



TO EXPLORE THE LIFE SATISFACTION OF OUR SCHOOL TEACHERS

Education

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ABSTRACT

Life satisfaction is highly needed for any professional satisfaction. The present study was initiated through descriptive survey method within ex-post-facto research design to explore the life satisfaction of the teachers. To collect the data "Purpose in Life (PIL)" test was administered on a stratified random sample comprising of 363 male and 234 female teachers selected from 30 Government / Government aided Secondary / Higher Secondary schools of West Bengal, India. The test has 20 scaled Likert type sentences stems each with 7 response alternatives ranging from 1 (low purpose) to 7 (high purpose). Descriptive terms are used as anchors for the extreme points 1 and 7, and position number 4 is considered as neutral. According to the manual of the test higher scores reflect a greater sense of life satisfaction. The result shows that the mean and standard deviation of PIL scores were 106.75 and 13.399 respectively. Here the mean (106.75) was much higher than the ambivalent score ($4 \times 20 = 80$). This may explain that on an average the teachers were somewhat satisfied with their lives – they might have a greater sense of "purpose in life" and might tend to have stronger believes in the significance of their own existences and behaviours.

KEYWORDS

Purpose in Life, Hedonistic Value, Power Value, Aesthetic Value

1. Theoretical Perspective of the Study

The meaning in life must be conceived in terms of the specific meaning of a personal life in a given situation. Life is a chain of questions; and in his life, an individual has to set out for finding the answers to these questions by being responsible and also by making proper decisions. Each question has only one right answer. In course of searching the true meaning of his existence, this, however, does not imply that an individual is always capable of finding the right answer or correct solution to each problem, faced by him in his voyage in life.

The Greek word "Logos" represents the word, the will of God, the controlling principles of the universe, or meaning. Dr. Frankl, the introducer of "Logotherapy", translates logos as meaning (Fabry, 1994). Therefore, logotherapy means healing and maintaining health through meaning.

According to Frankl (1967, 1984, 1986) there are two levels of meaning: the present meaning, or meaning of the moment, and the ultimate meaning or super-meaning.

Since ultimate meanings exist in the supra-human dimension, which is "hidden" from us, Dr. Frankl believes that it is more productive to address specific meaning of the moment, of the situation, rather than talking about meaning of life in general.

According to Frankl's dimensional ontology (Frankl, 1986), human beings exist in three dimensions – somatic, mental and spiritual. Spirituality is the uniquely human dimension. As because a person is a unity in complexity, these different dimensions must be understood in their totality, however.

One of the prepositions of logotherapy says that the human spirit is our healthy core. However, the human spirit may be blocked by biological or psychological sickness, but it will remain intact. The human spirit does not get sick, even when the psychobiological organism is injured. A part of the human spirit is the unconscious (Frankl, 1969, 1986). When it is blocked or repressed, one experiences existential vacuum or neurosis. According to Fabry (1994), the noetic dimension or the human spirit contains love, the will to meaning, purpose, creativity, conscience, the capacity for choice, responsibility, sense of humour etc.

According to Frankl (1978), an individual can enjoy finite freedom. Our existence is influenced by instincts, inherited disposition and environment. Therefore, he is not free from conditions. But the conditions do not completely constrain him, he is free to take stand about them. Freedom of will is possible because of the human capacity

for self-distancing or self-detachment. Hence, he is capable of choosing his attitude toward himself (Frankl, 1969). Again, responsibility follows freedom. As per Fabry (1994), responsibility without freedom is tyranny, and freedom without responsibility leads to anarchy, which in turn may bring forth boredom, anxiety, and neurosis.

The will to meaning is the basic striving of man to find meaning and purpose (Frankl, 1969). Because of the human capacity to transcend one's immediate circumstances, the will to meaning is possible. Self-transcendence often makes use of the power of imagination and optimism. Self-transcendence is essential for finding happiness, which is not the end, but the by-product of trying to forget oneself.

Every meaning is unique to each person, and each one has to discover the meaning of each particular situation. We can discover this meaning in life in three different ways: by creating a work or doing a deed; by experiencing something or encountering someone; and by the attitude we take towards unavoidable suffering (Frankl, 1984). However, suffering, without meaning leads to despair.

Search for meaning is more likely to be occasioned by three negative facets of human existence: pain, guilt and death (Frankl, 1967, 1984). Pain refers to human suffering; guilt refers to the awareness of our fallibility and death refers to our awareness of the transmission of life. These negative experiences make us more aware of our needs for meaning and spiritual aspiration. Neuroses are more likely to originate from our attempt to obscure the reality of pain, guilt and death as existential facts (Frankl, 1967, 1984).

In both qualitative and quantitative research the stressors, producing stress among the teachers, have consistently been identified. These stressors include – (a) student unrest, their disturbing behaviours, and their lack of motivation and lack of interest; (b) unsupportive administrators; and (c) overly prescriptive inspectors and supervisors who limit the autonomy of the teachers (Finlay-Jones, 1986; Ingersoll, 2001; Schonfeld, 2006; Shirom, Oliver, & Stein, 2009;).

1.1 Significance of the Study

The education system of a country in general and the school education system in particular are the gadgets to develop the human capital as economic assets for wealth generation of the country as well as also as social assets for improving the quality of the living of the members of the society. The education system should provide scope for understanding of several major socio-economic changes, which affect the society. Some of these include – (a) global economic integration,

(b) national economic reforms, (c) changing demographic pattern and social mobilization, (d) increased enrolment and reduced drop-out rate in schools, (e) social norms favouring women and weaker sections, (f) increasing environmental consciousness, (g) changing family finances, (h) demands of labour market, and so on and so forth.

In a study conducted by **Ghosh, Adhikari and Das (2019)** it was explored that on an average the teachers of our country did not experience much stress – but their stress was above the “mild strength rating”; so it was noticeable.

In another **Ghosh, Adhikari and Bhattacharya (2019)** have found that on an average the teachers were somewhat open, they might tend to be daydreamer and might not be down to earth; again they were somewhat conscientious, they might tend to follow rules and prefer clean homes, and might not be messy and cheat to others; the teachers were not so introvert or extrovert, they might tend neither to be very social nor might prefer to work on their own projects alone; they were somewhat agreeable, they might tend to typically polite and like people, and might not tend to “tell it like it is”; and they were emotionally much stable and might have good mental health.

The strategy for development of school education would have to take these trends in determining the future mission. Based on a review of international research, it may be concluded that teachers' satisfaction in life is a real phenomenon. High level life satisfaction is associated with a job satisfaction. Satisfied teachers impart their best effort and consequently the education system becomes fruitful.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the present state life satisfaction of the school teachers of our country.

1.2.1. Specific Objectives

The present study was designed to realize the following specific objectives – To have the statistical description of the *Purpose in Life* scores obtained by the teachers (considering male and female teachers as a whole).

2. Methods

The present study was carried out through descriptive survey method. The details regarding the sample, research instruments, procedure of data collection and statistical technique are reported herewith.

2.1 Sample

A stratified random sample comprising of 363 male and 234 female teachers selected from 30 Government / Government aided Secondary / Higher Secondary Schools of West Bengal, India, were participated in the study.

2.2 Tool of Research

The following research tools were used in the present study for data collection. The tools were selected by applying yardsticks of relevance, appropriateness, reliability, validity and suitability. Brief descriptions of the tools are given hereunder.

2.3.4 Purpose in Life Test (PIL), (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1968)

To measure the meaning in life, experienced by the teachers, the Purpose in Life Test (PIL) of **Crumbaugh and Maholick (1968)** was selected. The reason for selection of this test is that it is specifically designed to measure Viktor Frankl's concept of existential vacuum and noogenic neurosis and this test has also been widely used to measure the concept of meaning in life in India and abroad (**Doerris, 1970; Mohanty, 1990; Lalitha et al. 2005**).

The PIL scale consists of three parts:

a) Part-A has 20 scaled Likert type sentences stems each with 7 response alternatives ranging from 1 (low purpose) to 7 (high purpose).

Descriptive terms are used as anchors for the extreme points 1 and 7, and position No. 4 is considered as neutral. There are 11 non-reversed and 9 reversed keyed items.

b) Part-B has 13 sentence completion items and, c) Part-C requires writing of a paragraph on personal aims, ambitions and goals.

Part-A is the only one, which is treated quantitatively and has been

used in most of the research endeavours in this field to date. Part-B and Part-C are not scored and little consideration is put to those in both the manual of the test and published research. In the present study also only the part-A of the test was used.

2.3 Procedure for Data Collection

The heads of the institutions were contracted for his/her permission to allow collecting the data. The relevant data on different constructs were collected by administering the above-mentioned tools on the subjects under study in accordance with the directions provided in the manual of the tool.

2.4 Analysis of the Collected Data

The results of the study was extracted in descriptive analysis were done with the help of SPSS 20.0 software.

3. Results

Results of life satisfaction (purpose in life) of the teachers are presented hereunder.

Table-3.1: Descriptive Statistics of Life Satisfaction of Teachers (Considering Male and Female as a Whole)

Life Satisfaction	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Purpose in Life	597	71	66	137	106.75	13.399

Table-3.1 presents the descriptive statistics of life satisfaction scores of teachers (considering male and female as a whole). The “minimum” of the scores was 66 and the “maximum” of those was 137 and the range was 71; the “mean” and “standard deviation” of the said distribution were 106.75 and 13.399 respectively.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The *Purpose in Life* test consists of 20 items assessing a person's subjective, global sense of having purpose or meaning in his or her life. According to the manual of the test a greater sense of “purpose” tends to entail a stronger belief in the significance of one's existence and behaviours. Item responses are obtained using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7 (specific statements between 1 through 7 vary from item to item). Total scores of the PIL Test are obtained by summing the 20 items. Total scores can range from $20 \times 1 = 20$ to $20 \times 7 = 140$ and the midpoint is $20 \times 4 = 80$; higher scores reflect a greater sense of purpose in life.

From the results of table-1 it is observed that in case of *Purpose in Life* the “mean” score was 106.75, which is higher than the midpoint (i.e., 80). This may explain that on an average the teachers were somewhat satisfied with their lives – they might have a greater sense of “purpose in life” and might tend to have stronger believes in the significance of their own existences and behaviours.

5. CONCLUSION

In case of *Purpose in Life (life satisfaction)* on an average the teachers were somewhat satisfied with their lives, they might have a greater sense of “purpose in life” and might tend to have stronger believes in the significance of their own existences and behaviours.

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