

Development of a measure that assesses psychological empowerment of college students in Japan

Introduction

Psychological Empowerment (PE) is known to play a crucial role in promoting the well-being of individuals. Essential to the PE is the concept of empowerment defined as “the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives” (Rappaport, 1984, p. 2). Individuals who maximize PE are believed to engage in participatory behavior and gain positive psychological outcomes (e.g., Speer & Peterson, 2000; Peterson et al., 2006). In particular, critical awareness (e.g., Gutierrez, 1994) underlying PE helps individuals understand the multilevel and context-specific environment that individuals are embedded (e.g., Zimmerman, 1995).

Although a series of research in the United States has evidenced important roles to which PE play in enhancing well-being (e.g., Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2005), little research has been conducted in the Japanese contexts including college settings. The lack of research evidence could be due to the unavailability of a measure that assesses PE in Japanese language. It is important to understand the processes and outcomes of PE in Japan as well, given that a host of psycho-educational interventions are designed to empower college students who live in the era of Covid-19. This poster presents an initial development of a PE measure for Japanese college students.

Methods

Participants

A sample of 259 students (94 males, 158 females, and 7 others) in a medium-size university in the Tokyo metropolitan area were recruited. The mean age of the sample was 18.28 (SD=0.54). Data collection took place twice over the one-month period.

Instruments

1. Psychological empowerment for college student: A total of nine items that characterized the construct of PE were developed in Japanese language, where six items were designed to measure competence and control and three items were adapted from Yoshida et al. (1999) representing critical awareness (e.g., I am interested in knowing the directions in which our society is moving towards).
2. The Japanese version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure levels of self-esteem (Yamamoto, Matsui, & Yamanari, 1982).
3. The Japanese version of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to assess psychological well-being of the sample (Oishi, 2009).

Results and Conclusions

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the PE scale (1st wave data) evidenced that the responses underlying the scale were best represented by three factors, namely, Competence (e.g., I know what I am good at), Identification with Others (e.g., I have friends who accept me even if we have different opinions), and Critical Awareness (e.g., I am concerned about the issues that raised in the society that I live in) accounting for a total of 58.48% of the variance. Factor loadings ranged from .45-.88 (Competence), .52-.82 (Identification), and .74-.87 (Critical Awareness).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was also conducted on the 2nd wave data, suggesting the 3-factor structure of the PE scale. Cronbach's alphas for Competence, Identification, and Critical Awareness were .77, .73, and .84; test-retest correlations (one-month interval) were .64, .64, and .57 ($p < .01$), respectively. Accordingly, adequate psychometric properties were found on the PE scale for Japanese students.

Furthermore, results of the regression analyses indicated that Satisfaction with Life was positively predicted by Competence ($\beta = .41$; $p < .01$) and Identification ($\beta = .21$; $p < .01$), whereas Self-Esteem was differentially predicted by Competence ($\beta = .46$; $p < .01$) and Critical Awareness ($\beta = -.14$; $p < .05$). In particular, the negative relationship between Self-esteem and Critical Awareness, albeit small in magnitude (partial $r = -.15$), was suggestive of complex patterns of relationship that the PE has with Self-Esteem and Life Satisfaction of the Japanese college students.

Representative references

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8. Coauthors:

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