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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
School of Foundations, Leadership and Administration
College of Education, Health and Human Services

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE
of
Hua Li
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Research, Measurement, and Statistics

INVESTIGATING FACTORS RELATED TO COPING AND
OPTIMISM: A LATENT PROFILE ANALYSIS AND A
PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING METHOD USING THE
NATIONAL SURVEY OF MIDLIFE DEVELOPMENT IN
THE UNITED STATES (MIDUS 3)

September 17th, 2021
8:30 a.m.
Online

Hua Li

M.A., Teaching English as a Second Language
Kent State University, 2013

B.A., Translation
Shanghai International Studies University, 2012

Hua Li is a doctoral candidate in Research, Measurement, and Statistics at the School of Foundations, Leadership and Administration. She is currently an English Language Lecturer at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) in China.

Hua Li has approximately ten years of experience teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the United States, Germany, and China since 2012. Following the completion of her Master's program, Hua was employed at Kent State University as a lecturer at the ESL Center. In this role, Hua served as the Assessment Coordinator and participated in the development of an online placement test. She also provided suggestions on effective student assessments and teacher observations. Additionally, Hua presented at local, national, and international conferences on teacher evaluation, peer feedback, and student note-taking skills. Inspired by the notion of life-long learners, she decided to pursue her doctoral studies to advance her knowledge of educational research and contemplate roles and responsibilities as an educator.

Investigating Factors Related to Coping and Optimism: A Latent Profile Analysis and a Propensity Score Matching Method Using the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS 3)

With the constructs of coping and optimism as the overarching research interest shared by the two studies in the dissertation, different directions of inquiry could further probe into the stressor process and the ecological system theory on work-family interactions. In Study 1, a latent profile analysis (LPA) was applied to classify groups with distinct profiles of work-family spillover using a nationwide representative sample of population. The results suggested that there are four profiles of work-family spillover. Each profile was strongly related to resilience, optimism, and coping. The findings have implications on considering work-family spillover profiles when planning intervention programs, which can further enhance protective factors.

Study 2 assessed whether people with a history of neurological disorders differed from those without such a history in their coping, optimism, self directedness and planning, and positive emotionality. A propensity score matching (PSM) procedure was used to identify a comparison group of individuals without a history of neurological disorders for those with such a history. Results showed that the group with neurological disorders reported significantly different positive emotionality. Hence, the assumptions that individuals with neurological disorders tend to maintain a less favorable psychological status and have less positive protective factors partially obtained empirical support.