A Culturally Sensitive Career Planning Program: Increasing Self-esteem within the Japanese Cultural Context

Kumiko Inagaki

Department of Political Science and Economics, Meiji University, Japan

kinagaki@meiji.ac.jp

Abstract

This study attempts to develop a culturally sensitive career planning program within the Japanese cultural context, based on the positive psychology model. Japanese culture appreciates things in their natural form; thus, negativity is not considered simply the opposite of positivity. Both strengths and weaknesses are manifested in the global self. In this study, positive psychology exercises were prepared in order to discover the resources from which people derive their strengths, focusing on what motivates them to succeed and what caused previous failures.

The program comprised formal sessions with Japanese undergraduate students over 15 weeks, and its effects on the participants were examined. The results indicated that the program helped enhanced components of the participants’ self-image, such as sense of authenticity and self-esteem, as well as their career planning skills.

Key words: career planning, self-esteem, sense of authenticity