The Effect of Positive Affirmations on Self-Esteem and Well-Being in College Students

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Introduction

• Spontaneous other- and self-affirmation have been associated with greater levels of happiness, hopefulness, and more health benefits (Emmanuel et al., 2018).
• Past research has shown that self-esteem can be fostered through positive regard from others (Rogers, 1951 as cited by Maxwell & Bachkirova, 2010).
• Well-being theorists believe that it is important to examine if people can intentionally enhance their resiliency by using happiness-enhancing strategies such as affirmations (Lyubomirsky & Della Porta, 2010 as cited by Howell, 2017).
• Delivering virtual messages through a mobile phone is a widely accessible method in facilitating behavior changes through the support and immediate feedback (Sharifi et al., 2013).

Hypotheses

Virtual affirmations will have a beneficial impact on college students’ self-esteem and well-being.
Affirmations given via text message will have a greater positive impact on self-esteem and well-being than affirmations given via mobile application.

Results

When comparing pre- and post-test scores, there were significant increases in: Esteem ($t(23) = -4.447, p < 0.001$), Flourishing ($t(23) = -3.574, p < 0.005$), and SWLS ($t(23) = -3.759, p < 0.005$).

Key findings

• Significant increases were found between pre-test and post-test scores for self-esteem, flourishing, and satisfaction with life.
• No significant differences were found between changes in scores of the text and mobile app conditions.
• One variable had greater change in one condition, while the other two had greater change in the other condition.

Conclusions

• Significant increases were found between pre-test and post-test scores for self-esteem, flourishing, and satisfaction with life.
• No significant differences were found between changes in scores of the text and mobile app conditions.
• One variable had greater change in one condition, while the other two had greater change in the other condition.

Future directions

• Replicate this study with a different population
• Follow up after 4-6 weeks to see if these benefits last beyond the intervention

Implications

• Virtual positive affirmations have a statistically significant beneficial impact on reported self-esteem and well-being.
• There are simple things people can do to better the lives of others.