

QUALITY OF LIFE OF STUDENTS AT A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN CENTRAL MEXICO

Cruz Garcia Lirios, Autonomous University of Mexico City

Jaime Lemus Tlapale, Autonomous University of Tlaxcala

Rosa Maria Rincon Ornelas, University of Sonora

Celia Yaneth Quiroz Campas, Sonora Technological Institute

Javier Carreon Guillen, National Autonomous University of Mexico

ABSTRACT

Human development and poverty are two characteristics that distinguish groups in academic formation. From the theory of human capital, income and religion are two factors that enhance academic training and quality of life, indicated by entrepreneurship, self-employment, and professional satisfaction. In this sense, the objective of this work was to establish the informative and practical conditions for the promotion of quality of life through entrepreneurship, self-employment, and satisfaction. Three studies were carried out: a diagnosis, a workshop-type intervention and a new quality of life diagnosis with samples of students from a public university in central Mexico and selected for their level of development and performance. The results show that there are no significant differences before and after the entrepreneurship, self-employment, and satisfaction workshops, but there are data that would guide a discussion and a new intervention limited by income and religion.

Keywords: Quality of life, Human Development, Poverty, Life Satisfaction, Social Work.

INTRODUCTION

Human Development is a broad concept that refers to the process through which it seeks to improve people's quality of life, expand their opportunities and freedoms, and allows them to reach their maximum potential in all dimensions of their existence (Keshky et al., 2020). The Human Development approach is based on the idea that economic growth alone is not enough to measure the progress of a society, but it is also necessary to consider other fundamental aspects that affect people's lives.

The concept of Human Development was popularized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) through the publication of the Human Development Report in 1990, which presented the Human Development Index (HDI) as a composite measure to evaluate the development of countries (Neill et al., 2023). The HDI is a combination of indicators such as life expectancy at birth, educational level, and per capita income, and is used to classify and compare the development of different nations.

Human Development Considers Three Fundamental Dimensions

Health: Refers to access to medical care services, adequate nutrition, sanitary conditions and life expectancy at birth.

Education: Includes literacy rate, school attendance and access to quality education.

Income and living standards: It is evaluated through per capita income and the distribution of income in society.

In addition, the concept of Human Development also covers other important aspects such as gender equity, political participation and protection of human rights, access to basic services, environmental sustainability and citizen security (Shek, 2021).

The Human Development approach places emphasis on people as the center of development and seeks to ensure that all individuals can live a dignified life, enjoying fundamental freedoms and actively participating in society (Santin et al., 2022). To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to implement policies and programs that address social and economic inequalities and that promote social inclusion and the protection of human rights.

Mexico has faced significant challenges in terms of poverty. Although there have been advances in certain economic and social aspects, a significant part of the population continues to live in conditions of poverty or extreme poverty (Zhang et al., 2023).

Poverty in Mexico is a complex and multifaceted problem, affecting different regions and population groups unequally (Agilar Medina, 2020). Factors that contribute to poverty in the country include:

Economic inequality: Mexico has experienced a significant gap between the rich and the poor, which has led to an unequal distribution of resources and opportunities (Bracons & de León Romero, 2021).

Lack of access to employment and adequate wages: Many Mexicans face difficulties in accessing well-paid and stable jobs, hindering their ability to escape poverty (Calderón et al., 2021).

Lack of access to education and health services: Lack of access to quality education and adequate health services can perpetuate the cycle of poverty in many communities (Pinto Alvarado, 2022).

High levels of informality: A significant part of the Mexican economy operates in the informal sector, which can lead to low earnings and a lack of social protection for workers (Chaves, 2021).

Violence and security problems: Violence and insecurity in certain areas can have a negative impact on the economy and the quality of life of people, especially those who live in situations of poverty (Garcia Meza, 2022).

Quality of life and social work are closely related, since social work has as its main objective to improve the quality of life of individuals, families and communities facing various difficulties and social challenges (Harenwall et al., 2021). Next, we will analyze how social work contributes to people's quality of life and how both concepts are linked:

Social work and quality of life improvement: Social work is a professional discipline focused on helping individuals and groups overcome social problems, improve their living conditions, and promote social well-being (Oakley et al., 2021). Social workers work with a wide range of vulnerable populations, such as people experiencing poverty, the homeless, victims of abuse, people with disabilities, among others. Its objective is to address the barriers and inequalities that affect these people and work with them to identify resources and solutions that allow them to improve their quality of life.

Holistic approach: Social work takes a holistic approach in analyzing and addressing social problems (Seng et al., 2021). Social workers not only focus on economic aspects, but also consider emotional, psychological and social factors that influence people's quality of life. By addressing these aspects in an integrated manner, it seeks to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of individuals and communities.

Access to resources and services: Social workers play a critical role in connecting people with the resources and services available in the community (Ishfaq & Ahmad, 2023). This can include help accessing health care, housing services, food assistance, emotional

support, employment and training programs, among other resources that directly contribute to improving the quality of life for people in need.

Promoting social change: In addition to working at the individual level, social workers also seek to bring about change at the structural and systemic level to address the roots of social problems (Zhang et al., 2022). This may imply the promotion of more inclusive public policies, the defense of human rights and the fight against discrimination and inequality.

In short, social work deploys a wide range of interventions and strategies to improve people's quality of life and promote positive change in society (Cayetano Gaspar, 2023). By addressing physical, emotional and social needs, social work seeks to achieve a significant improvement in the quality of life for those who face challenges and difficulties in their lives.

Consequently, the reduction of poverty in an area of low human development is possible through an intervention model oriented towards the individual and the group in academic formation. In this sense, the objective of this work is a pre-posttest on the quality of life in reference to an informative and practical workshop on entrepreneurship, self-employment and professional satisfaction.

Are there significant differences before and after an informative workshop on entrepreneurship, self-employment, and professional satisfaction with respect to the pre-post measurement of quality of life?

H₁: Given that poverty and quality of life are concomitant with the information surrounding and close to academic training, it is considered that there will be significant differences before and after the measurement of quality of life.

H₂: If pre-posttest differences prevail, then academic training can be oriented as an axis of entrepreneurship, self-employment, and professional satisfaction to increase individual and group quality of life.

H₃: The inclusion of quality of life in an intervention model will allow the prevention of poverty, as well as the factors associated with it and in relation to quality of life and human development.

METHOD

First study: A descriptive, cross-sectional, and exploratory study was carried out with a sample of 100 students from a public university who were contacted and surveyed through their institutional email, prior guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity of their answers, as well as information about the project and the responsible for carrying it out, following the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) in its section on human studies.

The Quality-of-Life Scale (ECV-20) was used, which includes 20 items alluding to entrepreneurship, self-employment and professional satisfaction. Each of the items includes five response options ranging from 0="it does not resemble my situation" to 5="it quite resembles my situation".

Second study: The intervention model focused on entrepreneurship was carried out to generate self-employment and professional life satisfaction. The workshop was carried out via zoom and the study protocols with people from the APA were followed, as well as the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity where it was warned about non-remuneration for participatory or recreational activities.

The sequence of the workshop began with the presentation of videos on entrepreneurship, self-employment, and professional satisfaction. Next, discussion groups were organized with the activating questions:

1. Do people deserve what we have?
2. Are we what we know or what we do?
3. Is studying more important than any other activity?

At the end, the participants wrote motivational phrases to present them in a round of closing comments.

Third study: The ECV-20 was applied following the same guidelines and guidelines of the first study. The application was carried out immediately after the sessions scheduled in zoom to measure the effect of reactance to the entrepreneurship, self-employment, and satisfaction workshop.

The data from the three studies were recorded in Excel and processed in JASP version 16. Descriptive statistics and dependency relationships were estimated to test the hypothesis of significant differences pre-posttest. Values close to unity were assumed as evidence of non-rejection of the null hypothesis and the consequent acceptance of independent variables between the dimensions of quality of life: entrepreneurship, self-employment and satisfaction.

RESULTS

The average age of the sample was 20,060 with a standard deviation of 1,399 the average income was close to two minimum wages (Table 1).

	Sex	Age	Scholarship	Income	Religion	Locality
Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1,500	20,060	1,760	1,880	1,640	3,080
Std. Deviation	0.503	1,399	0.698	0.769	1,097	1,316
Minimum	1,000	17,000	1,000	1,000	0	1,000
Maximum	2,000	22,000	3,000	3,000	4,000	5,000

Source: Prepared with study data

Most of the respondents are 21 years old and only two reach 17 years, although the ages of 18, 20 and 22 have similar frequencies that allow the comparison of variables related to quality of life such as entrepreneurship, self-employment, and satisfaction. The income reveals that the sample reaches a socioeconomic status estimated at two minimum wages for the majority and three minimum wages for the rest. In other words, the sample is conceived as the middle class and is distinguished from those who earn a minimum wage. Regarding religion, interesting results can be seen. The majority professes Catholicism, but not far behind are those who are Protestants, and both coexist with atheism, Mormonism and evangelism (Castillo de Mesa, 2021).

The normal distribution test indicates that the measurements reach the significance values for non-rejection of the null hypothesis regarding the dependence of the measurements and the consequent acceptance that the distribution is of the normal type (Table 2). In other words, the instrument meets the normality requirement to make comparisons before and after the quality-of-life workshop.

	W	p
r1 - r2	0.920	< 0.001
r3 - r4	0.952	< .001
r5 - r6	0.889	0.001
r7 - r8	0.951	< .001
r9 - r10	0.909	< .001
r11- r12	0.9	< .001
r13 - r14	0.951	< .001

r15 - r16	0.947	< .001
r17 - r18	0.874	< .001
r19 - r20	0.94	< .001

Note: Significant results suggest a deviation from normality.

Source: Prepared with study data

The “*t*” test of significant differences between the pre and posttest suggests the effect of the workshops was not enough to observe a change in the quality of life of the study sample. Therefore, the null hypothesis of significant differences is rejected, and it is accepted that the study dimensions should be more oriented towards socioeconomic issues such as income or sociocultural issues such as religion (Table 3).

Measure 1 & 2	You	df	P	Mean Difference	SE Difference
r1-r2	-2,954	99	0.004	-0.37	0.125
r3-r4	-2,203	99	0.03	-0.33	0.15
r5-r6	-0.517	99	0.607	-0.15	0.29
r7-r8	-0.827	99	0.41	-0.14	0.169
r9-r10	2,170	99	0.032	0.38	0.175
r11-r12	-5,898	99	< .001	-1,250	0.212
r13-r14	-3,961	99	< .001	-0.68	0.172
r15-r16	2,122	99	0.036	0.43	0.203
r17-r18	-3,888	99	< .001	-1,030	0.265
r19-r20	8,038	99	< .001	1,260	0.157

Note: Student's t-test.

Source: Prepared with study data

DISCUSSION

The contribution of this work to the state of the art lies in the comparison of a pre-posttest on quality of life with an informative and practical workshop on quality of life. The results show that the workshop did not lead to significant differences between the study sample, although some variables of a socioeconomic order such as income and sociocultural order such as religion are appreciated, which would explain the inhibition of the workshop on the quality of life of the students. In this sense, it is recommended to include in the measurement the factors that are associated as strategies of academic training and social assistance. This is the case of social work intervention models.

The history of social work is a fascinating narrative that has unfolded over the centuries. Below is a summary of the key moments in the evolution of this discipline:

Philanthropic and charitable origins (16th-19th centuries): The roots of social work go back to pre-modern times, where charity and philanthropy was practiced helping people in need. Religious and charitable institutions, such as hospices and asylums, played a prominent role in providing assistance to the poor, sick, and underprivileged (González & Ramírez, 2022).

Social reform movement (19th century): During the 19th century, social reform movements arose that sought to address the unfavorable living conditions and social injustices that resulted from the Industrial Revolution (Domínguez & de Mesa, 2021). Activists and social reformers worked to improve working conditions, housing, education, and health care for the most disadvantaged.

Social work pioneers (late 19th and early 20th centuries): Modern social work began to take shape in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries with pioneering

figures such as Jane Addams and Mary Richmond in the United States, Octavia Hill in the UK and others in different parts of the world. These historical figures advocated for the professionalization of social work and focused on addressing conditions of poverty and inequality.

Development of the profession (early 20th century): At the beginning of the 20th century, social work established itself as a recognized profession. The first social work schools and programs were established, and practices and theories based on intervention with individuals, families, and communities were developed (Machado et al., 2022).

Influence of the Second World War and the postwar period (1940-1950): The Second World War and the postwar period highlighted the need for social services for veterans and the population affected by the conflict. Social work expanded to address issues such as war trauma, rehabilitation and social reintegration.

Civil rights movements and social change (1960-1970): During the 1960s, social workers became actively involved in civil rights movements and in the fight against racial discrimination and social inequality (Garcia Meza, 2022). Social workers played a crucial role in promoting social justice and human rights.

Focus on welfare and social development (1980-1990): In the last decades of the 20th century, social work broadened its focus to encompass welfare and social development, in addition to traditional social service interventions (Ruíz et al., 2020). More attention was paid to topics such as prevention, promotion of social change and community participation.

Internationalization of social work (21st century): In the 21st century, social work has become increasingly globalized and interconnected (Monte Ibarra, 2021). Social workers work in international contexts and address global issues such as migration, poverty, health, and climate change. Social work continues to evolve to accommodate emerging challenges and the changing needs of individuals and communities around the world. The fight for social justice and the promotion of human well-being continue to be the fundamental pillars of this constantly developing discipline. Throughout the history of social work, various intervention models have been developed that reflect the theoretical and practical approaches used by professionals to address the needs of individuals, families, and communities (Domínguez & de Mesa, 2021). Some of the most prominent intervention models in the evolution of social work are presented below:

Case model: One of the earliest intervention models in social work is the Case Model, which was developed in the 1920s (Haro-Lara et al., 2020). This model focuses on individualized work with clients and uses interview and assessment to identify specific problems and needs. The social worker works with the client to develop a personalized intervention plan and offers emotional support and practical assistance to address identified problems.

Group model: The Group Model emerged in the 1930s and focused on working with groups of people who faced similar problems (Lucas-Vélez & Moreira-Valencia, 2022). Social workers used group dynamics and group therapy techniques to foster communication, cohesion, and mutual support among group members. This approach allowed people to share their experiences and learn strategies to deal with challenges in a supportive context.

Social change model: During the 1960s, social work took a broader approach towards social change and justice (Lugo et al., 2021). Social workers became active in civil rights movements and fought against discrimination and oppression. This intervention model emphasizes the promotion of social change at the structural level to address the underlying causes of inequalities and improve the living conditions of marginalized populations.

Systems model: Starting in the 1970s, the Systems Model became more prominent in social work (Millán-Franco, 2020). This approach views individuals and families as part of

larger systems, such as family, community, and society. Social workers assess the interactions and dynamics within these systems to understand how they affect the well-being and functioning of individuals. This approach helps to identify more holistic and contextual solutions to problems.

Strengths and empowerment model: In recent decades, a social work approach focused on the strengths and empowerment of individuals and communities has emerged (Sánchez et al., 2020). Social workers focus on identifying and building people's inner resources and skills to address challenges. This model seeks to empower clients to take an active role in their own process of change and development.

Human development model: This intervention model is based on human development theories and focuses on personal growth and evolution throughout the life cycle (Crispín, 2020). Social workers use theoretical frameworks to understand the stages of development and the typical challenges people face at each stage, allowing them to deliver more appropriate and relevant interventions.

It is important to note that these intervention models are not exclusive, and social workers can integrate different approaches depending on the needs of clients and specific situations. In addition, the evolution of social work is still ongoing, and new approaches and intervention models continue to emerge to address the complex problems of contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this work was to compare the quality of life, establishing the effects of an informative and experiential workshop on entrepreneurship, self-employment, and professional satisfaction. The results show that the effect was not significant, although it was found that socioeconomic and sociocultural factors would be influencing the process. If many of the participants perceive themselves as upper middle class and profess the Catholic religion, then it is possible that the workshop would not have an effect due to these two circumstances. The expectation of being upper middle class means that their quality of life is quite favorable, and the Catholic religion suggests that the quality of life contravenes the Franciscan commandment of austerity. However, a growing percentage of the sample indicates that income and religion would be modifying the dominant position and would guide the quality of life towards a desirable scenario and therefore, the comparison of the workshop between socioeconomic and sociocultural groups could anticipate significant differences and guide an intervention model according to the individual or group profile.

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