



Editorial: 2019 Progress in the Development of a Regional Positive Psychology

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Welcome back! It's been a particularly active year in the region for conferences in Kuwait, the UAE and Lebanon with many talks occurring under the banner of positive psychology ranging from urban planning and architecture to employability and education. An additional number of regional faces were also at international conferences presenting on their findings, attesting to the interest in, and growth of the field. We have captured some of those abstracts and conference reviews in this issue. Readers will also notice additions to the Board with a number of high profile academics who have noticed us and chose to support our work in the region. We are especially pleased to have them with us and hope to see collaborations with them in the future.

For the upcoming year of 2020, we are focused on growing student interest in the field and showcasing their consequent publications. A number of visits are already occurring and many scheduled in regional higher education institutions to talk about positive psychology. Students can learn about the field, its major theories and constructs and how these differ from mainstream psychology. They can also learn how to structure a research article for the purposes of publication, including how the review process works. Publications help students gain a number of useful skills relevant to research activity. These can be added to their CVs and graduate school applications too. Publishing one's work is a rewarding activity beyond just getting a grade and is a good way to familiarize one's self with the scientific literature on a positive psychology topic.

We also have a number of research papers as well as a 'perspective' paper meant to provide food for thought and provocatively so. Dr. Meg Warren and myself tackle the issue of journal impact factors (JIFs) and how these relate to the MEJPP. We argue that researchers, ourselves included, should be far braver as well as less concerned about JIFs. The same can be said of institutional rankings. Instead, we should be focused on the generation of science and local knowledge and strive to have a real social impact in the communities in which we work. Agreed, it's a thorny issue and you'll find yourself reacting strongly in one direction or another, so have a cup of tea while you read and let us know your thoughts on the issue.

We continue to accept full-length papers of an investigative nature in Arabic and English and are pleased to have several articles. The first stems from the UAE by Mosanya who explores the relationship between cultural intelligence, coping and grit in a higher education context, and how these act as strength for many young expatriates adults. The next paper describes the outcomes of a positive education program undertaken in an Abu Dhabi school with its implications for the UAE as a whole (Barrington, Hancock, & Clough). A third paper by Samways, Teasel, Waldrop, Chiao and Warren reflects on a focus group conducted with teachers in a Dubai school about their experiences implementing a positive education program. Their willingness and



hesitancies offer insights for schools wishing to implement programs of their own. Further, we have an article on breast cancer survivors in Iran (Taheri & Falavarjani) examining the role of resilience, a positive construct with cultural and religious roots, along with hope and self-efficacy in ameliorating disease progression. Finally, we have what is called a ‘short report’; a submission that is intended to be a brief rendering of an intervention. This format, often used in healthcare, allows researchers to showcase their work in a timely fashion, but does not include the benefits of a typical extended literature review or a broader consideration or contextualization of findings within that literature. Still, short reports are useful in highlighting important work taking place regionally. A short report from the Cleveland Clinic in Abu Dhabi (Cardona & Kennedy) describes a stress reduction intervention undertaken with physicians. We hope you enjoy reading these articles and make use of the comment feature below each publication to share your thoughts.

If you are not aware, the next regional psychology conference takes place in Kuwait City from March 12th to the 14th, 2020 under the auspices of the Middle East Psychological Association. A panel on positive regional higher education, as well as other positive psychology workshops and talks, are scheduled and we hope to see you there for these. See www.mepa2020.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. We all win by professionalizing and standardizing the field when we work together.

Finally, we point you to first regional positive psychology book published this April; *Introduction to Positive Psychology for the Middle East* (Lambert & Pasha-Zaidi; Springer, 2019). It was undertaken by a host of researchers and practitioners who have worked very hard to bring readers 17 chapters of positive psychology content in the realms of education, organizations, clinical psychology, policy development, infrastructure and building, big data, measurement, health, as well as Islamic and historical perspectives on wellbeing. This is the go-to book for all that is positive psychology across the Middle East region and stands as a comprehensive primer for anyone interested in the field. It is available online for classrooms and individuals here: <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030139209>

To close, we thank our reviewers for their thoughtful attention, suggestions and editing of all of our submissions. These are the individuals who donate their time and continuously offer their support and encouragement. Without you, we would have no journal. We also thank all of the authors who have trusted us to publish their work and recognize that their contributions are necessary towards the development of a regional positive psychology. Bravo!

Best wishes for the year ahead,
Dr. Louise Lambert