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The Emergence of Thematic Coherence: Linking Autobiographical Memories and Life Goals

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Parental Coping and the Diagnostic Process of Autism

Autism, a pervasive developmental disorder, affects approximately 30 to 50 per 100,000 people. This study explores ways in which parents cope over time with their child’s diagnosis of autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Ten in-depth interviews of parents with autistic children aged between three and seven years were completed. Three stages of the Diagnostic Process were defined: Pre-Diagnosis, Diagnosis, and Post-Diagnosis. Four common coping categories were found: use of conscious coping, increasing support network, negativity regarding professional services, and blaming oneself or one’s spouse. These categories were explored within stages of the diagnostic process in order to investigate coping experience throughout the entire diagnostic process. This research begins to fill existing gaps in the autism, special needs, and parental coping literature.
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**Maternal Substance Abuse: Relation of Distal and Proximal Environmental Factors to Child Behavior Problems**

Few researchers have assessed postnatal environments of children with mothers with substance abuse histories and their links to child problematic behaviors. This study examined postnatal social-environmental variables that might explain different behavioral outcomes in 149 preschool children of mothers receiving methadone maintenance treatment. It used an ecological framework, hypothesizing that relations between child behaviors and distal risks would be mediated by parenting. Negative, disengaged, and unresponsive parenting increased risk for child behavior problems. However, both distal and proximal factors were directly associated with problematic behaviors. Different factors were related to internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Parenting and poor environmental conditions are suggested as precursors to behavioral disorders in high-risk children. Further research is needed regarding environmental conditions of substance abusive families.
AIDS Orphans’ Access to Education: An Examination of Intervention Programs in Tanzania

The AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa is leaving millions of children orphaned and facing obstacles to school enrollment. This study of five programs in Arusha, Tanzania, examined factors that prevented orphans from attending school, programmatic strategies to support enrollment, and orphans’ views of their own education. Results showed that all five programs had primary enrollment rates that exceeded the national average (88.5%). Three programs exceeded the national average for secondary enrollment (7%). Interviews with 23 primary-aged orphans showed that over one-half previously missed extended periods of school due to illness, family instability, or inability to pay school fees. Interviews with 15 secondary-aged orphans suggested that high costs and academic requirements prevented enrollment, although a desire for greater educational opportunities existed.
The Underutilization of Mental Health Services for Korean Americans: Factors Influencing Attitudes Towards Seeking Mental Help

Asian Americans are vastly underrepresented in mental health services. This study investigated the Korean American population and their underutilization of mental health services in light of four variables – acculturation, stigma against mental illness, emotional inhibition, and the attitudes towards seeking mental help. Surveys were collected from 275 Koreans adults (195 from churches and 80 from colleges). In the church sample, stigma was a significant negative predictor for help seeking attitudes. In the college sample, acculturation level and emotional expressiveness (less emotional inhibition) were significant positive predictors for help seeking attitudes. The conclusions call attention to the nuances within the Korean population concerning factors that influence help seeking attitudes, as well as the need for further research done on this population.
The Emergence of Thematic Coherence: Linking Autobiographical Memories and Life Goals

Motivation and capacity for narrating coherent life stories are acquired in late adolescence and early adulthood; however, little research has directly examined development of coherence, particularly with respect to its role in connecting memories with goals. This study assessed whether thematic coherence between memories and goals increases from freshman to senior year in college. College students (38 male, 107 female) wrote narratives of 10 autobiographical memories and 2 life goals, which were coded for themes of agency and communion. Results failed to demonstrate that college students’ stories express thematic coherence between memories and goals. Though methodological issues may partially explain this lack of coherence, results suggest that thematic coherence between past memories and future goals may not emerge until later in life.
Talent and Community Inclusion as Predictors of Foster Children’s Clinical Status

This study examined effects of increased levels of two strengths, talent and community inclusion, on foster children’s clinical status. The population consisted of 764 foster children, 397 male and 367 female, ages 3-20. Data consisted of demographics and ratings of strengths and clinical status ratings from the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Mental Health (CANS-MH) assessment. ANOVA results showed significant results for Talent (p<.001) and Inclusion (p<.001). LSD tests for homogeneous groups revealed an apparent threshold level of strengths that was verified with additional analyses. Results indicated that inclusion and talent are associated with better clinical status when present at or above threshold level and that targeting strengths offers a promising method of improving clinical status.
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Exploring the Role of the Facilitator in a Video Club

To help teachers implement mathematics education reform effectively, research calls for new forms of professional development for teachers. This study examined the facilitator’s role in one such context, a video club for elementary school mathematics teachers. The facilitator plays a critical role as teachers attempt to discuss their teaching and understand their students’ mathematical thinking in new ways. Transcripts of 10 video club sessions were analyzed in this study. Results of this analysis identified several aspects of the facilitator’s role. The most frequently occurring category (28%), Acting as Participant, emerged in contrast with existing literature. This study also found that the nature of facilitation changed over time. As procedural remarks decreased, remarks categorized as Acting as Participant increased.
Building an Internationalist Perspective: The Effects of Higher Education on Foreign Policy Opinion in the U.S. and Europe

Previous studies have documented a connection between higher education and liberal foreign policy preference. This study tests the current relationship by analyzing data from the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations’ *Worldviews 2002* survey of U.S. and European foreign policy opinions. The results indicated that people with higher levels of education favored more internationalist, humanitarian, and multilateral foreign policy options. In the U.S. (n=3262), the effect of education was largely independent of effects of income, political views, attention to news, and travel abroad (p<.01). Level of education was the best demographic predictor of foreign policy preference. Most European attitudes (n=6000) mirrored those of highly educated Americans. Still, level of education was a significant predictor of foreign policy preference in Europe (p<.01).
**The Effect of the Estate Tax on Family Business**

This study investigated the root of differences in family business owners’ perceptions of the impact of the estate tax on family business to determine if these perceptions are consistent with behavior. Data was generated from the 1995 survey, ‘A Report on the Impact of the Federal Estate Tax.’ The sample consisted of 284 senior generation family business owners whose companies are members of the Associated Equipment Distributors (AED). Correlational and regression analyses were used to evaluate hypotheses. Findings indicated that business size and generational maturity significantly account for differences in family business owners’ perceptions. Findings also indicated that business owners’ perceptions were, in most cases, consistent with behavior. Exceptions could be explained within the context of the social psychology theory of conceptualization.