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## The Strength-Based Counselling Model: Is It a Fit Model For Counselling the MENA At-Risk Youth? (An Exploratory Multiple Case Study)

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**Youth In the Middle East and North Africa: Expanding economic  
Prospects and in Urban Areas.**

**Highlighting Global Lessons, Creating Local Solutions**

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**Mahmoud M.E.Amer**

The University of Manchester (UK)

[Mahmoud.Emam@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Mahmoud.Emam@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

**Dalia Gaafar**

Assiut University (Egypt)

[Daliagafr99@yahoo.com](mailto:Daliagafr99@yahoo.com)



# Introduction

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- Traditional Counseling Models with At-Risk Youth.
  - a deficit paradigm
  - A shift in Counseling Psychology
- ‘treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best within ourselves’  
(Marting Seligman, 2000)
- Positive Psychology
  - In an article entitled ‘ A positive psychology that matters’, Lopez (2006) links strength based counselling to successful multi-cultural counselling,



## Introduction

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- Peterson & Seligman (2004) authored the Values in Action (VIA) classification of strengths and virtues. This classification identified 24 character strengths arranged under six virtue headings: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence.
- The Picture of the youth population in the MENA region. An Alarm for impending problems waiting for the youth population if education systems and economic and population growth remains on the rise.



## Research Context

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- Definition of At- Risk Youth.
- The term ‘at-risk youth’ refers to individuals whose life situations put them in danger of future negative events, (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter, 1998).
- The Key Concepts of the Term At-Risk
- future time dimension of the term,
- ‘at-risk’ as a continuum rather than a dichotomy,
- and interaction between treatment and prevention



## Strength Based Model (SBM)

- The SBM has a core component of culture awareness which is perhaps the most striking advantage of the model .
- In the MENA region there has always been a debate on the appropriateness of applying western research results and counselling models that were developed in a western culture and brought into the MENA region for practice.
- strength is ‘a natural capacity for behaving, thinking, or feeling in a way which allows optimal functioning and performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes. (Linely, 2006)



## Strength Based Model (SBM)

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- strength refers to ‘what helps a person to cope with life [and to what] makes life more fulfilling for oneself and others. Strengths are not fixed personality traits [but rather] they develop from a dynamic contextual process rooted deeply in one’s culture’ (Smith, 2006).
  - Determinants of Strength:
    1. Culture
    2. Context
    3. Adaptability and functionality
    4. Polarities



## Strength Based Model (SBM)

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- Categories of Strength:
  - (1) wisdom,
  - (2) emotional strength (insight –optimism, perseverance, putting troubles in perspective, finding purpose in life and having the ability to endure, hope, faith, and love),
  - (3) character strengths: integrity, honesty, discipline, and courage,
  - (4) creative strengths: curiosity, novel and productive thinking,
  - (5) relational and nurturing strength: such as the individual's ability to relate to others through establishing and maintaining healthy relationships,



## Strength Based Model (SBM)

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- Categories of Strength:
  - (6) educational strengths: such as academic degrees, level of educational attainment and informal education,
  - (7) such as problem solving and decision making strengths,
  - (8) work-related and provider strength: which include the ability to secure employment and to secure life for the family and to generate wealth,
  - (9) social support and community strength,
  - (10) survival strengths: such as avoiding pain and keeping oneself safe from dangers. maintaining healthy relationships,



## Strength Based Model (SBM)

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- Twelve propositions for the SBM:
  - Proposition 3: 'each individual has the capacity for strength development and for growth and change'
  - Proposition 6: yy the role of human strength as 'buffers against mental illnesses.'
  - Proposition 7: counsellors should be active as they in the counselling situation if they are to apply the SBM. 'people are motivated to change' during the counselling situation when only 'practitioners focus on their strengths not on their deficit'

# Strength Based Model (SBM)/Process of Counseling

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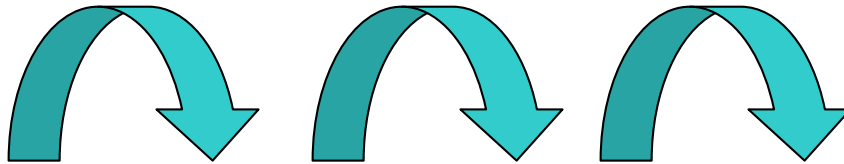
## Aim/Research Questions

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- The aim of this study is to assess the MENA at-risk youth using the polar resiliency concept inherent in the SBM of counselling. The aim is, likewise, questioning the promising validity of the SBM for use in the MENA region. In this paper, the SBM is used for diagnosing and considering the possibility of strength based counselling.
- Is the SBM fit for diagnosing the resiliency concept of the MENA at risk youth?

# Methodology

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Multiple Case Study, (Yin, 1994, 2003)

Number of Cases: Three At-Risk University Students from the  
MENA region



## Data Collection Methods

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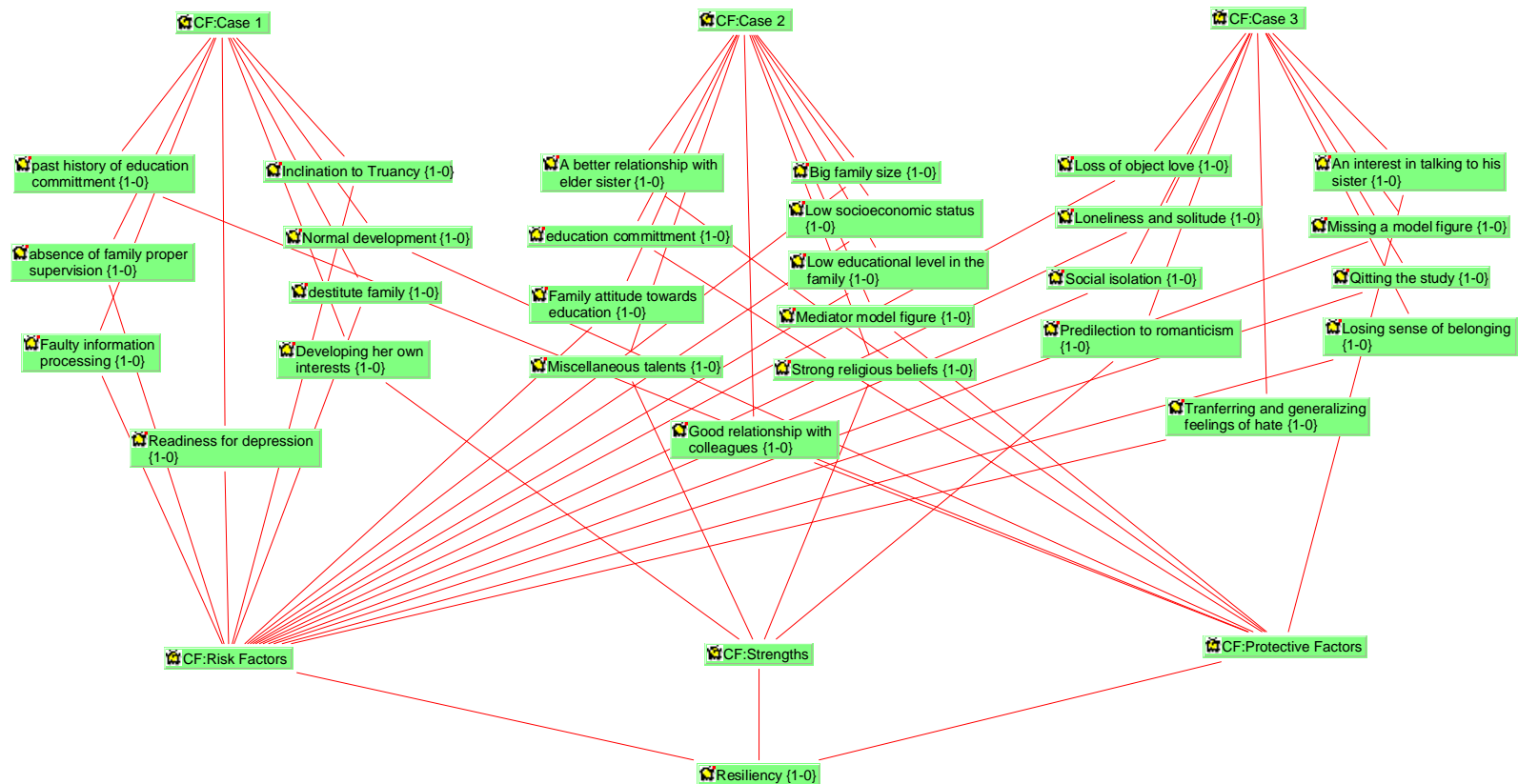
- Demographic Questionnaire
- Interviews

## Results/Analysis

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- Case Descriptions
- Explanation Building
- Case comparisons

# Results/Analysis



# Discussion/ Questions

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