

Martin Seligman's Theory in the Perspective of Positive Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Happiness is people's eternal pursuit of the goal, but in the pursuit of the road, some people will lose themselves because of the arrival of setbacks and difficulties, forget their original heart, or because of the pressure of modern social life leads to a variety of psychological problems. People should keep their positive and optimistic attitude to achieve their goals in today's society. Through the collection and analysis of literature review, this paper mainly introduces several theories related to happiness from the perspective of positive psychology by Martin Seligman, the father of positive psychology, with the purpose of allowing people to understand how negative thinking patterns are produced and some measures can be taken to improve their positive thinking. At the same time, this paper also points out the limitations of these theories and some critical thinking and makes an in-depth exploration of the emergence and formation of these theories.

KEYWORDS

Positive Psychology; Martin Seligman; Theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

Martin Seligman is one of the main representatives of positive psychology, and his frameworks of positive psychology the theoretical model is based on the principles of the positive psychology movement. In the political context of the West at that time, he proposed relevant research questions about positive psychology to study and discuss positive experiences. The views summarized in these studies later became part of the theoretical framework of positive psychology[7]. Systematic research perspective by stating the fundamental views, approach Provide a rationale and conduct a comparative analysis of the research. In the process, Seligman has made great contributions and has many titles. More importantly, because of him, psychology has shifted from studying suffering to studying happiness, and from studying patients to studying ordinary people[10].

2. THEORETICAL SUMMARY

2.1. Learned Helplessness

2.1.1. Experimental Process

During the experiments he discusses, he defines the result of learned helplessness through the demeanor of dogs. Initially, the dogs were put in cages with bars, and shocking them attracted a bell sound at their disposal at any one time. After several repetitive trials, the experimenter opened the fence, and unexpectedly the dog did not escape from the cage even if it wasn't shocked when the bell rang. He thinks that while, when the dogs later had the opportunity to avoid the shock, they were unable to because they could not help it. Furthermore, the dogs that were involved in the study had

other problems that are as follows, frustration and depression, reduced pioneering spirit, and others[3]. These social facilitation dogs do this because they are exposed to a notion of hopelessness in the initial stages of the experiment. In other words, they know they have no say on when the shock will be discontinued or will stop. For each experiment, the shock was turned off by the experimenter, and whichever response the dog attempted, the dog came to understand he was powerless to alter the situation this principle was termed as learned helplessness by Seligman[3].

2.1.2. Experimental Results

He used his experiments to make conclusions on behaviour of dogs that could also be generalised to human beings. He opines that learned helplessness is a result of past failures and therefore came to doubt oneself and abilities. Such outcome if not promoted over time may cause symptoms of depression[9]. For negative people, they believe that the good things only exist in special circumstances, the success of the outcome is due to external factors, the bad things are common, and the failure of the outcome is caused by themselves. For positive people, on the other hand, take credit for all the good things and think that they will happen more often in the future and that the bad things are more the fault of circumstances and won't happen again[5].

2.1.3. Experimental Conclusion

From these experiments and theories, Seligman gets the idea that people who are suffering from depression can be treated using psychotherapy in an effort to alter their negative thoughts to positive ones with the intention of decreasing the degree of learned helplessness[4]. For instance, if a person is disturbed by a thing such as divorce then their perception will be that the divorce is evil. Maybe he or She thinks that I am to blame, maybe it is because of my personality and my problems that the other person is separated from me. But it is like even if there is no divorce, the couple may fight as they used to maybe even more rigorously. Divorce is not a one-sided point, it is not a one-person story. Altogether with the help of the example and Seligman's experiments the conclusion may be drawn that learned helplessness leads to the development of negative thought patterns and this very pattern makes a person unconsciously deprive himself and produce negative behavior. So if the goal is to either minimize or eradicate undesired behaviors, self-efficacy could also be enhanced through mindfulness meditation and other strategies to dismantle helplessness[9].

2.1.4. Limitation

However, a question that needs to be asked is whether experimental conclusions drawn from observations in animals still apply to human personality. In other words, each human race has different genetic and cultural differences, and conclusions drawn simply from animals are not convincing[8]. This is also the controversial part mentioned in many previous articles. In addition, due to the cruelty of this experiment, many people have suggested that humans should not be used for experiments, so it is doubtful whether this conclusion applies to humans.

2.2. PERMA Model

2.2.1. Five Element

The model consists of five letters, each representing five different meanings related to happiness. P means Positive, happy people have positive emotions and pleasant mental activities. "E" is for "Engagement." Happy people must be people who are closely connected to others, closely related to life, and closely integrated with work. R stands for Relationship, and happy people have positive social relationships, strong social networks, and constant human interactions that are available to them. M stands for Meaning, and happy people will find meaning in their lives and work. A stands for Accomplishment, and a for accomplishment. This may mean that he has found something in his life and work that he admires and strives to succeed in.[1].

2.2.2. Application

It is called PERMA model of happiness which is the positive psychology happiness framework, which could be used applied in the frame of the psychological counseling, career consulting, human resource management, education and teaching. For instance, in the human resource management model, the HR can devise a set of mechanism that can be invested on their company to enhance the work output and employee satisfaction. In general, the model presents the systematic making happiness methods which can be useful in order to consider the quality of people's decision and for facilitating the management process. The model is based on positive psychology, positive thinking becomes a core component of the model, which ensures people maintain a stable of positive state of mind and, thus, can approach even complex issues and challenges with optimism and proactive mentality[6]. PERMA model also emphasizes people's subjective initiative, so the individual plays a leading role in decision-making, and the success or failure of decision-making depends on the individual's internal quality and external conditions. Consequently, this needs all to be taken into account by decision-makers, not just in a certain part but in overall.

2.2.3. Significance

They have been beneficial in positive psychology as it has given the framework through which one can grasp positive psychology. The primary ideas emphasize the regulation and cultivation of positive affect and therefore people are asked to participate in training to focus on positive life events and in fact cultivate a long-term positive effect [2]. It facilitates that a person maintains a positive attitude when confronted with adversities as well as difficulties in life hence training the individual on how to face any trial in life. PERMA points to a kind of creative happiness that connects ourselves to the well-being of others and society, a happiness that lasts. Such happiness is worthy of becoming our lifelong goal[2]. In addition, the Perma model is the conceptual framework and practical guideline of psychologists, social workers, and educators that will help people to work for success in their personal life with more efficiency.

3. INDIVIDUAL OPINION

The concept of learned helplessness has been used with success in psychotherapy for many years. So, I believe that this theory should be given more understanding and, along with the results of other psychological theories, should be developed and perfected, making this theory more scientific and applicable. [5] When engaging in depth discussion, one should take into account the specific nature and context of a given social culture theory. Unless the readers grasp these historical backgrounds, then there is a possibility of not understanding how the learned helplessness theory was formed, which will give the future researchers a reference point. However, it is also important to underline that the theory was applied in different ways in different contexts. For instance, in the domain of education, we can teach students self-efficacies and minimize Learned helplessness through introduction of reward system. Cognitive therapy is also useful in reducing the effects of learned helplessness during psychotherapy on patients suffering from depression[4].

After we have a deep understanding of the PERMA model, we will find that each part in it is interrelated and cannot exist alone, because it is a whole, and the absence of any aspect will lead to the formation of the model. In the process of applying PERMA, we should pay attention to individual differences, because each person's situation is different, so this model is only suitable for the study of general problems, not for the prediction of specific individual behavior problems[6]. However, some behavioral rules summarized by it are of strong reference value, especially for managers, how to formulate corresponding policies to guide employees to maximize their potential, to promote the development of the enterprise, which should be the focus of their consideration.

4. CONCLUSION

Seligman's theoretical system is of great significance to the study of positive psychology. He is one of the most famous psychologists in the field of positive psychology, and his outstanding contributions to the study of mental health are inseparable from his contributions to the development of human potential. Seligman's books were translated into many languages and had a profound impact on society throughout the West. If positive psychology is a new idea, Seligman is the one who started it. A number of them are advantageous in offering theoretical foundation for achieving the well being factor in today's society and also encourage the people to think positively.

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