

Impact of Expectation of Higher Education and Achievement Motivation on Student's Perception of Purpose in Life

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Abstract. The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of expectation of university study on student's perception of purpose in life by considering the role of achievement motivation. Based on classic measurements PIL, AMS and EUS, the empirical research method, including descriptive statistics analysis, regression analysis and mediation effect test, was conducted on a sample consisted by 412 undergraduate students coming from national wide universities. Four main findings were illustrated. First, student's perception of purpose in life is entirely low, with the mean value of 60.8 scores. Second, individual characteristics (sex, grade, major, household register, university type) are not related with PIL. Third, both the study expectation and the employment expectation are significantly related with PIL. Fourth, achievement motivation plays mediating role in the relations between expectations and PIL, with mediation effects of 6.75% and 7.87%, respectively. The findings comprehensively demonstrated that the expectations of study and future employment established at the very beginning of university education can determine student's perception of PIL significantly, and part of the impact is transferred by student's achievement motivation.

Keywords: purpose in life; expectation of university education; achievement motivation; mediation effect

AMS Mathematics Subject Classification (2010): 62P25

1. Introduction

The philosopher and educationist Alfred North Whitehead, in his classic book, the purpose of education, makes it clear that teaching. The only purpose of education is life. The basic purpose of college students to learn specialized knowledge and to cultivate their personality style is to know how to live and take life seriously. Frankl also believes

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that the basic motivation of human beings lies in the pursuit of life goals and life meaning. At the moment, however, there are various negative realities existing in the college students, such as the general sense of confusion, low satisfaction, and the concept of suicide that can not be eliminated even suicides have plagued those concerned with college education. From a psychological point of view, students are short of a clear student living purpose and a sense of purpose which are the root causes of these problems.

In recent years, the sense of life purpose or the sense of meaning of life as a psychological resource has received more and more attention (Liu & Wu, 2018; William, 2006; Michael, 2006). The study of extreme psychology shows that a clear sense of life purpose plays an important role in the individual's mental function and physical and Mental Health. It is easy to produce higher subjective well-being, life satisfaction and job satisfaction, but also has a protective effect on the individual, can effective relief of depression and despair, individuals to cope with stress is an important resource (Xiao, 2009). Therefore, the important content and mission of University Education is to help students establish a clear purpose and value of life. There is no denying that the mission is not easy to accomplish because the university. The stage is a special period when students change from school people to social people. College students are faced with a high complexity of the environment and students' heart. The complexity and diversity of the psychological conditions lead to the multi-dimensionality of the influencing factors and the complexity of the decision-making Mechanism Chemical Change.

At present, the relevant research on the life purpose or sense of meaning of college students is mainly carried out from two angles. One is the Research University the dimension structure and measurement method of students' life goal (Xiao, 2009; Steger, 2018); the other is to explore the influencing factors and mechanism of life goal or meaning. In the forming mechanism, the existing achievements mainly follow two paths to spread out. First, taking the external environment factors as the explanatory variables, the paper discusses the influence of external factors such as material condition, interpersonal relationship (Yu & Yang, 2016), external commitment (Lian, et al., 2005), academic achievement, etc. The other is to use internal factors as explanatory variables, such as self-esteem (Liu & Wu, 2018), initiative (Wang, et al., 2016; Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2014), psychological capital (Wang, 2017), Left-behind experience and psychological consequences (Luo & Zhou, 2017), burnout (Wang, et al., 2018), loneliness, subjective social status cognition (Cheng, et al., 2016) and other psychological factors on the perception of life purpose of college students. Although the influence factors from the external environment can not be ignored, more scholars believe that the individual internal cause is more primitive and decisive, is closer to the origin of the trigger factors, which has a greater significance of Catharsis.

However, there is an obvious limitation in the existing research based on the perspective of personal internal cause, that is, it neglects the level of psychological needs of college students, and pays more attention to high-level psychological characteristics such as self-esteem, social status needs, etc. However, the most basic and natural psychological needs, that is, the expectations of the university stage, have been seriously neglected. Whether the expectation of study is the basic determinant of the perceived level of life purpose of college students, and whether its influence is realized by some same primitive psychological characteristics, such as the achievement motivation factors

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reflecting students' initiative, all these questions remain to be answered. Based on the expectation theory, this paper examines the intermediate conduction of achievement motivation to explore the mechanism of the impact of expectation on college students' life purpose perception. Based on the existing literature, this paper proposes the following four hypotheses: 1 Identity Trait (sex, grade, Major, household registration, college level) plays a significant role in determining the perceived level of life purpose of college students; 2 expectation of study (expectation of study and expectation of employment) plays a positive role in enhancing college students' perceived level of life purpose, 3 achievement motivation plays a positive role in regulating between expectation of study and sense of life purpose 4 achievement motivation plays a mediating role between the expectation of studying and the sense of life purpose.

2. 2. Relevant theories and tools

2.1. The purpose of life scale (PIL)

In 1968, CRUMBAUGH developed the Purpose in Life Test (PIL) (Crumbaugh, 1968), in order to test the sense of meaning in life. This study directly uses the Chinese translation of the original scale by Taiwanese scholars. The scale contains 20 each item was answered with a Likert 7-point scale. The total score varies from 20 to 140. A high score of 112 indicates a clear life goal and meaning, and a middle score of 112 to 92 low scores below 92 indicated a significant lack of life purpose and meaning.

2.2. Achievement motivation scale (AMS)

Achievement Motivation Scale was developed by Norwegian psychologists GJESME and NYGARD. It has been revised several times. The Chinese version was translated by Chinese scholar Ye Renmin and Norwegian scholar HEGTVET (Ye & Hagtvet, 1992). The scale contains 30.15 items represented the motivation to pursue success (MS), while the other 15 items represented the motive of failure avoidance. The scoring method is to add the scores of the corresponding items to get the MS and MF scores, MS-MF The difference between MS-MF and MS-MF represents the final score of achievement motivation. In other words, MS-MF 0 means the score of achievement motivation is strong, the higher the score is the higher the achievement motivation.

2.3. Expectation of study scale (EUE)

(Expectation of University Expectation Theory and related researches on college students' psychology show that Expectation of University Education) The content and scale of Education should include two aspects, one is about the expectation of study / study, the other is about the expectation of employment. Academic expectation involves the study of professional knowledge and the further study of academic knowledge, including four items of measurement, namely: Acquiring Advanced Professional Knowledge. The expectation of employment refers to the expectation of the job opportunity and the employment unit. It includes three items: mastering the skills needed in the job market You'll be able to graduate with a high-paying job and be able to start your own business. The scale was scored by the Likert 7-point scoring method. The larger the score was, the higher the expectation was high. The structure of the scale is based on the existing research, so the validity of the scale will be tested after data collection.

3. Data collection

In July to September in 2018, convenience sampling (teacher-student relationships in the research team) and snowball sampling (teacher referral) were used and student-recommended students), random sampling (based on the questionnaire star Data Collection Platform) and other sampling methods in colleges and universities across the country. More than 1000 questionnaires were distributed to all majors, and 514 questionnaires were collected. After strict screening, the final valid questionnaires were collected. Among them: 144 boys (35%), 268 girls (65%), 11 freshmen (3.4%), 98 sophomores. In junior middle school, it is 120(29.1%). In senior middle school, it is 142(34.5%). In liberal arts engineering, it is 270(65.5%). In rural, it is 218(52.9%). In urban, it is 194(47.1%). In general undergraduate college, it is 346(84.2%). In 211 or 985 institutions (including Peking University, Nanjing University, Sichuan University, etc.), it is 66(15.8%).

4. Result

4.1. Validity test

The internal consistency test method is used to test the reliability of the scale structure used in this paper. The results show that the reliability level of all variables is higher than the critical value of 0.5, so the structure of the scale is stable.

Table 1: Results of reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Perception of purpose (PIL)	0.680	Academic Expectations	0.624
Motivation for success (MS)	0.820	Employment Expectation	0.649
Motivation to avoid failure (MF)	0.870		

4.2. Descriptive statistics

(1) perceived level of life purpose

The overall mean score for life purpose was 85.09(60.8 out of 100). The specific distribution of scores. As shown in Table 2. The results clearly showed that most of the students in the sample had a low sense of purpose in life, a lack of purpose in life and a lack of meaning in life.

Table 2: Distribution of life purpose perception of college students

Pointer	Score(x)	Number	Percentage	Meanings
Perceived level of life purpose	$x < 92$	316	76.7%	Lack of sense of meaning in individual life
	$92 < x < 112$	96	23.3%	Individual life goals and meanings are not clear
	$112 < x$	0	0	Individual life has a strong sense of meaning

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(2) Analysis of the difference of perceived level of life purpose among groups

The purpose of this study was to explore whether the perceived level of life purpose exists in gender, grade, Major, Household Register and college category. The differences between groups were further analyzed by t test and variance test. The results showed that at the significant level of 0.05, there was no significant difference among the groups. Specifically, college students' perceived levels of life purpose were scored in both boys and girls. There was no significant difference between them (the level of significance was 0.056), there was no significant difference among the four grades (the level of significance was 0.800) , and there was no significant difference between liberal arts and science majors (the level of significance was 0.490) There is no significant difference between urban and rural registered students (significance level is 0.439) , and "211 or 985". There was no significant difference between the students in the institutions (the significance level was 0.752) . In other words, the lack of a clear sense of purpose in life does not exist only in a particular group, but is universal.

4.3. Regression results

By means of regression analysis, this paper further explores the causal effects of expectation of study on college students' perceived level of life purpose, as well as achievement motivation's possible intermediary role. The regression results are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Regression analysis result

Variable	The level of perception of college students' life goals				Achievement motivation
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Independent variable					
Academic expectation		2.062 (0.000)	1.922 (0.000)		2.108 (0.000)
Employment expectation		1.818 (0.000)		1.674 (0.000)	1.933 (0.001)
Mediator variable					
Achievement motivation			0.066 (0.077)	0.074 (0.048)	
Control variable					
Gender	-1.769 (0.071)				
Grade	0.463 (0.414)				
Major	-0.173 (0.834)				
Household Registration	0.780 (0.375)				
Institutional level	0.653 (0.606)				

Note: figures out of brackets are regression coefficients, and figures in brackets are significance levels.

The regression results show that:

(1) for the control variables, MODEL 1 showed that gender, grade, Major, household registration and college types had no effect on the dependent variables. This means that the perceived level of life purpose of college students is not related to the above factors, hypothesis 1 is not obtained support.

(2) in terms of direct effect, MODEL 2 showed that both academic expectation and employment expectation were different from college students' Life Purpose. Hypothesis 2 holds true for a statistically significant positive correlation.

(3) in the mediating effect, MODEL 2, MODEL 3 and MODEL 5 examined the relationship between achievement motivation and students' academic expectations. Because the regression Coefficient of achievement motivation is not significant, Sobel test is needed to test the mediating effect between living purpose. The results showed that the mediating effect was significant and partial, and the mediating effect accounted for the total of independent variable and dependent variable. The mediating role of computer in the relationship between the expectation of employment and the sense of life purpose shows that the mediating role of computer is significant, and it is partly mediating. In the process of influencing the perception of life purpose of college students, achievement motivation plays a significant mediating role and plays a role in the conduction mechanism of causality.

5. Conclusion and discussion

Through the above statistical analysis, we draw three conclusions and enlightenment.

(1) At present, the perception of life purpose of college students is at the level of just passing, which is only equivalent to 60.8 points under the 100-point system. Moreover, there were no intergroup differences in gender, grade, specialty, household registration and college level. This means that the sample university. Students' perception of life purpose and meaning is generally low, and the whole group lacks explicit cognition of life purpose and life meaning. If we agree with educationist Alfred North Whitehead that the fundamental purpose of a university education is to enable students to understand life, then students. Being ignorant of the purpose of life and living in a state of perplexity and chaos every day, the purpose of education at the present stage of university and meaning raises serious questions that need serious reflection from all concerned.

(2) The psychological factor of school expectation plays a significant direct role in the mechanism of perceived level of life purpose determinative effect. This means that college students have original expectation and good expectation for college education, and this kind of psychological need is natural. It's basic. However, the data show that new students quickly enter a state of confusion. The sense of purpose score of the students interviewed in grade is only at the pass level big contrast. So what aspects of life, study and student management system make students feel so great contrast that form

Being frustrated and having no purpose in life? More importantly, this negative priming mechanism has an obvious duration Sex (the same for grades one through four)

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is even superimposed, so the school authorities, teachers, parents and other relevant subjects are obliged actively explore the causes and seek improvement.

(3) As another objective psychological existence of college students, the Change Mechanism of the achievement motivation to the sense of life purpose is also played. The negligible effect is mainly shown as the indirect conduction effect based on the mediating effect, i. e. the sense of life purpose of the expectation of studying. The influence of the level of knowledge is partly influenced by the psychological factors of achievement motivation. The results show that the higher the achievement motivation strong (the more advanced and progressive) , the higher the degree of mediation, in Layman's terms, the impact of expectations on the perception of purpose in life. The louder it is, the more it works with the help of the psychology of achievement. This means that the more students seek to improve themselves, the more sensitive their psychology is to life.

The greater the elasticity of goal perception level, in other words, compared with the students with low achievement motivation. The contrast between the reading expectation and the reality has a greater influence on the life. The achievement motivation, encourage students to be positive at the same time, it is necessary to pay close attention to their expectations of university education, the Same Level Disappointment can lead to greater life loss for these more promising students.

The Group of college students is the fresh force and the backbone of the social development, and sets up the positive life attitude and the healthy life value. View, is they should be accepted and formed in the university education stage, in order to ensure that they become a healthy personality of social people, this is also the fundamental mission of university education. All educational institutions and educational subjects should be divided into two parts: imparting knowledge and psychological development. Then they will guide the students to understand the purpose and meaning of life correctly and acquire the necessary knowledge on the premise of forming healthy psychology. Knowledge and skills, the ultimate goal is to enable students to really have a serious attitude and ability to live.

The limitations of this study and future research directions are as follows: On the one hand, this study is a cross-sectional study, in the future, follow-up studies can be considered to further verify the stability of the results; on the other hand, although the sampling frame of this paper is a nationwide university, there is a certain imbalance in the distribution of the objects, especially the large gap between the number of ordinary institutions and those of 211 or 985 Follow-up study can improve the balance of object distribution to further enhance the external validity of research results.

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