WSH 2011

Stretching Conservation of Resources Theory of Stress in Organizational Research
Objectives

- Outline current COR research
- Discuss methodology and measurement
- Present COR in organizational contexts
- Offer future applications of COR
Agenda

Introduction / Overview
• (5 minutes)

Ganai & Glazer
• (10 minutes)

Morelli & Cunningham
• (10 minutes)

DeArmond, Matthews, & Bunk
• (10 minutes)

Richardson
• (10 minutes)

Question and Answers
• (25 minutes)
Introduction / Overview

• What is Conservation of Resources theory?

• What are resources?

• A COR perspective on stress?

• Why discuss COR theory?
Meaningfulness in Life as a Buffer Against Stress: An Application of COR Theory

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Why Study Meaningfulness?

- People have a need for meaning & purpose (Frankl, 1984; Baumeister, 1998)
  - Meaningfulness is associated with positive outcomes

- Meaninglessness seems pervasive (Ruffin, 1994)
  - 60 million Americans suffer from it
  - Associated with negative outcomes

- Meaningfulness in life has cognitive, motivational, and affective components (Wong, 1998)
  - Values are Motivational
  - Meaningfulness may be a resiliency variable; giving a sense of direction purpose in life
Research Questions

1. How do personal values relate to the experience of meaningfulness in life?

2. Does meaningfulness in life buffer the effects of stressors on strains?
Undergraduate students in two psychology courses ($N = 48$)
  - Required ($n = 25$)
  - Elective ($n = 23$)
  - 65.2% female
  - Age: $M = 22.7$ (SD 4.0) years
Surveys administered: T1: 2\textsuperscript{nd} week and T2: last week of Fall 2008 semester
Measures

- **Meaningfulness in life** (7 items developed for study)
  - “I have a sense of purpose in life”
  - $T_1 \alpha = .71; T_2 \alpha = .76$

- **Personal values** *(Schwartz Values Scale, 1992)*
  - Extrinsic $\alpha = .83; \text{intrinsic } \alpha = .57$
  - Self-enhancement $\alpha = .57; \text{Self-transcendence } \alpha = .75$

- **Role overload and role ambiguity** *(Glazer & Beehr, 2005)*
  - $\alpha = .82; \alpha = .70$

- **Course anxiety** *(Glazer & Beehr, 2005)* $\alpha = .84$
Meaningfulness in Life & Values

- Individuals are driven by values that give meaning and direction to their lives (Schwartz, 1992)

- Some values are healthy and promote well-being and others are unhealthy (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000)
Hypothesis 1

- At T1 and T2

  Meaningfulness in Life

  \[ + \]

  Self-Transcendence Values (comprised of universalism & benevolence)

  \[ + \]

  Self-Enhancement Values (comprised of power, achievement, & hedonism)

Not Supported: Opposite
Hypothesis 2

- At T1 and T2

  Meaningfulness in Life

  Intrinsic Values (self-direction, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, & universalism)

  Extrinsic Values (power & achievement)

Mostly unsupported
T1 & T2 $r = .30; .39$
T1 & T2 $r = .40; .37$
1. Resource losses are more salient than resource gains (Hobfoll, 1989).

2. It is important to invest in resources that protect against resource loss, improve recovery, and gain more resources.
   - People will experience less strain if they deem that meeting their life challenges is worthy of investing time and energy (Korotkov, 1998)
Hypothesis 3

Supported for Role Ambiguity-Anxiety relationship: interaction accounted for 4% variance in anxiety.
Take Home Message

- Values that drive one’s sense of purpose in life are not necessarily steeped in goodness and giving to others.

- Building a sense of meaningfulness in life can help to reduce negative effects of role ambiguity on anxiety.
Thank you!

- Questions?
- Contact Information: sglazer1@umd.edu
  oganai@uwaterloo.ca
Furthering Conservation of Resources Theory: How Our Values Influence Our Stress Response

Neil Morelli and Christopher J. L. Cunningham
Resource Appraisal

- “the basic tenet of COR theory is that individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster those things they value” (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 343, emphasis added)

- Resource-importance appraisal, or the amount of value we place on individual resources, is a previously untested aspect of the COR process
Figure 1: Values Conceptual Model

Adapted from Schwartz (1992)
Resources and Behavior/Processes

- COR theory has been applied to various stress-related topics:
  - PTSD after traumatic events (Hobfoll, Tracy, & Galea, 2006)
  - disaster research (Benight et al., 1999; Freedy et al., 1994)
  - burnout (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Neveu, 2007)

- Coping responses treated as a “resource-related” behavioral outcome (Moos & Schafer, 1993)
  - Approach
  - Avoid
  - Emotive
Values and Behavior/Processes

- Values-to-behavior connection is still tenuous (Karremans, 2007)
  - Still correlate with a number of “value-expressive behaviors” (e.g., Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Bardi, Calogero, & Mullen, 2008)

- Values congruent within the “right” contexts,
  - “resource-related” behavior (Messick & Mcclintock, 1968; Torelli & Kaikati, 2009)
The Present Study

- General research questions:
  - Is resource-importance appraisal a function of personal values?
  - If so, do values and perceived resource importance help determine coping behaviors?
Figure 2: Conceptual Model

- **Self-Transcendence**
  - (H1)

- **Resource-importance Appraisal**
  - (H5)
    - • Material
    - • Psychosocial

- **Conservation**
  - (H2)

- **Coping Response**
  - (H3 and H4)
    - • Approach
    - • Avoidance

(H6)
**Method: Resource Categorization**

- COR-E resources were categorized into one of three types:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Feeling successful</td>
<td>Good marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate clothing</td>
<td>Feeling valuable to others</td>
<td>Family stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary tools for work</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Closeness with family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suitable housing</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Role as a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial stability</td>
<td>Stamina/endurance</td>
<td>Closeness with friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time for work</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Understanding from my boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings/emergency money</td>
<td>Feeling I have control over life</td>
<td>Support from co-workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Method: Participants & Procedure

**Study 1: Students**
- 548 undergraduates
- 78% Caucasian, 66% female
- $M \text{ age} = 19$ ($SD = 2.27$).
- Questionnaire distributed during class
- Voluntary participation with extra-credit as incentive
- 20 min to complete questionnaire in a classroom setting

**Study 2: Workers**
- 122 human resources employees in a large textile manufacturing organization in the southeastern United States
- 80% Caucasian, 62% female
- $M \text{ age} = 44$ ($SD = 9.73$).
- Internet version of Student questionnaire; link distributed via company email
- Voluntary participation with no added incentives
- Unlimited time to complete questionnaire at participant’s leisure
Figure 3: Self-transcendence → Coping
Figure 4: Conservation → Coping
Discussion

- Values are related in some ways to resource-importance appraisal and coping
- Link between resource-importance appraisal and coping outcomes less clear
  - Multiple mediation analyses
  - Lack of significant findings in Study 2
- Implications
  - Methodological
  - Conceptual
Limitations and Future Directions

- Homogeneity of sample demographics and held values
- Skewed distributions in resource-importance ratings
  - Other ways to test resource-importance
- Other future research:
  - Could use different outcome such as stress measure
  - Replicating study cross-culturally
  - Could incorporate values as a methodological tool to test COR theory more accurately in the future
Can Pushing Them to Do More Backfire?

Sarah DeArmond, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Russell A. Matthews, Ph.D.
Louisiana State University

Jennifer Bunk, Ph.D.
West Chester University of Pennsylvania
Background

- COR as a framework for understanding the relationship between workload and procrastination
Background

- Procrastination is voluntarily delaying an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off for the delay (Steel, 2007)
Background

- Primary resources
  - Well-being
- Secondary resources
  - Work
The Need for Research

- Stressful nature of work today
- Fairly little research exploring the relationships between occupational stressors and procrastination
- COR as a framework for understanding the connection
Hypotheses

- Workload
- Psychological Well-Being
- Procrastination
Method

- Participants
  - StudyResponse
    - Online participant recruitment panel.
  - 547 respondents provided complete data
    - 70.6% female
    - 61.8% married or living with a partner
    - 35.8% have children
    - Average age=40.8 years (SD=11.1)
    - Average organizational tenure=7.3 years (SD=7.9)
    - On average work 40.2 hours a week (SD = 11.7)
Method

Procedure

- Initial prescreening survey
  - Sent to approximately 8,000 panel members
  - 1,513 completed it (response rate=18.9%)
- Time 1 survey sent to 1,365
  - 973 participated (response rate=71%)
- Time 2 survey sent to 973
  - One month after Time 1 survey
  - 720 participated (response rate=74%)
- Time 3 survey sent to 973
  - Two months after Time 1 survey
  - 703 participated (response rate=72%)
Method

- Measures
  - Time 1
    - Quantitative Workload
  - Time 2
    - Psychological Well-being
  - Time 3
    - Procrastination
### Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Workload</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Well-Being</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>-0.14**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Procrastination</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>-0.39**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=591.*  
*p<.05, **p<.01*
Results

\[ \beta = 0.11, \ t = 2.56, \ p < 0.05 \]

\[ \beta = -0.12, \ t = -3.18, \ p < 0.05 \]
MacKinnon et al.'s (1998) test of the intervening variable effect was significant ($z' = 3.10$, $p < .05$).
Discussion

- Highlights
  - Longitudinal research
  - Full mediation
Discussion

- Implications
  - Inconsistency in results of occupational stressor-job performance/work behavior research

- Limitations
  - Causality
  - Self-report
  - Low response rate to pre-screening survey
Thank you! Questions?
Healing through story-telling: Resource gain and posttraumatic growth among WTC victims

Katherine M. Richardson
Pace University
May 21, 2011
Posttraumatic Growth & COR

- PTG is the positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999, 2001)

- Individuals with greater social support found to be at reduced risk for psychological distress following trauma (Brewin et al., 2000; Norris, et al., 2005; Norris & Kaniasty, 1996)

- Hobfoll et al. (2006) applied COR to investigate the impact of the events of September 11th in NYC among individuals living in the New York area
What is the Tribute WTC Visitor Center?

- Tribute WTC Visitor Center is located at 120 Liberty St.
- Tribute offers visitors a place where they can connect with people from the September 11th community.
- Through walking tours, exhibits and programs, the Tribute Center offers “Person to Person History.”
WTC Site
Background

- Tribute trained its first group of 17 docents in August 2005
- Overall, Tribute has trained 401 docents
- As of April 2011, there are about 245 “active” docents
- 144,000 people have been on our volunteer-guided walking tours
Research Questions

- How does this volunteer program aid in building resources?

- Which resources are most important in recovering from such tragic events?

- Do these vary by docent category (e.g., survivor, rescue worker, family member)?
Sent survey to 236 docents via email/mail
- 103 completed the survey (44%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th># Docents</th>
<th>% Docents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated New Yorker</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost friends or colleagues</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost a spouse or signif. other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost a child</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost a relative</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked in the WTC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First responder</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recover worker</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown resident</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 survivor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51%
Rewards of Giving Tours

“For many years, after losing a family member, I was not involved in anything involving the WTC. Tribute has helped me grieve and address many of the questions which I still have about the day.”

--Tribute Volunteer

“The positive feeling from doing a tour offsets the negative impact felt from working on the site and constantly netting little results.” --Tribute Volunteer

“The most rewarding part of leading Tribute Center tours is looking into the eyes of people from all over the world who want to learn and listen.”

--Tribute Volunteer
# Most Rewarding Aspects of Tours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th># Docents</th>
<th>% Docents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting visitors from around the world</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an “ambassador” to WTC visitors</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in living history</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to other docents’ stories</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing my personal story with visitors</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving feedback from visitors</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a member of the larger Sept 11th community</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting other docents</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being close to the WTC site</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping abreast of changes/progress at site</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building friendships with docents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Posttraumatic Growth

“I used to think September 11th was only about death and destruction. The Tribute Center has been instrumental in awakening compassion, resilience and team spirit.” --Tribute Volunteer

“I always come away from a tour with an ‘upbeat’ feeling. It’s a form of positive therapy for me.”

--Tribute Volunteer

“I had repressed many memories of what I saw, and have been able to reconstruct my experiences as a result of leading tours.” --Tribute Volunteer
# Healing Aspects of Tours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th># Docents</th>
<th>% Docents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning to appreciate other September 11 experiences that were <em>different</em> than mine</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserves an important historic event</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting others who have shared similar experiences</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to manage my emotions</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps memories of colleagues alive</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeps memories of loved ones alive</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a place to talk about loved one</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps to reduce trauma of events</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates grief process</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application to COR Theory

- 86% of docents reported that volunteering at the Tribute Center has helped in their healing and personal growth related to September 11th.

- Through “person-to-person” history, docents engage in psychological debriefing each time they lead a tour, which helps to rebuild resources.

- Docents also learn from others’ experiences, and thereby collectively rebuild personal resources that aid in stress resistance.
Question and Answer
Time