

Determination of Life Quality in Primary School and High School Teachers of Gorgan – Iran

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aimed at determination of life quality in primary school and high school teachers of Gorgan – Iran. Sample volume was assigned by use of Morgan table. Data were gathered by WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire which determines four areas (i.e. physical health, mental health, social relations, and environmental health). After evaluation of the mean scores, it was found that master-bearing primary school teachers have higher levels of physical and mental health than bachelor-bearing primary school teachers. However, the reverse is true about social relations and environmental health. Also, it was found in primary school teachers that <30 years old teachers gained better mean scores in all areas except for physical health area where 35-30 years old teachers gained higher mean score. But, in high school teachers, 35-30 years old teachers gained better mean scores in all areas except for social relations where <30 years old teachers had better mean score. No significant difference was detected in the areas of life quality ($p>0.05$).

KEYWORDS: life quality, primary school, high school, Gorgan

1- INTRODUCTION

School is one of the most important organized and social centers which provides a basis for improvement of physical and mental health of children and make them more responsible toward their family and society. The main prerequisite for this goal is provision of teachers' health. It is clear that a depressed, dejected, disappointed, physically-impaired, or stressed teacher cannot provide happiness, freshness, security, and consistency in classroom and educational environment.

Nowadays, teachers not only are exposed to various stressors of social, economic, cultural, and family environment but also cope with several occupational stressors. Increasing affection, safety, and self-respect in teachers may be effective in both self-actualization and directing students and improving teachers' life quality may be very effective in efflorescence and development of future generation.

Quality of life has no single uniform definition. Cummins (1997) summarized 60 quality of life definitions. Hughes and Hwang (1996) analyzed 87 studies on what constitutes quality of life and identified 44 definitions. A group of international researchers who have done primary research on quality of life in the field of intellectual disabilities developed a consensus related to the conceptualization measurement and application of quality of life (The Special Interest Research Group on Quality of Life, 2000). They underscored that the key characteristics of all definitions are (a) general feelings of well-being, (b) feelings of positive social involvement, and (c) opportunities to achieve personal potential. Indeed, researchers have agreed that quality of life is multidimensional and includes both subjective and objective dimensions [6].

Working conditions have an impact on overall life satisfaction through perceptions of the quality of working life. It influences life satisfaction through changing characteristics (interests, energy level, mood, personality, health etc.) of the person and the environment. Quality of life is defined as individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept, incorporating in a complex way individual's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs, and their relationships to salient features of the environment. This definition highlights the view that quality of life is subjective, includes both positive and negative facets of life and is multidimensional [7].

Quality of life, which has gained prominence in social research study since the 1970s, is a broad concept concerned with overall well-being within society. Its aim is to enable people, as far as possible, to achieve their goals and choose their ideal lifestyle. In that sense, the quality of life concept goes beyond the living conditions approach, which tends to focus on the material resources available to individuals. The term "Quality of Life" relates to the description and evaluation of the nature or conditions of life of people in a certain country or region. Quality of life is formed by exogenous factors, with respect to an individual or a social group, forces like production technology, infrastructure, relations with other groups or countries, institutions of the society, natural

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environment, and also by endogenous factors including interaction within the society and values of a person or a society [5].

Life quality is a broad concept and is complexly related to physical health, psychological status, independence level, social relations, and personal beliefs as well as relationships with prominent environmental factors. Therefore, the present paper aimed at determination of life quality in primary school and high school teachers of Gorgan – Iran.

2- METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive correlation where life quality and demographic variables of primary school and high school teachers of Gorgan. The community was composed of all primary school and high school teachers. Sample volume was assigned by use of Morgan table. Data were gathered by WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire which determines four areas (i.e. physical health, mental health, social relations, and environmental health) by 24 questions (7, 6, 3, and 8 questions for each area, respectively). There are also 2 more questions determining life quality and health as a whole. Therefore, the questionnaire is composed of 26 questions. After calculations, a 4-20 score was given to each area where 4 stands for the worst and 20 stands for the best status of that area. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire had been approved by Nejat et al. necessary certificates were acquired from education head office of Golestan Province for gathering data. To provide uniformity for data collection, the questionnaires were distributed in teachers' break time. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS Software version 16.

3- RESULTS

210 and 175 high school and primary school teachers were randomly selected from 457 and 318 teachers of Gorgan according to Morgan table. Table 1 shows life quality of primary school teachers in terms of their university degree.

Table 1: mean scores of life quality in terms of university degree in primary school teachers
(score between 4 and 20)

	Bachelor degree (SD)	Master degree (SD)
Physical health	(2.16)14.80	(2.28)16.00
Mental health	(2.81)13.41	(1.76)13.50
Social relations	(2.29)9.81	(2.40)9.16
Environmental health	(2.31)13.12	(3.72)10.66

As it can be seen, master-bearing teachers have better score than bachelor-bearing ones in physical health. This stands for mental health as well so that mental health score for bachelor-bearing teachers is 13.41 (SD=2.81) while it is 13.50 (SD=1.76) for master-bearing teachers. However, the scores for social relations and environmental health in bachelor-bearing teachers are higher than those gained by master-bearing teachers.

Table 2 shows scores of life quality in primary school teachers in terms of their age group. As it can be seen from the table, scores of mental health decrease with age so that the mean score in <30 years old is 16.33 (SD=1.03) while it is 13.00 (SD=2.23) in >35 years old. The same trend can be detected in the scores of social relations and environmental health.

Table 2: mean scores of life quality in terms of age (years old) in primary school teachers
(score between 4 and 20)

	<30 (SD)	35-30 (SD)	>35 (SD)
Physical health	(1.17)13.83	(2.02)15.93	(1.21)15.41
Mental health	(1.03)16.33	(2.12)14.21	(2.23)13.00
Social relations	(1.26)12.00	(1.99)9.85	(1.60)9.71
Environmental health	(1.03)15.33	(2.20)13.64	(2.50)12.43

Table 3 shows the mean scores of life quality in terms of university degree in high school teachers of Gorgan. As it is evident, master-bearing high school teachers gained higher scores than bachelor-bearing ones in all areas of life quality. For instance, the mean score for physical health for bachelor-bearing teachers is 14.50 (SD=3.21) while it is 15.08 (SD=2.86) for master-bearing teachers. In addition, the mean scores for mental health, social relations, and environmental health for bachelor-bearing high school teachers are 13.44 (SD=3.19), 9.00 (SD=2.17), and 12.74 (SD=3.38), respectively while the scores for master-bearing high school teachers are 14.43 (SD=3.41), 9.69 (SD=2.22), and 13.39 (SD=2.93), respectively.

Table 3: mean scores of life quality in terms of university degree in high school teachers (score between 4 and 20)

	Bachelor degree (SD)	Master degree (SD)
Physical health	(3.21)14.50	(2.86)15.08
Mental health	(3.19)13.44	(3.41)14.43
Social relations	(2.17)9.00	(2.22)9.69
Environmental health	(3.38)12.74	(2.93)13.39

Table 4 shows the mean scores of life quality in terms of age in high school teachers of Gorgan. As it can be seen, the mean scores in the areas physical health, mental health, and environmental health are higher in 35-30 years old while the mean score in the area social relations is higher in <30 years old.

Table 4: mean scores of life quality in terms of age (years old) in high school teachers (score between 4 and 20)

	<30 (SD)	35-30 (SD)	>35 (SD)
Physical health	(1.34)14.23	(2.66)15.30	(3.07)14.69
Mental health	(2.87)14.17	(2.41)14.60	(3.40)13.90
Social relations	(2.54)16.35	(1.33)10.00	(2.44)8.72
Environmental health	(1.34)13.24	(1.83)14.40	(2.95)12.36

Table 5: comparison of the mean scores in the areas physical health, mental health, social relations, and environmental health between primary school and high school teachers of Gorgan in terms of university degree and age group

	Bachelor degree	Master degree	<30	35-30	>35
Physical health	P=0.51	P=0.47	P=0.36	P=0.51	P=0.71
Mental health	P=0.95	P=0.52	P=0.84	P=0.68	P=0.50
Social relations	P=0.04	P=0.61	P=0.54	P=0.84	P=0.31
Environmental health	P=0.43	P=0.06	P=0.46	P=0.38	P=0.95

4- DISCUSSION

The present study was formulated to determine different dimensions of life quality in primary school and high school teachers of Gorgan in terms of university degree and age. After evaluation of the mean scores, it was found that master-bearing primary school teachers have higher levels of physical and mental health than bachelor-bearing primary school teachers. However, the reverse is true about social relations and environmental health. In high school, the mean scores gained by master-bearing teachers are higher in all areas; this is in agreement with the results obtained by previous studies [5, 6, 9, 10]. Also, a significant difference was detected between bachelor-bearing primary and high school teachers only in social relations ($p<0.05$) and no significant difference was seen in other areas between primary and high school teachers ($p>0.05$).

In determination of life quality areas in primary school teachers in three different age groups (i.e. <30, 35-30, and >35 years old), it was found that <30 years old teachers gained better mean scores in all areas except for physical health area where 35-30 years old teachers gained higher mean score. But, in high school teachers, 35-30 years old teachers gained better mean scores in all areas except for social relations where <30 years old teachers had better mean score.

Also, in determination of the mean scores in primary school and high school teachers in different age groups, no significant difference was detected in the areas of life quality ($p>0.05$). This indicates that teachers' age in both primary and high schools has no significant effect on their life quality; this is consistent with what Feizi et al. concluded.

Difficulty in reaching teachers in different grades in a same condition can be named as a limitation of the present study. It is recommended for future studies that such works are done in such broader levels as province or even country. Also, it is suggested to determine effects of such other factors as income level, gender, and etc. on life quality areas for teachers. Furthermore, as the mean scores gained by >35 years old teachers are lower than two other age groups, authorities are recommended to lead special plans in order to increase life quality level of teachers especially in higher ages so that the teachers can perform their tasks to educate future generation in a better manner.

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