

Original Research Article

LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS AMONG RETIRED AND NON-RETIRED SCHOOL TEACHERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Happiness and life satisfaction are essential domains of psychological well-being. Retirement is a major life transition that may influence emotional, social, and cognitive aspects of functioning. This study examined the differences in life satisfaction and happiness between retired and non-retired school teachers and explored the correlation between these constructs. A quantitative design was used with purposive sampling. The sample comprised 240 participants (120 retired; 120 non-retired). The Life Satisfaction Index-Z (LSIZ) and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ) were administered. Results indicated significantly higher life satisfaction among retired teachers compared to non-retired teachers, while happiness scores did not significantly differ. A significant positive correlation was found between life satisfaction and happiness across the entire sample. Findings highlight the psychological advantages associated with post-retirement stability.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, happiness, retirement, school teachers, psychological well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a critical role in shaping societal development through educational, emotional, and value-based contributions. Their professional lives are structured around responsibility, performance evaluation, and interpersonal demands. Retirement marks a transition from structured occupational demands to a period of reduced responsibility and increased autonomy.^[1-5]

Life satisfaction represents an individual's cognitive appraisal of overall quality of life, while happiness reflects affective experiences of pleasure, positivity, and well-being. Literature suggests that retirement may improve life satisfaction for many individuals due to increased leisure, reduced stress, and improved work-life balance, although effects may vary depending on socio-economic conditions, health, and social support.^[6-10]

Objectives

1. To compare life satisfaction between retired and non-retired school teachers.
2. To compare happiness between retired and non-retired school teachers.
3. To determine the relationship between life satisfaction and happiness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design: A cross-sectional quantitative research design was used.

Participants

A total of 240 school teachers participated:

- 120 retired teachers
- 120 non-retired teachers

Age ranges:

- Non-retired: 25–52 years
- Retired: 56–80 years

Sampling technique: Purposive sampling

Measures

1. Life Satisfaction Index-Z (LSIZ)

An 18-item validated instrument assessing psychosocial satisfaction.

2. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ)

A 29-item scale assessing global happiness; reverse-scored items included.

Procedure: Participants were approached through schools and community lists of retired teachers. After

obtaining consent, questionnaires were administered in English or Malayalam. Scoring was completed as per scale guidelines. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 20.

Statistical Analysis

- Independent samples t-test (for group comparisons)
- Pearson's correlation (for relationships).

RESULTS

Table 1: Life Satisfaction Scores Between Retired and Non-Retired Teachers (n = 240)

Group	n	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Retired teachers	120	12.30	3.05	4.12	<0.001
Non-retired teachers	120	10.70	2.90		

Interpretation: Retired teachers reported significantly higher life satisfaction.

Table 2: Happiness Scores Between Groups (n = 240)

Group	n	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Retired teachers	120	4.67	0.62	1.78	0.076
Non-retired teachers	120	4.53	0.57		

Interpretation: Happiness did not differ significantly between groups.

Table 3: Correlation Between Life Satisfaction and Happiness (n = 240)

Variables	Pearson r	p value
Life Satisfaction ↔ Happiness	0.31	<0.001

Interpretation: A moderate positive correlation exists.

DISCUSSION

Retired teachers showed higher life satisfaction, supporting literature indicating improved psychological adjustment post-retirement. The absence of significant differences in happiness suggests that affective well-being may depend on personal traits, coping styles, social connections, and perceived autonomy rather than employment status alone.

The positive correlation between life satisfaction and happiness aligns with existing models of subjective well-being, implying interdependence between cognitive and affective domains.

CONCLUSION

Retired teachers demonstrate significantly higher life satisfaction compared to non-retired teachers, although happiness levels are comparable. Overall, life satisfaction and happiness are positively associated. These findings underscore the need for well-being programs targeting teachers throughout their career lifespan.

Implications

- Supports the development of mental health promotion programs for retired individuals.
- Highlights need for workplace well-being interventions for active teachers.
- Findings can inform policy planning for teacher welfare and post-retirement engagement.

Limitations

- Purposive sampling may limit generalizability.
- Self-report measures may introduce bias.
- The study was region-specific to Kerala.

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