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Perceptions of purpose

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Table 1. Frequency table Access to University

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Government sponsored (JAB) | 406 | 34,6 | 34,6 | 34,6 |
| | Self sponsored programmes (SSP) | 513 | 43,7 | 43,7 | 78,3 |
| | Private University | 254 | 21,7 | 21,7 | 100,0 |
| | Total | 1173 | 100,0 | 100,0 | |

As far as the independent variable *Access to University* is concerned, the result findings show that those who access through self sponsored programmes had the highest frequency of 513 which constitutes 43,7% of the total sample. Those who access through government sponsorship had a frequency of 406 constituting 34,6% and those through private university scored a frequency of 254 which is 21,7%. The low frequency of access through private university is due to the fact that we considered only one private university. Since the two modes of access to university namely, through *Joint Admission Board* (JAB) and *Self Sponsored Programmes* (SSP) are both in public universities, we gave a higher priority to the public universities.

In relation to the three modes of access to the Kenyan universities, given that the *Joint Admission Board* (JAB) students are assured of a direct access to the university through government sponsorship we hypothesize that they will have a significantly higher score for PIL than the *Self Sponsored Programmes* (SSP) students and the *Private University* (PU) students. We also hypothesize that the JAB students will have a significantly lower score of the SONG in comparison with the SSP and PU students.

On the following table we present the ANOVA to determine the levels of significance in relation to our sample's responses to total PIL and SONG and then with *factors 1* and *2*.

Table 2. ANOVA on Access to University

| | df | F | Sig. |
|--|----|-------|------|
| PIL | 2 | 4,872 | ,008 |
| SONG | 2 | 5,025 | ,007 |
| Factor 1. Purpose/meaning | 2 | 7,438 | ,001 |
| Factor 2. Motivation for a future directed purpose/meaning | 2 | 5,638 | ,004 |

Since the ANOVA shows statistically significant differences in PIL, SONG, *factor's 1 and 2* we did a Post Hoc Test (Tukey HSD) to have a multiple comparisons showing the mean differences between the modes of access to the university, the standard error and levels of significance. In the table below these differences are indicated in *italics* which we will use throughout this hypotheses testing.

Table 3. Post Hoc Tests (Tukey HSD) on Access to University

| Dependent Variable | (I) Access to University | (J) Access to University | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| PIL | Government sponsored (JAB) | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | 3,11295* | 1,27348 | ,039 |
| | | Private University | 4,37597* | 1,53373 | ,012 |
| | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | Government sponsored (JAB) | -3,11295* | 1,27348 | ,039 |
| | | Private University | 1,26302 | 1,47089 | ,666 |
| | Private University | Government sponsored (JAB) | -4,37597* | 1,53373 | ,012 |
| | | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | -1,26302 | 1,47089 | ,666 |
| SONG | Government sponsored (JAB) | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | -3,50965* | 1,23885 | ,013 |
| | | Private University | -,07793 | 1,49201 | ,998 |
| | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | Government sponsored (JAB) | -3,50965* | 1,47089 | ,013 |
| | | Private University | 3,43172* | 1,43088 | ,044 |
| | Private University | Government sponsored (JAB) | -,07793 | 1,49201 | ,998 |
| | | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | 3,43172* | 1,43088 | ,044 |
| Factor 1 | Government sponsored (JAB) | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | 1,74027 | ,90155 | ,131 |
| | | Private University | 4,18401* | 1,08579 | ,000 |
| | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | Government sponsored (JAB) | 1,74027 | ,90155 | ,131 |
| | | Private University | 2,44375* | 1,04130 | ,050 |
| | Private University | Government sponsored (JAB) | 4,18401* | 1,08579 | ,000 |
| | | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | 2,44375* | 1,04130 | ,050 |
| Factor 2 | Government sponsored (JAB) | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | -1,79283* | ,53745 | ,003 |
| | | Private University | -,77912 | ,64729 | ,451 |
| | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | Government sponsored (JAB) | -1,79283* | ,53745 | ,003 |
| | | Private University | 1,01371 | ,62076 | ,232 |
| | Private University | Government sponsored (JAB) | -,77912 | ,64729 | ,451 |
| | | Self-sponsored programs (SSP) | 1,01371 | ,62076 | ,232 |

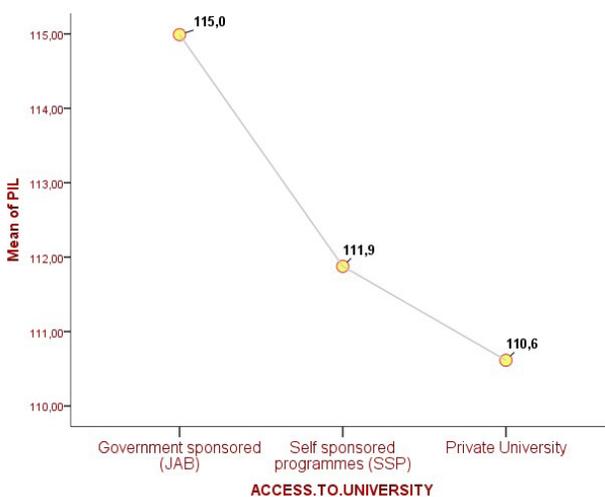
The Post Hoc Test (Tukey HSD) has shown significant differences between JAB students and the SSP students ($p = 0,039$) and PU students ($p = 0,012$) in PIL. The difference between them is statistically significant because it is below the threshold ($P < ,05$).

The second part of the first hypothesis was comparing JAB students with SSP students and PU students in relation to SONG. The presumption was that “we also hypothesize that the JAB students will have a significantly lower score of the SONG in comparison with the SSP and PU students”. Between the JAB students and SSP students there is a statistically significant difference because ($p = 0,013$) which is lower than ($p <,05$). There is no significant difference between JAB students and PU students since ($p = 0,998$) which is greater than the threshold level of significance ($p <,05$). We observe as well a significant difference between SSP students and PU students because ($p = 0,044$).

The result findings in relation to factor 1 which we have called Purpose/Meaning³⁶ in Life, show a significant difference between the JAB students and PU students ($p = 0,000$) which is very low in comparison with threshold p - level ($p <,05$).

The factor 2 which we have called Motivation for a future directed Purpose/Meaning³⁷ in life shows a statistically significant difference between JAB students and SSP students because their ($p = 0,003$) which much lower than ($p <,05$).

Graph 1. Mean PIL on Access to University

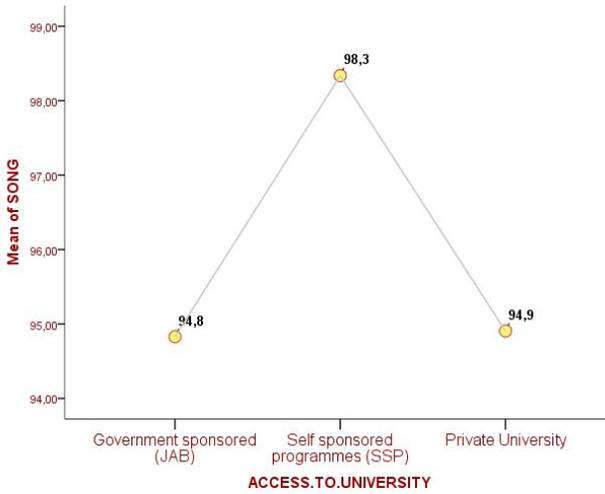


The above graph shows the mean scores in the three modes of access to Kenyan universities for total PIL.

³⁶ From here onwards, whenever we refer to *factor 1*, we will not repeat its title. We will simply refer to it as *factor 1*.

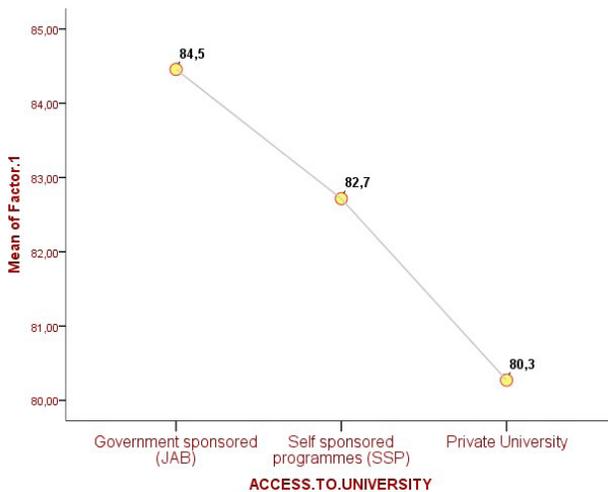
³⁷ We will follow the same methodology in relation to *factor 2*.

Graph 2. Mean SONG on Access to University



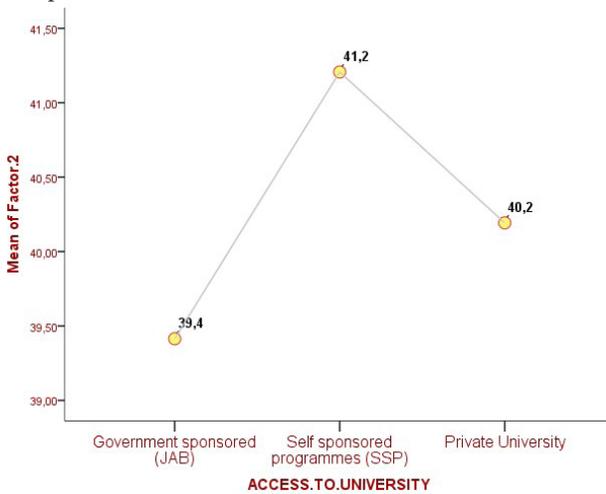
The graph above shows the mean scores in the three modes of access to Kenyan universities for total SONG.

Graph 3. Mean of Factor 1



In the graph above we present the mean scores of the three modes of access to Kenyan universities for *factor 1 (Purpose/meaning)* in life.

Graph 4. Mean of factor 2



The graph above shows the mean scores of the three modes of access to Kenyan universities in *factor 2 (Motivation for a future directed purpose/meaning)* in life.

The Post Hoc Test (Tukey HSD) shows significant differences between the JAB students and SSP students at the level of (0,039) and PU students at the level of (0,012). This confirms the first part of our hypothesis because it shows that the government sponsored students have a higher perception of purpose/meaning in life in their response to total PIL score. There is also a statistically significant difference between JAB students and SSP students in total SONG at the level (0,013) which is lower than the threshold ($p < .05$), but not with the PU students which partially verifies the 1b hypothesis where we had predicted a significantly lower score of JABs from SSPs and PUs.

JAB students are those directly selected by the *Joint Admission Board (JAB)* to join Kenyan public universities (government owned) because not only have they achieved the minimum required grade (C+) for joining university but have as well met the *cut-off* point set by the government each year. Such a procedure on the part of the government creates two categories of students who access Kenyan public universities, the higher performers and average level performers. While to meet the minimum entry grade is an achievement for Kenyan university students, to be a JAB student is even more prestigious because it is a sign of excellence, a worthwhile goal achieved at this level of cognitive development. No wonder then the JAB students have achieved a higher score in PIL as we foresaw in our hypothesis because they regard themselves as successful rendering life more meaningful to them.

In asserting the above, Frankl describes a meaningful life as a life lived doing meaningful things; may it be through achieving an important goal/task in life,

engaging in a mission that is other-centered, while of course joy and fulfillment comes to the person as a by-product among other ways³⁸.

The result findings in relation to *factor 1*, show a significant difference between the JAB students and PU students ($p = 0,000$) in the direction of the hypothesis. The *factor 2* shows a statistically significant difference between JAB students and SSP students because their ($p= 0,003$) at ($p<,05$). Basing ourselves on the mean scores and taking in consideration that this sub-scale of SONG extracted 7 SONG items we can confirm the 1b part of the first hypothesis which stated that *the JAB students will have a significantly lower score of the SONG in comparison with SSP students but not with PU students.*

In Path Analysis we observed a negative Regression Weight (-2, 14) which explains that JAB students are higher perceivers of purpose in life in comparison to SSP students and PU students.

4. APPLICATIVE SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

As we have seen in hypothesis one, between the JAB and SSP students there are significant differences both in total PIL and SONG scores. The JABs have higher scores. The two modes of access have created categories which at times create social groupings based on the mode of access to the university in both social and academic life. This may reduce the spirit of academic sharing in group works which is an important aspect in especially the promotion of *postformal stage* of cognitive development.

The SSP students may develop an inferiority complex in relation to JAB students simply based on the mode of access and especially if there are bully students from the JAB. The SSP students follow the same courses with the JAB students except they have to meet their whole tuition while the JABs are sponsored by the government. This may provoke anger and hostility which may lead to violent strikes and there have been a number of them in some Kenyan public universities. The two modes of access while from a positive perspective have increased access to the tertiary level of education, could have a negative repercussion in the collaborative aspect in realizing the *Vision 2030* because the divisions are already caused at the university.

Since the JAB intake is based not on the minimum grade required for university entry but on *cut-off* point set by the government corresponding to the number of accommodations available in public universities, the government should embark on increasing the infrastructure so that more hostels are built to accommodate the increasing numbers of qualified secondary school graduates.

While the government gives loans to SSP students from low economic backgrounds, such an affirmative action should be extended to such a time that the

³⁸ See: V. E. Frankl, *The doctor ...*; V. E. Frankl, *The will to meaning. Foundations and applications of logotherapy*, Meridian, Penguin, New York 1988; V. E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning ...* .

graduates get a job to begin repaying the loan and not fixing standards which must be followed regardless of whether there are jobs or not. The government therefore ought to increase job opportunities especially respecting the three pillars of the *Vision 2030*.

While a vast literature exists about transition and access to Kenyan higher education, no literature exists on researches done in Kenya on *perceptions of meaning/purpose* in life in relation to *transition and access to Kenyan universities*. Our research aimed at addressing *transition and access* in logotherapeutic interpretive approach, using validly standardized tests on the measurement of perceptions of purpose/meaning in life PII and SONG, in the view of helping people discover their degree of *existential vacuum*, in order to assume full responsibility for their lives and hence live meaningful lives. Living meaningful lives is a health promotion factor in that it prevents from avoidable psychosomatic disorders that are as a result of accumulated stress. *Boredom* and *existential frustration* are key elements of living meaningless lives and in this particular aspect, logotherapy offers us helpful means of living meaningful lives by being responsible.

Such an approach to transition and access to Kenyan universities would have a twofold effects namely: the promotion of health at a *bio-psycho-social* level to the students by living responsibly from the very first year and not succumbing to social pressure of wasting time, which is supposed to be invested in studies in preparation for tomorrow's career. There could be a tendency among some students to think that there is a lot of time and therefore not invest quality time to learning. This would affect the student's performance and indeed the quality of graduates at the end of their degree program; a promotion of the *Vision 2030* by consciously preparing the required workforce and knowhow through the different specializations undertaken by the university students. It would help the students study with aims, goals, visions that go-beyond their personal, family interests to national interests that benefit Kenyans in the envisaged economic-developmental plan of *Vision 2030*.

PERCEPTIONS OF PURPOSE/MEANING IN LIFE IN RELATION TO TRANSITION
AND ACCESS TO KENYAN UNIVERSITIES.
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AMONG FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Summary

We investigated the perception of meaning/purpose in life in relation to transition and access to Kenyan universities in a sample of 1173 first year students, in the three modes of access namely: Joint Admission Board students (JAB), Self-Sponsored Programs students (SSP) and the Private University students (PU). The *Purpose-in-Life Test* (PIL) and The *Seeking of Noetic Goals Test* (SONG) were used to measure Viktor Frankl's concept of *Will to Meaning* and existential vacuum in which four interpretable dimensions of satisfaction with life were extracted with 2 factors loading on the PIL and two on the SONG with the Kenyan sample. The JABs attained a higher score than SSPs and PUs and inversely a lower score in SONG than the other two. This result supports assertion that

SONG is a complementary scale to PIL contributing two factors that deal with purpose in life and two motivations for meaning in life. The two instruments proved their cross-cultural reliability and validity with the Kenyan sample.

Keywords: Perceptions of purpose/meaning in life, University, access, research

PERCEPCJA CELU/SENSU ŻYCIA W ODNIESIENIU
DO WSTĘPU NA UNIWERSYTETY W KENII.
BADANIA EMPIRYCZNE WŚRÓD STUDENTÓW PIERWSZEGO ROKU

Abstrakt

Artykuł przedstawia wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród 1173 studentów pierwszego roku czterech państwowych i jednego prywatnego uniwersytetu w Kenii. Celem badań była analiza poziomu percepcji sensu życia w okresie rozpoczęcia studiów uniwersyteckich (I rok), z uwzględnieniem trzech trybów dostępu obecnych w Kenii: studenci wspierani przez program państwowy (JAB), studenci częściowo finansujący swoje studia (SSP) oraz studenci uczelni prywatnych (PU). W badaniach użyto dwóch testów (PIL i SONG), mierzących percepcję egzystencjalną i sens/znaczenie życia, mających swoje podłoże teoretyczne w teorii V. E. Frankla. Studenci z programu JAB wykazali wyższy poziom percepcji celu/sensu życia od studentów objętych pozostałymi dwoma programami. Wynik ten został otrzymany przy użyciu obu zastosowanych testów, które tym samym okazały się komplementarne; użyte po raz pierwszy w Kenii potwierdziły również swoją wiarygodność transkulturową.

Nota o Autorach: O. dr Kagwe Cosmas Muiruri OFM – doktor psychologii. W swoich badaniach zajmuje się logoterapią i analizą egzystencjalną V. E. Frankla.

Ks. prof. dr Zbigniew Formella SDB – doktor nauk humanistycznych, profesor nadzwyczajny na *Università Pontificia Salesiana* w Rzymie, kierownik Katedry Psychologii Wychowawczej. Członek Towarzystwa Naukowego Franciszka Salezego. W badaniach naukowych zajmuje się problematyką młodzieżową i wychowawczą, z tego zakresu posiada kilkadziesiąt publikacji.

Słowa kluczowe: percepcja sensu życia, uniwersytet, wstęp, poszukiwania naukowe