



Meta-Analysis on Meaning of Life and Suicidality



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Introduction

- This project is aimed at investigating if there is a significant association between meaning in life and each suicidal outcome (viz., suicide ideation, suicide risk, suicide attempt), the effect size of each association, if the effect sizes change when considering unreported/unpublished (i.e., “gray”) literature, and if effect sizes differ across different moderators.
- This study is important to understand what the actual associations are between meaning in life and suicidal outcomes, rather than simply assuming that such associations exist. If meaning in life is associated with a suicidal outcome (for some or all groups), that would be useful to know in order to improve detection, prevention, and treatment of suicidal outcomes.
- Existing studies have found a putative relation between meaning in life within suicidal ideation (e.g., Marco et al., 2017), suicide risk (e.g., Bryan et al., 2019), and suicide attempt (e.g., Gsemalu & Ha, 2020).
- Hypotheses:**
 - There will be a significant negative association between meaning in life and each suicidal outcome (i.e., suicidal ideation, suicide risk, and suicide attempt).
 - The effect size of each association will be moderate.
 - Marked publication bias will not be present.

Databases

Search string: (“meaning in life” OR “meaning-in-life” OR “MLQ” OR “integrative meaning” OR “crisis of meaning” OR “meaning crisis” OR “meaning making” OR “meaning-making” OR “life meaning” OR “perceptions of meaning”) AND (“suicid*” OR “STB” OR “STBs”)

6 Databases Included:

- APA PsycInfo (ProQuest)
- APA PsycArticles
- Harvard Dataverse
- Cochrane
- MEDLINE (PubMed)
- ProQuest Dissertations & Theses

References

Chen, Q., Wang, X., He, X., Ji, L., Liu, M., & Ye, B. (2021). The relationship between search for meaning in life and symptoms of depression and anxiety: Key roles of the presence of meaning in life and life events among chinese adolescents. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 282, 545-553. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.12.156>

Glaw, X., Kable, A., Hazelton, M., & Inder, K. (2017). Meaning in life and meaning of life in mental health care: An integrative literature review. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 38(3), 243-252. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/meaning-life-mental-health-care-integrative-literature-review/1881316858/se-2>

Huo, J., Wang, X., Steger, M. F., Ge, Y., Wang, Y., Liu, M., & Ye, B. (2020). Implicit meaning in life: The assessment and construct validity of implicit meaning in life and relations with explicit meaning in life and depression. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 15(4), 500-518. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2019.1639793>

Krok, D. (2018). When is meaning in life most beneficial to young people? styles of meaning in life and well-being among late adolescents. *Journal of Adult Development*, 25(2), 96-106. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-017-9280-y>

Steger, M. F., Frazier, P., Oishi, S., & Kaler, M. (2006). The meaning in life questionnaire: Assessing the presence of and search for meaning in life. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53(1), 80-93. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.53.1.80>

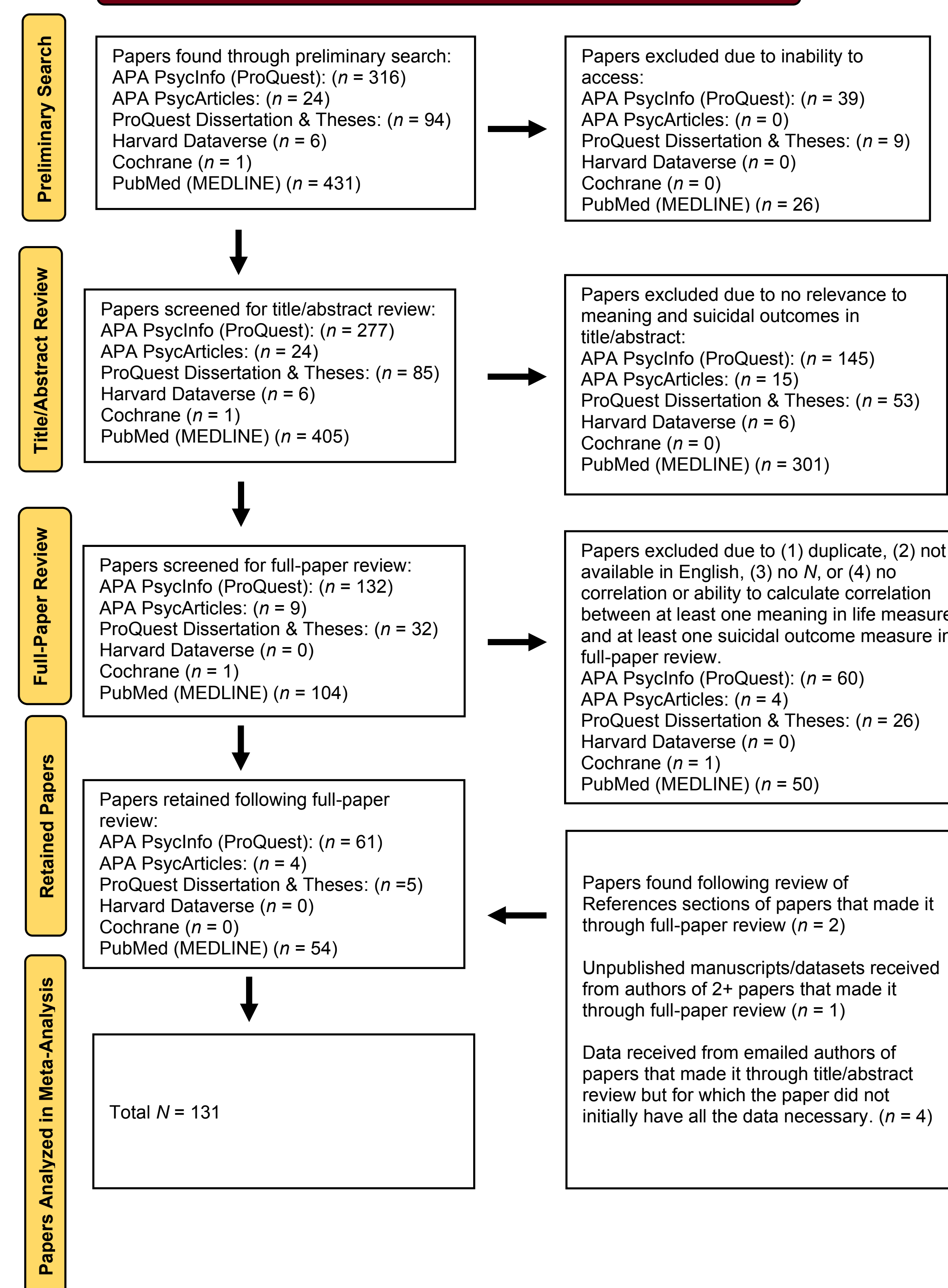
Yang, C., Pi, Z., Liu, R., Li, X., & Wang, W. (2022). The class group counseling on life education improves meaning in life for undergraduate students. *Current Psychology: A Journal for Diverse Perspectives on Diverse Psychological Issues*, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-03623-9>

Procedure

- Record # of papers found from each database and search date(s)
- Record # of papers retained following title/abstract review
 - exclusion criterion: no relevance to meaning and suicidal outcomes
- Record # of papers retained following full-paper review
 - exclusion criteria: duplicate; not available in English
 - must include *N*, total score or mean score, and *SD* or variance for at least one meaning in life measure; must include *N*, total score or mean score, and *SD* or variance for at least one suicidal outcome measure
 - Authors of papers that do not meet exclusion criteria and include at least one meaning in life measure and at least one suicidal outcome measure but for which association findings are unavailable and unable to be calculated will be emailed with requests for the dataset or missing information, with a deadline of 6 weeks for a response
- Search References of retained papers for missed papers
 - Record # of added papers and new # of papers
- Email authors with 2+ retained papers to ask for unpublished studies or datasets involving meaning in life and suicidal outcomes
 - Deadline of 6 weeks for a response
- Record total # of retained papers/datasets

Databases	Search Date	# Preliminary Search Hits	# Accessible	# Made It Through Title/Abstract Review	# Made It Through Full-Paper Review
APA PsycInfo (ProQuest)	2/2/2022	316	277	132	72 (→9)
APA PsycArticles	2/10/2022	24	24	9	5 (→6)
ProQuest Dissertations & Theses	2/18/2022	94	94	32	6
Harvard Dataverse	2/8/2022	6	6	0	0
Cochrane	2/8/2022	1	1	1	0
PubMed (MEDLINE)	2/11, 17 - 19/2022	430	405	104	56

Inclusions & Exclusions of Papers



Moderators

- Publication year
- Publication type (published article, dissertation, unpublished manuscript, dataset, conference presentation, technical report)
- Mean age of participants
- Standard deviation of age of participants
- Sex of participants (% female)
- Country of study
- Study design (correlation, experiment)
- Mean depression scores
- Mean anxiety scores
- Race of participants (% white/caucasian)
- Marital status (% single)
- Sexual orientation (% heterosexual)
- Military status (% Reserve/active-duty/veteran)
- Psychopathology (% with mental health condition)

Conclusion

What I retained through the meta-analysis was the distinct process in which papers were found through search strings, exclusions, inclusions, and through abstracts. I was able to understand the process of how these papers were selected in certain databases and the relevance to the research questions at hand. The main conclusion drawn from this meta-analysis are still being gathered at this time.