Successful aging through modelling selection

This article seeks to address the creativities of Albert Bandura and Martin Seligman as developmental psychologists, their views on creativity as well as how their theories can compensate Paul Baltes' SOC. It will review Paul Baltes' life stories and recognising his creativity via references to his life-long contribution to developmental psychology. It will also evaluate the applicability of Paul Baltes' theories for counselling and guidance specifically how they can be used together with Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory in helping the aging to increase their positive affect.

Keywords: Successful aging, SOC, Creativity, Social Cognitive theory, Paul Baltes

Introduction

Creativity means change, escaping contingencies, and finding connections between seemingly unrelated issues sometimes bringing order out of chaos (Stricldand, 1989). It is a highly individualistic activity (Sternberg, 1985). Creativity involves inquisitiveness and imagination, and likely demand a suspension of judgment and a " letting go" of conventional ways of looking at the world (Stricldand, 1989). Creative individuals do not automatically accept the " accepted," but take risks and have a willingness to try out new ideas and imagine future possibilities that are quite different from the past (Sternberg, 1985). With reference to the above understanding of creativity, the article will examine the creativities of Paul Baltes (1939-2006), Albert Bandura (1925- present) as well as Martin Segliman (1942-present) as well as how they viewed creativity. (good)

Paul Baltes's Creativity

Creativity of Paul Baltes may be best characterized by his modernization of the understanding of human development: Development is as redefined by him is no longer confined solely to processes of biological maturation until adolescence (Baltes, 1997). It is a lifespan psychology which defines development as a continuous dynamic process of gains and losses lasting from the cradle to the grave. The ratio of gains to losses changes, however, as we move through life. He formulated lifespan development and used a multidisciplinary approach to studying multidirectional ontogenetic development of humans. Referring to contextualism as a paradigm, Baltes coined plasticity in historical embeddeness. Development is a joint expression between gains and lost. Paul Baltes described development as an incomplete architecture of human ontogeny (Baltes, 1997). His approach was considered revolutionary then as lifespan theorists such as Jean Piaget (1896-1980) considered cognitive development to be completed upon adulthood. (good)

Imagine Future Possibilities

Paul Baltes developed interest in the potential of cognitive functioning in adulthood and old age. He launched a cognitive training program at Penn State to study the potential as well as the limits of cognitive functioning in old age. The program was continued and further developed at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin. This research program has produced widely replicated evidence with regard to the trainability of cognitive functions, but also with regard to the reduced effect of training at higher ages. Interest in the potential of old age prompted Paul Baltes to venture into the

psychological study of wisdom. He succeeded in establishing a measurement paradigm and collected evidence on the fact that it does not suffice to grow old in order to become wise. Paul Baltes was interested as well in the reasons behind cognitive decline and discovered the connection between the declines in sensory and cognitive functioning. Automatized behaviours such as hearing, seeing, and walking would appear to demand increasing cognitive resources as we age. Toward the latter stage of his life, Baltes engaged in the neuronal basis of cognitive behaviour. He wanted to better understand the close interactions between biology and culture in producing developmental outcomes, which he called bio cultural co-constructivism (Staudinger, 2007).

Willingness to Try out Novel Ideas

Two incidents are referred to illustrate Paul Baltes's creativity as a researcher. In the 1990s, Baltes brought together an interdisciplinary group of aging researchers in Berlin to start the Berlin Aging Study (BASE), which became the first study to provide reliable evidence on the functioning of the old and very old. BASE also was the first interdisciplinary study that had all disciplines participating with equal standing. BASE was the first to lead the important acknowledgment the need to distinguish a third from a fourth age period, which starts around the age of 80 to 85 years.

Finally, Paul Baltes' creativity is best exemplified by his ability to identify the processes by which it is possible to describe, explain, and optimize human development. Together he and his late wife Margret M. Baltes (1939-1999) introduced the selection, optimization and compensation (SOC) model of developmental regulation that posits that selection, compensation, and

optimization are the three central regulatory mechanisms of human development (Baltes, 1997). (fairly good)

Paul Baltes's View on Creativity

For Paul Baltes, people demonstrated their creativity when they generate a broad range of behaviours, new bodies of knowledge and values, new environment features, to create a higher level of adaptive capacity (Baltes, Lindenberger, Staudinger, 2006). (good)

Albert Bandura's Creativity

Albert Bundura is creative because he did not automatically accept the " accepted". Then the popular behaviourism movement dominated in psychology. He took risks of being alienated and criticised through demonstrating a willingness to try out new ideas. He posits a novel theory, social cognitive theory and uses it as a direct challenge to the popular behaviouristic principles which embraced an input-output model. The behaviourists viewed human behaviour to be shaped, controlled automatically and mechanically by environmental stimuli (Bandura, 2001). However, his social cognitive theory subscribes to a model of emergent interactive agency (Bandura, 1969). Thoughts are not disembodied, immaterial entities that exist apart from neural events (Bandura, 2001). Bunge's (1977) analogy is used to illustrate this idea, the unique emergent properties of water, such as fluidity, viscosity, and transparency are not simply the aggregate properties of its micro components of oxygen and hydrogen. Through their interactive effects they are transformed into new phenomena. (good)

Bandura's View on Creativity

The human mind in Bandura's view is generative, creative, proactive, and reflective, not just reactive. Creativity is expressed when people design, conceive unique events and different novel courses of action and choose to execute one of them under the indefinite prompt to concoct something new (Bandura, 2001). People by their actions partly, determine the nature of their experiences, through their capacity to manipulate symbols and to engaged in reflective thought for innovative action, novel ideas are generated and this creates new environment for themselves and others (Bandura, 1978).

Martin Seligman's Creativity

Martin Seligman demonstrated his creativity when he started a new movement in psychology called positive psychology which he recently rebranded as authentic happiness (Seligman, 2002). The movement emerged as a reaction against the over-emphasis in psychology and psychiatry on " the negative", mental disorders, destructive tendencies, self-centered motivation, and persons as isolated entities rather than participants in communities (Seligman, 2007). Seligman had a novel view on psychology not just as the study of disease, weakness, and damage but also the study of strength and virtue. " Treatment is not just ¬ ⫯ xing what is wrong; it also is building what is right" (Seligman, 2002, p.??). There are three distinct kinds of happiness, the Pleasant Life (pleasure), the Engaged Life (engagement), and the Meaningful Life (virtue). Seligman's theory of authentic happiness attempts to synthesize all three theories of happiness. The Pleasant Life is about happiness in a hedonic sense. The Engaged Life is about happiness through engagement, and the Meaningful Life is about happiness by

achieving virtue. Strength in one's character is one of the central concept in positive psychology.

Seligman's View on Creativity

Martin Seligman view creativity as a type of character strength which he want to measured when he developed his Values in action(VIA) classification of strength. Creativity is according to VIA is thinking of novel and productive ways to do things, includes artistic achievement but not limited to it. (Park, Peterson, Seligman, 2004) People are much less creative when they are under time pressure, when they are being scrutinized and judged by others, and when external circumstance limit the range of options available. Hard work is often a prerequisite for creativity. Creativity is encouraged by environments that are supportive, reinforcing, open, and casual (Seligman, 2002).

Paul Baltes's Life Story

Paul Baltes was born in 1939, in Saarlouis, Germany. Between 1959 and 1963, he studied psychology at the University of Saarland in Saarbrücken. He went to the United States to take a position first as Assistant Professor and later as Associate Professor at the University of West Virginia. From West Virginia, Paul Baltes went to Pennsylvania State University as department head at the College of Human Development at 33 years. In 1980, he was recruited back to Germany by the prestigious Max Planck Society to become one of three directors of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. In 2004, he assumed emeritus status. He became Distinguished Professor at the University of Virginia and Director of the first virtual Max Planck Institute geared toward the investigation of the social- and

behavioural-science aspects of aging. Furthermore, up until the very end of his life, he was the Chair of the International Max Planck School LIFE and a board member of a Network on Aging, Work and Education launched by the Academy of Natural Sciences Leopoldina and the Academy of Technical Sciences (acatech). Paul Baltes leaves a legacy and he should be called father of modern lifespan development for his contributions to lifespan developmental. He will continue to inspire research in developmental psychology and gerontology well into the future.

Paul B. Baltes died on November 7, 2006, at the age of 67. He left behind a legacy that includes more than 300 publications, including 27 books and 26 volumes of the International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences. He received honorary degrees from the Universities of Jyväsklyä, Stockholm, Geneva, and Humboldt University Berlin. Furthermore, he was awarded membership in the Academia Europaea (founding member), the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences (founding member), and the Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina. For his scientific work, he received 12 prestigious prizes and awards from national and international professional societies. In 1997, he received the Aristotle Prize for Distinguished Contributions, given by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA). Beyond the scientific community, Paul Baltes received highest recognition. He was awarded as the only psychologist, membership in the German Ordre pour le Mérite for the Arts and Sciences. He received the Great Order for Merit with Star of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Using the Meta-model of Selection, Optimization, and Compensation (SOC) to Assist the Aging to Achieve Successful Aging

Successful Aging

Successful aging, as successful development in general is defined as the maximization and attainment of desired outcomes and the minimization and avoidance of undesired outcomes (Baltes, 1997). People who reported using SOC-related life-management behaviours had higher scores on subjective well-being, positive emotions, and absence of feelings of loneliness, three indicators of successful aging (Freund & Baltes, 1998). As the growing population in Singapore ages, it is important for the counsellor to acquire competencies to assist the aged to achieve successful aging. The following is a proposal for educating the aged to achieve successful ageing. The proposal attempts to integrate views of Bandura and Seligman mentioned above to SOC. (ok)

SOC

The SOC model provides a general framework for the understanding of developmental change and resilience across the life span (Baltes, 1997). It builds on the assumption that throughout the entire life span, people encounter certain opportunity structures such as education as well as limitations in resources such as illnesses that can be mastered adaptively by an orchestration of three components: selection, optimization, and compensation (Freund & Baltes, 1998). In old (include years, is it 60-80) and very old age (80 and above??), however, the dynamics associated with SOC are thought to be amplified and to take on a special profile. As people

approach the end of life, they are likely to encounter health-related constraints and other losses in plasticity and reserve capacity (Baltes, 1997). They experience limitation of resources. Their associated compensatory needs become more evident than in younger ages. This decline is apparent in subjective reports on the nature of life span development. When adults are asked about their expectations of changes during the adult life span, the ratio of expected gains to losses becomes increasingly less favourable and less controllable with age (Heckhausen & Baltes, 1991) hence, the importance of using SOC as strategies to navigate through old age.

Selection

The limitation of resources such as time and energy inherent to human existence necessitate the selection of goals because not all opportunities can be pursued (Carstensen, Hanson, & Freund, 1995). Two sub processes of selection can be identified. Elective selection refers to regulative processes that are involved in selecting from a pool of alternative developmental pathways. Loss-based selection occurs in response to a decline of resources or loss of previously available goal-relevant means such as the reconstruction of one's goal hierarchy or the search for new goals (Freund & Baltes, 1998). For example, one may be used to play competitive sports when he was young.. As he aged he may have to choose to compete in a lower division (elective selection); or he may have to choose to give up competing (loss-based selection). Counsellor should let the clients be aware of both selection processes so that they can be more conscious about their actions. When presented the both selection process, the clients can make a decision that can serve them better to maximise their gain.

Optimization and Compensation

Optimization is defined as the allocation and refinement of internal or external resources as means of achieving higher levels goals (Freund & Baltes, 1998). Compensation, when used to confront loss of resources or the decline of goal-relevant means in a selected goal refers to substitutive processes needed to maintain a given level of functioning in the targeted goal (Baltes, 1997).

One way to interpret the relative importance of optimization when compared with compensation is that optimization resources allows for within-person variability and designates the potential that individuals have for different forms of behaviour or development (Gollin, 1981). Aging individuals might attempt to use plasticity-based resources for optimization before engaging in compensatory efforts. Optimization implies a focus on positive outcomes, compensation is directed to avoid a negative outcome. When losses are permanent and might not be fully recoverable which is highly likely to occur among the old and very old, focusing on those domains that are most promising for maintaining or achieving a high level of functioning is probably better for one's sense of well-being and positive emotions (Emmons, 1996). Hence, Bandura's self-efficacy theory would be able to fit through the use of self-regulation and modelling in conjunction with SOC.

Integrating Positive Psychology into SOC

Integrating SOC into positive psychology will help one to achieve authentic happiness across the three distinct ways. For example, optimizing one's ability to achieve meaningful life through generative behaviour, selecting suitable tasks to engage to achieve engaged life such as taking up a degree

course and compensating one's tasks to achieve pleasant life for example would be the act of procrastination. This will takes place along the continuum of Big creativity (breakthrough creativity) and everyday creativity (little c) (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009, Include this to your list of reference)

Self-regulation and Efficacy

Self-regulation plays an important part in describing, predicting and development of one's successful aging path. In 1969, Bandura suggested the importance of role of played by self-regulation in ?? (incomplete sentence??) was first suggested by Bandura in 1969. The research showed that situational external stimuli are not the only one factor influencing behaviour. Sources of behaviour regulation also lies within the individual. This is similar to what lifespan researchers refer to as plasticity. The pursuit of long-term goals requires persisting in goal-related actions and avoidance for disengagement practices. Numerous factors contribute to persistence of goal pursuit such as the value of each of the alternative options, the temporal distance of achieving either of the goals, the perceived likelihood of the realization of each of the goals, control beliefs, and self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1995).

As one ages, the need for culture increases with age and the efficacy of culture decreases with age (Baltes, 1997). Culture refers to all psychological, social, material and symbolic resources that humans have produced (Baltes, 1997). Hence, in order to have successful aging, it is necessary to help one to increase his culture efficacy in order to support one's development into the old age. For human ontogenesis to have reached higher and higher levels of functioning in physical or psychological domains, there had to be a

conjoint evolutionary increase in the richness and dissemination of the resources and opportunities of culture (Valsiner & Lawrence 1997). The farther human ontogenesis extend itself into old age, the more necessary it will be for particular cultural factors and resources to emerge to make this possible. For cognitive efficacy to continue into old age at comparable levels of performance, more cognitive support and training are necessary (Baltes & Kliegl 1992). There are two causes for this age-related reduction in cultural efficacy or efficiency. (Try to link the two paragraphs together, the points are there, but need some integration)

Successful Aging through Effective Modelling

Lifespan can be viewed as an analogy to a learning curve and the acquisition of expertise (Ericsson & Lehmann 1996). As one ages, one would expect a reduced gains in his psychosocial domains due to the age- related losses in biological potential. Hence, it requires more effort and better technology which are necessary to produce further advances as during aging in order to reach or maintain higher levels of functioning. Moreover, there is the possibility of age-related increases in negative transfer and costs of specialized knowledge. As one ages, biological functioning of the brain declines as such one may not remember or learn things as well as before. The mastery of life often involves conflicts and competition among growth, maintenance and regulation of loss. The primary focus of the first half of life is the maximization of independence and autonomy, this goal-profile changes in old age (Baltes, 1997). The productive and creative use of dependence rather than independence becomes critical. By invoking dependence and support, older people free up resources for use in other

goals involving personal efficacy and growth, a mitigating factor in affecting successful aging. This can be done through presenting successful older people who manage to seek out and achieve goals involving efficacy and growth as role models in the society for the aging to model after.

The pursuit of the cultural goals set forth by the society would help alleviate the discomfort and pain of aging. As the society ages, it could collectively set a tone for which individuals can follow by providing role models with ' ideal' or ' normal' biographies associated with success and prestige such as famous celebrities. Society can also promote the desired life patterns through media. This according to Bandura will help further reinforce the likelihood of individuals to model after such behaviour. Moreover, such models are likely to provide examples for certain life patterns that can be adopted by younger generations (Freund, Johannes, & Ritter, 2009).

People could be made more aware of the SOC strategies around them in order to model them effectively. For example, government can praise their elderly citizens who optimize their potentials through diligence and self-perseverance during national talks. For example, in 2012 Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hisen Long praised an elderly man who pursed his Phd with UniSim in his speech during the national rally 2012. This would encourage their fellow classmates to model after the desired behaviour. Through understanding of the environment as well as setting goals with the self-efficacy to achieve it, one can adopt strategies from SOC to achieve the goals set.

Conclusion

The first part of the article examines creativity of three development researchers, Paul Baltes, Albert Bandura and Martin Seligman with reference to their theories. This includes how the three developmental researchers viewed creativity. In the second part, the life story of Paul Baltes is presented as well as his contributions to lifespan development. The third part of the article discusses about the effectiveness of SOC in helping the aging to achieve successful aging through citing relevant literatures.

To conclude, the article suggests an integration of theories from the three developmental researchers to create an effective strategy to be used in counselling and guidance work to aid the aging to achieve successful aging. This can be done through the use of positive models to effective encourage individuals to pick up the desired SOC strategies. The effects of modelling is taken from Albert Bandura's social cognitive learning theory. One of the premises used to measure successful aging is through the subjective well-being index. The subjective well-being is under the umbrella of positive psychology which is created by Martin Seligman. (double check if this information is correct!)

Going forward, it is an uphill task for one to achieve successful aging independently due to an increase demand for culture as well as the decrease of efficacy in culture. To reduce the tension experience by one, the society as a whole should work collectively to promote the ideal " model" of successful aging through media, use of celebrities. This would help increase the likelihood for one to achieve as according to Bandura, the influence of society would affect the self-regulatory processes in individuals. The

proposed strategy needs to be explored in depth as behaviour is related to its outcomes at the level of aggregate consequences rather than momentary effects. Hence, more work need to be done before deciding if this proposed strategy is truly effective to be used in counselling and guidance.