

Exploring the Dimensions of Life Satisfaction Among School Teachers: A Comprehensive Study

DEEPMALA MISHRA

Research Scholar,

DR. HARIKRISHNA A. PATEL

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,

KADI SARVA VISHWAVIDYALAY

SECTOR-15, GHANDHINAGAR-328015

ABSTRACT

The study entitled "Exploring Dimensions Influencing Life Satisfaction Among School Teachers: A Comprehensive Study," aimed to investigate various dimensions that impact life satisfaction. Findings: Within the field of education, life satisfaction holds paramount importance. A fully contented teacher can emerge as a valuable asset to society, contributing to the cultivation of responsible and well-rounded citizens, thereby fostering societal development. Furthermore, a teacher's personal sense of life satisfaction directly influences their teaching approach. When teachers experience satisfaction, they are more inclined to impart positive values and morals to their students, thus playing a pivotal role in shaping their personalities. Consequently, it can be asserted that if we aspire to nurture a population with a positive outlook, we must prioritize the satisfaction of teachers within our nation. Various past research endeavors underscore the significance of personal and environmental factors, along with their respective components, in influencing the life satisfaction of teachers.

KEY WORDS: Life Satisfaction, Dimensions of Life Satisfaction, Teachers

INTRODUCTION

We can define education as a systematic process through which an individual can acquire knowledge, experience and sound attitude. It helps in making individuals civilized. Therefore, it is an important means for a refined society. Its aim is to make individuals perfect by removing all social evils. Through education, we can solve any problem easily. Imagine how dark this world would have become, had it not been illuminated by the light of knowledge. In other words, we can say that civilization itself began with education which has now become an integral part of our lives. For the development of any society, education is the key element which assures the wellbeing and prosperity of the nation. While talking about education, it is necessary to mention that it is a lifelong process which starts with the birth of an individual and goes on till his last breath. It not only makes human beings moral but is also instrumental in the foundation of a civilized society. An educated person can give himself and the people around him a happy and content life. If we talk about education in India, it means the

development of its human resources. And what is a better way to transform a society than transforming the builders- that is the teachers. A teacher plays a very crucial role in the progress of the society. She plays a dual role in the society- in school by transforming the lives of the students and making them responsible citizens and outside school by working as social workers and agents of social change. It involves self-sacrifice for the society. Teachers are perfect role models for their students. Therefore, they must set right examples for the students to follow which include integrity and honesty. A teacher can only ensure an overall development of her pupils. Thus, education can only become effective if there is a personal touch between the teacher and her student

Teaching is the core of educational enterprise and a key to success for any individual. A qualified teacher can only deliver quality education to her students. Thus, efficient teachers play a direct role in creating responsible citizens and developed societies. Therefore, assuring the quality of teacher education has become the need of the hour. It is believed that teacher is to students as soul is to body. Therefore, it is essential to look after the mental health and moral qualities of teachers. This can only bring fruitful and desired results of teaching.

A teacher's behaviour and personality impacts the behaviour and personality of her students. She is source of motivation and enthusiasm for her students. On the other hand, a dissatisfied teacher can carry this negativity to her profession too. Thus, to have a happy environment in schools, a teacher has to be content and happy with her profession. Therefore, life satisfaction is the ultimate goal that we all try to achieve in our lives.

Being social animals, men always thrive to lead a harmonious life with fellow human beings. Man has proved himself as the supreme creation of God by his curiosity and hard work. He has made his life comfortable with various inventions. He has to himself all the luxuries of life. But in this age of Science and Technology, where he has gained and progressed so much, he has also increased his stress levels. Life has become so fast and to keep pace with the growing competitive world, man has started ignoring his physical as well as mental health. He has started taking various medicines to keep his stress level in control. The greatest philosophers and educationists from the past have suggested many ways to deal with all stressful situations of life. But people are looking for immediate solutions to their problems. The basic aim of every individual in today's world should be to focus on improving their lifestyle in terms of health and not money.

In this race to achieve more, man has completely started neglecting his health. So, we can say that the final goal for every individual is to achieve his goals which he thinks will lead to life satisfaction. We can sum it up by saying that life satisfaction is the ultimate goal of every human being because of which he has been ignoring all the other important things of life. He strives to achieve this goal throughout his life.

Life satisfaction is a multidimensional concept which can be related to psychological and environmental conditions of life. We can divide life satisfaction into two parts- life and satisfaction. Life is a very complex phenomenon to understand and live. A person lives his life according to his rules as well as the rules set by the society he is an integral part of. Life includes the cycle between birth and death. It is a struggle for survival and only the fittest will survive. Life is the state of functional activity peculiar to organize matter and especially to the portion of it such as, constituting on animal or plant before death (**Oxford Dictionary, 2005**)¹. Life is what one's thinking makes it, one makes it human or hell through one's thinking (**Bartlett, 1977**)². It is an object which directs us towards our goals. No life is possible without a goal.

The word satisfaction is a mental state after our goals and desires are fulfilled. It gives pleasure and motivates us to work harder and achieve more. Satisfaction is a Latin word which means to do enough or to make. **Webster's Encyclopaedic Dictionary of English Language**

(1977)³ defines it as an "act of satisfying or state of being satisfied, contentment in possession and enjoyment; and to satisfy is to gratify fully the wishes or desires of any to supply to the full extent, with what is wished for". In other words, the word satisfaction is defined as fulfilment of desires which lead to happiness and optimism. Satisfaction fully depends on an individual's environment, skill and behaviour. It deals more with the mental world rather than material world.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction is the realization of goals that are necessary to lead a healthy and prosperous life. Every individual sets some goals in his life and when these goals are achieved, he feels satisfied. Now the basic needs of life are not only confined to food, clothes and shelter. Man needs many facilities now to lead a comfortable and happy life. Life satisfaction is an attainment of a desired end and fulfilment of essential conditions (**Wolman, 1973**)⁴. Satisfaction in life does not lie in the length of days, but in the use, we make of them. A man may live long yet may get little from life. Thus, satisfaction in life does not depend on number of years, but on will (**Bartlett, 1986**)⁵.

Goldenson (1984)⁶ psychologically speaking satisfaction may occur on a conscious, preconscious and an unconscious level and brings an organism to a balanced state. Satisfaction with one's life means contentment or acceptance of one's life circumstances thereby fulfilling one's goals. The people who are often heard saying that life is meaningful are the people who have optimal life satisfaction.

As life satisfaction cannot be defined in a very simple and precise way, we have different definitions of life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction for **Sumner (1996)**⁷ is "A positive assessment of the circumstances of your life, a judgement that at least on balance, it measures up favourably against your level or expectations."

According to **Andrews (1974)**⁸ life satisfaction represents an overall criterion or ultimate outcome of human experience and knowledge. Life satisfaction is an assessment of the overall conditions of existence as derived from a comparison of one's aspiration to one's actual achievements (**George and Bearson, 1980**)⁹.

According to **Hamilton (1995)**¹⁰ in the Dictionary of Developmental Psychology, „life satisfaction is the degree of contentment with one's own life style. “ Life Satisfaction generally inferred the pleasure that a person gets from his/her **life (Telman and Unsal, 2004)**¹¹. Subjective thinking and objective components are vital for leading a satisfied and meaningful life. The three foundations of a satisfied life are-

- Establishing in depth relationships;
- Committing to projects and goals; and
- Using stories which place life in genuinely ultimate context.

Therefore, life satisfaction is a complex idea which includes one's adjustments in life and his attitude towards life. It also includes his perception and solution to different problems. **Harleen (2004)** opined that happiness enhances reasonable self-satisfaction. The three A's of happiness are achievement, acceptance and affection. So, it can be said that a person can be truly happy only when he gets appraisal for his work. He will then thrive to work hard and improve himself. Thus, an optimistic motivation and cheerful disposition towards life are the key components without which life satisfaction is not possible at all.

Objective of the Study

- **To Study about the Various Dimensions affecting Life Satisfaction of the Teachers.**

DIMENSIONS AFFECTING LIFE SATISFACTION

Wilson (1968)¹² believes that a man would be completely happy if he is satisfied in all aspects of life. Here he is talking about the life that satisfies all desires and gives pleasure. The desires which arise due to a number of behavioural actions related to overt, covert or environmental behaviour of a person. **Lio et.al. (1990)**¹³ analysed nine life satisfaction variables such as satisfaction with relations, hobbies, place of residence, satisfying life (happy or dull), health conditions, physical fitness and health and overall satisfaction with one's life situations. **Douthitt et.al. (1992)**¹⁴ reported that economic variable significantly influenced economic and non-economic domains of life. **Maynard (1993)**¹⁵ reported as the number of occupational roles increased, life satisfaction tended to decrease. **Cribb (2000)**¹⁶ found in his study the people become more satisfied with their lives, as they get older. As we grow older, we realize that majority of important things in life like work satisfaction, friendship, leisure etc cannot be bought.

Researchers have done a lot of work to identify the dimensions related to and influencing an individual's life satisfaction. These dimensions can be divided into the following two categories:

Personal Factors	Environmental Factors
(i) Satisfaction of Needs or Urges	i) Social Friendship
(ii) Education	ii) Physical
(iii) Nature of Job	iii) Good residential
(iv) Leisure Activities	iv) Occupational
(v) Marital Status	v) Community Environment
(vi) Sports Participation facility	
(vii) Positivity of Emotions	
(viii) Coping Abilities	
(ix) Mental & Physical Health facilities	
(x) Ego identity	
(xi) Financial/Economic status	
(xii) Personality	

PERSONAL FACTORS

(i) **Satisfaction of needs:** When our needs are not fulfilled, we become restless and dissatisfied.

There are various types of needs such as:

- Physiological needs which include food, clothing, dwelling & sex.
- Psychological needs which include self-esteem, attitude, social intelligence, mental health, anxiety, frustration, life skills and emotional stability.
- Social needs which include strong family support (satisfaction with spouse, with children and with rest of family), social participation, social factors affecting Life Satisfaction Personal Environmental support, social cognitive skills, family relationships, social status and other social outlets and affiliations.

(ii) **Education:** It has been observed that education plays a vital role in the life satisfaction of an individual. It kills all mental illusions thereby enhancing good thinking, skill and knowledge. It ultimately adds value to one's life.

(iii) **Nature of Job:** Life satisfaction also depends on an individual's Job role and job satisfaction in which he is engaged. Man, a social animal, needs some social recognition which would enhance his status and position in the society. Job is the most important factor in this which gives satisfaction to an individual. Abualrub (2008)¹⁷ defined that stress is the key component and have positive significant correlation with absenteeism and health problems.

(iv) **Leisure Activities:** Life satisfaction can also be achieved through various leisure activities that an individual is involved into. These activities might include anything from reading a book to travelling to going on picnics with family and friends etc. He does all these activities to relax his mind and body.

(v) **Marital Status:** As marriage is a social institution, every individual seeks an ideal life partner. It

gives satisfaction of sharing your life's joys and sorrows with your life partner. A successful marriage gives ultimate satisfaction to man.

(vi) **Sports Participation:** Sports also play an important role when it comes to life satisfaction. Participation or mere watching any sport can bring mental peace and work as a stress buster.

(vii) **Mental and Physical Health:** Life satisfaction is also related to personal health which includes both physical as well as mental health of an individual. A sound mind can give peace and happiness and this can be achieved through a sound body. For achieving a sound mind and sound body, a human being performs many activities like eating balanced diet and exercising regularly. All these things also give life satisfaction to an individual.

(viii) **Positivity of Emotions:** To achieve life satisfaction, a positive attitude towards life is equally important. As indicated by Diener (1984)¹⁸, Life Satisfaction speaks to the intellectual side of the people's emotional and mental goodness regarding their happiness.

(ix) **Coping Abilities:** Man adapts himself to different life situations and adjusts according to different conditions. Because of this unique quality, he can get more satisfaction than other living beings.

(x) **Ego Identity:** Every individual wants to establish his identity in the world. He wants to be heard and understood. If these things are denied, it leads to misery and unhappiness. Thus, finding due respect leads to life satisfaction too.

(xi) **Economic Status:** Satisfaction can also come if you have the ability to give yourself and your family good living conditions like a comfortable house and financial security.

(xii) **Personality of the Individual:** Admiration and acceptance in the society he lives also gives satisfaction to an individual.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The word Environment means our surroundings. It includes various psychological traits as well as good behaviour of an individual. If the environment is peaceful, it leads to a balanced life. Good relations with family, friends, neighbours etc also lead to life satisfaction. Without the help of environment by, no one could have had a satisfying life.

(i) **Social Circle/Friendship:** It includes satisfaction achieved by spending time with one's peers and family. "Life Satisfaction is a cognitive assessment of an underlying state thought to be relatively consistent and influenced by social factors" (Ellison et al. 1989)¹⁹.

(ii) **Physical/Geographical Environment:** This type of satisfaction is achieved from the geographical condition of the region in which an individual resides. For example: hill stations, plains, deserts, hot region etc.

(iii) Good Residential Facilities: This includes a comfortable house with all the facilities required for a comfortable life. These facilities include water, electricity, sewerage, road and good neighbourhood etc. are available.

(iv) Occupational Facilities: It includes facilities such as promotion, recognition, freedom, salary, job security, work itself, job status, friendliness of head, relationship with employees, achievement and working conditions etc. They all enhance life satisfaction.

(v) Community Environment: This is the satisfaction one achieves with community services such as trash collection, public transport, road conditions, public lights, neighbourhood safety and trust in local authorities.

IMPORTANCE OF LIFE SATISFACTION

We need life satisfaction for fulfilling our goals and various aspects of life. It is the dominance of positive over negative. It brings happiness and morality in our lives. It is the need of the hour. In today's stressful life, it plays a particularly important role as it brings in prosperity and peace. Life satisfaction refers to an individual's well-being, quality of life and happiness (Noone, 1998)²⁰. It's a state where one feels the ultimate pleasure which we all thrive to achieve all our lives. Without life satisfaction, there is disharmony and chaos in life. Life satisfaction includes our capacity to enjoy. Enjoyment of things will bring happiness. They are two sides of the same coin. It tells us the extent to which an individual feel that he is leading a happy and meaningful life. It can also help in knowing social problems thereby helping in finding their solutions. It is required to study social progress. We can eliminate many social problems by bringing in life satisfaction.

LIFE SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS

The pillar of any teaching process is the teacher. The progress and prosperity of the students are directly associated with the teacher. He alone can mould the students into good citizens. It is also believed that a teacher has to be a member of a holy order. Teachers create a very strong and long-lasting impact on the minds of the students which ultimately shapes and moulds their personalities. Therefore, it is very important for a teacher to be optimistic and satisfied. Lavingia (1979)²¹ stated that a teacher, who is happy with his work and finds satisfaction in his life, plays a pivotal role in the upliftment of society. A teacher's personality and behaviour can have paramount impact on the minds of his students. If the teacher is satisfied, he can do proper justice to his job. Only a friendly, energetic, optimistic and enthusiastic teacher can contribute positively to the well-being of his students.

Conclusion:

We can sum up by saying that life satisfaction in the field of education is more important than anything else. A fully satisfied teacher can become an asset to the society as he will create good and responsible citizens for the development of the society. A teacher's life satisfaction also has a direct impact on his

teachings. If he is satisfied, he will instil positive values and morals into his students which will help in shaping their personalities. Thus, we can say that if we want to have a population with positive outlook, we need to focus on the satisfaction of the teachers of that nation. Various past researches indicate that Personal and Environmental factors and their dimensions play an important role in Life Satisfaction of Teachers.

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