

Life Attitude of Master Students

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ABSTRACT

Many choices and decisions in a person's life are related to their life attitude. At a young age when many significant life decisions are made, one's life attitude is a crucial indicator. Therefore, it is desirable to study modern youth's life attitudes using reliable means. This study examines the differences in life attitudes by area, gender, and field of study among a total of 249 master's students, comprising 104 urban and 145 rural participants. The LAP-R scale, developed by T. Reker, assessed these attitudes. A 2 x 4 factorial design, focusing on area and field of study, comprehensively explores life attitudes, including the composite scales of the Personal Meaning Index and Existential Transcendence, as well as, t-test was used to examine six dimensions: Purpose, Coherence, Choice/Responsibility, Death Acceptance, Existential Vacuum, and Goal Seeking. Master's students' life attitude in general can be considered to reflect positively on their purpose, choice, responsibilities, death, and existences. In terms of area and gender, there were only slight differences without significance. Composite scales of the Personal Meaning Index and Existential Transcendence in Life Attitude have differences in the field of study.

Keywords: *Master students, Urban, Rural, Gender, Field of study, Life attitude*

Life attitude is important in daily and lifelong activities, such as determining one's role in society and life goals, choosing one's lifestyle, and one's views. The global world gives individuals freedom of choice, and to that extent, individuals need to be responsible. Life attitude is shaped by family, tradition, customs, religion, lifestyle, and social status, but modern globalization, is universal education. Despite technological development altering the attitudes of individuals in today's society, it is no secret that traditional values remain strong in rural areas. Therefore, it is important to study whether there are differences in how students from urban and various rural areas approach life. Because postgraduate education aims to help students understand the value of life, set goals, solve problems at a personal level, gain a deeper understanding of life and themselves, overcome weaknesses, and strive for meaningful pursuits, regardless of where they live. This permits them to enjoy a purposeful life, and it cannot be doubted that it is one of the aims of existence for them.

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The creator of the theory regarding life attitude is Viktor Frankl. He formulated this in light of the meaning of life, attitude research, and some observations that he came across. Frankl (1946) proposed the idea that the meaning of life, the search for it, setting goals, making choices, taking responsibility for one's life, and one's attitude towards death determine how happy, healthy, and creative a person can live. In suffering there is a choice, and in death there is the meaning, and living with purpose, being responsible, and leading a meaningful life depends on one's attitude towards life. (Frankl, 1946).

In this society, the values and perspectives of master's students are a very important subject for investigation of their educational processes, vocational careers, personality traits, and the psychological predictors that affect them. This literature review study will seek to establish how master students' life attitudes transform with regard to their learning, social existence, and the future. Life attitude is closely linked to education. Some studies indicate that the successful learning of master's students is influenced not only by academic abilities but also by a positive life attitude (Smith, 2020). These students are more resilient and motivated to achieve their life goals with a positive attitude (Johnson, 2019). Professional Master's programs demand the ability to work under conditions of stress, and impact the life attitudes. Mentally upright students definitely perform well when it comes to stress management and dealing with tension (Martin & Jones, 2017). Master's students' social contacts and the accessibility of the needed social support is an important element determining life attitudes. Besides, a good social analysis shows that social networks of these students and their peers have a positive impact on their lives (Garcia, 2016). According to van Rensburg (2016), students that have a self-support system experience improved life attitudes as stated by Walker (2015). Perception of life is connected with future professional aspirations. Certain research shows that students enrolled in master's programs who have proper attitude towards job market and avenues with better defined objectives tend to achieve more better results (Harrison, 2021). Prospective students with a positive approach tend to compete or conquer professional hurdles successfully (Kim, 2019).

Objectives

To study the life attitude of master's students. The following questions were explored in the research:

1. Whether master's students' life attitudes positive or negative?
2. Are there any significant differences in master's students' area, gender, and field of study?

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference between area (urban & rural), gender (male & female), and field of study (science, social science, humanities & commerce) on composite scales and subdimensions of Life Attitude among master's students. There is no interaction effect of Area and Field of study on composite scales of Life Attitude among master's students.

METHODOLOGY

Sample: Participants in this research were master students from Anand district in four scientific fields which are humanities (N=65), social science (N=68), science (N=65), and commerce (N=56). The sample was divided by gender (104 male and 150 female), and area (urban 107 and rural 147). The age range was 20-26 years. Mean age and SD=21.87±1.007. Out of the 290 students randomly selected, 233 participants completely filled out the paper-based questionnaire. Additionally, 16 participants left only 1-2 questions unanswered. Thus, the data from a total of 249 participants was used for processing.

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Method

The study utilized a 2 x 4 factorial design to analyze the area and field of study for the ANOVA summary.

Tool

The LAP-R scale, developed by T. Reker, comprehensively examines attitudes towards life, including Purpose (PU), Coherence (CO), Choice/Responsibility (CR), Death acceptance, (DA), Existential vacuum (EV), and Goal-seeking (GS). The LAP-R is a 48-item self-report multidimensional measure of discovered meaning and purpose in life and motivation to find meaning and purpose in life. Each item on the LAP-R is rated on a 7-point Likert scale of agreement (1-7), ranging from "strongly agree" (7) to "strongly disagree" (1). Gary T. Reker scored and profiled the LAP-R based on six dimensions and two composite scales the Personal Meaning Index (scores 16 - 112) and Existential Transcendence (scores -80 - 208). Scale scores of subdimensions range from 8 to 56 and (the average score is 32) respectively (Reker 1990). Reliability is $R=0.70$, Validity is LAP-R; $\alpha=0.84$, are subdimensions; PU ($\alpha=0.73$), CO ($\alpha=.68$), CR ($\alpha=0.62$), DA ($\alpha=0.76$), EV ($\alpha=0.63$), and GS ($\alpha=0.67$).

RESULTS

The Personal Meaning Index (Purpose + Coherence) focuses on personal meaning and Existential Transcendence ((Purpose + Coherence + Choice/Responsibility + Death Acceptance) - (Existential Vacuum + Goal Seeking)) is a global measure of attitude towards life. (Reker, 1992). According to Reker; a high total score on the composite scales and each dimension reflects a high degree of the attribute in question (Reker, 1992).

Composite scale of Personal Meaning Index (PMI) in Life Attitude

Table 1. Mean differences of PMI on Area and Field of study (2x4)

Independent variable		N	Mean score	Mean difference
Area	Urban	104	89.12	0.26
	Rural	145	88.87	
Field of study	Humanities	64	86.67	H&SS = 0.54 ^{NS} H&S = 4.54* H&C = 4.23* SS&S = 3.99 ^{NS} SS&C = 3.68 ^{NS} S&C = 0.31 ^{NS}
	Social Science	65	87.21	
	Science	65	91.21	
	Commerce	55	90.90	

*Level of significant; * = $p \leq 0.05$; ** = $p \leq 0.01$; NS = Not significant*

Table 1 shows the mean scores of composite scales of the Personal Meaning Index in Life Attitude for a total sample of 249 participants, broken down by Area and Field of study along with the mean differences.

Table 2. ANOVA Summary of PMI on Area and Field of study (2x4)

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Level of significant
Area	3.83	1	3.83	0.30	0.863
Field of study	1020.47	3	340.16	2.64*	0.050
Area*Field of study	322.78	3	107.59	0.84	0.476
Error (SSW)	31042.92	241	128.81		
Total (SST)	32516.49	248	***		

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With a total of 249 participants, the ANOVA summary of the composite scale of the Personal Meaning Index in Life Attitude presents significant data using a 2 x 4 factorial design.

Composite scale of Existential Transcendence (ET) in Life Attitude

Table 3. Mean differences of ET on Area and Field of study (2x4)

Independent variable		N	Mean score	Mean difference
Area	Urban	97	102.41	3.14 ^{NS}
	Rural	136	99.28	
Field of study	Humanities	59	94.48	H&SS = 6.34 ^{NS}
	Social Science	61	100.83	H&S = 9.55*
	Science	62	104.03	H&C = 9.55*
	Commerce	51	104.03	SS&S = 3.21 ^{NS} SS&C = 3.21 ^{NS} S&C = 0.002 ^{NS}

Level of significant; * = $p \leq 0.05$; ** = $p \leq 0.01$; NS = Not significant

Table 3 presents mean scores of composite scales of Existential Transcendence in Life Attitude for a total sample of 249 participants, broken down by Area and Field of study along with the mean differences.

Table 4. ANOVA Summary of ET on Area and Field of study (2x4)

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Level of significant
Area	543.04	1	543.04	1.24	0.266
Field of study	3380.06	3	1126.69	2.59	0.055
Area*Field of study	905.85	3	301.95	0.69	0.558
Error (SSW)	98326.14	225	437.01		
Total (SST)	103814.50	232	***		

With a total of 233 participants, the ANOVA summary of the composite scale of Existential Transcendence in Life Attitude presents significant data using a 2 x 4 factorial design. According to the explanation in the methodology section, data from 233 out of the 249 participants was used in the analysis.

According to the explanation in the methodology section, data from 233 out of the 249 participants was used in the analysis in Table 3,4.

Subdimensions of Life Attitude

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and difference of subdimensions area (urban and rural), by gender (male and female), and field of study (humanities, social, science, and commerce).

Subdimensions	N	Scores		Gender	Area	Scientific field
		Mean	Std. D	t	t	F
Purpose	249	45.0	6.75	0.52 ^{NS}	0.07 ^{NS}	1.14 ^{NS}
Coherence	245	43.84	6.17	1.77 ^{NS}	1.06 ^{NS}	4.60 ^{NS}
Choice/ Responsibility	249	46.12	6.19	0.84 ^{NS}	1.95*	2.74*
Death Acceptance	247	41.21	8.77	0.95 ^{NS}	0.49 ^{NS}	0.62 ^{NS}
Existential Vacuum	246	38.18	7.13	0.27 ^{NS}	0.68 ^{NS}	1.13 ^{NS}
Goal Seeking	244	43.58	5.89	0.95 ^{NS}	0.08 ^{NS}	0.38 ^{NS}

Level of significant ** = $p \leq 0.01$, * = $p \leq 0.05$, NS = Not significant

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This table shows the mean scores and Standard Deviation of attitude towards life of master students, as well as shows the mean, standard deviation, t value, and significant level in reflection with gender and area of participants.

DISCUSSION

Master's students' attitudes towards life in general can be considered positive and tendency to be optimistic according to the guidelines of scale.

The Personal Meaning Index, which includes aspects such as having life goals, a sense of direction from past, present, and future, and a logically integrated and consistent understanding of oneself, others, and life in general (Reker, 1992), the mean scores of various groups are higher than the average score, and there is no difference of mean scores between area. Whereas, there are various differences between the scientific fields of master students. There are differences in mean with a statistically significant level of $p \leq 0.05$ between Humanities and Science (H&S = 4.54*) and Humanities and Commerce (H&C = 4.23*). However, notable distinctions were observed between Social Science and Science (SS&S = 3.99^{NS}), and Social Science and Commerce (SS&C = 3.68^{NS}), although the differences are not statistically significant. Whereas, there is no statistical difference between Humanities and Social Science and Science and Commerce. As shown in Table 3, there is no statistically significant difference in area, although, the field of study shows a difference in area the interaction between area and field of study does not affect the Personal Meaning Index.

The Existential Transcendence is a global measure that the motivation to find purpose and a new perspective on life, has internalized successes, and views life as inevitable and meaningful (Reker, 1992), there are various differences between scientific fields of master students. There are differences in mean with a statistically significant level of $p \leq 0.05$ between Humanities and Science (H&S = 9.55*) and Humanities and Commerce (H&C = 9.55*). However, a notable difference was observed between Humanities and Social Science (H&SS = 6.34^{NS}), it is not statistically significant. As well as, although minor differences exist between Social Science and Science (SS&S = 3.21^{NS}), and Social Science and Commerce (SS&C = 3.21^{NS}) these differences are not statistically significant. The science and commerce scored the same.

1. Purpose (PU); refers to having life goals, having a mission in life, having a sense of direction from the past, in the present, and toward the future (Reker, 1992). This mean score of 45.02 with the sample comprises those participants who have responded very much to the Purpose subdimension. According to Johnson et al (2018), life attitudes of master's students would be shaped by their perception of their career progression. The study instruments included positive life attitudes and clarity of indicative career paths. The study by Shin et al. (2018) revealed how master's programs affect students' choices of careers, and how they view life.
2. The mean number of items endorsed by the overall sample was 43.88 out of 100 attributed moderately to coherence which is a logically integrated punched and consistent analytical and intuitive comprehension self, others, and life (Reker, 1992). However, they greatly represent Coherence, the area, the gender, and the scientific field showed no differences. Martinez et al. (2013) identified an analysis of balancing multifaceted students' commitments to master's degree program, focusing on the problems and solutions.

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3. Choice/Responsibility is freedom to choose all minor and major life decisions, assuming responsibility, self-determination, and inner regulation of the life situation (Reker, 1992). It, the mean score of them was 46.17 had above-average. The variations are significant at the 0.05 level of significance in the areas (rural 45.55, SD 6.79 and urban 47.07, SD 5.01) as well as fields of study (Humanities, social sciences, Science, commerce $p \leq 0.05$). Freedom and accountability reflect the life attitudes of the master's students as far as they choose their further paths and become more responsible for their choices and actions both in their academic and personal lives. In this case, Yan, & Berliner (2013) examined cultural contextualism to determine the impact of cultural background on the perception of choice and responsibility in academic and life domains. Arhcer (2008) identified that students who are at master's level feel more responsible when more choices are offered regarding learning activities. The formerly mentioned autonomy was beneficial as it promoted improved motivation and levels of engagement.
4. The mean score of master's towards Death Acceptance, Death Acceptance is the absence of fear and anxiety regarding death and acceptance of death as part of the life cycle (Reker, 1992) is 41.21. It has shown that there is not any substantial alteration in area, gender, and field of study. Graduate student's death anxiety, death acceptance, and academic performance were examined in a study by Niemiec and Schulenberg (2011) who hypothesized that death acceptance enhances academic engagement.
5. Existential Vacuum is a sense of life having a lack of meaning in life, lack of goals, lack of direction, boredom, apathy, or feelings of indifference. (Reker, 1992). Although, the mean score of 38.18 is lower than other subdimensions, it is higher than the average. The study suggests that a lower existential vacuum score indicates a more positive life attitude and a fuller understanding of life's meaning. However, a higher-than-average score shows some feelings of life's meaninglessness. Existential Vacuum is not abnormal but reflects changing values in modern society, indicating a loss of personal identity and initiative. These reverberate from uncertainties and, depending on the level of detachment from parental support, from limited independence, too: participants can be optimistic about life goals, while at the same time harboring uncertainties and lacking personal initiative. Currently, there is no differentiation between area, gender, and scientific fields. Steger et al., (2008) observed that those participants, who exhibited a high sense of meaning, experienced less of an existential vacuum, and enjoyed improved academic performance.
6. Mean value A 43.88 is a relatively high index of Goal Seeking, which is the aim of getting new experience, avoiding boredom, and routine, accepting new tasks and challenges, remaining active, and aspiring for more in life according to Reker (1992). They are highly oriented toward Goal Seeking and there is no big difference between the area, gender, and scientific fields. In their paper, Ryan & Deci (2000) looked at how intrinsic motivation which is the core of goal pursuit behavior enhances academic relatedness and well-being among learners in higher education settings.

Limitations and Suggestions

The current study has several limitations. In this study, attitude towards life is the only area, gender, and field of study compared, not additional background or causality indicators, such as how or why. What is the purpose, and choice of master students, it was not calculated, just their attribution of attitude.

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- Attitudes toward life can be studied in relation to satisfaction with their academic achievement, mental health, emotional Intelligence, and psychological well-being, etc.
- They can be assisted in making conscious plans for their future, and activities can be undertaken to further enhance their outlook on life and society.

CONCLUSION

One of the characteristics of youth is to be optimistic about the future and to dream lofty dreams. Students of Science and Commerce reflect Personal Meaning Index and Existential Transcendence more than students of Humanities and Social Science.

Students from urban area reflect the Choice/Responsibleness more than students from rural area, and students of humanities reflect it lower than other students in scientific field. The null hypothesis is conformed for gender and area but rejected for the field of study regarding the Personal Meaning Index and Existential Transcendence. Although there are some differences in the study results, it appears that there are fewer significant differences in gender, area, and field of science.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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