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Determining the Theoretical Quality of the Strengths Perspective: A Critical Analysis

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Determining the Theoretical Quality of the Strengths Perspective: A Critical Analysis

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Introduction

The Strengths Perspective (SP) presents itself in the literature as (1) a theoretical framework and (2) a practice model or intervention. This perspective is widely used in social work and across other social science professions (e.g., Ausbrooks & Russell, 2011; Barton, 2006; Bell-Tolliver et al., 2009; Cederbaum & Klusaritz, 2009; Defrain & Asay, 2007a; Hughes, 2015; Mowbray et al. 2007; Shoshani & Slone, 2013; Strobino & Salvaterra, 2000). Social work curricula emphasize contents derived from the SP. Many social service organizations adopt the SP as a practical guide for helping clients overcome multifaceted challenges. Prominent theorists Ann Weick, Charles Rapp, and Dennis Saleebey from the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare developed the SP in the late 1980s (see “Results” section for more details on the historical evolution of the theory).

The SP is a positive attribute approach that focuses on looking at individuals, families, and communities through a lens of the abilities, talents, skills, possibilities, values, and aspirations that these entities may have or can use in transforming themselves instead of fixating on the pathologies associated with their current circumstances (Saleebey, 1996). The theory assumes that every person, group, family, and community have strengths that these systems can use to pursue positive changes and solve problems. Saleebey (1996) contended that the difficulties that a client may have experienced (any trauma or struggle)—while not minimizing the effect these things may have had on the lives of individuals—may actually be used as sources of power and resilience to overcome future challenges. It is also assumed that the theory works to minimize any presumptions on the capacity for a client to develop, evolve, and achieve desired changes, while also seriously considering any goals and dreams the client may have (Saleebey, 1996). Systems become empowered by using resources that already exist in the environment; acknowledging how those existing resources can be a positive, continual source for change; and becoming aware of resources that may still be lacking and knowledgeable about how to obtain them (Sheafor & Horejsi, 2003).

By promoting resources and resourcefulness, the SP essentially identifies the client as an expert and thus counters the pathological medical model, which focuses on illness, weaknesses, and deficiencies instead of competencies, values, and capacities (Saleebey, 1996). Moreover, this perspective is transformative by requiring the social worker and the client to build on potential rather than focusing on obstacles and limitations. Furthermore, Saleebey (1996) accentuated the importance of language in practice. In fact, the way clinicians talk to clients influences the latter’s ability to grow and develop. Key ideas embedded in the SP are empowerment,

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resilience, and membership. Elsewhere, this perspective highlights the role that trauma and obstacles can play in the development of strengths in light of the recovery process as well as the importance of culture and storytelling (Saleebey, 1996).

Purpose and Rationale

Because the SP serves multiple purposes, including theoretical, pedagogical, and clinical, it is important to assess its quality. In addition, because social work values evidence-based practice, it seems normal to question the worth of any theory that informs practice or pedagogy. Although located near the bottom of the evidenced-based practice pyramid, “well-crafted theoretical works” constitute a credible method of determining the contribution of a model (Thyer & Myers, 2011, p. 19). The purpose of this study was to answer this question: What is the theoretical quality of the Strengths Perspective?

The existing literature, to some extent, has already tapped into this question. However, the literature has failed to deliver a definitive ruling on this issue. In fact, the SP has received a mixed review in the literature, with some scholars hailing its theoretical quality and others exposing its imitations. Scholars who credit the SP have praised its departure from the medical/disease model (Blundo, 2001; Early & GlenMaye, 2000; Kelly & Gates, 2010; Graybeal, 2001; Saleebey, 1996; Weick et al., 1989). The profession of social work has long advanced the strengths-based approach in lieu of the traditional deficit-centered framework promoted in non-social work clinical settings. This makes the SP mainstream within the field of social work. However, this does not mean that social work should take the theory for granted. Major theoretical concerns remain.

On the criticism spectrum, theorists have identified three main practical issues: connection to contemporary neoliberalism (Gray, 2011), lack of empirical support and applicability in the current market system (Cowger, 1998), and lack of spiritual focus (Lee, 2019). Other practice-related concerns include social workers’ inability to identify the motivation that allows clients to reach their self-determined goal [conation in practice] (Gerdes & Stromwall, 2008), lack of focus on resistance and rebellion against inequality (Guo & Tsui, 2010), and simplistic approach toward explaining social problems (Weick & Chamberlain, 2002). Nevertheless, even in the midst of the aforementioned criticisms, there has been some form of implicit acknowledgment of the theory potential. By proposing ways through which the SP can be improved (Blundo, 2001; Cowger, 1998; Gerdes & Stromwall, 2008; Gray, 2011; Graybeal, 2001; Lee, 2019; Guo & Tsui, 2010), critics have indeed confirmed the need for its existence.

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This paper extends the literature by conducting a different type of analysis on the theoretical quality of the SP. Indeed, existing efforts in the literature mostly represent analytical reviews of the theory. Despite their merits, these reviews do not involve the use of metrics. By using the Theory Evaluation Scale as a means of appraisal, this paper sets itself apart from all previous work on the SP. In other words, this critical analysis raises the current scholarship to new heights by expanding knowledge on the theory.

Methodology

The researchers assessed the theoretical quality of the SP, using Joseph and Macgowan's (2019) Theory Evaluation Scale (TES). A unique, transdisciplinary, and objective measure (Joseph, 2021), the TES basically appraises the quality of theories through nine distinct criteria: coherence, conceptual clarity, philosophical assumptions, historical roots, falsifiability, accuracy, limitations, utility, and human agency. Due to the philosophical nature of these criteria, Joseph and Macgowan (2019) hypothesized that the TES can be used to analyze theories emanating from the post-positivist school of thought as well as the constructionist paradigm. In other words, the TES bears hallmarks of the mixed-methods research paradigm.

A panel of 14 internationally recognized social work theorists participated in the development of the scale's content (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). The inclusion of each criterion required an 80% agreement among the panel of experts (content validity). The TES is a reliable instrument with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). To analyze a theory with the TES, it is recommended that evaluators use a scoring matrix ranging from 1-5 for each criterion, with 1 as the lowest score and 5 the highest. Hence, the total score on the TES varies from 9 to 45 (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). To avoid within-criteria scoring bias, the researchers used Joseph's (2020a) rubric that justifies any value assigned within a criterion. According to Joseph and Macgowan (2019), an overall TES score of 9 would be considered poor, 10-19 would be fair, 20-29 would be good, and 30-45 would be deemed excellent.

The TES criteria will be explained in depth in their own sections (see "Results" section below) in conjunction with how the SP measures up against them. The nature of this paper requires that each claim made about a TES item (or score attributed to an item) be supported in the literature. Hence, the researchers conducted a review of the literature on the SP, using a broad range of academic databases, including ERIC, EBSCO's Academic Search Premier, Journal Storage (JSTOR), Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, Reed-Elsevier, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer, and SAGE Publications. These electronically accessible sites are the most likely

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destination for relevant peer-reviewed materials that are relevant to the purpose of this paper. To ensure interrater reliability, the researchers evaluated the theory independently and then compared and discussed scores for each item.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of the analysis. The table contains three columns: one listing the TES criteria based on Joseph and Macgowan's (2019) work, one describing the TES criteria based on Joseph's (2020a) rubric, and one scoring the nine TES items. The bottom of the table informs readers about the overall score of the SP and the corresponding theoretical quality of the model based on the overall results.

Table 1

The Appraisal of the Strengths Perspective, using the Theory Evaluation Scale

Criteria*	Description**	Score
Coherence	The tenets of the theory are totally consistent with each other.	5
Conceptual Clarity	The interpretation of the theory in a given field is totally unambiguous.	5
Philosophical Assumptions	The theory fully explains both its paradigmatic belongingness and its main assumptions or tenets.	5
Historical Evolution	The theory fully explains its roots in connection to pioneers, prior research, and time.	5
Testability	The literature provides a broad range of concrete steps to test the tenets of the theory.	2
Empiricism	The literature contains widespread evidence for the theory, which emerges from the strongest research designs.	2
Boundaries	The theory fully explains its scope of competence or limitations.	3
Client Context / Utility	The theory accounts for the systems within which individuals interact with people around them and/or pertains to issues affecting diverse groups of people.	3
Human Agency	The theory clearly states that all people can influence their own lives and their milieus.	5
Overall score for the Strengths Perspective		35
Strengths Perspective quality based on overall score: Excellent		
* Source: Joseph and Macgowan (2019) ** Source: Joseph (2020a)		

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As demonstrated in Table 1, the SP generated an overall score of 35 on the TES. Based on the benchmarks for interpreting overall TES results, the score of 35 suggests that the SP has excellent theoretical quality. Table 1 also provides a breakdown of the scoring based on each item on the TES. Such itemized approach allows the researchers to determine the merits and flaws of the theory. As exhibited in the table, the SP is strong with regard to five TES criteria: coherence, conceptual clarity, philosophical assumptions/tenets, historical development, and human agency, but weak in terms of testability and empirical evidence. The remaining two items, boundaries and client context, fall somewhere on the middle of the strengths-weaknesses spectrum. Below is the rationale behind the score assigned to each item.

Coherence

Coherence measures whether a theory maintains consistency in the way in which its key tenets are constructed and defined (Joseph, 2020b). The SP is a way of viewing clients or situations based upon resources, talents, capacity, knowledge, potentials, experiences, hopes, aspirations, skills, etc., and learning how to identify and use these strengths to confront problems and create change (Saleebey, 1996). This perspective also holds that the practitioner works in conjunction with clients' desires and aspirations and seriously believes in their capacity to achieve those objectives (Mirick, 2013). Hence, the SP is not an abstraction about social phenomena, but a framework that has practical implications. Its tenets (discussed under "Philosophical Assumptions") are built upon each other in a clear and coherent manner. Because there is no contradiction in the conceptualization of the SP, the authors assigned a score of 5 for coherence.

Conceptual Clarity

Conceptual clarity refers to the ability of the theory to prevent unambiguity in its claims and directions for practice and research (Joseph, 2020a). The literature has explicitly pointed out that the SP lacks clarity (Saint-Jacques et al., 2009; Staudt et al., 2001; Wachtel, 1993). However, Ornstein and Ganzer (2000) argued that that the issue (lack of clarity) is not so much in defining what the intended purpose of the theory is, but rather in articulating how to undertake the collaborative process between the practitioner and the client. In effect, Ornstein and Ganzer (2000) believed that the SP focuses too much on the client side and not enough on the therapist side. Building on the work of Wachtel (1993), Ornstein and Ganzer (2000) recommended that greater recognition and emphasis be made on the

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fundamental role a therapist plays throughout the treatment process, notably regarding therapeutic communication with clients.

In other words, it can be concluded that the SP's lack of clarity does not pertain to its conceptualization but its implementation. The way the theory is applied may vary in context; however, the perception of what strengths-based practice entails is consistent across the literature, at least within a given field. Indeed, scholars—including the staunchest critics—uniformly agree that the SP emphasizes people's competencies as opposed to their pathologies (Harris et al., 2012; Oko, 2006; Powell et al., 1997; Saint-Jacques et al., 2009; Staudt et al., 2001; Wachtel, 1993). As the interpretation of the theory is virtually unambiguous, the authors conclude that the SP passes the conceptual clarity test. Full credit (5 points) was thus provided in this section.

Philosophical Assumptions

A theory should clearly outline its philosophical assumptions, i.e., its premises and paradigmatic classification (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019; Joseph, 2020a; Joseph, 2020b; Stoeffler & Joseph, 2020). Weick et al. (1989) were the first to formally name and outline the principles of the SP. According to Weick et al. (1989), (a) everyone possesses a breadth of talents, abilities, capacities, skills, resources, and aspirations; (b) the capacity for an individual to grow and change is untapped and the recognition that no one individual perfectly expresses this capacity throughout the course of all life stages; (c) a focus on strengths rather than on failings will encourage individuals to more dynamically grow by focusing on their positive aspects, but also acknowledging their lacks; (d) people have the ability to decide what is in their best interest and recognizing this capacity can positively empower them; (e) given their circumstances, people proceed in the best way possible; and (f) the power for decisions lies with the person whose personal life is in question and the decision on what is best for his or her life should not rest on the decisions of others. Saleebey (2008) refined these principles into the following five philosophical assumptions:

1. Every individual, group, family, and community has strengths and resources.
2. Illness, trauma, abuse, and the array of life's crises may be painful, demoralizing, and wearisome, but they also are sources of challenge and opportunity.
3. Assume that you do not know the upper limits of the capacity to grow and change.

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4. We best serve clients by collaborating with them.
5. Every environment is full of resources. (pp. 133-135)

The strengths perspective reflects a postmodern/constructivist perspective with the contention that people are the experts in their own lives and have the ability to recreate their reality based upon their strengths even in light of or in response to challenges (Gray, 2011; Saleebey, 1996; Saleebey, 2008). This perspective takes a relativist stance in emphasizing that the practitioner should work in conjunction with the client in identifying strengths and working toward the desired goals (Powell et al., 1997; Oko, 2006). Because the SP clearly states its philosophical assumptions, this criterion receives full credit (5 points).

Historical Evolution

According to the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare (KUSSW) (2021), the SP was first developed at the University of Kansas in early to mid-1980s by Professor Charles Rapp and doctoral students to be used for adults with psychiatric disabilities. At that time, the development of the model met with the movement for deinstitutionalization and activism for the rights of people seeking mental health services. The theory embraced concepts of other developing theories (e.g., empowerment, social constructionism, feminism, and holistic health and wellness) that challenged traditional practice and schools of thought in social work (KUSSW, 2021). In the late 1980s, social work practice was still embedded with the language of pathology, where defining and naming the problems in people's lives was then followed by a strategy of intervention (Weick et al., 1989).

Although not often acknowledged, the SP has a nominal and historical connection with the Family Strengths Perspective (FSP), a worldview that focuses on a family's strengths rather than its weaknesses (DeFrain & Asay, 2007b). Proposed in the 1960s and developed in the 1970s, the FSP is a 22-proposition perspective that departs from the weakness-centered paradigm that had guided family studies between 1930s and 1960s (DeFrain & Asay, 2007b). Arguably, the FSP has set the stage for the SP, which is perceived by family studies experts not as a worldview but as a theoretical framework (Ausbrooks & Russell, 2011; Barton, 2006; Bell-Tolliver et al., 2009; DeFrain & Asay, 2007a; Early, 2001; Ricks, 2016; Stiffman et al., 2007; Strobino & Salvaterra, 2000).

Weick et al. (1989) referenced the 1958 Commission on Social Work Practice created to recognize individual strengths in field practice by identifying, strengthening, and maximizing the potential of clients. However, Weick et al. (1989) also noted that—although proponents of holistic approaches (e.g., Germain & Gitterman, 1980; Hepworth & Larsen, 1986;

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Shulman, 1979) warned of the faults of limiting the focus of practice to individual pathology without considering strengths—the focus was still on diagnosis as a means for developing interventions. From these developments and discrepancies in social work, Weick et al. (1989) outlined the backdrop for SP, which was later expanded by Dennis Saleebey through his series of book editions on the SP from 1993 to 2013 (KUSSW, 2021). Hence, Saleebey's SP draws directly from and refines Weick et al.'s (1989) work. As Chapin (1995) wrote, however, it bears mentioning that drawing on clients' strengths has a long history of relevance in social work practice and can be seen in Perlman's (1957) casework model, Schwartz's (1971) interactional approach, Germain and Gitterman's (1980) life model of social work practice, and Weick's (1986) health model.

Meanwhile, some scholars have traced the history of the SP long before the 20th century. One of them is Australian social work theorist Mel Gray who linked the perspective to the beginnings of early philosophy (Gray, 2011). According to Gray (2011), the SP is "rooted in Aristotle's teleological theory of human nourishing or eudaimonia. Eudaimonism holds that people should strive to reach their innate potential through the exercise of their capabilities, most importantly their reason and intellect" (p. 5). Beyond its connection to constructionist and empowerment theories (as seen above), the SP is reflective of transcendentalism and humanistic approaches, and recognizing and building upon client strengths has been central to social work practice since the discipline's inception (Gray, 2011, Pallu, 2017, Saleebey, 1996; Saleebey, 2007). This section receives 5 points on the TES, as the historical development of the SP follows a clear trajectory and builds upon previous research.

Testability

As the name implies, testability indicates whether a theory has falsifiable properties (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). Researchers (e.g., Saint-Jacques et al., 2009; Staudt et al., 2001) lamented testability issues associated with the SP. Staudt et al. (2001) contended that the directives of the theory are not amply operationalized. In the same vein, Saint-Jacques et al. (2009) maintained that the theory lacks in specificity for an effective implementation, as it is difficult to discern the practices that are unique to a strengths-based practice approach. Hence, in spite of being a broad comprehensive perspective and model for viewing and approaching clinical practice, the SP lacks clear parameters for testing and experimentation. This lack of testability brings up concerns for policy implementation.

Over the past couple decades, psychometricians have developed empirically supported questionnaires that capture aspects of the SP. These

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include—in chronological order—Muris et al.'s (2003) Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), Peterson and Seligman's (2004) Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), Ho et al.'s (2016) Brief Strengths Scale (BSS), Swanson et al.'s (2001) Strengths and Weaknesses Assessment of ADHD Symptoms and Normal Behavior (SWAN), and Alexander et al.'s (2020) Extended Strengths and Weaknesses Assessment of Normal Behavior (E-SWAN). These scales have been mostly used for assessing clients' strengths in mental health and psychiatric settings (Alexander et al., 2020; Muris et al., 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Swanson et al., 2001). However, these strengths-related measures fail to address the testability gap of the SP because their content does not fully comply with the assumptions of the theory. This section therefore receives a score of 2 out of 5.

Empirical Evidence

The empirical evidence criterion gauges a theory's degree of scientific merit. There are hints in the literature about the effectiveness level of the SP. In a review, Staudt et al. (2001) assessed the empirical contribution of the model. Conducted under pre-experimental, quasi-experimental, and experimental designs, the nine studies in Staudt et al.'s (2001) review targeted adults with chronic mental illness and veterans with substance use problems who received strengths-based case management as intervention. Results demonstrated that, when used on top of regular services, strengths-based case management improves, to some extent, personal achievement during the treatment process. It should be noted that the quantitative studies included in Staudt et al.'s (2001) review were limited in scope, with samples varying between 19 and 235 participants.

Elsewhere, qualitative inquiries conducted by Brun and Rapp (2001), Rapp (2006), and Redko et al. (2007) showed positive results for the SP with regard to continuity of care, rapport building, and therapeutic relationship between case managers/clinicians and clients. More recent works on the SP, carried under qualitative methodologies, has looked at various types of client groups, including families who have a family member receiving palliative care (Hughes, 2015), communities struck with natural disasters (Araki, 2013; Wang et al., 2013), and adolescents receiving substance abuse treatment (Harris et al., 2012). Although important, qualitative studies generally suffer from a lack of generalizability, as their findings may not reflect conditions in the general population.

In short, the body of research and evidence on the SP tends to be centered around continued engagement of clients in continuing care programs. However, these studies—which mostly showed positive effects

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of strengths-based case management among clients with mental health and substance use issues—have not been replicated and thus lack the scope necessary to justify widespread policy decisions (Brun & Rapp, 2001; Rapp, 2007; Siegal et al., 1997; Staudt et al., 2001). Overall, the literature suggests that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the theoretical soundness of the perspective (Gray, 2011; Rapp, 2007; Staudt et al., 2001). Therefore, the theory receives a 2 in this category.

Boundaries

In TES terminology, boundaries imply a theory's shortcomings in terms of its applicability (Joseph, 2020a; Joseph, 2020b; Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). As mentioned earlier, the existing scholarship has identified an array of limitations associated with the SP, including compliance with neoliberalism (Gray, 2011), lack of empirical support and relevance (Cowger, 1998), lack of spiritual focus (Lee, 2019), lack of focus on social justice (Guo & Tsui, 2010), lack of conation (Gerdes & Stromwall, 2008), and downplaying of real problems (Weick & Chamberlain, 2002). However, based on its tenets, the SP seems to claim universal applicability by embracing keywords such as *every individual*, *sources of opportunity*, *no upper limit*, *collaboration*, and *full of resources*. Due to the gap between the SP's fundamental principles and its broad range of criticism, the evaluators conclude that the theory explains its boundaries only to some extent. Thus, this section earned a score of 3.

Client Context / Utility

The client context criterion addresses whether the theory accounts for the external systems with which people interact (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). The SP does take into account the interactions that occur between individuals and their surroundings, including family members, friends, and communities (Saleebey, 1996). In essence, the SP requires clients to look at the possibilities and capacities that each system can hold for them. In other words, Saleebey (1996) contended that this model is applicable at the individual level (micro), family level (mezzo), and macro level (community level (macro)). At each level, the client discovers existing strengths and resources that exist and proceeds by using them to reach desired goals.

However, the SP does not question the letter and spirit of public policies that cause harm to clients. By blindly accepting that every community is full of resources, this perspective gives a free pass to bad policies and unwittingly blames clients who do not utilize the so-called resources. For example, the SP would consider housing assistance a community resource. If every community is full of resources, why then are

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there so many people unsheltered or on public housing waitlists? With more demand than supply, the housing assistance policy in the United States is arguably inadequate. Hence, although useful for practice by tapping into issues affecting diverse groups of clients, the SP lacks context at the societal/systemic level. This explains the score of 3 for this section.

Human Agency

The last criterion, human agency, refers to people's ability to become active agents in a given environment by setting goals for themselves and implementing them (Joseph & Macgowan, 2019). Arguably, one of the greatest attributes of the SP is its recognition that humans possess the ability to reconstitute their reality based on their strengths. This model puts the client in the position of the expert and is focused on drawing on individual strengths as a primary mechanism toward change (Saleebey, 1996). By considering clients as experts and fostering individuals' capacity for positive change and inherent ability toward self-righting, the SP does an excellent job promoting human agency. Because the theory clearly states that all people can influence their own lives and their milieus, the researchers allotted maximum credit (5 points) in this section.

Discussion and Conclusion

The SP certainly contains values that are important to the field of social work. The theory advocates for giving power to clients in determining the course of action taken for themselves and works to re-conceptualize the way in which clients view themselves and their abilities beyond the identity of their pathologies. Social workers are bound to the values depicted in their profession's code of ethics, and this theory aligns well with the ethical principle of respecting the dignity and worth of people. This principle compels social work practitioners to promote clients' right to self-determination and enhancing their capacity to address their own needs. The SP is rooted in this value and, for this reason, represents a valuable contribution to social work practice.

The primary objective of this paper was to determine the theoretical quality of the SP. Because much of the scholarship on this model has been conceptual in nature, there was a rationale to conduct an empirical analysis. Joseph and Macgowan (2019) developed the TES for the very purpose of analyzing the quality of theories. Using this scale, this paper found that the SP has high theoretical quality with an overall TES score of 35. However, although strong in the categories of coherence, conceptual clarity, philosophical assumptions, historical evolution, and human agency, the

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theory falls short in terms of testability and empiricism. The theory also has room for improvement in the areas of boundary and client context.

Because the SP is purported to be an intervention, a score of 2 for testability and empirical evidence is underwhelming. Social work is a science; therefore, social work practitioners should ensure that practice models are effective. Stoeffler and Joseph (2020) argued that empirical evidence is the most important criterion of the TES for theories used as practice models and thus a low score for this item severely diminishes the quality of a given theory, regardless of its overall score. In other words, the findings in this paper indicate that, as a theoretical framework, the SP is a high-quality practice model that aligns itself with the values of the social work profession. As a practice model, however, this perspective still has a long way to go. Despite being in existence for more than 30 years and having an excellent overall score, the SP is still a model in progress.

This paper does not pretend to be flawless, as there are limitations associated with its content. Chief among them is the possibility that the evaluators may have missed key published or unpublished materials on the SP that would influence one way or another the findings in this paper. That is, despite their best efforts, the evaluators were unable to identify or read materials not published in the English language. In addition, the TES, despite its uniqueness and psychometric properties, is still a measure in development. Despite these limitations, though, this paper contributes to the literature on the SP. Through its empirical nature, this paper sets itself apart from all previous efforts on the quality of the model.

Moving forward, scholars, researchers, and practitioners can use the findings in this paper to improve the knowledge base of the SP. Future research can also use the structure of this paper as a template for analyzing the quality of other social work theories. By exposing the merits and flaws of the SP, this paper's findings hold implications for theory and research. These findings also carry implications for social work practice, because the SP has been a driving force behind major interventions implemented in different areas of practice, including child welfare, gerontology, and immigration, to name a few.

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