

Core Self-Evaluation as a Correlate of Subjective Wellbeing among Special Educators

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The study involves a comparison of core self-evaluation (CSE) (positive personality traits) and subjective wellbeing (SWB) between special educators and normal educators. It was observed that the former excel in CSE and SWB. The task and role responsibility of a special educator involves higher optimism, creativity, intuition and commitment to teach children with special needs. These responsibilities are not only dependent on the personal preferences and behaviours, but also on the structure and various social stimuli in which these educators work. Thus, the study investigates the special educator's personality traits (core self-evaluation) and their relationship with subjective wellbeing. Core self-evaluation was measured by the CSE scale and subjective wellbeing was measured by the life satisfaction scale and PANAS-X. It was applied to 30 special education teachers and 30 regular academic teachers (age 25 years and above) in mainstream private schools (Delhi/NCR). CSE was positively and significantly related to life satisfaction and positive affect and negatively related to negative affects in both groups. The study contributes to evaluate educators and is an attempt to assess its utility.

Keywords: Core self-evaluation, subjective wellbeing, special educators

Education is one of the most-pervasive components of one's life and is closely related to SWB (Hayward, Pannozzo, & Colman, 2005; Crocker, 2002). The role and responsibilities of special educators differs from that of normal educators. In addition, special educators tend to utilise and invest extreme emotions, efforts and energy while pursuing their task. They are also considered teachers of students with a single disability or multiple disabilities. There is a shortage of special educators in India as well as in the world (McLeskey, Tyler & Flippin, 2004). Inclusive education is the need of the hour. As an area of research, psychologists have not thoroughly investigated this. Hence, to study the positive personality traits and the affected variables underlying the disposition of special and normal school educators, CSE (positive personality trait) and SWB (positive and negative affects, life satisfaction) were considered.

Positive Personality Trait: Core Self-Evaluation (CSE)

Most traits have a genetic origin and are stable over time (Roberts & Mroczek, 2008).

However, traits vary across intensity in their changeability and stability. As evaluations of the self-concept are intimately tied to our environment, it may differ across short-term and long-term variability (Judge, 2009). Core self-evaluation is a comprehensive and fundamental evaluation by an individual of his own self and the world outside. Positive trait and behaviour evaluation in any context requires relating with the fact that many individuals are born with certain predispositions that contribute towards positive cognitions, behaviour and thoughts (Judge & Hurst, 2007). According to Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997), core self-evaluation is a higher-order concept representing the fundamental evaluations people make about themselves, their environments and the relationships between themselves and their environment. These core self-evaluations could be considered a set of traits, which is defined as a stable and consistent way of thinking, feeling or acting exhibited by individuals (Judge, Locke, Durham & Kluger, 1998). The concept undertakes not only four indicator traits - self-esteem, generalised self-efficacy, locus of control and emotional stability

— but also a unitary score of the same. Self-esteem is conceptualised as an individual's feelings or value of his/her own self (Rosenberg, 1985). An important aspect was shared by Snyder and Lopez (2002), who defined self-esteem as the evaluative dimension of the self-concept. Emotional stability (neuroticism) represents the tendency to exhibit poor emotional adjustment and experience negative feelings, such as fear, self-doubt and depression (Barrick & Mount, 1991). The generalised self-efficacy of individuals is defined as encompassing judgments of their capacity to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to exercise general control over their lives and deal successfully with life challenges (Judge, Locke & Durham, 1997). Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966) represents the perceived degree of control over the outcomes of one's actions. Based on Rotter's classification (1966), the locus of control is of two kinds — internal and external. The difference lies in how the events in one's life are interpreted. Internals believe they control the events in their lives while externals believe that luck, chance, fate or powerful others are responsible for the events. People who are high on core self-evaluation are not carried away by failure and have the tendency to appraise events in a consistently positive manner. They are highly capable individuals with higher self worth and control of their lives. Judge, Erez and Bono (1998) opined that individuals with higher core self-evaluations are more motivated to perform their jobs. Special education as a field of activity is full of challenges, more responsibilities and uncertainties in many cases; therefore, CSE needs to be towards the higher side. Various occupations require different levels of CSE (Judge & Mueller, 2010). CSE has been found to be associated with various demographic variables — age, gender, culture etc. (Charles, Reynolds & Gatz, 2001; Hayes & Joseph, 2003).

Subjective Wellbeing (SWB)

SWB is often associated with happiness and includes cognitive evaluation of positive and negative affects and life satisfaction (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003; Shmotkin, 1998). The current societal trends consider the importance of being

well, where individuals and their interaction with the environment are primary (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Since the individual does not operate in a vacuum, people react differently to similar circumstances and appraise the situation on the basis of unique expectations, values and previous experiences (Diener & Suh, 1997). SWB is not a single, specific construct and considers a broad category of phenomenon. It also involves a relative absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life and the experience of positive affects and emotions. Various demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status, geographic region, race etc., have been contrasted with SWB and are considered essential (Acock & Hurlbert, 1993; Gutierrez, Jimenez, Hernandez & Puente, 2005). Personality is one of the actors that are highly correlated with SWB (Cote & Moscovitz, 2000; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996). SWB has been also related to teachers' work profile (special educators and normal educators). In order to ensure role models for students, it has been claimed that regular classroom teachers and special education teachers need a healthy sense of SWB (Bekirogullari, 2011). It is also observed that a person who lacks SWB and satisfaction with their lives experiences positive feelings less frequently and expresses negative emotions (Yetim, 2001). There are various other factors that have been found associated with teachers' wellbeing, such as stress, coping, attrition and burnout (Pillay, Goddard & Wilss, 2005).

Core Self-Evaluation and Subjective Wellbeing

Personality and affect are considered two of the important constructs in determining SWB (Cummins, Gullone, & Lau, 2002; Steel & Ones, 2002). Evidence suggests that CSE is closely related to the SWB (Tsaousis, Nikolaou, Serdaris & Judge, 2007) and with life satisfaction (Heller, Judge & Watson, 2002; Piccolo, Judge, Takahashi, Watanabe, & Locke, 2005; Rode, 2004). A sub-component of CSE, "self esteem" is considered in various Indian studies (Hienze, 2004; Sharma & Sharma, 2010). These studies analysed the multiplicity of "being", notions of self, contribution towards core personality and maintenance of wellbeing. The uniqueness of this

study is in relating the constructs to the special educator's core personality. A study by Tankha and Nathawat, 2006 examined subjective wellbeing among army officers and found positive relationships among quality of life, positive affect and general wellbeing and an inverse correlation with negative affects. The role of family, society and culture also contributes to the overall wellness and management of individuals (Duggal & Singh, 2008). Job characteristics and the quality of one's job are important while interpreting the quality of life (Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000). According to Jangira (1991), the intrinsic motivation of a teacher is important in the all-round development of children who require special attention or are disabled. So, these researches highlight the importance of personality, affect, motivation, job characteristics etc. for the quality of life and the determination of wellbeing across various occupations. However, there is a dearth of researches in the context of special educators with special reference to these variables. Therefore, the present study has been conceived to fill this gap in knowledge. The following specific hypotheses were formulated to achieve this goal:

1. There would be a significant difference between special educators and normal school educators on CSE scores.
2. There would be a significant difference between special educators and normal school educators on SWB scores.
3. There would be a positive correlation between CSE and SWB among special educators and normal school educators.

Method

Sample:

A total of 60 educators was taken purposively, out of which 30 were special educators teaching in regular Delhi/NCR public schools that promote inclusive education, and 30 were normal educators. Both groups took higher secondary classes. The basic qualification for all the special educators was a post-graduate diploma by any government body, whereas the normal educators had a bachelor's degree in education. The role and responsibility of special educators was majorly

to extend extra care and help to the students who required more time — on the reference of class teachers or subject teachers, to develop intervention strategies and to assess the report cards of all students at the end of monthly/quarterly exams.

Tools:

Core Self Evaluation Scale (CSES): It was developed by Judge, Erez, Bono and Thoreson (2004). A 12-item scale on a 5-pointer scale ranging from 1 ("strongly agree") to 5 ("strongly disagree"). It is a composite measure of four components, namely, Self Esteem, Generalised Self-Efficacy, Emotional Stability and Locus of Control, but has a unitary factor. The CSES demonstrated an internal consistency of alpha 0.84 and a test-retest reliability of 0.81.

Subjective Wellbeing: According to Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin (1985), SWB needs to be measured by life satisfaction as well as positive and negative affects. Therefore, two psychological tools, namely, SWLS and PANAS-X were used.

i. *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)* by Diener, 1985 is a five-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life on a seven-pointer scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reliability of the scale is reported as 0.82, whereas the criterion-related validity is reported as 0.60.

ii. *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-X)* by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) includes 10 positive and 10 negative emotion adjectives. The participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they experience these adjectives in general. The Alpha reliabilities for the PA and NA scales were .80 and .75, respectively.

Procedure:

Various educational institutions that have an inclusive education system were considered. Prior permissions were taken and the brief objective was narrated. The consent of the participants was taken. The investigators visited the institutions personally and administered the tool accurately.

Results and Discussion

Table-1: Mean, SD, and t-scores on the measures among the special educators and normal educators

Educators Variable	Special Educators(N=30)		Normal Educators		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Core Self Evaluation	52.73	1.65	48.20	1.47	11.19**
Subjective Well Being					
Positive Affect	41.10	1.68	38.26	1.28	7.31**
Negative Affect	12.40	1.13	13.56	1.59	3.27**
Life Satisfaction	24.36	1.54	21.30	1.84	6.99**

**p < .01

The hypothesis 1 stated that there would be a significant difference between special educators and normal school educators on CSE scores. As can be inferred from Table-1, special educators differed significantly on the Core Self-Evaluation (CSE) trait, $t(58) = 11.19$, $p < 0.01$. It was also observed that special educators were on the higher side of this positive trait than the normal educators were ($M = 52.73$ and $M = 48.20$, respectively). Various authors have stated that CSE is an individual trait characterised by a prominent and specific style of managing, evaluating and dealing with external events (Judge, Erez & Bono, 1998). It is considered more prominent with one's vocational identity and job characteristics (Hirschi, 2011; Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000). Many special educators choose their careers by their own will; it was reported that course orientation begins with the information that special education is not a materialistically satisfying job. The tasks are challenging and at times, frustrating because the results may not come easily. Many children with special needs may need therapeutic intervention for years and chances of relapse are also there; anybody with low positivity may not be able to perform well. Hypothesis 2 stated there would be a significant difference among special educators and normal

school educators on SWB scores. As can be seen from Table-1, SWB was significantly higher among special educators, as $p < .01$ in all the measured facets of SWB. It was observed that related constructs within wellbeing, namely, positive affect and life satisfaction were substantially higher among special educators and negative affect was lower among special educators. There are persistent ways of functioning and evaluating the event, special educators' role and responsibilities require a far-more-positive approach towards positive perception and cognitively appraising events. Optimal subjective wellbeing is an important ingredient while considering education and its role (Michalos, 2007) and specifically for professions like social work where workplace practices are more demanding, SWB essentially needs to be high for efficient functioning (Graham & Shier, 2009).

As can be seen from the obtained correlation scores, highly significant correlation values were obtained among the constructs. Core self-evaluation was positively and significantly related to subjective wellbeing $p < .01$. This means that when CSE would be high, SWB would also be high; and our results correspond with this (Tsaousis *et al.*, 2007). Dimension-wise analyses highlighted a similar trend; positive affect and life

Table 2. Correlation coefficients: Core self-evaluation and subjective wellbeing among special educators and normal educators

Variable	CSE	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Life Satisfaction
CSE	1			
Positive Affect	.565**	1		
Negative Affect	-.418**	-0.24	1	
Life Satisfaction	.621**	.416**	-.355**	1

**p < .01 (2-tailed)

satisfaction were positively and significantly related to the measurable constructs (CSE and SWB) and negative affect was negatively related to it (Piccolo *et al.*, 2005; Rode, 2004). The overall measuring facets of SWB were also appropriate indicators of the domain, as each of the considered scale dimension is significantly related to each other and it is also used in various studies (Howell, Rodzon, Kurai & Sanchez, 2010). Personality and affect have been related as important aspects of subject wellbeing (Bhattacharya, Singh, Kaur & Neeti, 2006). Special education is such a profession where there requires to be on higher on the positive affect. Self-esteem has also been found to be an essential criterion for evaluating teacher performance (Ramanigopal, 2008). Our results correspond with what was expected; the special educators align with the expected level of scores, which should be on the higher side, making them more functional and fulfilling.

Conclusion

The work pressure of special educators is different from normal educators in terms of finance, time management, efforts, satisfaction, completion of agendas etc. Special educators need to be highly positive in orientation in order to better help and develop children with special needs. It was found that special educators were significantly higher on the measured constructs, namely CSE and SWB. The obtained results showed significant and positive correlation among CSE, positive affect and life satisfaction. However, we found a significant and negative relationship between CSE and negative affect. The results of the present study have an applied significance and contribute to the assessment of the utility of teacher educators overall.

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