



Life Satisfaction of Male and Female Teachers – A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Life satisfaction is subjective wellbeing and contentment with one's own life in general. Life satisfaction is reflected through the activity of an individual. Satisfied teachers are highly needed for the educational development of a country. The present study was launched to ascertain the extent and variation of satisfaction of the male as well as female 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. From the result it was observed that in life satisfaction (Purpose in Life) 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. The male teachers were more satisfied in their lives than their female counterparts.

Key Words: Life Satisfaction, Positive Psychology, Happiness, Purpose in Life

1. Perspective

Life satisfaction refers to a person's general happiness, freedom from tension, interest in life etc. According to John Locke happiness is satisfaction (Tatarkiewicz, 1976). The operational definition of Academic Life Satisfaction is the expected satisfaction in one's life in school by the fulfilment of his/her important academic goals or aspirations. Bronzaft (1996) studied academic achievement and life satisfaction; and the researcher found that these were strongly related. There are numerous explanations and definitions of Life satisfaction. According to Sumner (1996) life satisfaction is a positive evaluation of the conditions of one's life, a judgment that at least on balance; it measures up favourably against his/her standards or expectations.

Diener (1994) has said that life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes towards one's own life at a particular point in time. It is one of three major indicators of well-being – (a) life satisfaction, (b) positive effect, and (c) negative effect. Life satisfaction is believed to have precursors in the – (a) work domain, (b) family domain, and (c) personality traits. Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her own life as a whole (Veenhoven, 1993).

Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith (1999) have comprised the four aspects with the life satisfaction – (a) desire to change one's life; (b) satisfaction with the past; (c) satisfaction with the future; and (d) significant other's views of one's life. Life-satisfaction is one of the indicators of 'apparent' quality of life. According to the affective theory, life satisfaction is an individual's conscious experience to the dominance of his/her positive emotions over the negative emotions. Terms like happiness, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being and subjective well-being

are used interchangeably, which is not the proper use of the words. There are three separable components of subjective well-being – (a) positive affect (PA), (b) negative affect (NA), and (c) life satisfaction (**Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin 1985**).

1.1 Meaning in Life

The meaning in life must be conceived in terms of the specific meaning of a personal life in a given situation. The Greek word “Logos” means the will of God, the controlling principles of the universe, or meaning. But Dr. Frankl, the introducer of “Logotherapy”, translates logos as “meaning” (**Fabry, 1994**). Therefore, logotherapy means healing and maintaining health through the voyage of searching the “meaning” of life. 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. So, Dr. Frankl believes that it is more prolific to address specific meaning of the moment, of the situation, rather than talking about meaning of life in general. The dimensional ontology (**Frankl, 1986**) says that the human being exists 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. 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.

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 appliances 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. Highly satisfied teachers are main engineer to put up properly effective education.

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 not 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.

In the present study the researchers were enthusiastic to compare the life satisfaction of the male and female teachers of our country.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to compare life satisfaction of the male and female school teachers of our country.

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 result of the study was extracted by statistical analysis done with the help of SPSS 20.0 software.

3. Results

Results related to the comparison between the female and male teachers of the study in *Life Satisfaction Scale (PIL)* scores of are presented herewith in table-3(a) and table-3(b) as well as figure-3.

Table-3(a): Group Statistics of Life Satisfaction Scores of Female and Male Teachers

Life Satisfaction Purpose in Life	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Purpose in Life	Female	234	104.58	13.046
	Male	363	108.16	13.453

Table-3(a) shows the group statistics of life satisfaction scores of female and male teachers. In PIL the mean of female and male teachers were 104.58 and 108.16 respectively; again the standard deviations were 13.046 and 13.453 respectively.

Figure-3 shows the bar diagram of means life satisfaction scores of female and male teachers.

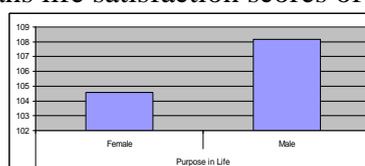


Figure-3: Bar Diagram of Means of Life Satisfaction Scores of Female and Male Teachers

Table-3(b): Results of Independent Samples Test of Gender Wise Comparison of Means of Life Satisfaction Scores of Teachers

Life Satisfaction		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purpose in Life	Equal variances assumed	0.505	0.477	-3.212	595	0.001
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.233	508.219	0.001

From table-3(b) it is observed that the two groups (female and male) differed (statistically) significantly in question of life satisfaction. In mean score of the male teachers was higher than their female counterparts.

4. Discussion

Table-3(a) exhibited the group statistics of life satisfaction scores of female and male teachers. In Purpose in Life test the mean of female and male teachers were 104.58 and 108.16 respectively. This result reflects that on an average the teachers of both genders were satisfied with their lives. Again, from table-34(b) it was observed that female and male teachers differed (statistically) significantly in question of life satisfaction; the mean score of the male teachers was higher than their female counterparts. This may show that the male teachers were more satisfied in their lives than their female counterparts.

5. Conclusion

In case of life satisfaction (Purpose in Life) 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. The male teachers were more satisfied in their lives than their female counterparts.

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