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A POSITIVE PARADIGM: BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF POSITIVE SCHEMA STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, research in the field of psychology has shifted its focus from diseases and dysfunctions in individuals to exploring the potential for development and strengths of people, largely influenced by the principles of positive psychology. Consequently, it can be asserted that studies in the field of psychology are advancing within a positive paradigm. Under the influence of positive psychology, a noticeable shift from early maladaptive schemas to positive schemas has emerged in research, which has garnered attention in the relevant literature. Thus, the primary aim of this study was to conduct a bibliometric analysis of research on positive schemas. To achieve this objective, we examined 2135 publications related to positive schemas in the Web of Science (WoS) database. The data obtained from this examination were systematically coded and transferred to a computerized environment. The analysis of this data was carried out through bibliometric methods. The results of this analysis shed light on the current research trends pertaining to positive schemas.

Keywords: Positive psychology, positive schema, bibliometric analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Studies in psychology are typically shaped by historical events (Magyary, 2002). For instance, during the Second World War era, psychological research predominantly centered on investigating psychological disorders in individuals, the underlying causes of these disorders, and the therapeutic process (Linley et al., 2006). Consequently, it can be affirmed that research on psychological matters evolved in accordance with societal needs (Allport, 1954). In the post-war period, this trend persisted for a significant duration, with research and practice primarily concentrating on psychological disorders in individuals. As a result, substantial advancements were achieved in the assessment, comprehension, and treatment of mental illnesses (Kazdin and Weisz, 2003).

Despite the valuable contributions of these studies to the field, they have given rise to two undesirable outcomes: an excessive emphasis on psychology's connection to illness and dysfunction, and the perception of illness and dysfunction as separate subjects of research rather than integral components of human functioning (Wood & Johnson, 2016). This situation, coupled with the influence of problem-oriented pathological approaches, has manifested in both research and practice within the field of psychology, resulting in the neglect of studies focused on psychological well-being, which is another crucial aspect of human functioning (Magyary, 2002).

The emergence of the positive psychology movement represents a challenge to this traditional perspective. Positive psychology arose as a response to the limitations of focusing solely on the examination of developmental potential and strengths of individuals under the influence of pathological approaches (Gable & Haidt, 2005). With the advent of the positive psychology movement, research and practices have shifted towards not only reducing diseases and problems but also enhancing the positive attributes of individuals in their daily lives (Magyary, 2002). Broadly defined, positive psychology encompasses the study of conditions and processes that contribute to the development and optimal functioning of individuals, groups, and organizations (Gable & Haidt, 2005). In other words, positive psychology is a paradigm that examines all aspects of characteristics contributing to the functioning of individuals and organizations. As Peterson (2006) aptly puts it, "The domains of inquiry in positive psychology encompass everything that goes right in life from birth to death and all the milestones in between." One of the most crucial concepts in human life is schemas. This concept, primarily referred to as early maladaptive schemas in the relevant literature and a subject of research and applications, has garnered increased attention in light of the influence of positive psychology and the introduction of the concept of positive schemas, which serves as a counterpart to early maladaptive schemas.

Positive Schema

Early schemas encompass a wide range of overarching themes, which encompass cognitions, emotions, memories, bodily sensations, and neurobiological reactions related to one's self-concept and interpersonal relationships. These schemas typically develop during childhood or adolescence and may persist throughout one's life (Young et al., 2003). The conceptual counterpart to early maladaptive schemas, characterized as positive schemas, also takes shape during childhood experiences (Lockwood & Perris, 2012). Positive schemas,

initially simple in structure during childhood development, evolve into more adaptive schema modes as individuals grow and mature cognitively. These adaptive schema modes are viewed as potential structures that contribute to enhanced functionality in adulthood (Lockwood & Perris, 2012). Numerous studies in the related literature have explored the concept of schemas, but one of the most comprehensive investigations was carried out by Beck. Beck defines schemas as mental constructs that dictate how we process, store, and retrieve information concerning external stimuli. These processes involve the creation of personalized meanings (Clark et al., 1999). According to Beck (1987), individuals form specific beliefs about themselves, other individuals, and the environment in their formative years. These beliefs become integral components of an individual's core belief system, influencing their behavior and shaping their responses to external stimuli.

Young (1999) and Young et al. (2003) formulated their schema model, drawing upon Beck's approach and emphasizing factors contributing to schema formation. Consequently, the concept of early maladaptive schemas is closely intertwined with the schema structure in cognitive psychology, serving as the cornerstone of the schema therapy model. Early maladaptive schemas encompass an enduring and pervasive pattern of information processing, encompassing thoughts, emotions, memories, and attention preferences. These schemas take shape during childhood and adolescence through the interplay of biological and temperamental factors (Young et al., 2003). However, focusing solely on early maladaptive schemas gives rise to two issues. Firstly, it confines the schema concept to maladaptive schemas alone, failing to consider it in its entirety (James et al., 2007). Secondly, it inhibits the exploration of factors influencing individuals' levels of well-being (Wood & Joseph, 2010). Under the influence of the positive psychology movement, there has been a growing recognition of the positive aspect of schemas, prompting research and practical applications in this area (Keyfitz et al., 2013; McArthur et al., 2017).

The conceptual counterpart to early maladaptive schemas is termed positive schemas (Lockwood & Perris, 2012). Every child possesses fundamental needs for healthy personality development, including safety, love, attention, acceptance, and autonomy (Videler et al., 2020). Additionally, autonomy, attachment to others, self-control, boundaries, expression of emotions, and play are emotional needs delineated within the schema therapy framework. When these essential needs of children are unmet, early maladaptive schemas form, whereas when they are met, positive schemas develop (Young et al., 2003). Consequently, akin to early maladaptive schemas, positive schemas encompass cognitions pertaining to self and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, as in the developmental process of early maladaptive schemas, positive schemas comprise favorable cognitive and behavioral tendencies that manifest during childhood (Young et al., 2003). As a result of Keyfitz's (2010) research, a total of five positive schema domains have been identified: valence, optimism, self-efficacy, achievement, and trust. Valence reflects one's perception of their self-worth; self-efficacy denotes the motivation to fulfill specific situational demands, cognitive resources, and belief in one's ability to take action; optimism signifies the conviction that outcome expectations will be positive or very good rather than negative; achievement represents the belief that one's efforts will culminate in success; and trust indicates one's inclination to trust others or consider them trustworthy in social relationships.

When analyzing research on positive schemas, it becomes evident that a predominant focus lies on early maladaptive schemas, with many studies predominantly centered around this aspect of schema research (Abbasi et al., 2017; Hashemipoor et al., 2019). Consequently, there is a noticeable limitation in the exploration of positive schemas in the research landscape. One of the few studies that delve into positive schemas (Tomlinson et al., 2017) examines the influence of both early maladaptive schemas and positive cognitive schemas on the well-being of children and adolescents. The study particularly assesses well-being through the lenses of happiness and life satisfaction while scrutinizing the contributions of both schema categories to these well-being indicators. Results from this study reveal that positive schemas are cognitive structures positively correlated with life satisfaction and happiness. Furthermore, positive schemas exhibit a more robust predictive capacity for life satisfaction and happiness compared to maladaptive schemas. In another study targeting university students (O'Byrne et al., 2020), researchers explore the relationships between positive schemas and life satisfaction, psychological resilience, depression, and anxiety. Findings from this investigation demonstrate that positive schemas are positively associated with life satisfaction and psychological resilience, while displaying a negative correlation with depression and anxiety levels. Additionally, a separate study investigating the impact of positive schemas on depression reveals that positive schemas have a mitigating effect on depression levels (Lumley & McArthur, 2016).

These studies within the related literature offer valuable insights for future research endeavors. It is also noteworthy that the adoption of bibliometric analysis has been on the rise in recent years and has gained popularity among researchers (Ağırkan, 2023; Haspolat, 2023; Yalçın, 2022). Therefore, it is considered crucial to assess past research trends within this broader context, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. With this aim in mind, we intend to conduct a bibliometric analysis of studies related to positive schemas.

METHOD

The data obtained in the study were retrieved from the Web of Science (WoS) database on September 10, 2023. Bibliometric analysis is employed for various reasons, such as uncovering trends in scientific research and exploring the intellectual structure of a specific area within the existing literature (Verma & Gustafsson, 2020). In terms of its types, bibliometric analysis consists of two main categories: performance analysis and mapping analysis. Performance analysis involves an examination of research on a per-author and per-country basis, while mapping analysis focuses on revealing the relationships between these variables. Therefore, bibliometric analysis allows for both objective and, subsequently, subjective information and interpretations to be derived across various aspects, including the quantity of data related to a subject, the structure of associated variables, and the regions where publications on the subject originate.

In the context of this research, performance and mapping analyses were conducted on the data obtained through the relevant topic. The data for this research were sourced from all studies listed under the "positive schema" title in the WoS database. A total of 2198 studies from various research types were included in this study. The

data collected from the database were subjected to performance analysis and mapping analysis, and the findings are presented in the results section.

Data Analysis

In the Web of Science (WoS) database, the search term "positive schema" was applied to titles, abstracts, and/or keywords of publications. This search yielded a total of 2198 studies. Initially, no specific limitations were imposed on the search criteria, meaning that all publications were subject to examination. However, due to the relatively low number of studies retrieved, the most significant four groups are presented in the data section. Following the database search, the identified studies were systematically coded and transferred to a computerized environment. The analysis of these studies was conducted using SPSS 22.0, Microsoft Excel, and VOSviewer (Version 1.6.15) software packages. Data sourced from the WoS database underwent coding and computerization processes. VOSviewer, a commonly employed computer program in bibliometric analysis, was utilized to construct and visualize network maps. VOSviewer operates as a fully graphical user interface-based software (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

FINDINGS

The data obtained for all publications on positive schema in the WoS database are as shown in Table 1. When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that the most common type of documents related to positive schema are articles (1790), followed by proceedings (241), followed by review articles (90) and book chapters (14). Another finding obtained from the research is the fields of study of the studies on positive schema. The fields of research on positive schema are Clinical Psychology (245), Psychiatry (232), Multidisciplinary Psychology (171) and Social Psychology (134), respectively.

Table 1. Most Published Document Types and Research Areas

Categories	n	%
Document Types	2135	
Articles	1790	82
Proceedings Papers	241	11
Review Article	90	0.4
Book Chapters	14	0.06
Research Areas		
Clinical Psychology	245	11
Psychiatry	232	11
Multidisciplinary Psychology	171	8
Social Psychology	134	6

Table 2. Distribution of Positive Schema Studies by Years

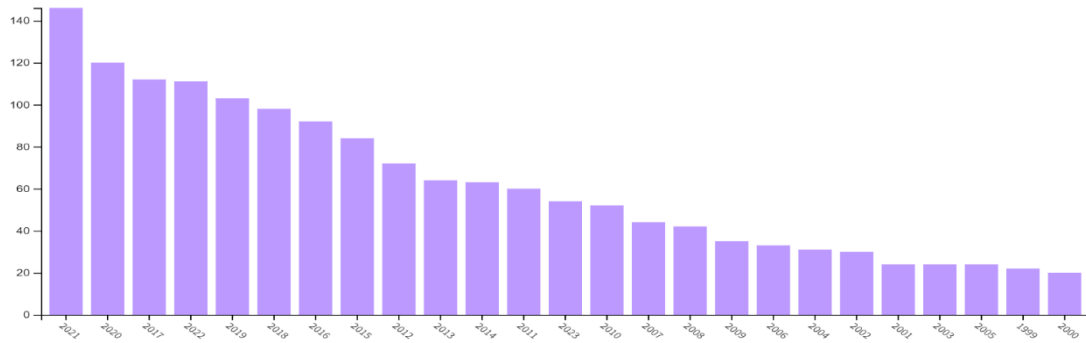


Table 2 shows that 2135 studies on positive schema were conducted between 1999 and 2021, and that these studies exhibited a parallel trend between 1999 and 2003, but the most research was conducted between 2010 and 2021. When the data in the table are analyzed, it is seen that a significant increase has started to occur especially in recent years and the subject of positive schema has started to be frequently addressed in research.

Table 3. Distribution by Countries

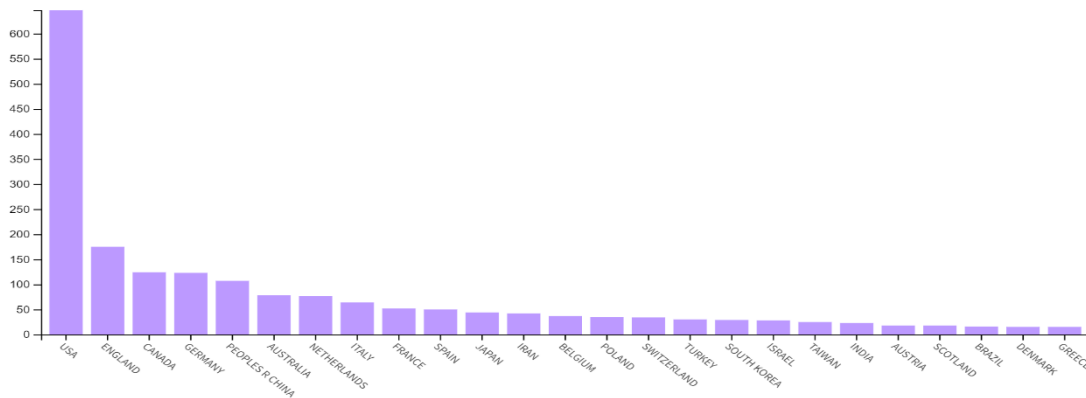


Table 3 shows the distribution of studies on positive schema worldwide. It is seen that there are studies on positive schema in a total of 90 countries around the world. Among these, it is seen that the United States of America (USA) is the country with the highest number of studies on positive schema (n=782). The USA is followed by the UK (n=206), Canada (149), China (149) and Germany (144).

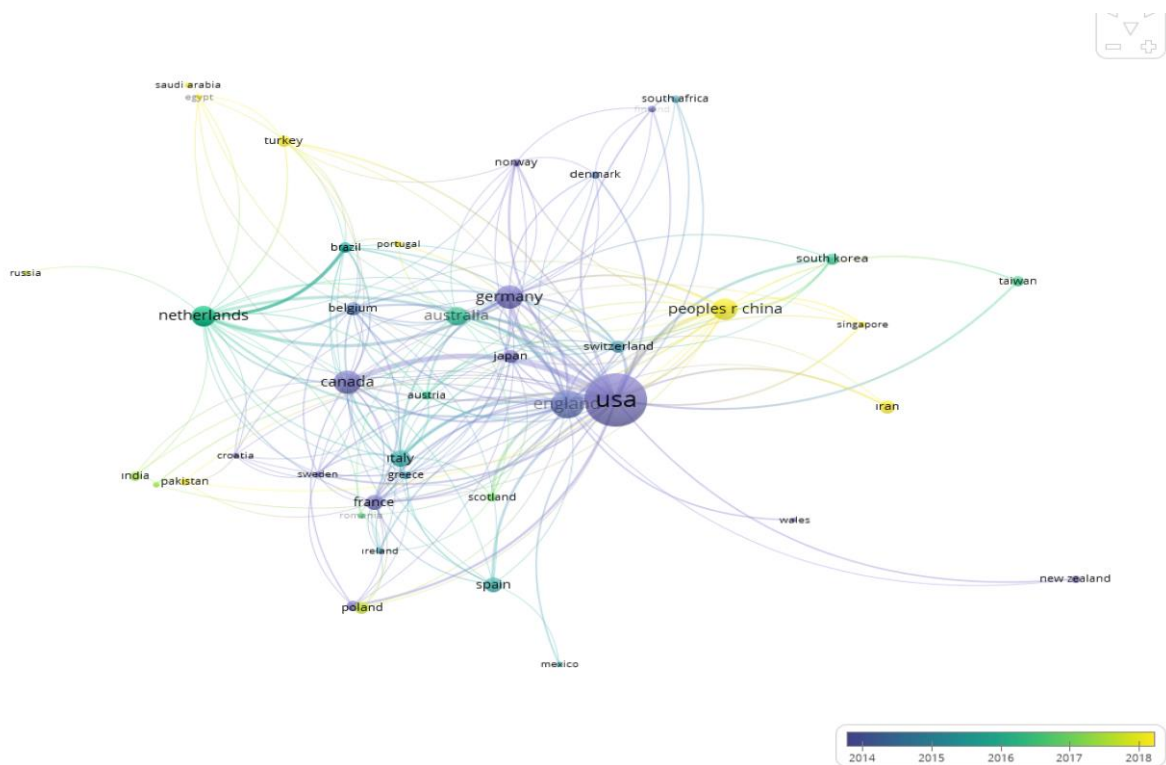


Figure 1. Network Images for Countries

Figure 1 shows the country-based distribution of publications on positive schema. In the publications related to positive schema, it is seen that the USA is the country with the highest number of studies on positive schema. The USA is followed by the UK, Canada, China and Germany.

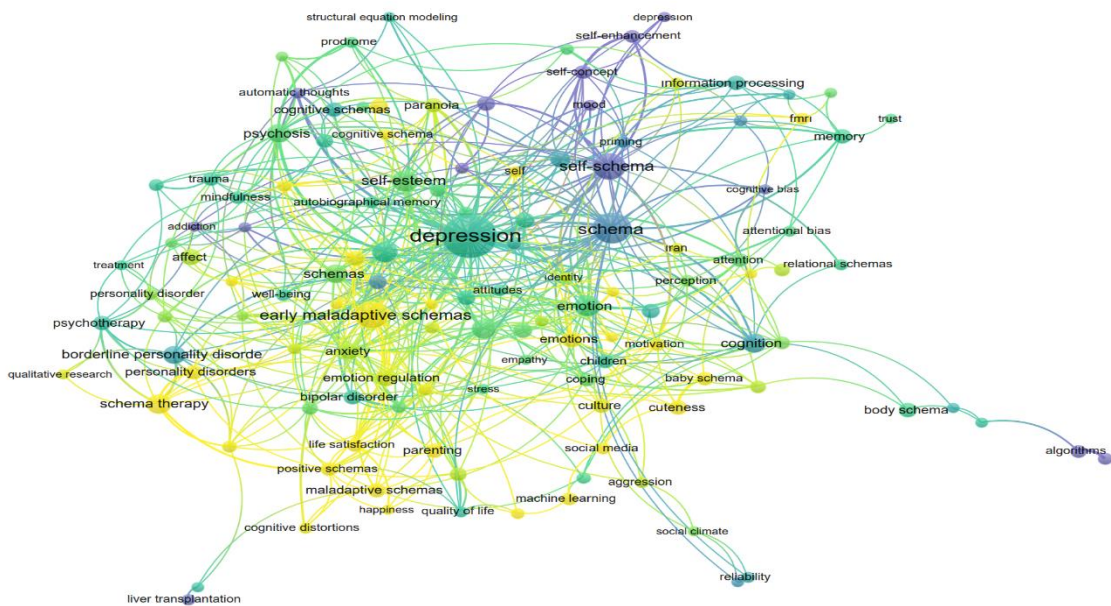


Figure 2. Network Image for Keywords

Figure 2 shows the keyword analysis of publications related to positive schema. The keywords of the publications mentioned at least five times in the publications on positive schema were included in this analysis. It is seen that the most frequently used keywords in publications on positive schema are depression, schema, self schema, early maladaptive schemas and self-esteem.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of research related to positive schemas, performing both performance and mapping analyses in this domain. Over the years, research has consistently demonstrated that negative cognitive schemas are potent vulnerability factors contributing to various adverse developmental outcomes, particularly susceptibility to psychopathology. However, limited attention has been devoted to exploring the connections between positive core beliefs and psychopathology, as well as emotional well-being (Keyfitz et al., 2013). Hence, it is crucial to examine variables that optimally contribute to human functioning, particularly within the framework of positive psychology, to offer insights for future research.

One of the study's findings is the recent surge in the number of studies on positive schemas, with this trend expected to continue as we approach the present day, primarily due to the influence of positive psychology. This outcome can be attributed, in part, to two key features among the six foundational aspects of positive psychology (Linley & Joseph, 2004). Firstly, facilitation plays a pivotal role. Positive psychology is characterized by its facilitative nature, aiming to assist individuals in achieving their goals rather than prescribing specific behaviors or interventions. Secondly, the level of application is notable. Applied positive psychology is adaptable to individuals, groups, and communities, taking full consideration of the social and cultural contexts that shape our lives. These two features, particularly, offer practical advantages for researchers and practitioners across diverse fields, rendering them suitable for investigations within this domain.

Upon reviewing the relevant literature, it becomes evident that studies on positive psychology and positive schemas span various domains, including clinical applications (Lee Duckworth et al., 2005), workplaces (Turner et al., 2002), and educational settings (Seligman et al., 2009). Consequently, it is unsurprising that research in the realm of positive psychology and positive schemas has witnessed a notable increase (Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, it can be reasonably inferred that this trend is a direct outcome of the positive psychology paradigm.

Another notable finding arising from the research is the identification of the countries that contribute the most to publications on positive schemas, which include the USA, the UK, Canada, China, and Germany. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the United States leads significantly in terms of the number of publications among these nations. This dominance of the USA aligns with the results of a bibliometric analysis focusing on positive psychology-based research conducted by Wang et al. (2023), where the USA emerged as the country with the highest number of publications in the field of positive psychology. In the same study, it is observed that Australia, England, China, and Canada follow closely behind the USA in terms of publication volume. Considering this context, it is reasonable to speculate that the significant contributions of Martin Seligman during his tenure as

the President of the American Psychological Association have played a pivotal role in the development of this field. Therefore, it can be concluded that the outcome derived from the research is in line with expectations given this historical perspective.

Lastly, the most frequently utilized keywords associated with positive schemas in research encompass depression, schema, self-schema, self-esteem, and early maladaptive schemas. Positive schemas represent affirmative core beliefs about one's self. Consequently, it can be postulated that the findings obtained from the key concepts in this research are potentially linked to depression, self-esteem, and schemas. Such research serves as an explanatory framework for the results achieved. Investigations have uncovered a strong correlation between positive schemas and depression (Keyfitz et al., 2013; Lumley & McArthur, 2016), as well as general well-being (Cherry & Lumley, 2019). Hence, positive schemas exhibit a negative association with psychopathology and a positive relationship with overall well-being. Another keyword of relevance is the concept of early maladaptive schemas, often considered the antithesis of positive schemas, which is prevalent in the relevant literature. In a study examining depression, psychological resilience, psychological well-being, and positive self-perception in relation to early maladaptive schemas, it was established that early maladaptive schemas display a negative association with psychological well-being and psychological resilience, while demonstrating a positive correlation with depression (Sağ, 2016). Schemas constitute another critical concept among the keywords, with Beck being one of the pioneers to introduce this concept to the relevant literature. According to Beck, schemas are the individual's response system, shaped by their capacity to make sense of external stimuli (Beck, 1987). Young (1999) developed his schema model based on Beck's approach. Within this model, Young (1999) delineated five fundamental schema domains comprising a total of 18 schemas, which result from unmet emotional needs, particularly during childhood (Young et al., 2003). Remarkably, there is substantial research focusing on schemas, particularly in the context of children and adolescents (McArthur et al., 2017; Tomlinson et al., 2017). Self-esteem constitutes yet another keyword in this context, revolving around how positively or negatively individuals evaluate themselves (Young, 2007). Research endeavors consistently highlight the close association between these two concepts (Obeid et al., 2020; Özhan, 2022). Consequently, given the cognitive capacity to respond to oneself and others, it can be asserted that research centered on self-esteem serves as an anticipated outcome.

When the findings obtained from the research are evaluated in general, it is seen that research on positive schema is increasing. It can be stated that the paradigm shift in the field of psychology is reflected in this situation. It can be thought that a tendency towards the development of an individual and social psychological health model from a disease-oriented tendency has led to an increase in studies in the field of positive schema in recent years.

SUGGESTIONS

In the realm of psychology research, the influence of positive psychology has ushered in a significant shift in both practice and research approaches. This evolving trend has led researchers in the field to increasingly direct their

focus towards individuals' inherent resources and their developmental processes. However, it's worth noting that the primary objective of researchers in the domain of positive psychology is to promote development within the framework of the psychological health model, emphasizing a departure from the disease-oriented approach. Consequently, the foremost recommendation for researchers in this field is to disseminate studies centered on the advancement of psychological health and the creation of intervention programs aligned with this goal.

The roots of mental health problems that manifest in adulthood often trace back to childhood and adolescence. Research on this subject underscores the importance of concentrating on psychological health and development during childhood as a preventive measure against issues that may arise later in life (Allensworth et al., 2011; Richards & Huppert, 2011). Consequently, it is advisable to prioritize childhood and adolescence in research and practical endeavors pertaining to positive schemas, particularly for preventive and developmental purposes. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting the significance of school-based initiatives in prevention and development efforts. Prioritizing school counseling and guidance services, structured around a comprehensive developmental guidance program, with a focus on positive outcomes rooted in developmental psychology, is recommended to enhance the quality of school-based studies.

Another noteworthy discovery stemming from this research concerns the keywords associated with positive schemas. The pertinent key concepts include depression, schema, self-schema, self-esteem, and early maladaptive schemas. In light of this finding, researchers have the opportunity to expand their investigations on positive schemas by incorporating various variables and dimensions.

ETHICAL TEXT

"This article complies with the journal's writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, and journal ethics rules. The responsibility for any violations that may arise regarding the article belongs to the author(s)."

Author(s) Contribution Rate: Author contribution rate is 100%.

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