

INAUGURAL EDITORIAL

Towards a science of well-being that promotes the flourishing of all humanity

Kaiping Peng*

School of Social Sciences, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, China

There is no doubt that the 21st century is a century of coexistence of enormous opportunities and pressing challenges. No matter how turbulent the world situation is, human beings are always interested in pursuing goals of happiness, well-being, health, value, meaning, creativity, imagination, aesthetics, spiritual transcendence, self-realization and a better life. The yearning for human flourishing is more urgent than ever before. Human beings' need for self-introspection, spiritual exploration, inner peace, spiritual comfort, spiritual dilemmas, and the need to love and be loved has become increasingly intense and longing. Without a doubt, the golden age for a science of well-being has arrived.

The science of well-being is a young discipline. In 1879, psychology separated from the mother womb of philosophy and became an independent discipline, which has developed for more than 140 years. Although the history of scientific psychology is not very long, the historical stage of psychology can be described as a hundred flowers blooming and a hundred schools of thought contending. From Wundt's constructivism, to James's functionalism, to Watson's behaviorism, to Freud's psychoanalysis, to Maslow's humanism, to the cognitive revolution and cultural revolution in the second half of the 20th century, until the positive revolution of the early 21st century. Young positive psychology is like a colorful picture with numerous schools of thought, competing ideas, comparable to Plato's Academy of Athens and JIXIA Academy in ancient China. However, the science of well-being remains a controversial and misunderstood discipline. To this day, people still ask: what is well-being science?

Is the science of well-being truly a rigorous science? Does well-being science can truly help everyone live a better life? How can we reduce the gap between theory and practice? However, this does not prevent positive psychologists and scholars from many other disciplines such as economy, sociology, education, political science, philosophy, among others, from diligently exploring the vast spiritual world of mankind, exploring the complex and ever-changing human heart and human desires, and devoting great humanistic care to all issues related to "what makes us human". Immanuel Kant once said: Man is an end, not a mean. Human beings are the ultimate existence and cannot be reduced to a means or tool for any purpose. The question that positive psychologists keep contemplating are: What is a person? What makes us human? How do people think? How do people feel? How do people judge true and false, good and evil, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness? How can people live poetically? How can people live with dignity? How do people view life and death? How did humans create great civilizations? Why do humans kill each other? Why do historical tragedies always repeat themselves? How to eliminate war, plague, famine, extreme poverty and social inequality? The road is long and far away, and we will keep searching for better answers and researching the unknown world with our passion, perseverance and wisdom.

Well-being science has three kinds of beauty: the beauty of experimentation based on natural sciences, the beauty of profound thoughts based on humanities, and the beauty of macro-level thinking based on social sciences. Psychology is at the hub of all scientific clusters and is viewed as a "hub science" among the scientific

***Corresponding Author:**

Kaiping Peng, School of Social Sciences, Tsinghua University, Haidian District No.30 Shuangqing Rd, Beijing 100084, China. Email: pengkp@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5938-8180>

Received: 26 March 2024; Revised: 29 March 2024; Accepted: 29 March 2024
<https://doi.org/10.54844/wsr.2024.0571>

 This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License, which allows others to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

landscape. Therefore, psychology should have all the attributes and characteristics of all disciplines. First of all, Well-being science absorbs the experimental paradigms of natural science and focuses on empirical evidence, experimentation and falsification. Positive psychologists use quantitative measurements, experimental operations and empirical tests to capture elusive psychological phenomena and confirm or falsify scientific hypotheses; secondly, positive psychology has the ideological foundations of the humanities. Humans are not machines. Humans have thoughts, emotions, consciousness, experiences, aesthetics, initiative, creativity, imagination, intelligent minds, and secret spiritual worlds. Positive psychology cannot be completely based on reductionism, which simplifies the profound and higher-level of psychological processes of human beings into standard formulas, models and theorems. Positive psychologists construct great, profound and thought-provoking theories to inquire about the ultimate purpose of life, find the meaning of life, fight against the absurdity of existence, and settle our souls; Finally, positive psychology has the macroscopic beauty of social science. People usually think that positive psychology focuses on individual psychological processes and behavioral patterns. In fact, this is not the case. The analysis levels of positive psychology include intra-individual, inter-individual, intra-group, inter-group and socio-cultural perspectives. Positive psychologists have grand visions, broad minds and benevolent sentiments, and are deeply concerned about the destiny of mankind: where do we come from, what are we now, and where are we going.

The purpose and mission of the science of well-being is not only about treat mental illness and reduce anxiety, depression and mental disorders, but also promote well-being and flourishing for all humanity. At the beginning of the 21st century, the revolutionary waves of positive psychology swept across the world and spread to different corners of the world, bringing sunshine, warmth and nourishment of thought, spirit and soul to people in different countries and regions around the world. Positive psychology advocates exploring the positive nature of human beings, giving full blossom to our unique strengths and potential, pursuing the meaning of our lives, being grateful for everything life has given us, building happy interpersonal relationships and intimate relationships, and allowing us to choose positivity and happiness and gratitude in an imperfect world. Positive psychology advocates that we can live our life more positive, optimistic, kind, generous, altruistic, loving and be loved, and flourishing, and unite us together to make the world more peaceful, beautiful

and prosperous.

As the editor-in-chief of this new journal, I am particularly thrilled that the very first issue of the journal "Well-being Science Review" which is jointly sponsored by the Department of Psychology of Tsinghua University, the Chinese Psychological Society, and the International Association of Positive Psychology has been officially published. We hope that this journal can serve as an academic space for students, scholars, enthusiasts, practitioners of well-being science across the globe, as well as the cross-integration of different disciplines, and guide our readers around the world to explore and learn about the latest ideas, cutting-edge explorations, scientific discoveries, and interesting findings of well-being science, translational work and practical wisdom, promote academic dialogue and reduce ideological collision, promote intellectual exchanges and research cooperation among global communities, and make meaningful contributions to the academic developments and public education of well-being science and ultimately promote the well-being and flourishing of all humanity and build a better world for the 8 billion people on the planet and our future generations.

DECLARATION

Author contributions

Peng KP developed the concept for the manuscript, reviewed the literature, formulated research questions, collected the data, conducted analyses and interpreted the data. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Source of funding

None.

Ethical approval

Not applicable.

Conflict of interest

Peng KP is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal. The article was subject to the journal's standard procedures, with peer review handled independently of the editor and the affiliated research groups.

Use of large language models, AI and machine learning tools

None declared.

Data availability statement

No additional data