

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teach with purpose: The impact of life's meaningfulness to educator's motivation—A case study from Cendekia Harapan School, Bali

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study investigates the role of life meaning in teaching motivation among educators at Sekolah Cendekia Harapan, employing a concurrent design to integrate quantitative and qualitative data. The research encompasses a sample of 22 teachers, with a subset of 12 participating in detailed interviews. The quantitative analysis reveals a multifarious influence of life meaning on teaching motivation. While some aspects of life meaning significantly bolster motivation, others show negligible or even inverse effects. These findings illuminate the complexity of motivational factors, challenging the conventional wisdom of a uniform influence of life meaning as posited in Viktor Frankl's theory. The qualitative insights enrich these findings, underscoring the nuanced interplay between educators' life meaning and their professional drive. The study underscores the necessity of accounting for broader contextual factors—including working conditions, social support systems, and educational policies—to fully comprehend the motivational landscape of teachers. It concludes that while life meaning is a vital element, it is not the exclusive determinant of teaching motivation. Further inquiry is warranted to delineate the intricate dynamics of this relationship, with a particular focus on the reciprocal impact of teaching on life meaning within diverse cultural settings. Such understanding is pivotal for crafting targeted professional development initiatives.

Keywords: life meaning; teaching motivation; mixed-methods; educators; cultural context

1. Introduction

Scholarly discourse delineates two fundamental motivational dimensions within the teaching profession: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, characterized by a teacher's innate desire for personal satisfaction and a commitment to effectuating a positive educational impact, has been empirically associated with enhanced job satisfaction and pedagogical efficacy^[1]. Conversely, diminished motivational states among educators have been linked to a perceived lack of meaning in their professional lives. Frankl's seminal work^[2,3] underscores the premise that life's meaning serves as a crucial motivational construct, energizing individuals towards engaging in actions that are both personally fulfilling and socially beneficial. This conceptual framework suggests that a teacher's motivation is pivotal for optimizing student learning outcomes, necessitating educators to harbor a profound sense of purpose in their instructional roles^[2,3].

Extant literature has investigated teacher motivation through a prism of diverse factors, encompassing

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identity formulation^[4], motivational typologies^[5,6,7], antecedents of student disengagement^[3,4], pedagogical effectiveness^[4,8], didactic methodologies^[2,9], instructional styles^[10,11], and educational practices^[11,12], alongside strategies to foster student motivation^[12,13]. Despite this, the scholarship pertaining to the intersection of life's meaning and motivational dynamics within the educational sector remains scant.

Preliminary investigations have identified a positive correlation between life's meaning and the motivational levels of junior high school educators in Bengkalis District^[14]. This nascent body of research, however, has predominantly relied on quantitative correlational methodologies, thus omitting the nuanced understanding that qualitative inquiry could offer into the experiential realities of educators.

The present study seeks to bridge this gap by examining the influence of life's meaningfulness on the motivational spectra of teachers across the educational continuum, from preschool to high school. This investigation targets Cendekia Harapan School in Bali, an institution exemplifying an integrated educational model that fosters daily inter-level teacher interactions, as a case study. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach with an embedded design, this research will juxtapose quantitative data—garnered from questionnaires administered to all permanent full-time teachers and analyzed via MMR—with qualitative insights procured from in-depth interviews. Participants will encompass educators from diverse academic trajectories, including those with non-educational bachelor degrees and those with formal qualifications in education. The study aims to elucidate the potential influence of life's meaningfulness on teacher motivation, contributing a dual-perspective analysis to the field.

2. Literature review

2.1. Meaning of life

The construct of life's meaning has been a central theme in philosophical and psychological inquiry, with its origins traceable to early 19th-century intellectual thought. Initial musings conceptualized life's meaning as a form of liberty, a precursor to the later, more nuanced interpretations^[13]. It was Frankl's seminal treatise, "Man's search for meaning," that catalyzed the modern exploration of this concept, positing life's meaning as an intrinsic motivational force^[3,4]. Frankl's theory of logotherapy, developed in the crucible of his Holocaust experiences, underscores the imperative of finding meaning even in suffering, an idea that has reverberated through subsequent scholarly work and found applications in contexts as diverse as teacher well-being and pedagogical motivation.

Further conceptual expansions by thinkers such as Bastaman, as interpreted^[14], underscore the subjective nature of life's meaning, emphasizing its role as a harbinger of purpose and value. Such interpretations resonate with Frankl's assertion that the quest for meaning is a cornerstone of human psychological resilience and motivation.

Contemporary scholarship has continued to refine the construct of life's meaning. Work on life narratives situates personal experiences within a broader existential framework, suggesting that coherence, purpose, and significance are pillars of a meaningful existence, with direct implications for motivation across life's domains^[15].

Subsequent scholars have built upon Frankl's legacy, exploring various dimensions of meaning and well-being. Psychological Well-Being Theory posits purpose as one of the six pivotal dimensions of psychological health, underscoring the relevance of meaning to overall well-being^[16]. A holistic view in "The power of meaning," where she articulates how belonging, purpose, storytelling, and transcendence are integral to the human quest for meaning^[2,3]. Researchers provide empirical rigour with the development of the meaning in life questionnaire (MLQ), facilitating the measurement and analysis of life's meaning^[17]. Meanwhile, in

“Meanings of life,” delves into the components of meaningfulness, examining how purpose, significance, coherence, and value coalesce to shape a meaningful life^[3,4]. Lastly, philosophical treatise, “Meaning in life and why it matters,” differentiates between the meaningfulness of life and its happiness or satisfaction, expanding the discourse to include philosophical considerations of meaning^[18].

2.2. Teaching motivation

The construct of motivation, as delineated by seminal psychologists, represents a foundational pillar within the educational domain, influencing both teaching efficacy and student achievement. According to Maslow’s hierarchy, motivation is an essential internal drive, a psychological catalyst compelling individuals to fulfill their intrinsic needs^[19]. Rivai expands upon this, conceptualizing motivation as an amalgam of attitudes and values that guide individuals towards goal attainment^[20]. Further refines this definition, positing motivation as the inner impetus that propels behaviors and actions in pursuit of one’s aspirations^[4]. In the educational context, motivation as the driving force that endows teachers with energy and enthusiasm, galvanizing them to achieve pedagogical satisfaction^[12].

Synthesizing these perspectives, teaching motivation can be construed as the amalgamation of efforts exerted by educators to realize their pedagogical objectives. Such motivation is a pivotal determinant of student success, as it encapsulates the persistent encouragement and passion that teachers impart to students, fostering an environment conducive to academic excellence^[15].

Building on these foundational theories, Ryan and Deci’s Self-Determination Theory (SDT) underscores autonomy, competence, and relatedness as integral components of intrinsic motivation. Within the teaching profession, The adapted SDT, asserting that teacher motivation flourishes when these psychological needs are met^[21]. Further bifurcate motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic categories, suggesting that intrinsically motivated teachers, who derive personal satisfaction from their vocation, exhibit heightened teaching effectiveness^[13].

The interconnection between life meaning and teacher motivation has garnered increasing scholarly attention. A teacher’s recognition of life’s meaning significantly correlates with job satisfaction and motivation^[22]. A teacher’s sense of professional purpose—a facet of life’s meaning—positively influences their motivational resilience amidst professional adversities^[20]. It is contributed to this discourse by exploring the extent to which teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles engender a meaningful occupational identity, which in turn fortifies their motivational and commitment levels^[23].

Additionally, the dichotomy of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation in educators has been explored extensively, with research indicating that intrinsic motivation, which is rooted in personal fulfillment and the aspiration to impact students profoundly, is associated with superior job satisfaction and pedagogical effectiveness.

In the face of increasing concerns regarding teacher burnout, the literature has identified a correlation between burnout and diminished motivation, accentuating the exigency for interventions that augment teachers’ sense of purpose and well-being.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Aim of research

The aim of this research is to assess the impact of the meaning of life on teaching motivation among teachers at Cendekia Harapan School. **Figure 1** visualizes the methodology used in this study.

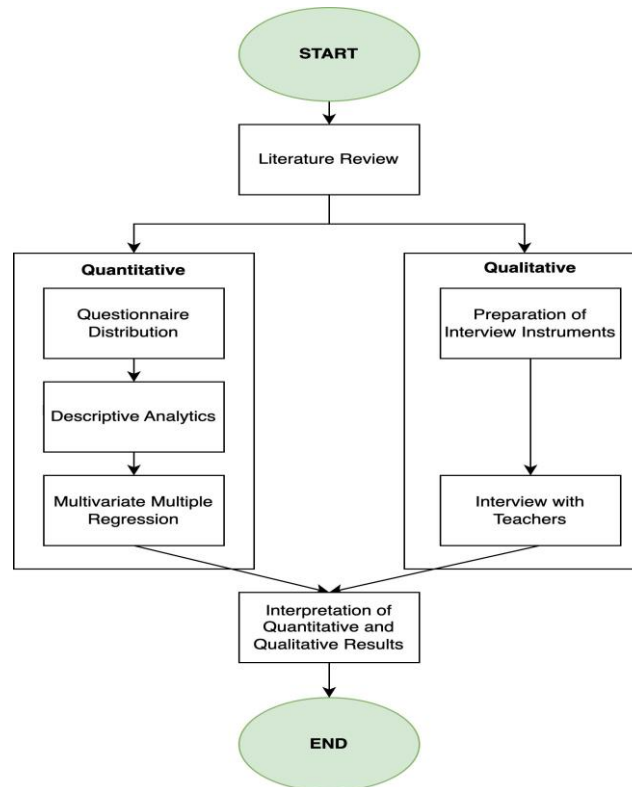


Figure 1. Research methodology.

3.2. Methodology

This investigation makes use of a concurrent mixed-methods approach in order to analyse the intricate relationship that exists between teaching motivation and the meaning of one’s life. The simultaneous incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data makes it possible to conduct a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis. This, in turn, allows for the triangulation of results, which boosts the depth and breadth of the findings. During the analytical phase of the study, the researchers aimed to combine the qualitative information obtained from the interviews with the quantitative data collected using validated instruments such as the MLQ and AMT scales. The phrase “concurrent mixed-methods approach” refers to the integration of several types of data.

The statistical foundation for understanding the relationship between life meaning and teaching motivation was developed via the use of quantitative data, which provided numerical evaluations of these variables. Presumably, the researchers used statistical analytic techniques to alter and evaluate the data, maybe using Python tools such as pandas, sci-kit-learn, and NumPy. The specific statistical methodologies used would differ based on the unique attributes of the data and the subjects under investigation.

Nevertheless, the qualitative data included detailed accounts of the teachers’ personal experiences and perspectives, along with a wealth of narrative depth. Prior to the interviews, meticulously formulated semi-structured interview questions were prepared, covering many issues connected to teaching motivation. The issues included in this study are the origins and progression of teaching motivation, the impact of the work environment, significant factors that drive motivation, professional obstacles, institutional assistance, classroom autonomy, interpersonal interactions, feedback and response, resilience, and motivation.

The researchers presumably encoded and transcribed the qualitative data to identify significant themes, patterns, and insights throughout the course of the study. The technique likely included the classification of the information, identification of recurring themes or concepts, and the exploration of connections or

correlations between different subjects. Subsequently, a comprehensive examination of the data was facilitated by juxtaposing and evaluating the qualitative and quantitative results.

The researchers were able to validate the quantitative results by using both quantitative and qualitative data in the comparative synthesis, with support from the instructors' shared narratives and perspectives. This strategy improved the study's findings by providing a more thorough understanding of complex concepts such as the purpose of life and the drive to learn within the field of education.

By combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, the researchers gained a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between teaching motivation and life meaning. This technique also helped to mitigate any deficiencies or limitations that might arise from depending just on one kind of data or process.

3.3. Tool used

For the purpose of objectively quantifying the concept of life meaning, the research makes use of the meaning in life questionnaire (MLQ)^[24]. The MLQ is an instrument that is psychometrically verified and is rooted in Frankl's logotherapeutic framework^[17]. In accordance with Frankl's dualistic paradigm of meaning actualization and pursuit, the Meaning-Location Questionnaire (MLQ) divides into two subscales: the existence of meaning in life and the quest for meaning in life. The investigation of many aspects of the meaning of life as viewed by educators is made easier by the use of this sophisticated assessment process. Complete questionnaire is attached in the appendix table A1, A2 and A3.

In addition to this, the autonomous motivation for teaching (AMT) scale, which was developed^[13], is a tool that operationalizes teaching motivation within the theoretical framework of Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory^[11]. Extrinsic, introjected, identifiable, and intrinsic motivation are the four types of motivation that are differentiated by the AMT. This allows for the dissection of motivational variables that are relevant to autonomous instruction.

3.4. Data collection

The population of the research consists of twenty-two instructors who are employed full-time and permanently at Cendekia Harapan School in Bali. In order to maximize the effectiveness and breadth of the data collecting process, questionnaires were sent using Google Forms for the purpose of gathering quantitative data. It is predicted that this procedure will result in a cross-section of data that is representative of the whole for further analytical investigation. Parallel to this, the qualitative component of the research included a cohort of twelve educators who were selected using a process of purposive sampling. These instructors were chosen on the basis of their accessibility and willingness to participate, conforming to the pragmatic criteria that are the foundation of qualitative sampling. In order to provide light on the quantitative results, this sample of participants offers a wealth of descriptive insights on the experiences that educators really have in their lives.

3.5. Python

In order to support advanced data manipulation and analysis, analytical methods were carried out using Python 3.8. Libraries such as pandas, sci-kit-learn, and NumPy were used in order to do this. In order to untangle the complicated links between life meaning and the multifarious construct of teaching motivation, the MMR statistical approach was selected as the method of choice. This was owing to the fact that it has the capability to simultaneously evaluate many dependent variables. By using MMR in an integrative manner, it is possible to conduct an exhaustive investigation of the predictive links that exist between the many dimensions of life meaning and the various motivational orientations.

By digging into the personal tales and experiences of the educators, the qualitative component of the study serves as a complementary alternative to the quantitative aspects of the research. Through the use of a semi-structured approach, in-depth interviews were carried out, which made it possible to investigate the myriad of components that constitute the factors that impact teaching motivation. The protocol for the interview was rigorously created in order to encourage reflection on the motivational journey of the teachers, the influence of the school environment on their professional drive, and the interaction between the acknowledgment they get from the organization and the happiness they feel inside themselves.

3.6. Interview questions

Interview questions were formulated to prompt detailed responses on the following themes:

- 1) Origins and evolution of teaching motivation: Inquiry into the initial reasons for choosing the teaching profession and their relevance over time.
- 2) Work environment impact: Assessment of the school's atmosphere and its influence on teaching motivation.
- 3) Key motivational drivers: Exploration of the factors that significantly motivate teaching practices.
- 4) Recognition and acknowledgment: Examination of how external validation from students, peers, and the institution shapes motivation.
- 5) Institutional support: Evaluation of the school's support mechanisms, such as training and professional development, and their impact on motivation.
- 6) Professional challenges: Discussion of workload, stress, and other challenges, and their effects on motivational levels.
- 7) Autonomy in teaching: Analysis of the degree of pedagogical freedom and its influence on motivation.
- 8) Interpersonal relationships: Consideration of how relationships with students, parents, and colleagues contribute to motivational dynamics.
- 9) Feedback and response: Investigation of the impact of student and institutional feedback on teaching motivation.
- 10) Resilience and motivation: Strategies for overcoming teaching challenges and sustaining motivation.

These inquiries were designed to elicit rich, descriptive insights, capturing the complex reality of the teaching experience. Participants were selected based on a purposive sampling method, targeting educators who offer a breadth of perspectives and experiences relevant to the research questions.

3.7. Analysis

In the analysis phase, the quantitative data, derived from validated instruments, provided a statistical foundation for understanding the relationship between life meaning and teaching motivation. The qualitative data offered a narrative depth, giving voice to the subjective experiences and perceptions of the teachers. The integration of these data streams was carried out through a comparative synthesis, wherein quantitative results were contextualized and expanded upon by qualitative insights.

This concurrent mixed-methods approach facilitated a comprehensive interpretation of the findings, allowing for the validation of quantitative outcomes through qualitative narratives. It enabled the identification of consistencies and discrepancies between the data types, enriching the study's conclusions with multifaceted perspectives on the phenomena of life meaning and motivational orientation in the educational context.

4. Results and discussion

This section presents a comprehensive examination of the empirical data elucidating the impact of life meaning on the motivational dynamics of educators at Cendekia Harapan School in Bali. It dissects the correlation patterns and provides an in-depth discussion on how existential fulfillment influences pedagogical drive and efficacy within this educational setting.

4.1. Respondent profiles

The respondents in this study are 22 permanent full-time teachers at Cendekia Harapan School in Bali, with 12 out of 22 teachers participating in the qualitative analysis conducted. Data collection was carried out from October 2023 to November 2023 among respondents with diverse backgrounds (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Demographic distribution of participants.

Characteristics	Quantitative sample size	Quantitative percentage	Qualitative sample size	Qualitative percentage
Age				
20–29	11	52.4%	7	58.3%
30–39	10	47.6%	5	41.7%
Gender				
Men	9	42.9%	5	41.7%
Women	12	57.1%	7	58.3%
Tenure				
<5 years	13	61.9%	8	38.1%
>5 years	3	25.0%	9	75.0%
Major				
Education-related	11	52.4%	10	47.6%
Non-education	7	58.3%	5	41.7%

Table 1 outlines the demographic profile of participants engaged in this study, delineating characteristics that are pertinent to both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the concurrent mixed-methods research approach.

The age distribution of participants reveals a concentration in the early professional stages, with the majority of quantitative respondents being within the 20–29 years age bracket (11 respondents, 52.4%), followed closely by those aged 30–39 years (10 respondents, 47.6%). The qualitative analysis reflects a similar age composition, with the 20–29 age group constituting 58.3% (7 respondents) and the 30–39 age group comprising 41.7% (5 respondents).

Gender distribution indicates a female predominance in both analytical approaches, accounting for 57.1% (12 respondents) in the quantitative sample and 58.3% (7 respondents) in the qualitative sample. Male participants represent 42.9% (9 respondents) and 41.7% (5 respondents) of the quantitative and qualitative groups, respectively.

Notably, there is a divergence in the years of work experience between the two cohorts. For the quantitative sample, most respondents have less than 5 years of teaching experience (13 respondents, 61.9%). In contrast, the qualitative sample is composed predominantly of respondents with over 5 years of experience (9 respondents, 75.0%), offering a depth of professional insights into the research inquiries.

The distribution of respondents by educational background is relatively balanced among the quantitative participants, with those holding education-related degrees marginally exceeding those from other academic backgrounds (11 respondents, 52.4%, against 7 respondents, 47.6%). However, the qualitative sample skews towards a majority with non-education majors (5 respondents, 58.3%), against those with formal education qualifications (10 respondents, 41.7%).

These demographic findings provide a foundational understanding of the participant pool, which is critical in interpreting the influence of life meaning on teaching motivation. The data suggests a diverse representation in terms of age, gender, work experience, and educational background, which enhances the robustness of the study’s conclusions by reflecting a range of experiences and perspectives within the teaching profession at Cendekia Harapan School in Bali.

4.2. Descriptive analysis

To provide a deeper understanding of the variables of life meaning and teaching motivation, **Table 2** presents a descriptive analysis of respondent responses. This analysis includes main descriptive statistics such as standard deviation, minimum value, mean, median, and maximum value for each researched indicator.

Table 2. Descriptive analytics of respondents answers.

Variable	Indicator	Std. dev	Min	Mean	Median	Max.
Meaning of life	MOL ₁	1.06	3	5.86	6	7
	MOL ₂	2.11	1	5.62	7	7
	MOL ₃	2.15	1	5.14	6	7
	MOL ₄	1.23	3	5.71	6	7
	MOL ₅	1.12	3	5.81	6	7
	MOL ₆	1.42	2	5.71	6	7
	MOL ₇	1.90	1	5.00	5	7
	MOL ₈	2.03	1	5.14	6	7
	MOL ₉	1.64	1	2.10	1	6
	MOL ₁₀	2.05	1	4.76	5	7
Teaching motivation	TM ₁	1.42	1	2.14	2	5
	TM ₂	1.42	1	2.29	2	5
	TM ₃	1.07	1	2.05	2	4
	TM ₄	1.12	1	3.57	4	5
	TM ₅	1.46	1	3.33	4	5
	TM ₆	1.11	1	3.86	4	5
	TM ₇	1.07	1	4.05	4	5
	TM ₈	1.35	1	3.14	3	5
	TM ₉	1.08	1	4.52	5	5
	TM ₁₀	0.75	3	4.52	5	5
	TM ₁₁	1.12	1	4.19	5	5
	TM ₁₂	1.00	2	4.10	4	5
	TM ₁₃	1.15	1	4.14	5	5
	TM ₁₄	1.01	1	4.29	5	5
	TM ₁₅	1.24	1	3.95	4	5
	TM ₁₆	1.25	1	3.81	4	5

4.3. Life meaning assessment

The research employed indicators MOL₁ to MOL₁₀ to gauge participants’ perceptions of life’s meaning and purpose. As delineated in **Table 2**, the majority of respondents ascribed high valuations to these indicators, reflecting a predominantly positive acknowledgment of life’s meaning within their personal and professional realms. Nonetheless, a marked deviation was noted in the response to indicator MOL₉, “my life lacks a clear purpose,” where a discernible diminution in the average score was observed. This deviation underscores a prevalent sense of ambivalence or an ongoing quest among participants to crystallize a more definitive purpose in life.

4.4. Motivational dimensions in teaching

The survey probed teaching motivation through indicators TM₁ to TM₁₆, revealing a tendency for intrinsic motivational factors—such as the aspiration for innovation in pedagogy and the cultivation of intimate relationships with students (indicated by TM₅, TM₆, TM₇, and TM₇ to TM₈)—to be rated more favorably than extrinsic motivators like the aversion to critique or administrative oversight (TM₁ to TM₃). This trend suggests that the educators’ motivations are predominantly fueled by internal drives that encompass personal fulfillment and a commitment to the educational vocation, rather than by external pressures or the pursuit of validation from authoritative entities.

4.5. The dynamics between life meaning and teaching motivation

The application of MMR analysis, detailed in **Table 3**, was instrumental in discerning the predictive influence of life meaning on facets of teaching motivation. The analysis illuminated that indicators of life meaning, particularly “I understand the meaning of my life” (MOL₁) and “my life has a clear purpose” (MOL₄), exert a positive effect on various dimensions of teaching motivation. These findings suggest a reinforcing correlation between the comprehension of life’s purpose and the motivational impetus in the educational domain. In contrast, indicators such as “I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant” (MOL₇) exhibited a negligible or even inverse impact on certain motivational factors, intimating that the nexus between life meaning and teaching motivation is not uniform but rather intricate and multi-faceted.

Table 3. Multivariate multiple regression analysis.

TM ₉	0.53	-0.21	0.62	0.01	0.36	0.00	0.22	-0.16	-0.39	0.29	0.13
TM ₁₀	0.40	0.52	0.22	-0.20	-0.01	-0.35	0.45	-0.01	-0.40	0.26	0.41
TM ₁₁	0.96	0.24	-0.27	-0.17	0.03	-0.41	0.50	0.06	0.32	0.19	0.25
TM ₁₂	0.96	0.20	-0.14	-0.11	-0.13	-0.26	0.66	0.56	-0.23	0.06	0.03
TM ₁₃	-0.36	-0.09	0.81	-0.29	0.53	-0.25	0.21	0.05	-0.55	0.28	0.25
TM ₁₄	1.54	-0.13	0.67	-0.33	-0.02	0.28	0.12	-0.23	-0.21	0.14	0.24
TM ₁₅	0.52	0.50	0.10	-0.49	0.40	-1.11	0.45	-0.48	0.85	0.46	0.24
TM ₁₆	0.66	0.84	0.02	-0.29	0.01	-0.97	0.39	-0.37	0.61	0.27	0.25
R ²	0.41										
Mean squared error	0.76										

4.6. Discussion

The investigation has illuminated the multifaceted influence of life meaning on teaching motivation at Sekolah Cendekia Harapan. The quantitative analysis delineates a substantial positive impact of certain life meaning aspects—particularly the clarity of life’s purpose and a well-defined understanding of what

constitutes a meaningful existence—on the multifarious components of teaching motivation. This suggests that educators who internalize a sense of life meaning are likely to channel this existential clarity into more vibrant and committed pedagogical engagement, as evidenced by enthusiastic classroom interactions, the creation of innovative instructional materials, and a general amplification of effort in their educational tasks. These empirical insights resonate with qualitative testimonies from participants, who underscore the role of self-conceptualized educational freedom and creativity in fostering job satisfaction and pedagogical fulfillment.

Nevertheless, the relationship between life meaning and teaching motivation is not uniformly positive. Certain indicators of life meaning, particularly those signifying an active search for existential significance, do not exhibit a consistently positive correlation with motivational dimensions, and in some instances, suggest an inverse relationship. This introduces a complexity to the motivational construct, highlighting that while a stable understanding of life meaning can invigorate educational motivation, an ongoing search for meaning might conversely impede occupational focus and commitment.

The statistical model's explanatory power, with an R^2 value of 0.41, and a mean squared error (MSE) of 0.76, denotes a moderate level of predictive accuracy. This indicates that while the model captures a significant portion of the variability in teaching motivation, there is an opportunity to enhance the model's precision by incorporating additional variables or exploring alternative theoretical frameworks.

Critically, these findings juxtapose against Frankl's postulation on the intrinsic value of life meaning, suggesting that its influence on motivation, particularly within the educational sector, may not be as unequivocal as previously posited. The narratives shared by the educators during the interviews reveal a nuanced interplay between external and internal motivators, with some educators emphasizing the sustainability of internal motivation over the fluctuating nature of external validation.

This research contributes a nuanced perspective to the discourse on life meaning's role in teaching motivation. The positive correlations identified between life meaning and motivational engagement support the wider psychological theories that posit meaningful life as a catalyst for enhanced job performance and satisfaction. Simultaneously, the study introduces a critical distinction within the life meaning construct that merits further exploration, particularly the impact of an active search for meaning on professional motivation.

This study's implications extend to teacher professional development and well-being programs, suggesting that fostering an environment that supports educators in finding and appreciating their life meaning could be instrumental in enhancing their motivational impetus. Additionally, the model's limitations beckon further research incorporating broader intrinsic and extrinsic factors to more comprehensively elucidate the determinants of teaching motivation.

Recommendations and future research directions

In light of the findings presented, several avenues for future research are suggested to deepen the understanding of the complex interplay between life meaning and teaching motivation. It is recommended that subsequent studies incorporate a broader array of factors that influence teaching motivation. These should include but not be limited to working conditions, the extent of social support networks, and the impact of institutional policies. Employing diverse methodological strategies, alongside a larger and more representative sample, will provide a more robust and generalizable understanding of these relationships.

There is a compelling need to explore the differential effects of life meaning on teaching motivation among educators with varied professional backgrounds. Comparative analyses between teachers with education-specific qualifications and those from non-educational disciplines could yield insights into how distinct professional experiences shape perceptions of life meaning and translate into pedagogical commitment

and energy.

An intriguing area of exploration is the potential reciprocal relationship between teaching and life meaning. Future research might profitably investigate whether engagement in teaching activities contributes to, or enhances, an educator's sense of life meaning. Such an inquiry would offer valuable perspectives on how the role of teaching can be both a source and a consequence of finding life meaning, potentially leading to a virtuous cycle of motivation and satisfaction within the educational profession.

Additionally, a multicultural perspective is essential to uncover the nuanced ways in which cultural norms and societal contexts influence teachers' interpretations of life meaning and their motivation. This knowledge is indispensable for the development of culturally responsive professional development programs and motivational interventions tailored to the unique needs of educators from diverse cultural milieus.

Conclusion and implications for practice

This study disrupts the conventional narrative that posits life meaning as a monolithic predictor of teaching motivation, challenging the assumptions underlying Frankl's theory and other motivational frameworks. The nuanced relationship uncovered between educators' perceptions of life meaning and their levels of motivation necessitates a finer-grained examination of what propels teachers in their professional endeavors.

In conclusion, future research agendas should broaden their scope to encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational influences. Investigating how different pathways to teaching shape motivational outcomes and how teaching, in turn, influences life meaning could pave the way for innovative motivational theories in the field of education. A multicultural examination of these phenomena will further refine our understanding and lead to the creation of more effective, culturally attuned, and nuanced support systems for educators globally.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, NJS and LS; methodology, NJS; software, NJS; validation, NJS and LS; formal analysis, NJS; investigation, NJS; resources, NJS; data curation, NJS; writing—original draft preparation, NJS; writing—review and editing, NJS; visualization, NJS; supervision, NJS; project administration, NJS; funding acquisition, LS. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Table A1. Meaning in life questionnaire (MLQ).

Scale						
Absolutely untrue (1)	Mostly untrue (2)	Somewhat untrue (3)	Can't say true or false (4)	Somewhat true (5)	Mostly true (6)	Absolutely true (7)
No	Statements					
1	I understand my life's meaning.					
2	I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.					
3	I am always looking to find my life's purpose.					
4	My life has a clear sense of purpose.					
5	I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.					
6	I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.					
7	I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.					
8	I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.					
9	My life has no clear purpose.					
10	I am searching for meaning in my life.					

Table A2. Autonomous motivation for teaching (AMT).

Scale				
Very inappropriate (1)	Inappropriate (2)	Somewhat appropriate (3)	Appropriate (4)	Very appropriate (5)
No	Statements			
External motivation				
1	When I devote time to individual talks with students, I do so because I want the parents to appreciate my knowledge and familiarity with their children			
2	When I try to find interesting subjects and new ways of teaching, I do so because I want the parents to be satisfied so they won't complain.			
3	When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because I do not want the principal to follow my work too closely.			
4	When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so in order to prevent disruptions and discipline problems during the lessons.			
Introjected motivation				
5	When I try to find interesting subjects and new ways of teaching, I do so because I think it is a shame to keep on teaching in the same way all the time.			
6	When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because if I do not invest enough I would feel ashamed of myself.			
7	When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because otherwise I would feel guilty.			
8	When I devote time to individual talks with students, I do so because it makes me feel proud to do this.			
Identified motivation				
9	When I try to find interesting subjects and new ways of teaching, I do so because it is important for me to keep up with innovations in teaching.			
10	When I devote time to individual talks with students, I do so because I can learn from them what happens in the classroom			
11	When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because it is important for me to make children feel that			

I care about them.

12 When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because it is important for me to feel that I help people.

Intrinsic motivation

13 When I try to find interesting subjects and new ways of teaching, I do so because it is fun to create new things.

14 When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because I enjoy finding unique solutions for various students.

15 When I invest effort in my work as a teacher, I do so because I enjoy creating connections with people.

16 When I devote time to individual talks with students, I do so because I like being in touch with children and adolescents.

Table A3. List of interview questions.

A list of questions

What made you decide to become a teacher, is that motivation still valid today?

How do you feel about the work environment at this school, does it affect your motivation to teach?

What are the things that motivate you most in teaching?

How do you feel about appreciation and recognition from students, colleagues, and the school? Does this affect your motivation in teaching?

Does support from the school, such as training and professional development, influence your motivation to teach?

How do you feel about the workload, stress or challenges in the teaching profession? How does that affect your motivation?

Do you feel you have autonomy in your teaching methods? How does this affect your motivation?

How do you feel about the quality of relationships with students, parents and co-workers? Does this affect your motivation?

How do you feel about the response and feedback you received from students and the school? Does this affect your motivation in teaching?

How do you face challenges in teaching, what helps you stay motivated?
