



A Comparative Study of Mental Health and Life Satisfaction among Rural and Urban Primary Teachers

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Abstract

The present study is directed to learn the association between mental health and life satisfaction among rural and urban area primary teachers. The study included 50 urban and 50 rural primary school teachers from the age group 35-45. Mental health inventory by Dr. Kamlesh Sharma and Life Satisfaction scale by Q. G. Alam and Ramji Shrivastav is used in the study. Statistical analysis included were Standard deviation and T scores to determine the levels of life mental health and satisfaction. The results indicated healthier levels of mental health and life satisfaction among urban primary teachers as compared to rural primary teachers. The primary factors for this differentiation include family environment, present social and economic standing.

**Keywords: Primary School Teachers, Mental Health, Life Satisfaction, Rural Population,
Urban Population.**

Introduction

Education for the most has been about the students, a lot of emphasis has been given to the wellbeing and nurturance of the pupils in education system; however, the same cannot be said about teacher, which is the second half part of the equation. To maintain and enhance the wellbeing of students, teacher's wellbeing should be considered as well. Life satisfaction is a criterion of wellbeing where individuals' satisfaction with oneself and relationships along with self-concept and one's self-perceived ability to cope with day-to-day challenges are assessed. This wellbeing and life satisfaction ultimately ensue mental health.

World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”(World Health Organization, 2004). Although mental health is a personal aspect, it is largely dependent on culture and social environment where the individual grows. Mentally healthy individuals typically have attributes like self-awareness, being even tempered and efficient coping mechanisms which play a key role in work satisfaction and maintaining work environment (Parkes, 1990).

Literature Review

Diener (1984) explains life satisfaction that as a cognitive component of subjective well-being and the cognitive assessment of an individual's life. The subjective wellbeing characterizes how an individual experiences their quality of life that comprises emotional reactions that includes frequent positive affect and infrequent negative affect (Busseri & Sadava, 2011).

As the teacher spends his most of his time at school or dealing with students and colleagues according to this the subjective wellbeing is inevitably dependent on the positive experiences that one receives/derives at work; according to this the subjective wellbeing is inevitably dependent on the positive experiences that one receives/derives at work.

The cognitive judgment denotes expressing thought, object representation and truth-apt (Hanna, 2004). The cognitive judgement is the satisfaction that one derives from the comparison

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of conditions that one faces by appraising it with relevant standards. The judgements are largely dependent by the comparing the present situation that one is in with the set of standards that individual has identified with, which are internal.

The life satisfaction is also largely determined by the results that an individual gets while comparing one's expectations over their achievements. Individuals positive beliefs and attitude towards oneself corresponds to the fact individual himself ascertain how one experience happiness. In brief individual determines the criteria to which one equates to. Thus, life satisfaction is not confined to just one aspect of individuals life, it can be a positive appraisal of individuals' complete life. When an individual asserts life satisfaction it also encompasses the work satisfaction.

Individuals spend a significant portion of their time at their workplace, being satisfied at workplace contributes to the wellbeing of an individual as well as develop positive attitudes toward one's job, this in turn contributes to individuals' wellbeing thus creating a positive cycle. Again, this work satisfaction may enhance life satisfaction but cannot replace it completely. Naturally then the question arises what are the components of life satisfaction. Appleton and Song (2008) states life satisfaction has six components – income level, occupation and social status, possessed possibilities and social mobility, welfare conditions, current government policy and environment, family and social relations; while Sneegas (1986) has professed health, age, income, marital status, perceived social competence and leisure participation as the components of life satisfaction. Another important aspect is the dynamic nature of the construct itself; the components of life satisfaction are subject to change according to individuals living condition and personal standards (Diener, 1984).

What factors play a role in life satisfaction among teachers? The study by Kumar (2014) identified life satisfaction as an auxiliary construct of subjective wellbeing i.e. happiness, composure and stability. It further stated adequate salary, working conditions and incentives play a prominent role in determining life satisfaction among teachers. Study by Shyim and Korb (2016) revealed job satisfaction and meaningful work were positively correlated suggesting improvement in work environment to enhance life satisfaction.

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Another important thing that needs to be considered is the mental health of the teacher, several studies have demonstrated that the teachers are likely to suffer from burnout; apart from the academic duties, the teacher has to perform non-academic duties that includes student assessment, appraisal etc. failure to meet the demands made upon him leads to immense stress (Dorman, 2003; Goddard, O'brien, & Goddard, 2006), another important aspect is the lack of support from both the administration and parents (Farber, 1982). Unfavorable school environment precipitates emotional exhaustion role conflict and depersonalization (Dorman, 2003; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, & Schwab, 1986) plays a prominent role in burnout thus affecting mental health. Reduced job satisfaction and short time spent on leisure contributed to the poor mental health among teachers also increasing the likelihood of having minor psychiatric disorders (MPD) (Nagai, Tsuchiya, Toulopoulou, & Takei, 2007).

Justification of study

Teachers play a significant role in shaping the society, their work determines how student's ethics and belief systems are built. Teachers carry non-academic responsibilities besides their academic work this puts enormous burden over them. The needs of teachers are not incidental they are as important as any other profession. The present study aims to determine the demographic characteristics that affect the mental health and life satisfaction levels among primary teachers.

Aim of the research

“Studying the mental health and life satisfaction among rural and urban primary teachers”

Study objectives

1. Study of mental health among urban primary school teachers.
2. Study of mental health among rural primary school teachers.
3. Study of life satisfaction among urban primary school teachers.
4. Study of life satisfaction among rural primary school teachers.
5. Comparative study of mental health among urban and rural primary teachers.

6. Comparative study of life satisfaction among urban and rural primary teachers.

Hypotheses

1. Urban primary teacher's mental health is higher than rural primary teachers.
2. Urban primary teacher's life satisfaction is higher than rural primary teachers.

Methodology

A) Sample

The study group composed of 50 urban and 50 rural primary school teachers (N=100) who were selected using purposive sampling. Teachers who were working full time were selected for the study from Sangli and Kolhapur district. Ratio maintained was 1:1 for urban and rural teacher.

B) Tools for data collection

1) Mental Health Battery:

Prepared by Dr. Kamlesh Shama (2009) was used. The test consists of a total of 60 questions and three options – 'Yes', 'Maybe' and 'No' for each answer are given to mark the response. The test contains 30 positive and 30 negative questions. For positive questions 2, 1, 0 answers are marked against the given three options similarly 0, 1, 2 answers are marked against negative question's response. The test-retest reliability is 0.86 and 0.88 and the validity of the test is 0.79.

2) Life Satisfaction Test:

Developed by Alam and Shrivastav (1983) was used. The test contains 60 questions each having two options of "Yes" and "No". For the assessment of the test "Yes" option is marked with '1' and "No" option is marked '0'. The reliability of the test is 0.84 and the validity is 0.74-0.84.

Statistical Analysis

The descriptive statistical analysis was performed, mean, standard deviation was calculated to determine mental health levels.

Table 1 – Showing mental health score of urban and rural area primary teachers.

Group	N	Mean	Df	SD	't' Value	Significance Level
Urban Primary Teachers	50	70.08	98	9.91	5.53	0.01
Rural Primary Teachers	50	59.9		8.47		

The mean score of primary teachers for mental health in urban areas is 70.08 and the standard deviation is 9.91 whereas in rural areas the mean score of primary teachers is 59.9 and standard deviation of 8.47. From the Table 1 it is inferred that 't' value is 5.53, which is significant at 0.01 level suggesting acceptance of research hypothesis that urban primary teacher's mental health is higher than to rural primary teachers.

Table 2 – Showing life satisfaction score of urban and rural primary teachers.

Group	N	Mean	Df	SD	't' Value	Significance Level
Urban Primary Teachers	50	50.8	98	7.18	4.83	0.01
Rural Primary Teachers	50	44.3		6.26		

The mean score of primary teachers for life satisfaction in urban areas is 50.8 and the standard deviation is 7.18 whereas in rural areas the mean score of primary teachers is 44.3 and standard deviation of 6.26. From the Table 2 it is inferred that 't' value is 4.83, which is significant at 0.01

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level suggesting acceptance of research hypothesis that urban primary teacher's life satisfaction levels are higher as compared to rural area primary teachers.

Mental health was higher among primary teachers from urban areas as compared to primary teachers from rural areas. Despite having uniform status of the job between the two, yet a substantial impact of the residing area of the job can be seen in the educators. In rural areas the number of teachers to be appointed is determined by the student's strength in the school, this puts additional burden over the teachers apart from their academic work leading to unpleasant work environment and burnout; both of which are determinants of life satisfaction. There is also a prevalent understanding among rural population that quality education lacks in rural area, to overcome this stigma the teachers put in more efforts in creating awareness and implementing educational policies resulting in more stress and reduced job satisfaction. Another aspect of being a teacher at rural area is sheer hardship caused due to lack of resources, example – availability of healthcare facilities, housing facilities, utility etc. at disposal as compared with their peers residing at urban area – factors affecting life satisfaction.

Conclusions:

1. The study revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the mental health levels among rural and urban primary teachers. The urban primary teachers have higher levels of mental health.
2. The study revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between the levels of life satisfaction among rural and urban primary teachers. The urban primary teachers have higher levels of life satisfaction than rural teachers.

Limitations

The following are some of the limitations in the present study.

1. The demographics of the target population in the study is limited.
2. Limited statistical analysis (descriptive statistics) was conducted on the collected data.

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3. Since the selection of the sample is purposive and is not accompanied by some sample selection method, the limitations of the sample were likely to have some consequences on the results.
4. Difference in the teaching/work experience of the subjects also has some impact on the scores of the administered test
5. Study comprised of only those teachers who were residing at their school/work premises.

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