



Editorial: Progress in the Development of a Regional Positive Psychology

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Welcome back to the Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology! It's been another good year and we offer best wishes for the months ahead. As we are always looking to meet the needs of the region and expand our offerings, we have made a number of changes. Our first major change is to include a means for readers to engage with the content rather than simply reading it. You will notice an "Add comment" link at the end of each article's online reference list where registered journal users can leave a comment, ask a question, or provide their thoughts. Academia is not the most inclusive community and tends to talk "to" members of the public, but rarely "with." As publishing is becoming more and more democratic, we felt it was important to give you a voice in talking with researchers themselves. To ensure this dialogue remains fair and respectful, all comments are attributed to the registered user and subject to standard rules of civility. Make use of this option to let researchers know you read their work.

For 2018, you will also notice that we meet researchers where they are and not only when they publish. That is, we highlight their interests, work in progress, and requests for partnerships to facilitate the exchange of ideas. Given teaching loads, committee work, few regional opportunities to meet as professionals, geographic distance, and the insular nature of many universities who lack convivial partnerships with other institutions in the region, it remains difficult to know who is doing what, and how to get involved. A positive psychology researcher's regional database would go a long way to counteract these issues and could be a great student project. We certainly don't claim to have an exhaustive list of all the positive psychology work that is being done in the region, but it's a start and we hope to carry on in the next issue.

We also opted to broaden the scope of work that appears in the journal to include conference proceedings which touch on positive psychology; three of which are included in this issue. This feature will continue in following issues and serves to highlight regional conferences as well as identify work being done in positive psychology by professionals in and around the region. Conference proceedings were included from the first Saudi positive psychology conference held in March of 2018 at Effat University, and the International Psychology Conference Dubai (IPCD) this past October. If you are attending a conference in the region and hear a presentation done by a regional speaker on a regional topic, let us know or encourage them to send an extended conference abstract with information about the conference and we will be in touch.

We have also included a section called "Perspectives" to consider questions of interest that are not yet ripe for investigation, but serve as avenues for future research and discussion. For example, Dr. Annie Crookes explores the applicability of positive psychology in the addictions field, while Chasity O'Connell explores the applicability of existing measures commonly used in



the West, but considers how they might not be quite a good fit in the region. “Perspectives” are fully researched manuscripts, but do not formally test a hypothesis. By providing literature reviews on relevant topics, this section encourages the active questioning and application of existing knowledge in the context of the MENA region. We envision such efforts will promote the creation and testing of hypotheses by researchers and provide an impetus for future empirical work.

We continue to accept full-length papers of an investigative nature in Arabic and English and are pleased to have several this year around the effects on women’s well-being of the legislative changes to driving in Saudi Arabia (Al-Ghalib), to the effects of the UAE’s national happiness and well-being mandate on job changes reflected in LinkedIn profiles (Omar). Additional papers include a pilot study conducted on an Islamic-influenced mindfulness program in Effat University (Al-Ghalib et al.), the subjective wellbeing of Emirati youth in the employment landscape (Poplavskaya & Karabchuk) and an Arabic submission by Dr. Marei Salama-Younes offering his views and updates on the current state of positive psychology in the region.

The next regional psychology conferences take place in Kuwait City, March 14-16, 2019, under the auspices of the Middle East Psychological Association. See www.mepa2019.com for more information about the conference and consider becoming a MEPA member to promote the development of psychology in general and positive psychology especially. On March 17, 2019, in Lebanon, there will also be a Positive Psychology Conference taking place at the American University of Beirut (AUB). For more information, see www.humanshiplb.org. Finally, the next International Positive Psychology Association’s (IPPA) world congress is in Melbourne, Australia this July 18-21, 2019. There will be several speakers from the region, as well as a panel on the development on a Middle East positive psychology. See <https://www.ippaworldcongress.org/>

At last, we shamelessly advertise the first English language published book on positive psychology in the region, Introduction to Positive Psychology for the Middle East (Springer, 2019). We have worked diligently over the last year to bring you 16 chapters of well-researched positive psychology content in the realms of education, organizations, clinical psychology, policy development, infrastructure and building, big data, measurement, health, and more. Other chapters include Saudi Arabia’s development of a positive psychology, commercial life contributions to well-being, the perils of publishing, Islamic views on well-being, the development of a positive Islamic identity, and the downside of valuing happiness too much.

Finally, we thank our reviewers for their commentary, suggestions and careful editing of each comma, sentence, reference and idea for the manuscript published in this edition. They donate their time – several hours on at least two occasions - and improve the quality of submissions we receive. The job is not small and a total of 26 reviewers helped prepare this issue alone. We also thank our dear friend, Mr. Wael Samir El Sökkary, lecturer from the English Department at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi (UAE) for the translation of much of this issue’s Arabic abstracts, as well as those in previous issues. It is people like him, as well as readers like you, who continuously offer your support and encouragement. We appreciate and thank you immensely.

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