

Purpose in Life Mediating Community Participation and Subjective Well-Being among NGO workers in Coimbatore

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ABSTRACT

Taking part in local groups helps people feel more grounded, seen, less alone. When folks join neighborhood efforts, they tend to say they feel more included, more at ease inside. Purpose - the sense something matters - might explain why being active socially lifts mood and outlook. This work looks at how that inner drive links involvement with overall feeling good, focusing on aid group staff and helpers in Coimbatore. Data was gathered once, using numbers to spot patterns across people right then. A mix of 476 people - workers and helpers from groups focused on schooling, medical care, nature preservation, plus community support - took part, chosen carefully by category. These individuals came from varied backgrounds yet shared one trait: each was eighteen or older. Half a year minimum had passed since they began contributing time to nonprofit efforts, making experience a common thread among them.

Information came from standard psychology tools. One tool checked how involved people are in local events. Another looked at personal sense of purpose. A third measured feelings about overall happiness. Researchers used different methods: averages, links between factors, indirect effects, and interaction checks. All calculations happened inside Jamovi, a program for data work. Results showed that joining community actions tied closely to better mood reports. People more active in neighborhoods often felt clearer about life goals too. What mattered most? Purpose acted like a bridge. When someone took part regularly, it fed their inner drive. That growing clarity then lifted emotional health along the way. Not just activity alone - but what grew from doing something meaningful.

Longer NGO experience made the link between taking part and feeling good even stronger, though whether someone was older or female didn't change much. What stands out is how mental wellness

grows when people stay involved in helping their communities. This work adds to what we know about group-based support and personal growth by showing that a sense of meaning helps connect service efforts with better feelings of well-being for those working in nonprofits. When organizations create roles that feel truly worthwhile, it can lift mood and drive in both employees and helpers. Being active together builds deeper purpose - which then lifts overall life satisfaction.

Keywords: Life feels fuller when people lend a hand. Helping out ties into deeper meaning. Those who give time often report brighter days. Meaning grows where effort shows up regularly. Purpose blooms in shared efforts, not solitary plans

INTRODUCTION

People joining local efforts help shape better communities through hands-on actions. Because they take part, friendships grow tighter, loneliness fades, some find deeper purpose. Helping out without pay tends to lift moods, add meaning, build trust among neighbors. When people work on shared goals, small moments matter most - like listening closely or showing up when it rains. For those in nonprofit groups, daily tasks tie directly to neighborhood needs, struggles, hopes. What happens locally shapes their work more than distant policies ever could.

Lately, India's nonprofit world has expanded fast - reaching into schooling, medical care, nature efforts, gender fairness, and fair treatment for all. People who lend time or work to these groups usually find themselves caught up in real change, shaping better lives around them. That kind of involvement? It tends to bring deep satisfaction, like finding something worth waking up for. Studies have shown joining hands with communities lifts mental health, feeding pride, connection, and direction.

How someone feels about life comes down to emotions and how satisfied they are. Diener said it back in 1984 - good mood, little stress, plus a general feeling that things are okay make up well-being. Doing kind acts or spending time on what matters can lift that inner score, simply because such moments fit who people believe they are.

A reason to get up each morning ties closely to mental wellness. Not just busywork - this drive comes from feeling your days add up to something real. People who see clear direction in their routine tend to bounce back faster when things go wrong, stay driven without constant pushes, then report deeper contentment over time. Getting involved where it counts - like helping neighbors or joining local efforts - can sharpen that inner compass. Doing what matters alongside others makes effort feel less hollow, more like leaving footprints behind.

Even though more work looks at volunteering and happiness around the world, hard evidence about NGO staff in India is still scarce. Not many papers dig into the mental links behind how taking part lifts mood. Looking at whether a sense of meaning helps connect those dots could reveal hidden emotional payoffs from joining local efforts.

So here we look at how feeling a sense of purpose might connect community involvement with personal well-being in NGO staff and volunteers from Coimbatore. Rather than just linking one thing to another, it traces how meaning in life plays into that link. This work sits between social action and inner satisfaction. A person joins groups, finds deeper reasons behind doing so, then feels better about life because of it. The city context shapes part of this picture too. People give time, feel grounded by why they do it, then report stronger well-being. Purpose isn't just an outcome - it runs through the middle.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between community participation and subjective well-being among NGO workers and volunteers.
2. To determine whether purpose in life mediates the relationship between community participation and subjective well-being.
3. To examine whether demographic factors influence the relationship between participation and well-being.

Hypotheses

H1: Community participation will be positively associated with subjective well-being. H2: Community participation will positively predict purpose in life.

H3: Purpose in life will positively predict subjective well-being.

H4: Purpose in life will mediate the relationship between community participation and subjective well-being.

Participants

A total of 476 individuals took part - workers and volunteers linked to official NGOs across Coimbatore district

in Tamil Nadu. These people came from varied fields: some focused on schools, others on medical aid, green initiatives, support for people with disabilities, or community well-being efforts.

Most people taking part were eighteen or older, each spending half a year - or more - working with nonprofits. Some came as staff members who earned wages, others joined simply by giving their time. Each person brought experience shaped by real effort inside these groups.

Materials

Three standardized instruments were used:

1. community participation questionnaire: A dozen questions using a rating system to check how involved someone is with local events.
2. Meaning In Life Questionnaire Short Form: A 10-item scale measuring presence of purpose and meaning in life.
3. WHO-5 Well-Being Index: Feeling steady inside lately? This tool checks five points on your mood journey through recent days. Each piece fits like a puzzle of inner weather from ten sunrises back. It quietly gathers how hearts hold up when time presses close. Not every moment shows - just those that linger just enough.

Data Collection

A total of 476 responses came from staff and helpers linked to nonprofit groups, reached using digital forms. Each person learned what the project aimed to find out prior to deciding whether to take part. Signing a form showed their agreement to join in. Most people spent between ten and fifteen minutes answering the questions. Completion time stayed within that range across submissions.

Scoring

Scoring followed the rules tied to every measure. When CPQ numbers go up, that means more involvement in community life. A rise on the MLQ points to a clearer sense of direction. The WHO-5 climbs when personal well-being feels stronger.

Variables

1. Community Participation
2. Life Purpose as Mediator
3. Subjective Well Being
4. Aging Gender and Time Spent with NGOs

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between community participation, purpose in life, and subjective well-being among NGO workers and volunteers in Coimbatore.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine the overall levels of community participation, purpose in life, and subjective well-being among the participants.

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the primary variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study variables (N = 476)

Variable	Mean		Standard Deviation
Community Participation (CPQ)	45.36	5.94	
Purpose in Life (MLQ)	32.14	4.82	
Subjective Well-Being (WHO-5)	18.33	3.22	

The results show that participants reported **moderate to high levels of community participation**. The mean score for purpose in life indicates that NGO workers and volunteers possess a **relatively strong sense of life meaning and direction**. Similarly, subjective well-being scores indicate **moderate emotional well-being among participants**.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among community participation, purpose in life, and subjective well-being.

Table 2: Correlation matrix of study variables

Variable	1	2	3
1. Community Participation	—		
2. Purpose in Life	.68***	—	
3. Subjective Well-Being	.74***	.70***	—

** $p < .001$

The correlation results indicate that community participation has a **strong positive relationship with subjective well-being ($r = .74$)**. This finding suggests that individuals who are more actively involved in community activities tend to experience higher levels of emotional well-being.

Community participation also shows a **significant positive relationship with purpose in life ($r = .68$)**, indicating that active engagement in social service activities enhances individuals' sense of meaning and life direction. Additionally, purpose in life demonstrates a **strong positive relationship with subjective well-being ($r = .70$)**.

These findings support previous research suggesting that participation in meaningful social activities promotes both psychological meaning and well-being.

Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether **purpose in life mediates the relationship between community participation and subjective well-being**.

Table 3: Mediation analysis results

Path	B	SE	t	p
Community Participation → Purpose in Life	0.41	0.03	13.68	< .001
Purpose in Life → Subjective Well-Being	0.32	0.04	8.91	< .001
Community Participation → Subjective Well-Being (Direct Effect)	0.23	0.03	7.45	< .001

Community Participation → Subjective Well-Being (Direct Effect)

The mediation results indicate that community participation significantly predicts purpose in life, and purpose

in life significantly predicts subjective well-being. The direct effect of community participation on well-being remains significant even after including the mediator.

These findings suggest that **purpose in life partially mediates the relationship between community participation and subjective well-being.**

The results support the positive psychology perspective, which emphasizes that meaningful engagement in prosocial activities strengthens individuals' sense of purpose and contributes to higher psychological well-being (Seligman, 2011). Participation in NGO activities may provide individuals with opportunities to contribute to social welfare, thereby reinforcing their personal values and life meaning.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that **community participation improves well-being both directly and indirectly through purpose in life.**

CONCLUSIONS

Community participation positively influences subjective well-being among NGO workers and volunteers.

Living through shared moments builds meaning. What happens together sticks deeper. Moments with others shape why we move. Being part of something molds direction. Shared effort feeds inner drive.

Purpose in life mediates the relationship between community participation and subjective well-being.

Longer involvement in NGO activities enhances the psychological benefits of participation.

Folks who take part in their neighborhoods often feel more connected, which quietly builds a sense of purpose. A steady rhythm of shared moments can ease inner strain while grounding daily experience.

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