



# **POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

## **- AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF DISSERTATIONS AND THESES**

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# **ABSTRACT**

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A number of studies on positive psychology have been published in peer reviewed journals since the birth of the field in 1998.

**Objective:** The objective of this annotated bibliography is to give the reader an overview of dissertations and theses on positive psychology. Many of these include studies that have not been published elsewhere.

**Design:** The dissertations and theses were identified through searches in ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database - the world's most comprehensive collection of dissertations and theses with 2.7 million searchable citations to dissertation and theses from around the world from 1861-2011.

**Methods:** This annotated bibliography focuses on dissertations and theses that explicitly use the terms 'positive psychology' in their abstracts. The original abstracts are included and the references are sorted in opposite chronological order and alphabetical order.

## ABSTRACT

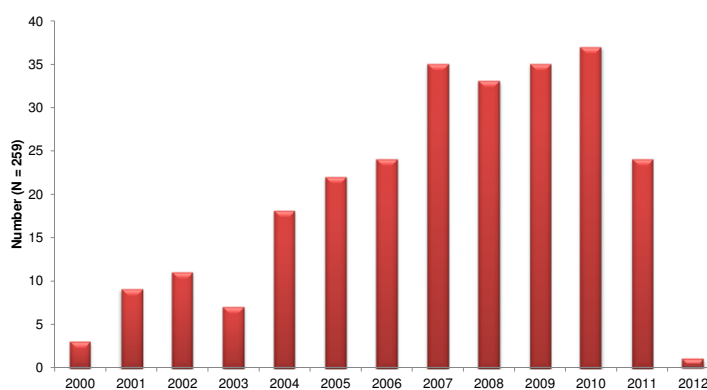
**Results:** In total, 259 references from 2000 to December 2011 met the selection criteria. The number of dissertations has been growing until 2007 and seem to have reached a plateau around 35 dissertations per year.

**Conclusion:** All attempts have been made to ensure that this document is as accurate as possible. Due to the complexity of cataloguing and categorizing the materials, some details may have been overlooked in the review process. If you have suggestions for changes or additions, please contact Saiyyidah Zaidi-Stone.



# PRELIMINARY RESULTS

## REFERENCES PER YEAR



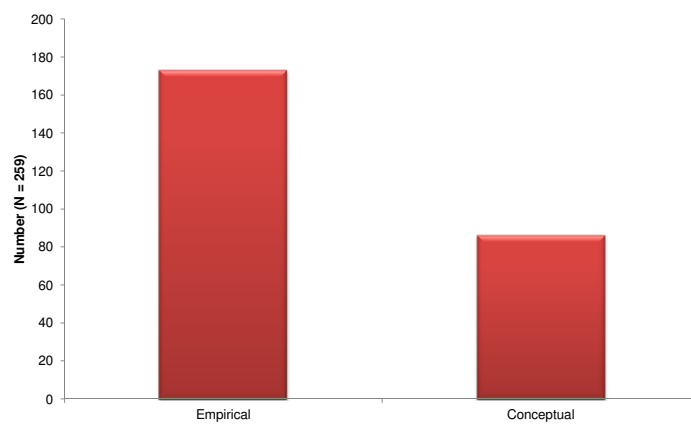
## REFERENCES PER YEAR

We have identified **259 dissertations** and theses on positive psychology

The number of dissertations and theses have been growing rapidly

There was a peak between 2007-10 and maybe a decline in 2011

## EMPIRICAL VERSUS CONCEPTUAL



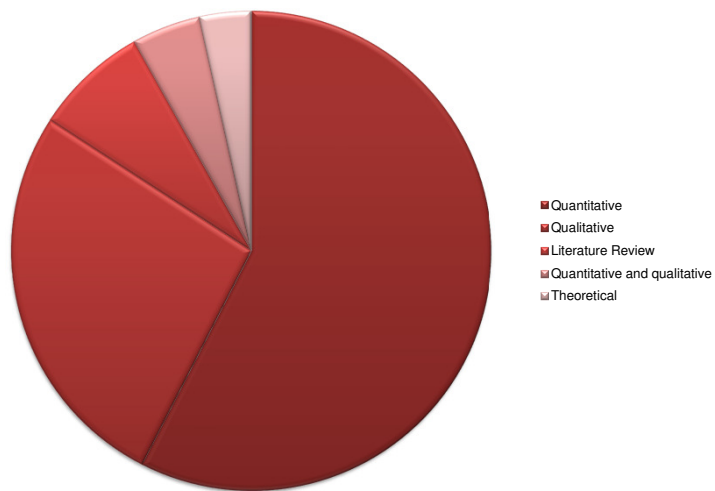
### EMPIRICAL VERSUS CONCEPTUAL

67 % (173) of the dissertations and theses contain **empirical studies** and 23% (86) are **conceptual studies**

Is there a need for more conceptual dissertations and theses – for instance attempts at building an overarching theory of positive psychology?

What conceptual developments are needed?

### QUANTITATIVE AND/OR QUALITATIVE OR LITERATURE REVIEW OR THEORETICAL



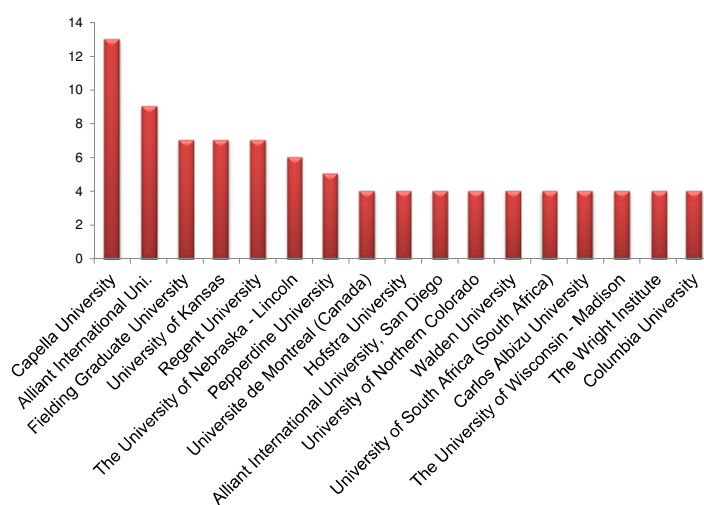
## RESEARCH TYPE

The overwhelming number of authors of dissertations and theses employ **quantitative** (149) and **qualitative** (69) methods

In 5 % (12) of the dissertations and theses **quantitative and qualitative** methods have been **combined**

In 8 % (20) of the dissertations and theses **a literature review** has been undertaken and 3 % (9) of the dissertations and theses have been **theoretical**

## MOST PRODUCTIVE UNIVERSITIES



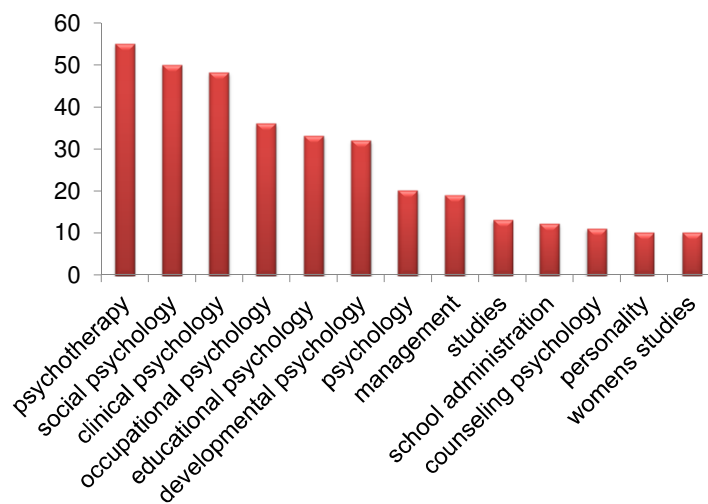
### MOST PRODUCTIVE UNIVERSITIES

Dissertations and theses on positive psychology have been produced at 140 different universities

The most productive universities are Capella University (13), Alliant International University (9), Fielding Graduate University (7), University of Kansas (7) and Regent University, Virginia (7)

17 universities account for 36% of the production of dissertations and theses on positive psychology

### MOST POPULAR SUBJECTS



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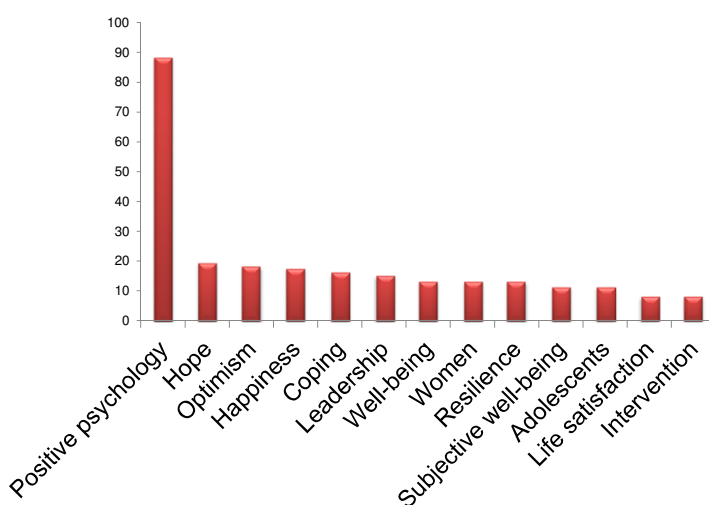
The 259 dissertations and theses touch upon a very broad range of subjects

Psychotherapy, clinical psychology and educational psychology are very popular subject areas in which positive psychology theses are produced

21% of dissertations and theses on positive psychology are about psychotherapy

Among the most popular subjects are positive psychology (88), happiness (17), well being (13), subjective well being (11), interventions (8), character strengths (7), motivation (6), attachment (6), etc.

### MOST POPULAR KEYWORDS





## MOST POPULAR KEYWORDS

The authors have used 100 different keywords

Among the **most popular keywords** are concepts such as positive psychology, hope, optimism, happiness, coping, leadership, well being, women, resilience, subjective well being, adolescents

All keywords have been used at least twice

## WHAT IS MISSING?

The Institute of Coaching focuses on:

- Leadership
- Health and wellness
- Positive psychology
- Executive coaching

**Positive psychology** is overwhelmingly used as author keyword (used 88 times, with the next highest being hope)

Key concepts in **PERMA** – like positivity, engagement, connectivity, meaning, and accomplishment / achievement – are not represented in author keywords



# PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

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Around 33-37 dissertations and theses are produced every year between 2007 and 2010

The work is **mostly empirical** with conceptual work accounting for about 1/3 of the dissertations and theses

There is **not much theoretical work** and **not many literature reviews**

Out of 140 universities, 17 universities produce 36% of the dissertations and theses

The dissertations and theses focus on a wide range of subjects and keywords

## FUTURE RESEARCH

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In the near future we might see:

- Around **35 dissertations and theses** per year
- An increase in 'positive psychology' subject dissertations from Masters in [Applied] Positive Psychology programs

More dissertations and theses are needed on:

- Concepts like positivity, engagement, connectivity, meaning, and accomplishment / achievement
- New ideas within the field of positive psychology and the application of positive psychology interventions in different cultures and groups



## NEXT STEP

## THANK YOU

If you are interested in this PowerPoint presentation and the annotated bibliography on which it is based, please contact Saiyyidah Zaidi-Stone ([saiyyidah@mcleanstone.com](mailto:saiyyidah@mcleanstone.com))

The annotated bibliography is probably incomplete. If you know of any relevant dissertations and theses that ought to be included, please contact Saiyyidah Zaidi

**Cite this paper** as: Zaidi-Stone, Saiyyidah; Lavendt, Ebbe; & Kauffman, Carol (2012, May). Positive Psychology: An Annotated Bibliography of Dissertations and Theses. Institute of Coaching, McLean Hospital | Harvard Medical School.

If you want more information on upcoming research on **positive psychology coaching**, please contact Saiyyidah Zaidi-Stone