

The Rogerian Fully Functioning Person: A Positive Psychology Perspective

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Abstract

Two studies examined the characteristics of the Rogerian fully functioning person from the positive psychology perspective. Based on the findings of extant research in support of the Rogerian metatheoretical model, indicators were selected to represent characteristics constituting the fully functioning person. Using confirmatory factor analysis, a single factor structure of the fully functioning person was assessed with young adults aged 16 to 19 years ($\bar{x} = 16.86$). Participants of both studies completed measures of life satisfaction, positive thoughts and feelings, authenticity, organismic valuing, aspirations, basic psychological needs, anxiety, and strengths use. Participants of Study 2 also completed a measure of character strengths endorsement. Analyses revealed that variables consistent with the Rogerian fully functioning person loaded positively on a single “fully functioning person” factor. Overall, results suggest that the fully functioning person is high in life satisfaction, has increased positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings, low anxiety, and moves toward intrinsic values rather than extrinsic values. The fully functioning person component was positively correlated with the character strengths of enthusiasm, bravery, honesty, leadership,

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and spirituality and negatively correlated with modesty and fairness. Results supplement research indicating strong links between positive psychology and the person-centered theory of Carl Rogers.

Keywords

strengths use, positive psychology, person-centered theory, character strengths

Introduction

As highlighted by Wong (2011), “[m]any of the key concepts and themes in humanistic psychology provide a gold mine for research and theorizing” (p. 410). Indeed, humanistic psychology is an important foundation of many areas of psychological research, both past and current. Positive psychology is among the prominent progeny resulting from humanistic psychology and has been considered an extension of its aims (Robbins, 2015). Although there are differences in the philosophical grounding of humanistic psychology and positive psychology, and have been contentious divides between the two areas, the concepts of humanistic psychology have led to systematic developments in theory, research, and therapy by positive psychologists (Friedman, 2008; Robbins, 2008; Wong, 2011). As evidenced in the research literature, positive psychology has tested and applied many of the profound ideas from humanistic psychology with great success and universal impact (Wong, 2011). Indeed, humanistic psychology shares with positive psychology “the key aims of identifying and investigating positive experiences, traits, and institutions” (Robbins, 2008 as cited in Robbins, 2015, p. 32). Unfortunately, however, the focus has often been on the differences between the two areas instead of on the similarities and this has led to the ways in which the two may be mutually beneficial and assist one another to be frequently overlooked (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Robbins, 2015).

This study sought to add to the growing positive psychology research literature drawing on the concepts and theories of humanistic psychology by examining the characteristics of the fully functioning person described in the person-centered personality theory of Carl Rogers (1959, 1961). That is, this study sought to use positive psychological measurement to assess the variables consistent with the Rogerian fully functioning person. Similar research has been conducted from a humanistic perspective by Cartwright and Mori (1988) and Cartwright, DeBruin, and Berg (1991). These researchers developed and tested the Feelings, Reactions, and Beliefs Survey (Mori, 1987)

designed to assess nine aspects of personality described by Rogers (1951, 1959, 1961, 1963, 1980). Results of this research support the assessment of the personality variables derived from Rogers's theory as being a valid means of determining the structure of personality from this perspective. It has been previously noted (e.g., Joseph & Linley, 2004; Patterson & Joseph, 2007) that the metatheoretical assumptions of person-centered theory are consistent with, and provide grounding for, positive psychology research. Thus, this study explored the construct of Rogers's fully functioning person using indicators primarily drawn from positive psychology and then assessed further whether Rogers's construct is associated with outcomes valued within positive psychology, including enhanced well-being, reduced dysphoria, an orientation toward intrinsic goals, and demonstration of character strengths.

Positive psychology's foundations also include Aristotelian (Aristotle, 1925) theory which posits that the primary function of humans is to exercise good character through the conscious choice of action in the pursuit of Eudaimonia (i.e., human flourishing or the "good life"). Furthermore, according to the Aristotelian model, with the right environmental conditions, each individual can learn to realize their potentials and their positive virtues. Thus, as stated by Jørgensen and Nafstad (2004), the "Aristotelian model then takes into account a teleological aspect: The individual as a being lives a life in which thoughts and ideas about future positive goals also influence the direction of actions here and now" (p. 21). Similarly, Rogers (1959) proposed that humans have an inherent tendency toward growth, development, and autonomy, which he referred to as the actualizing tendency:

This is the inherent tendency of the organism to develop all its capacities in ways which serve to maintain or enhance the organism. It involves not only the tendency to meet what Maslow (1954) terms "deficiency needs" for air, food, water, and the like, but also more generalized activities. It involves development toward the differentiation of organs and of functions, expansion in terms of growth, expansion of effectiveness through the use of tools, expansion and enhancement through reproduction. It is development toward autonomy and away from heteronomy, or control by external forces. (p. 196)

According to Rogers, individuals engage in an organismic valuing process (OVP), whereby they evaluate experiences with the actualizing tendency as the criterion. Experiences that are perceived as organismically enhancing are valued positively, whereas those that are perceived as not organismically enhancing are valued negatively. From this perspective, humans have an innate ability to know what they need and what is essential for a fulfilling life (Joseph & Linley, 2004). If this is the case, however, why do so many individuals suffer

with psychological disorder and distress? The answer, according to Rogers, lies in the social environment in which an individual develops. According to Rogers (1959), the OVP can be disturbed in a social environment characterized by conditional positive regard:

A condition of worth arises when the positive regard of a significant other is conditional, when the individual feels that in some respects he is prized and in others not. Gradually, this same attitude is assimilated into his own self-regard complex, and he values an experience positively or negatively solely because of these conditions of worth which he has taken over from others, not because the experience enhances or fails to enhance his organism. (p. 209)

Therefore, in a social environment characterized by conditional positive regard, individuals do not self-actualize in a direction consistent with their actualizing tendency but in a direction consistent with their conditions of worth (Joseph & Linley, 2004). Psychological disorder and distress develop through the assimilation of worth conditions into an individual's own identity. In contrast, in a social environment characterized by unconditional positive regard, "To perceive oneself as receiving unconditional positive regard is to perceive that of one's self-experiences none can be discriminated by the other individual as more or less worthy of positive regard" (p. 208), individuals self-actualize in a direction consistent with their actualizing tendency toward becoming what Rogers (1959) referred to as a "fully functioning person":

It should be evident that the term "the fully functioning person" is synonymous with optimal psychological adjustment, optimal psychological maturity, complete congruence, complete openness to experience, complete extensionality. . . . Since some of these terms sound somewhat static, as though such a person "had arrived," it should be pointed out that all the characteristics of such a person are *process* characteristics. The fully functioning person would be a person-in-process, a person continually changing. (p. 235)

Thus, the fully functioning person is a term that describes the ideal condition in which actualization of the self is congruent with an individual's organismic experiences.

Rogers's view of the meaning of the good life was based on his conception of the fully functioning person. According to Rogers (1961), the good life is a process of movement (not a state of being) in a direction (not a destination) which the total human organism selects. The characteristic qualities experienced by a person becoming more fully functioning involves an increasing openness to experience, increasingly existential living (i.e., to live fully in

each moment), an increasing trust in one's organism (i.e., trust in one's organismic evaluation as a means of arriving at the most satisfying behavior in each existential situation), and an increasing experience and acceptance of one's feelings. Specifically, Rogers (1959) noted several changes customarily associated with outcomes or results experienced by a person becoming more fully functioning, which are observed outside of the therapeutic relationship. The following changes were hypothesized as being relatively permanent:

1. Being more congruent, open to experience, and less defensive
2. Having improved psychological adjustment
3. Having an increased degree of positive self-regard
4. Perceiving the locus of evaluation and the locus of choice as residing within oneself
5. Experiencing more acceptance of others

Consequences or results of the above changes:

- a. More realistic, objective, extensional in perceptions, and more effective in problem solving
- b. Less vulnerable to threat
- c. More confident and self-directing
- d. Values are determined by an OVP
- e. Perceive others more realistically and accurately
- f. Behaviors "owned" by the self are increased and those disowned as "not myself" are decreased
- g. Behavior is perceived as being more within control, socialized, mature, creative, uniquely adaptive to new situations and problems, and fully expressive of own purpose and values

Empirical Support From Positive Psychology for Person-Centered Theory

These metatheoretical hypotheses that arise from person-centered theory are both theoretically and empirically supported by positive psychology research. For example, support for the OVP has been demonstrated by Sheldon, Arndt, and Houser-Marko (2003). These investigators theorized that in order to demonstrate the existence of an OVP, the existence of a tendency to move toward beneficial goals (i.e., intrinsic goals vs. extrinsic goals) must first be determined. Results of three studies demonstrated that participants tended to move toward intrinsic goals and/or away from extrinsic goals, which suggests that people do know (i.e., engage in an OVP) about what goals are most

likely to be beneficial for their subjective well-being (SWB). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that over and above the effects of associated goal motives, goal content matters for well-being, with people experiencing more well-being when pursuing goals for autonomous reasons (Sheldon, Ryan, Deci, & Kasser, 2004). Similarly, Govindji and Linley (2007) found that people in touch with their OVP and who are using strengths more often experience both greater SWB and psychological well-being (PWB; i.e., engagement with the existential challenges of life). Findings of this study suggested that people have intrinsic motivation to use their strengths, which results in increased authenticity, vitality, and well-being.

Research has also demonstrated that individuals who select more self-concordant goals (i.e., intrinsically motivated goals representative of their implicit interests and values) put more continued effort into them, thus enabling their attainment (Patterson & Joseph, 2007). Moreover, those with increased self-concordant motivation have been found to have higher goal attainment and in turn benefit from an upward spiral effect of increased adjustment and ego development (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). In line with these findings, Judge, Bono, Erez, and Locke (2005) demonstrated that people with positive self-regard are more likely to have self-concordant goals and as a result have greater life satisfaction and happiness. Similarly, Patterson and Joseph (2006) found unconditional positive self-regard to be associated with increased PWB and happiness. Taken together, these results not only provide evidence for the OVP but also indicate that those who act concordantly with their OVP experience positive psychological growth and well-being (Patterson & Joseph, 2007). Similarly, evidence demonstrating that conditional regard from significant others leads to the internalization of conditions of worth, which has negative consequences for PWB, has been provided by Assor, Roth, and Deci (2004). These investigators demonstrated that parents' use of conditional regard, as a socializing practice in four life domains (emotion control, prosocial, academic, and sport), was associated with introjected internalization of behavioral regulations (internal compulsion and pressure to enact desired behaviors), resentment toward parents, perceived parental disapproval, fluctuations in self-esteem, and reduced well-being.

Empirical evidence also provides support of the hypothesis that more fully functioning persons move in a direction of increasing openness to experience. Rogers (1961) considered openness to experience to be the polar opposite of defensiveness. Defensiveness is "the organism's response to experiences which are perceived or anticipated as threatening, as incongruent with the individual's existing picture of himself, or of himself in relationship to the world" (Rogers, 1961, p. 187). For Rogers (1961) openness to experience was a principle outcome of therapeutic change, that is becoming ". . .

that self which one truly is” (p. 173). In line with Rogers’s (1959) hypothesis of therapeutic outcomes and the significance of humanity’s inherent actualizing tendency (i.e., tendency toward increased personal growth, development, and autonomy), Knee and Zuckerman (1996) found openness to experience to be positively associated with autonomous functioning. This study examined whether autonomy and control orientations moderate the attributional tendency (i.e., self-serving bias) to take more responsibility for success than failure. Results demonstrated that causality orientations moderate the self-serving bias. Specifically, participants low in control and high in autonomy were less likely to make self-enhancing attributions with successful and defensive attributions after failure. Thus, these individuals perceive less threat to self-esteem, invite opportunities for growth, and are not motivated to exhibit the self-serving bias. These findings provide support for the Rogerian perspective in which autonomous individuals will show greater openness to experience and a more genuine and less defensive perception of experience (Patterson & Joseph, 2007).

Person-centered theory also suggests that the self-actualizing person moves toward acceptance and experience of others or increasing relatedness with others. In a result consistent with this claim, Kasser and Ryan (1993, 1996) demonstrated that intrinsic aspirations for self-acceptance, affiliation, and community feeling were associated with greater well-being, self-actualization, and vitality and less distress, with the opposite associations for extrinsic aspirations such as a drive for financial success. In support of these findings, Kasser, Ryan, Zax, and Sameroff (1995) found that adolescents who rated extrinsic aspirations relatively high compared with other values had mothers who were less nurturing (i.e., less democratic and warm and more controlling) and valued their adolescents’ extrinsic aspirations. Thus, one might expect the fully functioning person to move toward motivations that tend to be intrinsic (e.g., self-acceptance, community feeling) and away from those that tend to be extrinsic (e.g., financial success).

According to Rogers (1961), “congruence” is the ability to have a genuine relationship with another without a front or facade, openly experiencing and expressing the feelings and attitudes of the moment—an “accurate matching of experience and awareness,” (p. 339) such as when an infant experiences hunger, his awareness matches his experience, and his communication is congruent with his experience. For Rogers (1959), incongruence develops due to distorted perceptions arising from the conditions of worth, which cause the individual to depart from integration the infant state characterizes. From the positive psychology perspective, congruence has been operationalized as the tripartite construct “authenticity.” Moreover, research conducted by Wood, Linley, Maltby, Balouisis, and Joseph (2008) has demonstrated

authenticity to be positively associated with SWB, PWB, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. These findings are in keeping with Rogers's (1959) linking of authenticity (i.e., congruence) and unconditional positive regard.

If the Rogerian fully functioning personality truly promotes well-being as these prior studies suggest, then this personality might also be associated with elevated levels of the character strengths that tend to be associated with well-being. For example, some research suggests that well-being is associated with character strengths (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004) including enthusiasm, hope, gratitude, love, and curiosity. These in particular may be present at elevated levels in the fully functioning person along with others more specifically associated with the associated changes and subsequent outcomes of becoming more fully functioning such as creativity, wisdom (or perspective), self-control, social intelligence, and open-mindedness.

Study Purpose

Two studies were conducted to examine the characteristics of the Rogerian fully functioning person from the positive psychology perspective. The first study used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the theoretical basis for items to include in a single component indicating the fully functioning person construct as defined by person-centered theory. The study was conducted with a sample of young adults. Based on the findings of previous positive psychology research in support of the Rogerian metatheoretical model, indicator variables were selected to represent the various characteristics constituting the fully functioning person construct. The aim of Study 1 was to statistically support the single factor structure of the fully functioning person construct. Correlational analyses were then used to assess the theoretically based outcomes predicted to be associated with the fully functioning person. The second study validated the findings of Study 1 with a different sample, utilizing an exploratory factor analysis to determine the variance accounted for in the model. Study 2 then expanded the investigation by examining the character strengths associated with being "fully functioning" and the content of a fully functioning person's motivation.

Study Hypotheses

Based on the metatheoretical assumptions of person-centered theory, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: The following measured indicator variables will load positively and most meaningfully on a single fully functioning person factor:

organismic valuing, authentic living, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and strengths use.

Hypothesis 2: The following indicator variables absence will be characteristic of the fully functioning person and therefore will load negatively on a single fully functioning person factor: accepting external influence and self-alienation (these are reverse facets of authenticity; i.e., authenticity is measured in part by low scores on these; Wood et al., 2008).

Hypothesis 3: The fully functioning person will have characteristics consistent with Rogers's theory including high life satisfaction, increased positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings, and low anxiety.

Hypothesis 4: The fully functioning person will have strengths of character associated with the consequences or changes noted by Rogers to be associated as outcomes of becoming fully functioning such as creativity, wisdom (or perspective), self-control, social intelligence, and open-mindedness.

Study I

Participants

Participants were 329 young adults aged 16 to 19 years (96 males, 233 females). The mean age of participants was 16.86 years ($SD = 0.745$).

Measures

1. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is a five-item self-report measure of global life satisfaction. Respondents responded to each item (e.g., "I am satisfied with my life") using a 7-point Likert-type scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*). Scoring consists of summing the items for a total score; higher scores are indicative of higher global life satisfaction.
2. The Short Depression–Happiness Scale (SDHS; Joseph, Linley, Harwood, Lewis, & McCollam, 2004) is a six-item scale designed to measure depression (e.g., "I felt dissatisfied with my life") and happiness (e.g., "I felt happy"). Respondents responded to each item using a 4-point Likert-type scale (*never* to *often*). Scoring consists of reversing the depression items and then summing all the items for a total score; higher scores are indicative of increased positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings.
3. Authenticity Scale (AS; Wood et al., 2008) is a 12-item scale designed to measure dispositional authenticity across three domains: (a) Authentic

- Living (e.g., “I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular”); (b) Accepting External Influence (e.g., “I am strongly influenced by the opinions of others”); and (c) Self-Alienation (e.g., “I don’t know how I really feel inside”). Respondents are required to respond to each item using a 7-point Likert-type scale (*does not describe me at all to describes me very well*). Subscale scores are calculated for the Authentic Living, Accepting External Influence, and Self-Alienation domains by totaling the four items representative of each subscale. High scores on the Authentic Living subscale and low scores on the Accepting External Influence and Self-Alienation subscales indicate authenticity.
4. Organismic Valuing Scale (Govindji & Linley, 2007) is an eight-item scale designed to measure organismic valuing. Respondents responded to each item (e.g., “The decisions I take are the right ones for me”) using a 7-point Likert-type scale (*strongly disagree to strongly agree*). Scoring consists of summing the items for a total score; higher scores are indicative of greater organismic valuing.
 5. Aspiration Index (AI; Kasser et al., 1995; Kasser & Ryan, 1993) is a 14-item scale designed to measure aspirations across four value domains: (a) Self-Acceptance (e.g., “You will know and accept who you really are”); (b) Affiliation (e.g., “You will share your life with someone you love”); (c) Community Feeling (e.g., “You will work for the betterment of society”); and (d) Financial Success (e.g., “You will have a job that pays well”). Possible future events are rated on two dimensions: (a) the Importance that it will happen in the future and (b) the Chance it will happen in the future. Respondents are required to rate both the Importance (*not at all to very important*) and Chances (*very low to very high*) dimensions on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Domain scores are obtained by computing the mean of items on a particular domain for each dimension (i.e., importance or chances). The relative importance and likelihood of intrinsic values was computed by taking the computed averages of each domain and subtracting Financial Success from the sum of Self-Acceptance, Affiliation, and Community feeling for each dimension.
 6. Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS; Gagné, 2003) is a 12-item scale designed to measure the extent to which participants have satisfied innate basic psychological needs based on a 21-item original scale. Psychological needs are rated across three domains: (a) Competence (e.g., “Often, I do not feel very competent”); (b) Autonomy (e.g., “I feel like I am free to decide for myself how to live my life”); and (c) Relatedness (e.g., “I really like the people I interact with”). Respondents are required to respond to each item using a

- 7-point Likert-type scale (*not at all true to very true*). Scoring consists of averaging item responses for each domain to create three sub-scale scores.
7. Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS; Zung, 1971) is a 20-item self-report measure of anxiety. Respondents are required to respond to each item (e.g., “I feel more nervous and anxious than usual”) using a 4-point Likert-type scale (*none or a little of the time to most or all of the time*). Scoring consists of summing the items for a total score; higher scores are indicative of higher anxiety.
 8. Strengths Use Scale (SUS; Govindji & Linley, 2007) is a 14-item scale designed to measure individual strengths use. Respondents are required to respond to each item (e.g., “I achieve what I want by using my strengths”) using a 7-point Likert-type scale (*strongly disagree to strongly agree*). Scoring consists of summing the items for a total score; higher scores are indicative of greater strengths use.

Procedure

The study questionnaire was placed online via a web page advertisement that invited anyone aged 16 to 19 years¹ to participate and informed those interested that no identifying information was collected and that all participation was voluntary.²

The Internet was used to recruit participants and collect the data. An advertisement and link to the study questionnaire was placed on a website providing information to students studying A-Level³ Psychology within the United Kingdom (<http://www.holah.co.uk>). On accessing the questionnaire online, participants were required to indicate their consent before completing the battery of included measures. Using the Internet for data collection is a long-established and validated method (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005).

Data Analysis

Overall, the recruitment procedure resulted in 622 individuals accessing the questionnaire as posted on the study web page. Fifty-eight of these individuals were older than the age of 19 years, 1 individual was below the age of 16 years, 1 individual did not report his or her age, and 225 individuals dropped out before completing all the measures. As recommended by Birnbaum (2004), those who dropped out were removed before analysis. Moreover, of those who dropped out, the majority (62%) did so early on, suggesting that those who completed the questionnaire were not impatient

or resistant people but willing participants (Birnbbaum, 2004). Therefore, a total of 337 individuals aged 16 to 19 years were retained for data analysis. Among the remaining data records, there were no instances of item nonresponse, which Borgers and Hox (2001) note is less common among adolescents than children. As suggested by Birnbbaum (2004), a search for identical records was conducted to identify multiple submissions. No identical records were found.

As recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), examination of the scoring distribution of all measures was conducted to identify outliers and to test for multivariate normality. All scale scores were first transformed into z scores and all those in excess of the ± 3.29 range were removed. This resulted in eight individuals being excluded from further analysis. Skewness and kurtosis were all within acceptable limits ranging from $-.759$ to $.565$ for skewness and $-.874$ to $.470$ for kurtosis, signifying no significant departures from normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Subsequently, a total of 329 individuals aged 16 to 19 years were retained for testing the hypotheses.

The relationships between study variables were assessed via Pearson correlations. The theoretical basis of the single factor structure for the fully functioning person was assessed using factor analysis. Loadings for variables indicating the fully functioning person construct were calculated using a single-factor CFA. The theoretically grounded variables associated with the fully functioning person were assessed using Pearson correlations.

Results

The descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1.

Zero-order correlations among the variables are reported in a correlation matrix in Table 2. Results revealed most of the variables to have significant medium positive or negative correlations except where noted.

To test the theoretical basis for items to include in a single factor for the fully functioning person construct, a CFA was performed on the entire sample ($N = 329$). Factor variables included: OVS, AS–Authentic Living, AS–Accepting External Influence, AS–Self-Alienation, BPNS–Autonomy, BPNS–Competence, BPNS–Relatedness, and SUS. Results revealed strong factor loadings (i.e., over the absolute value of $.50$; Costello & Osborne, 2005) in the analysis for all variables except the Accepting External Influence subscale of the AS (Regression weight: $-.409$). Subsequently, the goodness-of-fit measures were not at a satisfactory level; so this variable was excluded and a second CFA was conducted with the remaining variables. Results then revealed strong regression weights (i.e., over $.50$) for all variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables.

Measure	M (SD)
SWLS	22.01 (6.80)
SDHS	17.61 (3.63)
AS–Authentic Living	22.13 (3.72)
AS–Accepting External Influence	16.38 (5.58)
AS–Self-Alienation	14.21 (6.47)
OVS	39.53 (8.59)
AI–Importance	54.23 (7.00)
AI–Chances	48.75 (9.04)
BPNS–Autonomy	15.69 (4.43)
BPNS–Competence	17.83 (4.13)
BPNS–Relatedness	20.52 (4.47)
SAS	39.46 (9.71)
SUS	66.77 (16.20)

Note. $N = 329$. SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale; SDHS = Short Depression Happiness Scale; AS = Authenticity Scale; OVS = Organismic Valuing Scale; AI = Aspiration Index; BPNS = Basic Psychological Needs Scale; SAS = Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; SUS = Strengths Use Scale.

To calculate scores for a single variable indicating the fully functioning person construct, regression coefficients were calculated; standardized regression weights were calculated in a maximum likelihood estimation ($n = 329$) using these same input variables retained above. Positive loadings for organismic valuing, authentic living, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and strengths use all exceeded .50. A negative loading for self-alienation also exceeded the absolute value of .50 (see Table 3). In addition to being supported by the fully functioning person theory.

In the reduced CFA, goodness of fit = .958, adjusted goodness of fit = .917, normed fit index = .947, and comparative fit index = .961; two of these measures are above the threshold of .95 recommended by Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008); however, all are above other recommendations (normed fit index > .90, adjusted goodness of fit > .90). The root mean square error of approximation = .089 is greater than .07, which is considered the maximum threshold by Hooper et al. (2008). However, acceptable ranges have included a strict cutoff of .06 to .10 as consensus is still reached. Together, though, these measures support a model a single factor reflecting the fully functioning individual.

Results of a correlational analysis revealed that the fully functioning person component was positively correlated with the SWLS and the SDHS accounting for approximately 40% of the variance in the Rogerian fully

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Study Variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	1.0	.69	.27	-.18	-.52	.64	.18	.37	.43	.56	.46	-.46	.51
2		1.0	.25	-.15	-.53	.57	.20	.39	.45	.48	.50	-.53	.45
3			1.0	-.40	-.34	.51	.21	.32	.37	.40	.25	-.18	.47
4				1.0	.35	-.28	.00 ^{ns}	-.24	-.48	-.28	-.10 ^{ns}	.20	-.24
5					1.0	-.64	-.14*	-.36	-.45	-.49	-.43	.45	-.47
6						1.0	.31	.47	.54	.60	.38	-.47	.65
7							1.0	.66	.18	.38	.31	.10 ^{ns}	.35
8								1.0	.39	.56	.39	-.30	.49
9									1.0	.47	.34	-.50	.50
10										1.0	.42	-.41	.67
11											1.0	.33	.42
12												1.0	-.31
13													1.0

Note. $N = 329$. *ns* = not significant; 1 = Satisfaction With Life; 2 = Short Depression Happiness Scale; 3 = Authenticity Scale (AS)–Authentic Living; 4 = AS–Accepting External Influence; 5 = AS–Self-Alienation; 6 = Organismic Valuing Scale; 7 = Aspiration Index (AI)–Importance; 8 = AI–Chances; 9 = Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS)–Autonomy; 10 = BPNS–Competence; 11 = BPNS–Relatedness; 12 = Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; 13 = Strengths Use Scale. All variables correlated at $p \leq .01$ unless otherwise indicated.

* $p < .05$.

Table 3. Standardized Regression Weights.

Measure	Component
OVS	.833
AS–Authentic Living	.567
AS–Self-Alienation	-.683
BPNS–Autonomy	.634
BPNS–Competence	.763
BPNS–Relatedness	.516
SUS	.799

Note. $N = 329$. OVS = Organismic Valuing Scale; AS = Authenticity Scale; BPNS = Basic Psychological Needs Scale; SUS = Strengths Use Scale.

functioning person component and negatively correlated with the SAS accounting approximately 26% of the variance (see Table 4) as hypothesized. These results are reflective of large effect sizes ($r > |0.5|$; Cohen, 1992) indicating that the fully functioning person is high in life satisfaction, has increased positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings, and low anxiety consistent with Rogers's theory.

Table 4. Correlational Analysis of Rogerian Fully Functioning Person Component and Outcome Variables.

Measure	Correlation
SAS	-.515
SWLS	.661
SDHS	.626

Note. $N = 329$. SAS = Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale; SDHS = Short Depression Happiness Scale. All variables correlated at $p \leq .01$.

Study 2

Study 2 both supported the CFA findings using exploratory factor analysis and extended beyond Study 1. It supported Study 1 by assessing whether a single factor for the fully functioning person was associated with the outcomes of well-being and low anxiety. It extended Study 1 by assessing whether the fully functioning person construct was associated with presence of strengths and motivational content associated with intrinsic motivations.

Method

Participants

Participants were 307 young adults aged 16 to 19 years (69 males, 238 females). The mean age of participants was 16.86 years ($SD = 0.759$).

Measures

1. SWLS (Diener et al., 1985; see Study 1)
2. The SDHS (Joseph et al., 2004; see Study 1)
3. AS (Wood et al., 2008; see Study 1)
4. Organismic Valuing Scale (Govindji & Linley, 2007; see Study 1)
5. AI (Kasser et al., 1995; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; see Study 1)
6. BPNS (Gagné, 2003; see Study 1)
7. SAS (Zung, 1971; see Study 1)
8. SUS (Govindji & Linley, 2007; see Study 1)
9. Strengths Endorsement—Respondents were presented with a list of the 24 Values in Action strengths and a brief definition of each (see, e.g., Park et al., 2004), and required to endorse which strengths from the list of 24 they felt were their top five strengths.

Procedure

The procedure was the same as described in Study 1.

Data Analysis

The recruitment procedure was the same as described in Study 1, which resulted in 553 individuals accessing the questionnaire. Of the 553 individuals who began the questionnaire, 48 individuals were more than the age of 19 years, 1 individual was below the age of 16 years, and 193 individuals dropped out before completing all the measures. Of those who dropped out, the majority (69%) did so early on. Therefore, a total of 311 individuals aged 16 to 19 years were retained for data analysis. Examination of the scoring distribution of all measures resulted in four individuals being excluded from the data. Subsequently, a total of 307 individuals aged 16 to 19 years were retained for data analysis.

The CFA and correlation findings in Study 1 were supported in Study 2 using principal component analysis and the addition of two correlational analyses to examine the character strengths and motivational content associated with being fully functioning.

Results

The descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 5.

Zero-order correlations among the measures are reported in a correlation matrix in Table 6. Results revealed most of the variables to have significant medium positive or negative correlations except where noted.

A single variable indicating the fully functioning person construct was calculated by extracting a single unrotated principal component ($N = 307$). The variables that loaded on the fully functioning person construct in Study 1 were found to load on a single factor in this Study 2 sample, as supported by statistical eigenvalue (Kaiser, 1960) and scree test criteria (Cattell, 1966). Positive loadings for organismic valuing, authentic living, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and strengths use had values above .50. The negative loading for self-alienation also exceeded an absolute value .50 (see Table 7). The results suggest that these elements of the fully functioning person construct have coherence; they are all intercorrelated.

To test the theoretically based outcome variables associated with the fully functioning person, a further correlational analysis was conducted. Results revealed that the fully functioning person component was significantly

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables.

Measure	M (SD)
SWLS	21.89 (6.32)
SDHS	17.54 (3.43)
AS–Authentic Living	21.82 (3.60)
AS–Accepting External Influence	15.93 (5.49)
AS–Self-Alienation	14.01 (5.86)
OVS	39.72 (8.26)
AI–Importance	27.96 (4.29)
AI–Chances	23.91 (3.88)
BPNS–Autonomy	16.00 (4.17)
BPNS–Competence	18.25 (3.85)
BPNS–Relatedness	21.29 (4.28)
SAS	39.18 (9.29)
SUS	68.19 (15.47)

Note. N = 307. SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale; SDHS = Short Depression Happiness Scale; AS = Authenticity Scale; OVS = Organismic Valuing Scale; AI = Aspiration Index; BPNS = Basic Psychological Needs Scale; SAS = Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; SUS = Strengths Use Scale.

Table 6. Correlation Matrix.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	1.0	.65	.24	-.04 ^{ns}	-.46	.60	.25	.43	.39	.47	.43	-.40	.46
2		1.0	.20	-.09 ^{ns}	-.50	.54	.17	.44	.43	.44	.41	-.54	.46
3			1.0	-.29	-.37	.45	.23	.29	.28	.28	.08 ^{ns}	-.13*	.36
4				1.0	.34	-.20	.08 ^{ns}	-.07 ^{ns}	-.41	-.17	-.06 ^{ns}	.20	-.21
5					1.0	-.60	-.10 ^{ns}	-.35	-.41	-.30	-.29	.46	-.40
6						1.0	.23	.43	.44	.49	.35	-.44	.60
7							1.0	.56	.00 ^{ns}	.25	.16	.01 ^{ns}	.18
8								1.0	.28	.42	.33	-.24	.45
9									1.0	.41	.30	-.39	.51
10										1.0	.43	-.25	.59
11											1.0	.24	.37
12												1.0	-.35
13													1.0

Note. N = 307. ns = not significant; 1 = Satisfaction With Life; 2 = Short Depression Happiness Scale; 3 = Authenticity Scale (AS)–Authentic Living; 4 = AS–Accepting External Influence; 5 = AS–Self-Alienation; 6 = Organismic Valuing Scale; 7 = Aspiration Index (AI)–Importance; 8 = AI–Chances; 9 = Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS)–Autonomy; 10 = BPNS–Competence; 11 = BPNS–Relatedness; 12 = Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; 13 = Strengths Use Scale. All variables correlated at $p \leq .01$ unless otherwise indicated.

* $p < .05$.

Table 7. Principle Component Matrix.

Measure	Component
OVS	.824
AS–Authentic Living	.555
AS–Self-Alienation	–.690
BPNS–Autonomy	.694
BPNS–Competence	.727
BPNS–Relatedness	.556
SUS	.805

Note. $N = 307$. OVS = Organismic Valuing Scale; AS = Authenticity Scale; BPNS = Basic Psychological Needs Scale; SUS = Strengths Use Scale.

Table 8. Pearson Correlations Between Calculated Rogerian Fully Functioning Person Scores and Outcome Variables.

Measure	Calculated fully functional individual score
SAS	–.454
SWLS	.643
SDHS	.625

Note. $N = 307$. SAS = Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale; SDHS = Short Depression Happiness Scale. All variables correlated at $p \leq .01$.

positively correlated with the SWLS and the SDHS accounting for approximately 40% of the variance (indicative a large effect size) in predicting the Rogerian fully functioning person component and significantly negatively correlated with the SAS accounting approximately 20% of the variance (see Table 8). These results reinforce the findings in Study 1 indicating that the fully functioning person is high in life satisfaction, has increased positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings, and low anxiety consistent with Rogers's theory from both a model fit and variance accounted for perspectives.

Results of a correlational analysis revealed the fully functioning person component was positively correlated with enthusiasm (or zest), bravery, honesty, leadership, and spirituality and negatively correlated with modesty and concern for fairness (see Table 9).

Results of a correlational analysis (see Table 10) revealed the fully functioning person component was positively correlated with all subscales of the AI, except the Importance of Financial Success subscale.

Table 9. Pearson Correlations Between of the Calculated Rogerian Fully Functioning Person Score and Character Strengths.

Character strength	Calculated fully functional individual score
Bravery	.185**
Fairness	-.113*
Honesty	.114*
Leadership	.115*
Modesty	-.173**
Spirituality	.117*
Enthusiasm	.214**

Note. N = 303. All other variables (Appreciation of Beauty, Love, Prudence, Teamwork, Creativity, Curiosity, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Hope, Humor, Perseverance, Kindness, Love of Learning, Wisdom, Self-Control, Social Intelligence, and Open-Mindedness) had nonsignificant correlations.

** $p \leq .01$. * $p \leq .05$.

Table 10. Pearson Correlations Between Calculated Rogerian Fully Functioning Person Scores and Aspiration Index Value Domains.

Value domain	Importance component	Chances component
Self-Acceptance	.405	.743
Affiliation	.231	.462
Community Feeling	.242	.314
Financial Success	.101 ^{ns}	.454

Note. N = 303. ns = not significant. All variables correlated at $p < .01$ unless otherwise indicated.

Discussion

Two studies set out to examine the characteristics of the Rogerian fully functioning person from the positive psychology perspective. Based on the findings of extant positive psychology research in support of the Rogerian metatheoretical model, indicators were selected to represent the characteristics constituting the fully functioning person. Using CFA, we set out to construct a theoretically grounded single factor operationalization of the fully functioning person construct through positive psychological indicator variable measurement.

The aim of Study 1 was to statistically support the single factor operationalization of the fully functioning person construct developed using theoretically

consistent psychological measures. Correlational analyses were then used to test theoretically based psychological constructs expected to result from being a fully functioning person, thereby assessing its convergent validity. The second study used exploratory factor analysis to support the findings of Study 1 and expanded the investigation by examining the character strengths associated with being fully functioning and the content of a fully functioning person's motivation.

To test the theoretical basis for items to include in a single indicator for the fully functioning person construct, a CFA was performed (Study 1). Results revealed acceptable regression weights for all predictors except the Accepting External Influence subscale of the AS. This variable was subsequently excluded and a second factor analysis was conducted with the remaining variables, which generated acceptable regression weights for all remaining variables. The results suggest that the fully functioning person construct has statistical coherence as hypothesized with the exception of the accepting external influence construct, which is one of the subcomponents of authenticity. All the remaining construct elements included here tend to co-occur. The resisting external influence scale could be seen as contradicting the Rogerian ideal, and that could be why this scale did not cohere with the other indicators. In particular, the Rogerian personality will be open to experience (Rogers, 1959), and this openness would include hearing others' ideas. The Rogerian personality will neither be blindly led by others, nor be particularly resistant to listening to others. Instead, the Rogerian personality will be open to others and then will be inner directed. That inner direction may or may not be compatible with the desires of others, but the person will listen to and interact with others, but then follow the organismic valuing of an inner core (Rogers, 1959).

A subsequent principal component analysis created a single indicator variable for the fully functioning person. This indicator included organismic valuing, authentic living, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and strengths use. Organismic valuing, authentic living, autonomy, competence, relatedness, and strengths use were found to load positively, and self-alienation to load negatively, as hypothesized on a single factor.

Consistent with the stated hypotheses and Rogers's theory, correlational analyses revealed the fully functioning person to be high in life satisfaction, to have increased positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings, and low anxiety. Overall, findings of Study 1 supported the stated hypotheses.

Study 2 supported and extended Study 1. It assessed whether a single factor operationalizing the fully functioning person was associated with the outcomes of well-being and low anxiety and then went beyond Study 1 by

assessing whether the fully functioning person construct was associated with presence of character strengths and also with motivational content associated with intrinsic motivations. The results reinforced the findings of Study 1 using a different sample and principal component analysis by similarly indicating that the fully functioning person is high in life satisfaction, has increased positive and negative thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings, and low anxiety—consistent with Rogers's theory. Again, accepting external influence was not significant. Results also revealed the fully functioning component to be positively associated with the character strengths of enthusiasm, bravery, honesty, leadership, and spirituality and negatively correlated with modesty and fairness. It was anticipated that the fully functioning person would have strengths of character associated with the consequences or changes specifically noted by Rogers to be associated as outcomes of becoming fully functioning, such as creativity, wisdom (or perspective), self-control, social intelligence, and open-mindedness. Rogers noted several changes to be customarily associated by individuals becoming more fully functioning, such as being more open and less defensive, having increased perceptions of oneself and others, being more in control of one's behavior, and being more socialized, creative, and realistic. However, results did not support associations with these expected strengths. Results further revealed the fully functioning person component to be positively correlated with importance and chances of self-acceptance, affiliation, and community feeling, with chances of financial success, but nonsignificantly positively correlated with importance of financial success.

Prior work suggests that well-being is associated with elevated levels of the strengths enthusiasm, hope, gratitude, love, and curiosity (Park et al., 2004). It was hypothesized that the Rogerian fully functioning person would have elevated character strengths. The Rogerian fully functioning person, however, was elevated on only one of the character strengths previously found to be associated with well-being: enthusiasm. The low scores on modesty and fairness were interesting. This result was not hypothesized. However, in hindsight, modesty can represent an understated and even false presentation of the self, which would clearly contradict Rogers's focus on complete authenticity. Also, concern for fairness, as constructed in the Values in Action categorizations used here, could be interpreted by participants not as a Ghandiesque demand for justice for others, but instead tendency toward grudge holding against others (i.e., a tendency to notice and remember many injustices against the self), which would also contradict the Rogerian focus on living in the present and not being overly concerned about past grievances. The association with bravery and honesty was also not hypothesized, but elevated levels of these character strengths support Rogers's focus on

authenticity and are in keeping with the findings of this research. Authentic living involves expressing emotions and behaving in a way consistent with one's awareness (low self-alienation)—that is, being true to oneself and living in accordance with one's values and beliefs (Wood et al., 2008). To live authentically thus inherently necessitates bravery in the genuine presentation of oneself (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and authenticity is a fundamental aspect of both SWB and PWB (see Wood et al., 2008).

Beyond this study, research also supports a link between spirituality and the fully functioning person. For example, perceived spirituality has been found to positively influence life satisfaction (Zullig, Ward, & Horn, 2006), and daily spiritual experiences have been found to be associated with positive affect and life satisfaction (Van Dyke, Glenwick, Cecero, & Kim, 2009). Furthermore, spirituality is associated with an existential search for meaning and purpose in life (Thoresen, 1999) and stage theories of faith development echo humanistic theories of becoming self-actualized (Maslow, 1999) or fully functioning (Rogers, 1961) with individuals considered as being "in process," with rare attainment to the highest levels of being (Fowler, 1981). Interestingly, posttraumatic growth corresponds with particular character strengths related to the various dimensions of the fully functioning person, including more meaningful interpersonal relationships (love), a greater appreciation of life (enthusiasm), enhanced confidence (bravery, honesty), and spiritual development (spirituality; Joseph & Butler, 2010; Peterson, Park, Pole, D'Andrea, & Seligman, 2008; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The overall findings of this study, however, suggest that the Rogerian fully functioning person indicator had small, mostly positive, significant relationships, with several related character strengths.

Exploration of the content of a fully functioning person's motivation indicated a positive correlation with the importance component of self-acceptance; however, this correlation was higher for the chances component of self-acceptance. Similarly, a positive correlation was found with affiliation importance, but this was higher for affiliation chances. Both importance and chances for community feeling had moderate correlations and there was no significant relationship with financial success importance (Study 2—low positive correlation found in Study 1), though there was a positive correlation with chances. Therefore, these results suggest that the fully functioning person does not consider financial success important, but however believes that they will obtain it.

Similar to the findings of Cartwright and Mori (1988) and Cartwright et al. (1991), results of this research suggest that assessment of the personality variables derived from Rogers's theory is a valid means of determining the structure of the fully functioning person. Furthermore, results support the use of positive psychological indicators as a means of assessing Roger's

construct. Overall, in keeping with Rogers's conceptualization of the fully functioning person, results of this research suggest that increased life satisfaction, positive thoughts and feelings, and intrinsic motivation and decreased anxiety, negative thoughts and feelings, and extrinsic motivation are outcomes of being fully functioning. The Rogerian fully functioning person is authentic, organismically valuing, and has their basic psychological needs met. The becoming individual therefore experiences higher life satisfaction and positive thoughts and feelings and decreased negative thoughts and feelings and anxiety. This person also moves toward intrinsic goals versus extrinsic goals. These ideas are all theoretically supported, and the current data support or at least do not contradict those ideas.

This study supports the theoretical link between person-centered theory and positive psychology. More specifically, this study provides evidence that the metatheoretical hypotheses within person-centered theory are both theoretically and empirically supported by positive psychology research and can also be measured using positive psychology indicators. However, this is the first study to use positive psychological indicator variable measurement to characterize a single factor structure for the fully functioning person construct. As such, caution is required in drawing substantial conclusions from the findings. Further research is required in which demographic variables are more fully considered (e.g., this study's samples were primarily female young adults) and comparisons across ethnicities are analyzed. Furthermore, the data here were all self-reported. Including peer reports in future studies would provide important verification of these outcomes. Furthermore, longitudinal studies or even true experiments could help clarify the causal direction of links between these variables.

Conclusion

Overall, findings of this study suggest that the fully functioning person from the positive psychology perspective is a "person-in-process," a person who is characterized as being in touch with their OVP and hence experiences increased happiness and life satisfaction, who feels competent, autonomous, and relates well with others and they with them. Moreover, the fully functioning person is open, authentic, and uses their strengths, experiencing the well-being associated with doing so. When compared with other people, this person less frequently experiences feelings of anxiety or alienation from themselves.

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Notes

1. Age of consent in the United Kingdom is 16 years (The British Psychological Society, 2010).
2. Ethical approval to collect the data for Study 1 was secured from the University of Leicester Psychology Research Ethics Committee by the first author. Data collection for Study 2 was conducted by the first author under the Code of Human Research Ethics (2010) of the British Psychological Society with which the first author is a chartered psychologist.
3. A-Level is a secondary school-leaving qualification in the United Kingdom undertaken during Year 12 and Year 13 (ages 16-18).

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