways to use their assets to achieve the goals they want. The Strengths Quest Program is receiving more attention from colleges and high schools across the country. Additionally, the Strengths Quest Program appears to have a positive impact on students, according to the available outcome studies (Hodges & Harter, 2005).

7.1.7 Positive teaching :

Positive teachers have unleashed the enthusiasm and joys of learning, just as negative teachers have harmed this process. According to Worzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz (1997), these positive schooling teachers consider their work to be a calling rather than a job. According to Buskist, Benson, & Sikorski (2005), a calling is a strong motivation in which a person consistently pursues an intrinsically satisfying course of action. When positive psychology principles are applied to education, we believe that teachers act as if they have vocations because they have a deep and abiding love of teaching.

Many teachers have highlighted the positives a teacher can have to add value at school, such as preparing for classes the following week, leading discussions, lecturing, giving demonstrations, collaborating with teaching assistants, interacting with students from a variety of backgrounds, reading student journals, and even commenting on and grading tests.

7.1.8 Role of parents in positive schooling:

There are a number of things parents can do to support the education system as a whole and teachers in particular. First, parents can collaborate with teachers to help their own children learn more effectively. It goes without saying that learning takes place outside of the classroom, so parents are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities with their children to practice and reinforce the lessons they are already learning. Volunteer to assist with various school activities as well. Children will be dazzled by the way that learning isn't something about which just their instructors care.

Parents can also meet with the teachers at the school to find out what they need to do to improve instruction. Teachers' requirements may vary depending on the course, but they can still make a contribution. Guardians with extraordinary abilities can elect to come into class and give shows to understudies. Additionally, parents may wish to become politically involved in order to raise local school taxes in order to construct new classrooms or improve teacher compensation and benefits. Positive psychology's solution to improving your community's schools includes parents.

In the event that there are educators in the nearby educational system who did a great job of educating, guardians can find out when these instructors intend to resign. Since these teachers have made it their life's work to educate the community's children, why not organize a reunion with other former students? or assist in organizing the beloved teacher's farewell party.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is positive teaching?

2. Define the role of parents in positive schooling.

7.2 AGEING WELL AND ROLE OF THE FAMILY

7.2.1 Introduction:

The majority of people fear getting older because they believe it means they will lose their ability to function and enjoy life. According to recent professional and popular research publications, there has been a movement to define and encourage "successful ageing" over the past two decades. The fact that we are more concerned than ever before with elderly people is a credit to our society. Then again, there have never been as many elderly individuals about whom to be concerned.

The research literature has used the terms "ageing well" and "ageing successfully," which are thought to be similar concepts. However, older adults have been more likely to use the term "successful ageing" to describe the components of "ageing positively" or "ageing well" (Fernández-Ballesteros et al.). 2010.

7.2.2 What Is Ageing?

The idea of successful ageing has sparked a lot of discussion in recent years, and a variety of definitions of the term have been presented in a number of studies. Rowe and Kahn's classic definition of successful ageing is high physical, mental, and social functioning in old age without major illnesses.

"The ability to maintain a low risk of disease-related disability, high mental and physical function, and active engagement with life" has been defined as successful ageing (Rowe and Kahn 1998). This generally includes a desire to remain active and healthy in later life, as well as having a positive attitude and a sense of engagement and purpose in life, which are seen as among the most significant factors that contribute to ageing well.

Check Your Progress:

1. Define Ageing

7.2.3 Biomedical Aspects of Ageing:

Physiological function:

Life expectancy has significantly increased in recent decades. Multimorbidity, frailty, and disability are on the rise in the older population as a result of the rising number of people over 80. According to cohort studies, lower quality of life in old age is linked to morbidity and functional limitations.

Cognitive function:

In old age, key objectives include maintaining cognitive abilities and preventing memory disorders. Hartley et.al have recommended that fruitful mental work ought to be a focal part of effective maturing. Individual differences exist in old age's cognitive development. Despite the fact that indicators of the disease process are still poorly understood, longitudinal studies have demonstrated that the middle of life is a critical time for the beginning of the pathology of cognitive disorders. Though indicators of successful cognitive functioning are frequently chosen to tap particular dimensions of functioning, cognitive functioning encompasses perception, attention, memory, and higher functions. According to Hartley and colleagues, clinical cognitive assessments may not accurately reflect current cognitive psychology thinking.

Physical function:

Physical functioning is the most developed aspect of successful ageing. A key factor in successful ageing is preserving one's physical function. Healthy aging can be strongly predicted by engaging in regular physical activity throughout one's lifetime. Ageing, chronic diseases, and lifestyle factors (nutrition, inactivity) all contribute to muscle mass and strength decline.

Psychosocial factors:

Psychosocial conditions of the mind and body contribute to ageing processes. The model of selective optimization with compensation (SOC), developed by Baltes and Baltes, provides an explanation for how successful psychological and behavioral processes can adapt to age-related deficits. The SOC model reflects people's capacity to make choices that are best suited to their individual resources and includes both objective and subjective criteria. An alternative model that takes into account the possibility of overcoming physiological limitations through psychological and social dimensions has also been proposed by Young and colleagues. Even though they experience a decline in physical and cognitive function, older adults can age successfully if they are socially active and psychologically well-adapted, according to the study by Kim and Park.

Being actively engaged in life: Good social functioning is frequently cited as a key factor in successful ageing, particularly by older adults themselves. It demonstrates a desire to continue playing a part in society and interacting with others. Loneliness indicators, social activity, and emotional and instrumental support for others are all components of social functioning. For instance, the participants could be considered to be actively engaged if they have reported being involved in a sport, social, or another kind of club, or in voluntary work.

Psychologically well-adapted in later life: In recent research, it has been demonstrated that factors such as life satisfaction, a sense of purpose in life, and perceptions of the aging process all contribute to successful ageing. Accordingly, the psychological domain of adaptation in later life is

an essential component of successful ageing. Depressive symptoms and life satisfaction could be used to measure emotional functioning, and subjective feelings could be measured by asking questions like, "Describe how successfully you have aged."

Check Your Progress:

1. List the biomedical aspects of ageing.

7.2.4 Approaches Of Ageing :

The Positive Psychology of Ageing:

Scientists and laypeople alike have attempted to comprehend the concept of ageing. The following perspectives assist us in comprehending the effects of ageing on individuals. Medical, political, and psychological interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of the elderly are also informed by these theoretical approaches: The Biomedical Model of Ageing focuses on how older people can delay disease or control their symptoms. To put it another way, the absence of chronic disease and risk factors for disease are the primary focus of this strategy. According to Baltes & Baltes (1990), this highly medicalized model emphasizes the negative aspects of old age.

On the other hand, the psychosocial theory of Successful Aging tries to look at how older people can make age-related choices to improve their well-being (Baltes et al., 1990). Scientists say that "successful ageing" can be achieved if people choose to make up for lost or reduced abilities by adapting to a new situation or re-evaluating goals that were important in the past. Although "successful ageing" is a framework that looks at aspects of ability rather than disease, it is also a theory that looks for successful adaptation to age-related changes (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). As a result, it can be said to be a theory that sees ageing as a time of decline. Therefore, the best course of action is to maximize one's remaining abilities (Ranzijn, 2002).

Psychologist Ranzijn (2002) discusses and explains that compensation for the deficiency of capacity is just one aspect of ageing. He argues that older people's strengths and positive gains should be the focus of research. Ranzijn refers to the Positive Psychology of Ageing, a relatively new approach to ageing that places an emphasis on subjective well-being constructs.

7.2.5 History of Ageing:

The population is "turning grey. Individuals are living longer. In 1900, life expectancy was 47 years; it is now closer to 76 years.

More than two-thirds of people now live to at least 65, three times more than in 1900. And the over-85 age group is the fastest-growing segment of the population—from 4% in 1900 to over 10% today (e.g., Rowe & Kahn, 1998; 1992, United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); Volz, 2000).

Historically, attitudes regarding ageing have been characterized by a short-sightedness that we have yet to overcome. To give a couple of examples, elderly individuals are seen as wiped out, intellectually maladroit, confined, a monetary channel in society, and discouraged by their conditions (for example, 1998, Centre for Health Promotion (CAH); 1990, Palmore; 1998, Rowe & Kahn). A major concern is that as the baby boomers age into disability, there will be fewer adult children available to provide care, creating a demand for formal care that may severely (if not impossible) tax the rest of society's resources. This is due to the fact that there are fewer children per capita than in previous generations.

Are elderly people sick?

Even though a large portion of the population continues to deny it, the majority of adults over 65 are in remarkable health, which is an important fact. Paces of inability, even among the extremely old (i.e., those over age 95), are consistently declining. Advances in medical technology and public acceptance of the behavioral aspects of chronic illness are forecasting an even brighter future for baby boomers and subsequent generations (DHHS, 1992). Although there is no known cure for the fact that physiological systems slow down and become less efficient as we get older (Birren & Birren, 1990), older people are quite adept at gradually altering their lifestyles to accommodate their declining physical abilities (Williamson & Dooley, 2001).

Cognitive deficits in adults:

Cognitive abilities decline with age in the "normal" course of events, just like physiological functions do (Horn & Hofer, 1992; 1996, Schaie). However, the expression "use it or lose it" refers to sexual functioning as well as memory and learning abilities. According to Gatz & Smyer (1992), older adults in cognitively challenging settings exhibit minimal, if any, declines in their thinking and learning abilities, with the exception of organic disorders like Alzheimer's that progress with age.

Isolation and loneliness among the elderly:

"The common view of old age as a prolonged period of demanding support from an ever-diminishing number of overworked providers is wrong," according to Rowe and Kahn (1998).

"Neurobic exercises" also preserve and enhance brain and memory functions, according to Katz, Rubin, and Suter (1999). Engaging in routine activities that require little mental effort can exacerbate cognitive decline. Consequently, Katz and her colleagues recommend seeking out unusual and enjoyable experiences—not because they are challenging but rather because they are one of a kind.

Depression in the elderly:

Because poor well-being and functioning are naturally linked to depression, it is unquestionable that depressive symptoms and depression

have a significant negative impact on health and life satisfaction for all people, not just adults. The elderly, on the other hand, are at such a high risk due to apparent natural causes. The death or illness of a loved one are the two main factors that contribute to depression in the elderly. Social and cultural expectations regarding the roles that are appropriate for particular groups of people frequently restrict personal control. Seniors should have more options given the current trend towards less stigmatizing older adults. Other cultural changes will add stimulus to this development.

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the psychosocial model of ageing

2. Discuss isolation and cognitive deficits in the elderly.

7.2.6 The Depression Activity Restriction Affect Model:

A number of natural (Gillespie, Garlow, Fastener, Schatzberg, and Nemeroff, 2009) and mental (Beck and Alford, 2009) speculations have been proposed with regards to the beginning and upkeep of discouragement in more seasoned restoratively treated patients and parental figures. According to Williamson and Shaffer (2000), one of these is the restriction of social and recreational activities, which is a factor that theoretically contributes to the development of depressive symptoms in medical patients and their caregivers. According to the Activity Restriction Model of Depressed Affect (Williamson & Shaffer, 2000), life stresses that prevent normal social and recreational activities lead to an increase in depressive symptoms. According to this model, when a patient has a medical condition, depression is not directly related to the symptoms of the illness; rather, it is related to the limitations these patients have on their daily activities. In a similar vein, patients who have medical conditions, particularly chronic conditions, are frequently discharged to the care of family members, who assume responsibility for the patient's care. This care frequently prevents the caregiver from participating in activities, which causes depression to rise.

According to Williamson & Schulz (1992), activity restriction is the inability to continue normal activities such as self-care, caring for others, doing household chores, shopping, visiting friends, working on hobbies, and maintaining friendships following stressful life events such as a debilitating illness. Major life stressors, according to the Activity Restriction Model of Depressed Affect, disrupt normal activities, which in turn leads to poorer mental health outcomes (e.g., Williamson, 1998). To put it another way, stress, and mental health are linked through activity restriction (Walters & Williamson, 1999; 2000 Williamson, 2001, Williamson and Dooley; 1992, 1995, Williamson & Schulz; In 1994, Williamson, Schulz, Bridges, and Behan; Williamson and Shaffer, 2000; 1998, Williamson, Shaffer, and Schulz; Williamson, Shaffer, and the Family Connections in Late Life Undertaking, 2000).

Differences in the activity restriction model:

Activity restrictions are not just brought on by stressful life events. Instead, individual differences are also significant factors. People differ in many ways, one of which is their age. For instance, older adults are better able to deal with pain of the same intensity than younger adults (Cassileth et al., 1984; Foley, 1985), a phenomenon that is typically attributed to older people's increased exposure to pain and disabling conditions. Indeed, my colleagues and I have discovered that experience, not chronological age, is more important in predicting individuals who will limit their activities in response to stressful situations (Walters & Williamson, 1999; 1995, Williamson and Schulz; Williamson and others, 1998). To put it another way, depression and reduced physical activity are not always caused by old age.

Financial resources may also play a significant role in stress management. Insufficient pay slows down ordinary exercises (Merluzzi and Martinez Sanchez, 1997). In addition, activities are restricted more when financial resources are simply perceived as inadequate (for a review, see Williamson, 1998).

According to Williamson & Dooley (2001), reducing normal activities that involve spending money, such as shopping, recreation, and hobbies, may therefore be an understandable first line of defence when life becomes stressful.

Activity restriction is also influenced by personality traits in addition to demographic factors. Throughout their lives, some people deal with all situations in a way that is not adaptive. On the other hand, there are people who are more likely to accept that a problem has arisen, deal with their emotions (perhaps with the assistance of others), and make every effort to resume life as usual. If all else fails, they will face the situation, evaluate potential solutions rationally, and seek assistance and information as needed.

Social support resources are another significant difference between individuals. According to Mutran, Reitzes, Mossey, & Fernandez (1995), people who have stronger social support networks are better able to deal with all kinds of stressful life events. Oxman and Hull, 1997), and social support facilitates routine activities (Williamson et al., 1994). However, personality factors appear to play a role in social support, which in turn influences activity restriction (e.g., Williamson & Dooley, 2001). Socially desirable or proactive individuals also have stronger social ties and are less restricted in their activities. People who simply have the perception that they can get social support when they need it see benefits that are comparable, and the benefits of having the perception that one can get support from others persist even after controlling for personality variables like public self-consciousness and illness severity and demographics like age and financial resources (Williamson, 2000).

7.2.7 Coping Strategies to Increase Activity And Reduce Depression:

The Activity Restriction Model proposes that coping with stress is a multifaceted, complex process influenced by numerous factors. Across the lifespan, the nature of stressors varies, with older adults experiencing at least as many as young adults. Since physical and mental pressures contrast (e.g., concerning controllability) with expanding age, notwithstanding, adapting effectively may require supplanting beforehand versatile techniques with ones more qualified to meet the requests of propelling age. Therefore, elders may need to be persuaded to switch from problem-focused to emotion-focused coping mechanisms in order for interventions to be successful (Stanton, Parsa, & Austenfeld, this volume). Interventions can be designed such that they reduce both activity restriction and depression by acknowledging that depression is caused by restricted normal activities. However, encouraging older adults to participate in more of their usual activities may not be the best strategy. Instead, efforts to increase activity might take the form of three or even more. To begin, therapists should carefully consider the (likely numerous) causes of restricted activities and tailor their interventions accordingly. Second, they should focus on those who are most vulnerable to poor adaptation.

Thirdly, programs can be implemented to engage ageing adults in activities that not only meet their specific interests and needs but also fit their functional capacities once manageable activities and resources are identified.

Even though older adults' financial resources vary significantly from those of younger adults, rising costs for insurance and health care in later life can deplete even the most financially prepared seniors. However, each person's financial situation has a significant impact on activity restriction (Williamson, 1998). Low-income individuals may not necessarily consider their financial resources inadequate; also, people with higher incomes do not always say that they have enough money (Williamson & Shaffer, 2000). Thus, it appears that perceptions of income sufficiency are more important than actual dollar amounts. In either case, the community-based, low-cost social and recreational resources that are available to older adults can be pointed in the right direction.

As well as assessing segment qualities like age and monetary assets, it is vital to evaluate pertinent character aspects. Identifying the characteristics that cause people to limit their usual activities can help identify those at risk for poor adaptation.

Patients high in public self-consciousness can be targeted for interventions to improve self-esteem and sense of efficacy, such as hope enhancement (see Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, this volume), training in adaptive coping skills, and support groups, for instance, when an illness involves body disfigurement (e.g., limb amputation or breast cancer surgery).

Consideration should also be given to additional personality traits. For instance, people who lack optimism struggle to deal with stress and adapt

(Carver et al., 1993) and might be defenceless against movement limitation. According to McCrae & Costa (1986), a maladaptive coping style, which may include forgoing pleasurable activities, is linked to high levels of neuroticism. People who are less agentically oriented and lack a strong sense of mastery will have a harder time finding ways to avoid restricting their rewarding activities when confronted with disruptive life events (e.g., Femia, Zarit, & Johansson, 1997; 1998, Herzog, Franks, Markus, & Holmberg).

In addition, people who have a low dispositional predisposition to hope for positive outcomes are less likely to think of ways to continue (or replace) valued activities or to keep trying to do so, especially when the paths to achieving these goals are blocked (e.g., Snyder, 1998). Even though research in this area is still in its infancy, personality factors shouldn't be overlooked, especially if the goal is to find people who are at risk of limiting their usual activities, are having trouble coping with stress, and need help early.

Social support has an impact on normal activities in the same way that personality traits and illness experiences do. Activity restriction is less likely when there are more social support networks (Williamson et al., 1994). Elders with disabilities, for instance, will go to church and visit friends more frequently if they receive assistance with walking, transportation, and words of encouragement from others. Keeping up with common exercises despite pressure thus decreases the plausibility of pessimistic close to home reactions and further decrements in wellbeing and work.

As a result, identifying older adults who live in the community but lack social support is a good place to start for intervention. However, we must identify which aspects of social support are lacking or most distressing prior to intervention and tailor treatment accordingly (Oxman & Hull, 1997). It's possible that a lack of social interaction is the primary reason why some elderly people experience depression. Others might have substantial requirements for help that are not being met (e.g., getting up or shopping for food). Some may also be exposed to social groups that are exploitative or abusive (Cohen & McKay, 1983; Suls, 1982; Williamson et al., 2000; Wortman, 1984).

Check Your Progress:

1. Describe the depression activity restriction affect model

2. List the various coping strategies to increase activity and reduce depression.

7.2.8 Furure Research and Scope:

Similar to other models of stress and coping (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the Activity Restriction Model of Depressed Affect suggests that the causal path is unidirectional—that is, that stress causes restriction in activity, which in turn leads to negative affect. This is unquestionably an

inadequate portrayal. Take, for instance, depression and pain. Depression is a result of an inability to adjust to chronic pain, according to unilateral models. However, a lot of research suggests that depression increases pain reports (Lefebvre, 1981; 1981; Mathew, Weinman, and Mirabi Parmelee and team, 1991). In a similar vein, the Activity Restriction Model of Depressed Affect can be turned on its head in such a way that, as clinicians have long known, depression causes individuals to forego many of the activities that they had previously enjoyed. As a matter of fact, one of the better ways to treat sadness is to propel patients to turn out to be all the more socially and truly dynamic (e.g., Herzog et al., 1998). In a reciprocal manner, inactivity also raises levels of experienced pain for physiological and psychological reasons (e.g., Williamson & Dooley, 2001).

By demonstrating that strategies designed to increase activity level will actually improve well-being, controlled experimental studies can clarify previous findings. We will also be closer to developing effective intervention programs if we are able to distinguish between individuals who will voluntarily make efforts to continue engaging in meaningful activities despite discomfort and those who will not.

Psychosocial predictors of activity restriction, like low social support or low income, are stressors in and of themselves, but they can also be thought of as coping mechanisms or outcomes, making already complicated associations even more complicated. For instance, coping is facilitated in multiple ways by access to and perceptions of support resources (Billings & Moos, 1984; Wills & Cohen, 1985).

Overtaxing support resources, on the other hand, can lead to a decline in social support, particularly if stress persists. When a stressful event first occurs, the majority of people will rally around it, but as the situation continues, they tend to fade away, especially if the individual is thought to be doing little to solve or adapt to the problem (e.g., Williams, 1993). According to Arluke (1988), all illnesses are typically regarded as acute rather than chronic, and the (often unattainable) expectation is that a patient will recover. Parsons, 1951,1978). This cognitive bias may be the cause of a decline in social support for older adults with chronic health conditions.

7.3 SUMMARY

Positive Education combines best-practice teaching and learning with the science of positive psychology to encourage and support the flourishing of schools and individuals in their communities. It is fully involved in proactive practices that improve the well-being of the community. The underpinnings of positive instruction of care, trust, and variety. Plans and motivation, fueled by objectives, are necessary at the ground level. Teachers instill hope in students and empower them by motivating them to learn and take their successes with them. Finally, the student realizes that they are part of a larger society in which they have the potential for growth and development beyond the confines of the classroom.

Effective ageing has turned into a significant idea to depict the nature of ageing. It is a complex idea, and its primary centre is the way to extend useful years in a later life expectancy. The idea has evolved from a biomedical perspective to a more comprehensive comprehension of the social and psychological processes of later life adaptation.

According to the Activity Restriction Model of Depressed Affect, people's mental health declines in direct proportion to the degree to which stress affects their daily activities. As a result, people who are well feel in control of at least some important aspects of their lives and maintain the routine activities they value most (perhaps with the assistance of others). There are numerous and intricate facets to the relationship between stress and adjustment. There are no basic answers for what truly occurs, nor are there simple responses about ways of interceding. However, people should be in better physical and mental health and be less dependent on others if they continue at least some of their favourite activities. Indeed, engaging in regular activities might be the key to longevity.

7.4 QUESTIONS

1. Define positive schooling.

2. Discuss the theoretical approaches to positive schooling.

3. What are the components of positive schooling? Discuss

4. How can parents contribute to positive schooling?

5. Define ageing.

6. What are the biomedical aspects of ageing?

7. Describe the depression restriction affect model.

8. Discuss the coping strategies to increase activity and reduce depression.

9. What is the future scope of research in ageing?

7.5 REFERENCES

- Bowling, A. (1993). The concepts of successful and positive ageing. Family Practice, 10, 449–453.

- C. R. Snyder Shane J. Lopez, Handbook of positive psychology

- C.R. Snyder & Shane J. Lopez. Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths.

- James, w. (1890). The principles of psychology. New York: Holt James, W. (1899).

- Talks to teachers on psychology: And to students on some of life's ideals. New York: Holt. McKeachie, W. J. (1999).

- Teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers (10th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin. McKeachie, W. J., & Kimble, G. (1950).

*****

<div align="right">**8**</div>

POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS– II

Unit Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand forgiveness as part of a healthy society

- To gain greater insight about individualistic and collectivistic societies

- To understand the balance between individualistic and collectivistic societies.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.1.1 Forgiveness For a Healthy Society:

Individuals have formulated various likely answers for the destructive impacts of relational offences. Forgiveness is one way to break the cycle of avoidance and vengeance, which occurs when people suppress their instinctive negative responses to transgressors and become increasingly motivated to act positively instead. For millennia, the concept of

forgiveness has been articulated by numerous world religions (McCullough & Worthington, 1999; Rye and Co., 2000). According to McCullough & Worthington (1999), all three major monotheistic traditions agree that people should forgive their own transgressors because they have been forgiven by God.

For three centuries, social theorists and social scientists have basically ignored forgiveness, despite the fact that many religious traditions place a high value on it. In 300 years of post-Enlightenment thought, forgiveness is not even mentioned. However, social scientists began to study forgiveness in the last two decades of the 20th century (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000b).

They made progress in defining and measuring it as well as investigating its social, personality, and developmental foundations. They also made progress in designing forgiveness-promoting interventions and evaluating their value for individual and social well-being. The production of several edited collections devoted to forgiveness, the growing number of empirical journal articles, and the convening of several national conferences are all examples of scientific progress (e.g., Enright & North, 1998; McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen, 2000a; Worthington, 1998). Besides, in 1998, the John Templeton Establishment and other generous establishments started a mission to give $10 million in subsidies to the logical exploration of forgiveness (Holden, 1999). Strong financial support, widespread research teams, and national interest in the subject lay the foundation for forgiveness research (McCullough, 2001).

8.1.2 Definition of Forgiveness:

According to Enright and Coyle's (1998) study, forgiveness is distinct from pardoning, which is strictly speaking a legal concept and is generally shared by researchers and theorists. supporting (which includes legitimizing the offence); excusing (which implies that a violation was committed as a result of circumstances that were less severe); forgetting, which suggests that a violation's memory has faded or vanished from conscious awareness; and denial, which suggests an unwillingness or inability to recognize one's harmful injuries. According to Freedman (1998), most agree that forgiveness is distinct from reconciliation, which refers to the repair of a strained relationship.

However, in order to go any further in the definition of forgiveness, it is necessary to distinguish between three distinct meanings of the word. The characteristics of forgiveness as a response, personality disposition, and social unit can all be used to define it. Forgiveness can be understood as a prosocial shift in a victim's thoughts, feelings, and/or actions towards a culpable transgressor as a response.

These definitions, be that as it may, are based on one centre element: at the point when individuals pardon, their reactions (i.e., what they feel and think about, what they need to do, or how they really act) towards individuals who have irritated or harmed them become more positive and

better — or prosocial — over the long run (McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen, 2000b).

Forgiveness can also be understood as a personality trait, as a tendency to forgive others in a wide range of interpersonal situations. The majority of people, by definition, fall somewhere in the middle of the population's forgiving-to-unforgiving continuum, so in this sense, people can be categorized along this continuum. According to Mullet, Houdbine, Laumonier, and Girard (1998), there may be multiple aspects to the disposition to forgive.

Decision-based forgiveness:

DiBlasio (1998) has laid an emphasis on wilful decision-making and wilful forgiveness: the cognitive letting go of resentment, bitterness, and the need for vengeance is what is meant by decision-based forgiveness. However, emotional pain and hurt do not always end there. Here, forgiveness is seen as a choice between letting go and holding on. Individuals can isolate their contemplations of hatred and harshness from their sensations of harm.

The cognitive release of resentment and bitterness is the focus of DiBalsio's decision-based model, but it does not take into account the hurt feelings that frequently persist after a decision is made.

Cognitive Forgiveness:

The perspective that views transgressions as violations of cognitive structures, such as beliefs, is the foundation for another cognitive definition of forgiveness (Gordon et al., 2005). To assist individuals in changing their cognitions, a cognitive approach to forgiveness makes use of psychodynamic therapy and standard cognitive therapy interventions.

The cognitive model developed by Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, and Rasmussen et al. is one such example. 2005). They have proposed a meaning of pardoning as "the framing of a perceived transgression in such a way that one's responses to the transgressor, the transgression, and its sequelae are changed from being negative to neutral or positive. Oneself, another person or people, or a circumstance that one believes is beyond one's control, such as illness, fate, or a natural disaster, may be the source of the transgression and, as a result, the object of forgiveness.

Emotional Forgiveness:

Worthington (2006) characterized genuine pardoning as something that happen just when profound absolution can happen, in light of the fact that close to home substitution is fundamental.

At the point when profound pardoning is finished, the individual will have supplanted gloomy feelings related to unforgiveness like displeasure, disdain, and vindictiveness with good feelings like compassion, empathy, compassion, and philanthropic love.

They argue that the shift in emotional forgiveness will be most accurately reflected by shifts in emotions as it begins and progresses towards completion rather than shifts in thoughts, motivations, or behaviors, despite the fact that those will frequently occur.

Check Your Progress:

1.What is forgiveness?

2. State the types of forgiveness.

8.1.3 Measures of Forgiveness:

According to McCullough, Hoyt, and Rachal (2000), self-report measures that operationalize forgiveness as a response have been the focus of numerous psychometric studies.

There are numerous instruments that can be used to determine how much a person has forgiven another person for a particular offence (for instance, McCullough et al.). ,1998; Subkoviak and others, 1995; 1981; Trainer; Wade, 1989).

Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI): A 60 item test developed by Enright and his colleagues. It has six subscales that assess the victim's positive and negative affect, cognitions, and behaviours/behavioural intentions towards a transgressor.

McCullough et al. (1998) refined Swim's Pardoning Scale: a 12-thing measure called the Offense Related Relational Inspirations (TRIM) Stock. There are two subscales for the TRIM Inventory: one for assessing the harm done to the transgressor (Revenge) and one for assessing the extent to which an offended person is motivated to avoid a transgressor (Avoidance). The TRIM Stock has great inside consistency, great united and discriminant legitimacy, and a hypothetically determined two-factor structure.

In the Transgression Narrative Test of Forgiveness (TNTF) by Berry et al., respondents are asked to rate their likelihood of forgiving offenders (such as a classmate, friend, or cousin) in five paragraph-long scenarios.

Berry et al. have also developed The Trait Forgivingness Scale, which asks respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with ten statements regarding forgiveness.

The Forgiveness Likelihood Scale developed by Rye et al. (1999) assesses how likely one is to forgive in 15 scenarios described in one or two sentences. It has a good internal consistency and good test-retest reliability, and it is positively correlated with the Enright Forgiveness Inventory.

Terney et al. developed the Multidimensional Forgiveness Inventory which presents 16 one- to two sentence scenarios in which the individual alternates between taking the perspective of the perpetrator or the victim.

The instrument measures how likely respondents are to ask for forgiveness and to forgive themselves when they are in the perpetrator role and how likely they are to forgive their offenders when in the victim role.

Check Your Progress:

1. State the different types of forgiveness scales.

8.1.4 Development of the Disposition to Forgive:

The first researchers to identify age-related trends in forgiveness were Darby and Schlenker (1982). In consistent studies with Darby and Schlenker's (1982) unique discoveries, different analysts have found that individuals, by and large, turn out to be more lenient as they age. Mullet et al. (1998) additionally found that more established adults scored extensively higher than youthful adults on proportions of demeanour to pardon.

Enright and his colleagues hypothesized that Kohlbergian moral reasoning and forgiveness reasoning develop in the same way. In line with this, they proposed that people at the earliest stages of moral reasoning about forgiveness—the stages of restitutional forgiveness and revengeful forgiveness—understand that forgiveness is only appropriate once the transgressor or the victim has made restitution or obtained revenge. The reason that forgiveness is appropriate for people at the intermediate stages—expectational forgiveness and lawful expectational forgiveness— is that they are compelled to forgive by social, moral, or religious pressures. Forgiveness is considered appropriate by those at the highest stages—forgiveness as love and forgiveness as social harmony—because it is an expression of unconditional love and promotes social harmony. Enright et al. (1989) found that Kohlbergian moral reasoning, as measured by standard interview measures, was positively correlated with people's stage of forgiveness reasoning in two studies.

8.1.5 Personality and Forgiveness:

In many ways, people who are forgiving are different from those who are not. People who are forgiving report having fewer negative emotions like hostility, depression, and anxiety. In comparison to those who are less forgiving, such people are also less ruminative, less narcissistic, less exploitative, and more empathic. Forgivers, likewise, will generally embrace socially helpful mentalities and conduct. Additionally, clinicians' ratings of hostility, passive-aggressive behaviour, and neuroticism are negatively correlated with self-ratings of the disposition to forgive. Researchers have found additionally that pardoning/forgiveness are connected conversely to the proportions of neuroticism. Subsequently, the easy-going individual gives off the impression of being somebody who is generally high in inappropriateness and moderately low in neuroticism/pessimistic emotionality.

1. How do personality factors affect forgiveness?

8.1.6 Forgiveness, Health and Well-Being:

Empirical studies on the connections between pardoning and psychological wellness had a modest start during the 1960s. In the principal known investigation of pardoning and prosperity, Emerson (1964) utilized a Q-sort technique and found what he saw as a connection between profound change and furthermore, pardoning. However, researchers did not re-evaluate the connection between forgiveness, health, and well-being until the 1990s, following Emerson's work.

8.1.7 Interventions to Promote Forgiveness:

A few intervention programs have been created. The majority of these interventions are intended for group rather than individual delivery. Enright's theories were used in some of the forgiveness intervention studies, while McCullough and colleagues' theoretical work was used in others. While some of these intervention programs have focused more on prevention or psychoeducation, others have targeted clinical populations. Intervention program evaluations are also being conducted by other researchers.

To conclude, regarding the impacts of such interventions, Worthington, Sandage, and Berry (2000) directed a meta-investigation of information from 12 group studies. They detailed that these gathering interventions were, for the most part. viable, further developing gathering individuals' pardoning and moral feelings like culpability and disgrace. What are the consequences of truly feeling forgiven? When it comes to addressing the numerous psychological aspects of forgiveness, these and other questions are crucial.

Is forgiveness really related to mental and physical health?

According to a lot of researchers, forgiveness can help prevent mental and physical health issues. Nevertheless, empirical research is still in its infancy. It's possible that as our understanding of health and forgiveness grows, we'll discover that the main plot has numerous subplots. The plot might take unexpected turns as opposed to sticking to a straightforward idea like "forgiveness is good for health." For instance, even if they eventually forgive their transgressors, individuals who are more likely to feel hurt by a particular transgression—even one that others dismiss—may incur higher health care costs.

Another illustration of this is the possibility that, in certain circumstances, low forgivers may perform better than high-forgivers, particularly in situations in which the offences committed by high forgivers were severe or traumatic. Another possibility is that seeking vengeance provides some people with significant satisfaction and even some kind of health benefit. In still other circumstances, victims may be surrounded by strong social

support networks that encourage recalcitrant and hostile responses to offenders in ways that make the victim feel justified, reassured, and content with their unforgiving attitude. Victims may not experience any negative emotional or physical consequences if they have sufficient social support for unforgiving responses. In contrast, individuals who are pressured to "forgive and forget" may experience more post-offence distress than those who are given time to grieve their loss. The relationship between forgiveness and health is likely to have numerous nuances that distinguish relationships that appear to be straightforward, as these scenarios suggest.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is the impact that forgiveness can have on health and wellbeing?

8.2 THE ME/ WE BALANCE: BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

8.2.1 Individualism: Psychology of Me:

Individualism includes giving one's own preferences priority over the interests of the state or gathering (i.e., vanity or narrow-mindedness). It depends on faith in the essential significance of the individual and in the temperance of confidence and individual freedom. Independence might be different from distinction, which is the number of characteristics that set one individual apart from others. To individualise is to set oneself apart from other people, whereas to individuate is to make oneself unique. In addition, individualism is distinct from autonomy, which is the capacity to comprehend the expectations of others in any given circumstance and one's own values, as well as the freedom to act in accordance with either or both of these factors. Individualism is not a healthy psychological development or state of health, whereas individuality and autonomy are.

A culture is said to be individualistic when concern for the individual is greater than concern for the group. However, society is collectivistic when everyone is very concerned about the group.

8.2.2 Core Emphasis of Individualsm:

The three core accentuations of independence include a feeling of freedom, a longing to stand apart compared with others (a requirement for uniqueness), and the utilization of oneself or the person as the unit of examination in contemplating life.

There are a set of expectations and memories about what is considered acceptable for members of each culture. Social patterns in individualistic societies, such as those in the United States, resemble a loosely knit fabric, and it is common for each person to view themselves as distinct from the group of people around them (Triandis, 1995).

Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier (2002) support the conclusion that American individualism reflects a sense of independence rather than dependence on others.

A core emphasis of individualism is that the individual needs to stand apart compared with the populace in general. Therefore, individuals in individualistic societies adhere to their own motives and preferences rather than adapting their desires to accommodate those of the group (sometimes referred to as conforming). As a result, the individualist sets personal objectives that may not align with those of the groups to which they belong (Schwartz, 1994; 1990; Triandis, 1988). It follows that citizens of individualistic societies like the United States will have a strong need for uniqueness because of the individualistic tendency to show one's uniqueness and the support of actions that show this individuality from society. This point's research shows that uniqueness-seeking thoughts and actions are strong.

The idea that the self—or the individual—is the unit of analysis for comprehending how individuals think and act in a society is a third central focus of individualism.

That is, individuals rather than groups are more likely to be involved in explanations of events. According to Bellah et al. (1985), worldviews in which personal factors are prioritized over social forces are the basis for the various definitions of individualism. 1994, Kagitcibasi; 1995, Triandis).

Individualistic societies centre around the self as opposed to collectivistic societies. People in an individualistic society typically set goals for themselves. In addition, success and the satisfactions that come with it operate at the level of the individual. In contrast to collectivistic people, who seek pleasure in activities that benefit the group as a whole, the individualistic person pursues what makes them happy. It is true that the individualist may, from time to time, adhere to social norms, but most of the time, they do so after determining that doing so is in their own best interest. Individualists, as may be obvious by now, prioritize pleasure and self-esteem in interpersonal relationships and beyond. Before deciding whether or not to pursue a relationship, individualists also consider its advantages and disadvantages (Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1994). As a result, individuals who are individualistic conduct benefit analyses to ascertain what might benefit them, whereas individuals who are collectivists are more likely to unconditionally support their group and to think first and foremost in terms of their responsibilities to the group. Dissimilar to individualists, collectivists are not prone to act suddenly, in view of their interests in their friend group. Individualists will quite often be fairly momentary in their reasoning, while collectivists are all the more long-haul in their thinking patterns.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is individualism, and what is its core emphasis?

8.2.3 Uniqueness In Individualistic Cultures:

The need for uniqueness has been referred to as the pursuit of individualistic goals to produce a sense of specialness (Lynn & Snyder, 2002; 1977 and 1980, Snyder and Fromkin). Because people strive to maintain some degree of difference from others (in addition to maintaining a bond with other people), this need is thought to have some universal appeal. Research was conducted in the 1970s by Howard Fromkin and C. R. Snyder (see Snyder & Fromkin, 1977, 1980) on the premise that most people have some desire to be special in relation to other people. They referred to this human motivation as the need for originality. Past laying out that some uncommonness was attractive for a large portion of individuals in their American examples, these specialists likewise contemplated that certain individuals have an extremely serious requirement for uniqueness, while others have an extremely low requirement for uniqueness. Simply explained, there are individual contrasts in the requirement for uniqueness.

"A set of personal attributes that have a common core of meaning" is the definition of an identity dimension (Miller, 1963, p. 676). Snyder and Fromkin (19S0), in their theory of uniqueness, proposed that individuals use a dimension (in their minds) on which they evaluate how to correct any given feedback that appears to be about their degree of similarity to other people (technically encoded on a uniqueness identity schema). In a nutshell, people consider how acceptable it is for them to share varying degrees of similarities with other people.

8.2.4 Collectivism: The Psychology of We:

Cultures that prioritize the requirements of a group over those of an individual are referred to as collectivistic. In a collectivist culture, people's identities are determined more by the characteristics of the collective groups to which they belong than by those of individuals. Adults who have been raised in a collectivist culture, for instance, may place a higher value on the requirements of the family than on their own aspirations for the rest of their lives. Furthermore, group cohesion is essential in collectivist cultures due to the emphasis placed on social aspects in general.

Collectivism has the following important cultural traits:

- The self is seen as interdependent and comparable to others, as opposed to the qualities of a person.

- An alignment of individual goals with the goals of the community: the individual makes decisions keeping in mind the goals/ needs of the community.

- Consideration and emphasis are mainly on social norms rather than individual attitudes while making decisions.

Check Your Progress:

1. What are the important cultural traits of collectivism?

8.2.5 Core Emphasis of Collectivism:

- **Dependence:** Dependence is a genuine tendency in collectivism to derive one's very meaning and existence from belonging to a significant group of people. In collectivism, a person follows the group's expectations, cares a lot about the group's well-being, and is very dependent on the other members of the group to which they belong.

- **Conformity/ desire to fit in:** The core element of collectivism is the assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals." As such, collectivism is an inherently social approach in which the movement is towards in-groups and away from out-groups. (Oyserman et al.)

- **Perception of the group** as a fundamental unit of analysis: social patterns in collectivist societies reflect close connections in which individuals see themselves as part of a larger, more significant whole, with the group as the perceived unit of analysis.

- **People who are collectivist-oriented** pay close attention to the rules and goals of the group and may frequently sacrifice their own needs for the group's.

- **Collectivist individuals** clearly become exceptionally engaged with the progressing exercises and objectives of their gathering, and they consider cautiously the commitments and obligations of the gatherings to which they belong.

Check Your Progress:

1. State the core emphasis of collectivism.

8.2.6 Differences between Individualism and Collectivism:

	INDIVIDUALISM	COLLECTIVISM
1)	Personal emphasized	Social emphasized
2)	Views people as unique	Views people as part of the group
3)	Encourages self-expression	Discourages self-expression
4)	Emphasizes competitiveness	Emphasizes group harmony
5)	Use of the word 'I' is encouraged.	Use of the word 'WE' is encouraged.

8.2.7 Me/We Balance:

Individualism and collectivism have frequently been viewed as opposites by social scientists (Hui, 1988; Oyserman et al., 2002), and this polarity has typically been used to compare European Americans' individualism to

East Asians' collectivism (Chan, 1994; Matsumoto, Kitayama, Markus, and Norasakkunkit, 1997). We think that this polarity approach is neither good science nor a good way to encourage healthy interactions between people of different ethnicities in and across societies. Oyserman and colleagues (2002) conducted a watershed review on this subject and discovered that individuals in cultures like the United States were indeed highly individualistic, but that they were not necessarily less collectivist than others. As a result, only half of the stereotype was supported.

Seeing independence and cooperation as alternate extremes additionally has the potential to incite questions, in which the individuals from each camp endeavour to exhibit the prevalence of their methodology. Given that it has not been determined that the distinctions between individualism and collectivism are clear-cut, this acrimony between these two perspectives seems especially problematic.

Individualism and collectivism may differ in degree between generations (Matsumoto, Kudoh, & Takeuchi, 1996, for example). Freeman & Bordia (2000) also found that individuals' propensities towards collectivism and individualism varied as different reference groups became more prominent. In addition, a tendency that appears to be individualistic may actually contribute to collectivism; for instance, consider the way that a strong individual feeling of viability might add to the aggregate adequacy of a general public (Fernandez-Ballesteros, Diez-Nicolas, Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Bandura, 2002).

Oyserman and her colleagues (2002) proposed, based on such findings, that we ought to move beyond the rather static view of individualism and collectivism as distinct categories and instead take more dynamic approaches to culture in order to discover when, where, and why these mental sets operate. They argued for a comprehension of the ways in which individualism and collectivism can coexist for the benefit of individuals. We agree that the best course of action is to learn to accept aspects of both the individualist and collectivist perspectives, which both have benefits for individuals.

A sense of balance in one's thoughts and actions is one of the characteristics of a happy and productive life. A person can pay attention to both the individual and the group through the ME/WE perspective. Indeed, high-hope individuals' perspectives on their lives and interactions with others have been found to be characterized by this (Snyder, 1994/2000, 2000b). That is to say, the high-hope children learned about how important it is to consider other people's perspectives and how important it is to successfully achieve one's own goals. Therefore, in the same way that high-hopers can simultaneously envision other people's WE goals, they can also think of their own goals. As a result, ME is a useful strategy for fostering positive interactions between people of various ethnic backgrounds within and across societies. In research on this theme, Oyserman and associates (2002) found that Americans were without a doubt high in independence, but they were not guaranteed to be lower than others in cooperation. In this manner, there was support for just around

50% of the generalization. Individualism and collectivism can also be seen as opposites, which can lead to arguments in which both sides try to show that their approach is superior. Given that it has not been determined that the distinctions between individualism and collectivism are clear, this acrimony between these two perspectives seems especially problematic. For instance, Vandello and Cohen (1999) discovered that even within individualistic societies like the United States, the Northeast, Midwest, Deep South, and West all have distinct forms of individualism. Besides, societies are very assorted; According to Bandura (2000), neither "individualist" nor "collectivist" have social systems that are symbiotic and ever-evolving.

Moreover, there might be generational contrasts in how much independence and cooperation are shown (e.g., Matsumoto, Kudoh, and Takeuchi, 1996). Freeman & Bordia (2000) also found that individuals' propensities towards collectivism and individualism varied as different reference groups became more prominent. In addition, a tendency that appears to be individualistic may actually contribute to collectivism; for instance, think about the reality that a strong individual feeling of viability might add to the system viability of a general public (Fernandez-Ballesteros, Diez-Nicolas, Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Bandura, 2002).

In light of these discoveries, for example, Oyserman and her associates (2002) recommended that we ought to move past the somewhat static perspective on independence and community as independent classifications and, on second thought, adopt more unique strategies to culture to find when, where, and why these psychological sets work. They argued for a comprehension of the ways in which individualism and collectivism can coexist for the benefit of individuals. We, as well, accept that both independent and collectivistic viewpoints have benefits for individuals and that the best goal is to figure out how to embrace parts of each.

A sense of balance in one's thoughts and actions is one of the characteristics of a happy and productive life. We believe that the ME and WE emphasises would be equated in a positive psychology approach to this problem. A person can pay attention to both the individual and the group through the ME/WE perspective. Indeed, high-hope individuals' perspectives on their lives and interactions with others have been found to be characterized by this (Snyder, 1994/2000, 2000b).

Check Your Progress:

1.What are the few studies conducted with regards to the me v/s we balance?

8.3 SUMMARY

An individual's voluntary internal process of letting go of feelings and thoughts of resentment, bitterness, anger, and the need for vengeance and

retribution towards someone we believe has wronged us, including ourselves, is frequently used to define forgiveness.

According to evolutionary theory, our capacity for forgiveness is a trait of human nature that has developed through natural selection in tandem with our propensity for retaliation.

Forgiveness and vengeance are social instincts that human ancestors used to solve problems. We have hope that we can make the world a more forgiving and less vengeful place, despite the fact that these two capacities are fixed aspects of human nature (McCullough, 2008).

People's typical negative responses to interpersonal transgressions, which appear to be etched deeply into the human template, are characterized by tendencies toward avoidance and vengeance. Forgiveness is an important corrective measure against these tendencies. Forgiveness has been praised by the world's great religious traditions for millennia as a response that has re-redemptive consequences for transgressors and their victims; b) a human trait that should be developed; and (c) a kind of social capital that makes it easier for social units like families, marriages, and communities to work together well.

The individualistic perspective appears to centre on the three core elements of independence, uniqueness, and the self as the unit of analysis. The collectivistic cultures place much more emphasis on the culture/ group needs than individual needs.

8.4 QUESTIONS

1. Define forgiveness

2. What are the types of forgiveness? Discuss

3. Describe the different scales of forgiveness.

4. Suggest and discuss intervention programs for forgiveness.

5. What is the core emphasis of individualism?

6. Describe the need for uniqueness.

7. Discuss the core emphasis of collectivism.

8. Elaborate on the differences between individualism and collectivism.

9. What is the ME V/S WE balance?

8.5 REFERENCES

*   C.R. Snyder & Shane J. Lopez. Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths.

*   C. R. Snyder Shane J. Lopez, Handbook of positive psychology

*****