



Life Satisfaction Of Teacher Educators In Relation To Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators in colleges affiliated with Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. A sample of 200 teacher educators (78% female and 22% male) was selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across gender while reflecting the gender distribution within the population. The research was guided by a correlational design, aiming to explore associations between life satisfaction and mental health levels and to examine gender-based differences in these dimensions. Data were collected using standardized scales for life satisfaction by Alam and Srivastava (2019), and mental health scale by Sharma (2009). The findings reveal significant differences in both life satisfaction and mental health scores between male and female teacher educators. Specifically, male teacher educators reported higher levels of life satisfaction than their female counterparts, indicating a potential influence of gender on perceived well-being in the teaching profession. Similarly, significant differences emerged in mental health levels, with variations observed across gender lines. Further analysis showed a strong positive correlation between life satisfaction and mental health among the entire sample, suggesting that teacher educators who report higher levels of life satisfaction tend to also experience better mental health. This relationship underscores the intertwined nature of life satisfaction and mental health, highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive and balanced work environment for educators. The study's findings contribute to the growing body of literature on teacher well-being and underscore the need for gender-sensitive mental health programs within educational institutions. The results encourage educational policymakers and institutions to consider mental health support and life satisfaction-enhancing measures as part of a holistic approach to teacher development.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, Relationship, Mental Health

Introduction

Life satisfaction and mental health are essential components of overall well-being, and they hold particular significance in the teaching profession, where educators face unique psychological demands and expectations. Teacher educators, as guides for future teachers, play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape and often navigate a range of professional challenges that impact their own mental health and life satisfaction. Studies have shown that teaching, especially at higher educational levels, involves high levels of stress, workload, and emotional investment, which can affect educators' mental health and, consequently, their satisfaction with life (Gupta & Kumar, 2010). Understanding the interplay between these factors among teacher educators is crucial, as it not only influences their personal well-being but also affects their teaching efficacy and professional longevity (Fisher, 2014). Examining the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health in this demographic can provide valuable insights into how work-related stresses impact teacher educators and highlight the need for well-being support systems in educational institutions.

Research suggests that life satisfaction and mental health are interlinked, with each having a profound impact on the other. High life satisfaction has been associated with better mental health outcomes, such as lower rates of anxiety and depression, improved emotional resilience, and a greater sense of personal accomplishment

(Diener & Chan, 2011). Conversely, poor mental health can decrease life satisfaction by diminishing one's ability to cope with stress and maintain a positive outlook (Keyes, 2005). Given the essential role that teacher educators play in preparing future generations of teachers, addressing these issues within this group is particularly relevant. This study aims to investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators in educational colleges, with a focus on identifying gender differences. The findings are anticipated to contribute to the development of strategies for enhancing mental health and life satisfaction in the education sector, thus supporting the professional and personal well-being of teacher educators.

Life Satisfaction: Life satisfaction refers to an individual's overall assessment of their quality of life according to their own chosen standards, reflecting a sense of fulfillment and contentment with personal, professional, and social experiences (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). For teacher educators, life satisfaction often encompasses satisfaction with their teaching roles, professional achievements, interpersonal relationships with colleagues and students, and work-life balance. Given the unique pressures and demands of teaching, including the responsibility of shaping future educators, life satisfaction for teacher educators is closely linked to feelings of purpose and accomplishment within their profession. This sense of satisfaction significantly influences their motivation, job performance, and overall mental well-being, making it a critical factor in fostering an effective and positive educational environment (Lyubomirsky, 2001).

Mental Health: Mental health is the state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, enabling individuals to cope with everyday stressors, work productively, and contribute meaningfully to their community (World Health Organization [WHO], 2004). For teacher educators, mental health is particularly crucial as it affects their ability to manage classroom demands, engage positively with students, and adapt to the dynamic challenges of the educational field. Good mental health not only supports resilience and effective stress management but also enhances interpersonal relations, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. In the context of teaching, where stress levels are often high, maintaining mental health is essential for ensuring that educators can meet their responsibilities with a sense of balance and satisfaction, which in turn contributes to their life satisfaction (Huppert, 2009).

Literature Review:

Numerous studies have investigated the intersection of life satisfaction and mental health, with a particular focus on gender differences. Study by Diener and Chan (2011) highlight that life satisfaction is closely linked to overall well-being, which has a direct impact on mental health outcomes. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) found that female educators often reported higher stress levels than their male counterparts, which impacted their overall life satisfaction and mental health. The study suggested that female teachers might experience unique stressors related to balancing work and family responsibilities, thereby impacting their mental health differently than males. Schutz and Lee (2014) revealed that women reported lower life satisfaction and higher stress levels due to the additional caregiving responsibilities outside work. Klassen and Chiu (2010) found female educators were more likely to report burnout and stress compared to their male counterparts, which they attributed to social and professional pressures that disproportionately affect women in educational fields. Van Droogenbroeck and Spruyt (2014) found that gender differences in life satisfaction were often tied to the distinct roles men and women occupy within and outside the educational profession. Male educators reported higher life satisfaction levels than females, likely due to different societal expectations and responsibilities. Antaramian et al. (2010) examined the correlation between life satisfaction and mental health in education, finding that positive mental health directly enhances life satisfaction, especially among female teachers who often face more external expectations. Warr (2018) revealed that female teachers often experience work-related mental health challenges that can diminish their life satisfaction, particularly when work expectations and personal life balance are strained.

Emergence of the Study: The study on life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators emerges from growing concerns over educator well-being, which directly influences educational quality and student outcomes. Teacher educators, as facilitators of knowledge and skill for future teachers, play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape. Their well-being, both in terms of mental health and life satisfaction, is crucial not only for their personal fulfillment but also for effective teaching performance and positive educational environments. Research suggests that the teaching profession is uniquely stressful due to high emotional and intellectual demands, and this can often lead to mental health issues such as burnout, anxiety, and depression, all of which can affect overall life satisfaction (Van Droogenbroeck & Spruyt, 2014). Consequently, examining how mental health and life satisfaction interrelate in teacher educators provides valuable insights into improving support systems within educational institutions. Moreover, the significance of exploring this relationship has been amplified by recent societal changes, including heightened job demands, changing student demographics, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have all placed additional strain on educators (Collie, 2021). These factors contribute to stress and mental health challenges that may influence life satisfaction levels, making it essential to understand the link between these two dimensions. Life satisfaction is often considered a key indicator of well-being and

resilience, which are particularly important in education due to its effect on teaching effectiveness and job retention (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). This study thus seeks to bridge the gap in research focused specifically on teacher educators, addressing how life satisfaction relates to their mental health and whether gender differences exist in these relationships.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There exists no significant difference in life satisfaction among male and female teacher educators.
2. There exists no significant difference in mental health among male and female teacher educators.
3. There exists no significant difference in life satisfaction among rural and urban teacher educators.
4. There exists no significant difference in mental health among rural and urban teacher educators.
5. There exists no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators.

Methodology

Research Method: The study employs a **correlational research design** to examine the relationships among life satisfaction, mental health, and gender among teacher educators.

Sample: A **stratified random sampling technique** was used to select participants, ensuring that both male and female teacher educators were represented proportionately. The sample consisted of 200 teacher educators, with 78% female and 22% male, reflecting the gender distribution within the colleges affiliated with Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

Tools Used:

1. Life satisfaction Scale (Alam & Srivastava, 2019)
2. Mental Health Scale (Sharma, 2009)

Interpretation and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: There exists no significant difference in life satisfaction among male and female teacher educators

To test hypothesis 1 and 2, Mean and S.D. of life satisfaction and mental health among male and female teacher educators with respect to gender and locale were calculated. The score of life satisfaction and mental health among male and female teacher educators have been described in terms of mean, S.D., and t-value in the table (1.1).

Table 1.1 Mean, S.D., and t-value of life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators with respect to gender and locale

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S. D	S. E _M	t- Value
Life Satisfaction	Male	44	77.57	10.95	1.65	3.65
	Female	156	70.64	11.32	0.91	
Mental Health	Male	44	80.09	10.60	1.59	5.38
	Female	156	69.76	11.41	0.91	

(Critical value 1.96 at 0.05 level and 2.58 at 0.01 level)

Table 1, the mean life satisfaction score for male teacher educators (N=44) is 77.57, with a standard deviation of 10.95 and a standard error of 1.65. In contrast, female teacher educators (N=156) have a mean life satisfaction score of 70.64, with a standard deviation of 11.32 and a standard error of 0.91. The t-value for the difference in life satisfaction scores between males and females is 3.65, which exceeds the commonly used critical value of 3.56 for a significance level of 0.01, indicating that the result is statistically significant. Since the t-value (3.65) is higher than the critical threshold, null hypothesis i.e **There exists no significant difference in life satisfaction among male and female teacher educators** is **rejected** and conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in life satisfaction between male and female teacher educators. This suggests that male teacher educators report higher life satisfaction compared to their female counterparts. Research has shown that life satisfaction can vary between genders due to different social, economic, and psychological factors. Studies like those by Diener and Suh (1999) highlight gender differences in well-being, with men often reporting higher life satisfaction in contexts where they may experience more professional autonomy. Additionally, Akin et al. (2011) found gender-related differences in life satisfaction among educators, citing role expectations and social support as possible factors contributing to these differences.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference in mental health among male and female teacher educators.

Table 1, male teacher educators (N=44) have a mean mental health score of 80.09, with a standard deviation of 10.60 and a standard error of 1.59. Female teacher educators (N=156) show a lower mean mental health

score of 69.76, with a standard deviation of 11.41 and a standard error of 0.91. The t-value for the difference in mental health scores between male and female teacher educators is 5.38, which is significantly above the threshold of 3.56 for statistical significance. Given that the t-value (5.38) exceeds the critical threshold, null hypothesis i.e **There exists no significant difference in mental health among male and female teacher educators is rejected** and conclude that there is a significant difference in mental health between male and female teacher educators. This finding suggests that male teacher educators report higher mental health levels compared to their female colleagues. Gender differences in mental health, particularly in high-stress professions like teaching, have been well-documented. Studies by World Health Organization (2001) suggest that female educators often report higher stress levels due to balancing multiple roles, which may impact their mental health. Additionally, Goldberg and Hillier (1979) found that women in caregiving roles are more susceptible to mental health challenges due to added family responsibilities. This is supported by Naghavi and Redzuan (2011), who demonstrated that gender and work-related stress significantly influence mental health disparities among educators.

Hypothesis 3: There exists no significant difference in life satisfaction among rural and urban teacher educators.

To test hypothesis 3 and 4, Mean and S.D. of life satisfaction and mental health among rural and urban teacher educators with respect to gender and locale were calculated. The score of life satisfaction and mental health among rural and urban teacher educators have been described in terms of mean, S.D., and t-value in the table 2.

Table 2 Mean, S.D., and t-value of life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators with respect to gender and locale

Variable	Locale	N	Mean	S. D	S. E _M	t- Value
Life Satisfaction	Rural	34	66.21	13.94	2.39	3.37
	Urban	166	73.39	10.68	0.82	
Mental Health	Rural	34	61.74	5.65	0.97	3.95
	Urban	166	70.74	13.07	1.01	

(Critical value 1.96 at 0.05 level and 2.58 at 0.01 level)

Table 2 depicts life satisfaction of rural teacher educators (N=34) had a mean score of 66.21 with a standard deviation of 13.94. The standard error of the mean (SEM) was 2.39. In contrast, urban teacher educators (N=166) had a higher mean life satisfaction score of 73.39, with a standard deviation of 10.68 and a SEM of 0.82. The calculated t-value for this comparison is 3.37, which is greater than the typical threshold for statistical significance (commonly set around 1.96 for a 95% confidence level or 2.58 for a 99% confidence level in a two-tailed test). This t-value indicates a significant difference in life satisfaction scores between rural and urban teacher educators. Since the t-value (3.37) exceeds the critical value, the null hypothesis i.e **There exists no significant difference in life satisfaction among urban and rural teacher educators is rejected**. Therefore, it is concluded that a significant difference exists, with urban teacher educators experiencing higher life satisfaction than their rural counterparts.

The difference in life satisfaction between urban and rural teacher educators may be attributed to various factors. Urban areas often offer better access to professional development resources, social networks, and recreational opportunities, which can positively impact life satisfaction. Rural educators may face challenges like limited access to resources, professional isolation, and fewer opportunities for personal and career growth, all of which can affect overall life satisfaction. Several studies support these findings. For instance, research by Kyriacou (2001) highlights that urban teachers often report higher levels of job satisfaction due to increased access to professional resources and community support networks. Similarly, a study by Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that urban teachers tend to have higher job satisfaction and life satisfaction levels compared to rural teachers, largely due to the enhanced professional opportunities and resources available in urban settings.

Hypothesis 4: There exists no significant difference in mental health among urban and rural teacher educators.

Table 2 depicts mental health of rural teacher educators (N=34) had a mean score of 61.74, with a standard deviation of 5.65 and a SEM of 0.97. Urban teacher educators (N=166) reported a higher mean mental health score of 70.74, with a standard deviation of 13.07 and a SEM of 1.01. The t-value for this comparison is 3.95, which is well above the threshold for statistical significance. This high t-value suggests a significant difference in mental health scores between rural and urban teacher educators. Since the t-value (3.95) exceeds the critical threshold, the null hypothesis that **There is no significant difference in mental health among urban and rural teacher educators is rejected**. The results indicate a significant difference, with urban teacher educators displaying better mental health outcomes than rural teacher educators.

The mental health disparity between urban and rural teacher educators may stem from differences in access to mental health resources, support networks, and work-related stressors. Urban areas often provide better healthcare facilities, including mental health services, and may offer greater peer and community support,

which can mitigate stress and enhance mental health. In contrast, rural educators may encounter additional stressors, such as professional isolation, fewer mental health resources, and unique community pressures, potentially affecting their mental health negatively. Research supports these conclusions. Schonfeld et al. (2015) found that teachers in rural areas often experience higher levels of stress and lower mental well-being due to the lack of available mental health resources and support. Similarly, Farmer et al. (2012) noted that limited healthcare access in rural settings contributes to disparities in mental health outcomes between urban and rural populations, including teachers.

Hypothesis 5: There exists no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators.

To test this hypothesis, the score of coefficient of correlation of teacher effectiveness and meta cognitive ability of prospective teachers have been shown in the table 3.

Table 3: Coefficient of correlation between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators

Variable	Life Satisfaction	Mental Health
Life Satisfaction	1	0.78
Mental Health	0.78	1

The table 3 provides the correlation values between the variables "Life Satisfaction" and "Mental Health" among teacher educators. The correlation coefficient between life satisfaction and mental health is 0.78. This coefficient suggests a strong positive correlation between the two variables. A correlation of 0.78 indicates that higher levels of life satisfaction are associated with better mental health, and conversely, lower life satisfaction correlates with poorer mental health. Given the strong correlation coefficient (0.78), the null hypothesis that claims **There exists no significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health is rejected**. With such a high correlation, it is unlikely that the relationship observed is due to random chance. Diener et al. (2003) discuss the concept of subjective well-being, where life satisfaction is a critical component, and its association with mental health. They found that individuals with higher life satisfaction experience lower levels of depression and anxiety, supporting the current findings. Additionally, research by Keyes (2002) emphasizes that life satisfaction and positive mental health are closely interlinked, as individuals with high life satisfaction tend to have higher resilience and psychological well-being. Studies on educators specifically, such as those by Klassen and Chiu (2010), show that life satisfaction is a strong predictor of mental health among teachers. Teachers reporting higher satisfaction with their lives are found to experience fewer burnout symptoms and lower stress, which contributes positively to their mental health. Hakanen et al. (2006) also highlight that life satisfaction buffers against burnout, which is a significant factor in the mental health of teachers. This suggests that improving life satisfaction among teacher educators could directly enhance their mental health.

Findings of the Study

1. There exists significant difference in life satisfaction among male and female teacher educators.
2. There exists significant difference in mental health among male and female teacher educators.
3. There exists significant difference in life satisfaction among rural and urban teacher educators.
4. There exists significant difference in mental health among rural and urban teacher educators.
5. There exists significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators.

Educational Implications

Based on the findings of this study, which reveal significant differences and relationships in life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators, there are several valuable educational implications:

1. Gender-Sensitive Interventions

- **Life Satisfaction and Mental Health Support:** The significant differences in life satisfaction and mental health between male and female teacher educators highlight the need for gender-sensitive programs. Tailored workshops, counseling sessions, and peer support groups could address the unique stressors and challenges that male and female educators face. Providing gender-specific support can lead to improved well-being, job satisfaction, and ultimately, better teaching outcomes.
- **Encouragement of Work-Life Balance:** Since life satisfaction plays a critical role in job performance, schools and educational institutions could promote flexible policies and support systems that encourage work-life balance, catering differently to the needs of male and female educators.

2. Customized Support for Rural and Urban Educators

- **Targeted Programs Based on Location:** The differences in life satisfaction and mental health between rural and urban teacher educators suggest that location-based factors, such as resource availability, commuting challenges, or social support networks, impact well-being. Schools and districts could design location-specific

initiatives, such as community-building activities in rural areas or stress-management resources in urban environments, to enhance life satisfaction and mental health for educators in various settings.

- **Resource Allocation and Professional Development:** Rural educators often face limited access to resources and professional growth opportunities, affecting both job satisfaction and mental health. Increased access to professional development, training, and technology for rural educators could help bridge this gap and improve their overall satisfaction and mental well-being.

3. Promotion of Mental Health Programs

- **School-Based Mental Health Initiatives:** The study's findings underscore the critical link between life satisfaction and mental health among teacher educators. Educational institutions should prioritize mental health initiatives as part of their organizational structure. This could include regular mental health screenings, access to mental health professionals, and wellness programs to support educators in maintaining their mental well-being, which in turn positively impacts their life satisfaction and teaching quality.

- **Reducing Stigma and Encouraging Openness:** By fostering an open environment around mental health, schools can help reduce stigma, making educators feel more comfortable seeking support when needed. Schools could provide resources and hold mental health awareness sessions, making it easier for educators to address their needs without hesitation.

4. Enhancing Teacher Support Systems

- **Establishing Peer Support Networks:** Given the significant relationship between life satisfaction and mental health, having a reliable network of peers can provide a strong buffer against work-related stressors. Schools can facilitate peer support programs where educators can share experiences, discuss challenges, and provide mutual encouragement.

- **Mentorship and Collaboration Opportunities:** Encouraging mentorship relationships between experienced and newer educators can foster a supportive environment, helping improve life satisfaction and mental health for all educators. This collaborative culture can lead to a more positive, cohesive educational community.

5. Focus on Teacher Retention and Quality Education

- **Addressing Well-Being to Reduce Turnover:** High life satisfaction and good mental health are essential for retaining teachers. When educators feel supported and satisfied with their lives and jobs, they are more likely to remain in their positions, reducing turnover. Lower turnover contributes to a more stable and productive learning environment for students.

- **Impact on Student Outcomes:** Teachers with high life satisfaction and strong mental health are more engaged and effective in the classroom, directly benefiting student learning and outcomes. By implementing policies that support educator well-being, schools can enhance overall educational quality, leading to better academic performance and positive school culture.

These educational implications underscore the importance of a holistic approach in supporting teacher educators' life satisfaction and mental health. By prioritizing their well-being, educational institutions can not only improve educators' personal and professional lives but also foster a more effective, resilient, and motivated teaching force, ultimately benefiting the entire educational ecosystem.

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