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Satisfying work and its purpose in men's lives: Positive aspects of a professional relationship

Abstract

At present, a satisfying, secure job which corresponds to our education is for some of us a normal, logical consequence of our choices made at school, while for others it is an unattainable luxury. What inspired me to explore this topic was my observation of various professional circles and different levels of satisfaction with everyday professional duties, noticeable to a casual observer. I assumed that people working in their field will achieve a high level of the sense of the meaning of life and experience lower depression levels than people performing random jobs, including casual ones.

The issue examined was whether, and to what extent, the choice of work influences one's sense of the meaning of life and depression level. It turned out that people working in their field feel greater job satisfaction than those working in other fields or performing casual work. Their job, which meets their interests, is connected with important elements of their life and with their interests in a given field, sometimes having developed from their childhood.

The practical conclusions arising from my research may be particularly significant for psychological prevention, upbringing, and education, fields seemingly distant from problems of the adult professional life.

Keywords: satisfaction, work, purpose in life, professional, relationship

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The role of job satisfaction: theory and research

At present, a satisfying permanent job which corresponds to our education for some of us is a normal, logical consequence of our choices made at school, while for others it is an unattainable luxury. The question whether such harmonious development from our dream education through a job compliant with that education is in any way connected with a more general sense of purpose in life has opened a broader perspective for research, analysis and conclusions.

What inspired me to explore this topic was my observation of various professional circles and different levels of satisfaction with everyday professional duties noticeable to a casual observer. Based on available literature and research, I assumed that persons performing jobs that correspond to their education will feel a stronger sense of purpose in life and will experience fewer symptoms of depression than persons performing random work, or work that is not connected with their education.

In one of the first definitions of job satisfaction, E. Locke has described it as a pleasant emotional state which results from the individual's perception of his/her work being realised or as an occasion to realise significant values offered by the job provided that the values comply with the person's needs (Locke, 1976). Both emotions and needs will reappear in later references to the notion of job satisfaction. Besides, many authors agree that satisfaction with a permanent job is a complex function of an employee's expectations and needs, and fulfilment of those expectations and needs (Stoner, Wankel, 1996; Bańka, Derbis, 1995; Bańka, 2002, Armstrong, 2007).

In his definition of job satisfaction, A. Bańka stresses one more important aspect of that notion, namely emotions. Describing the notion of subjective job satisfaction, he writes that "it is an emotional response, pleasureable or distressful, experienced in connection with performance of given tasks, functions and roles (Bańka, 2002, p. 329). This definition of satisfaction with a permanent job will be referred to later in this paper.

In the context of satisfaction with a permanent job, we should also mention M. Seligman's concept of positive psychology defined, which also stresses the role of values and self-fulfilment at work as constituting a significant part of our lives. Positive psychology covers:

1. Positive diagnosis – consisting in broadening the diagnostic perspective by including an individual's resources and environment; stressing qualities, values, and positive and so-far-not-noticed elements of life.
2. Positive prevention – consisting in regular support provided for an individual to develop his/her skills, stimulate development of his/her personality strengths, and teach how to apply them.

3. Positive psychological intervention, a form of assistance in cases of emotional problems (Seligman, 2005; Gulla, Tucholska, 2007).

How important such intervention is Seligman, Rashid and Parks proved through research and positive psychotherapy of people suffering from depression; they were examined with the use of the Beck Depression Inventory at the beginning of the therapy and then after a year. The result pointed to an increase in satisfaction with one's life and a readiness for work (Seligman, Rashid and Parks, 2006).

Both Seligman as well as another representative of this trend, Csikszentmihalyi, focus on identifying happiness as well as life and job satisfaction (Seligman, Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In particular the latter, also known for the concept of flow as a form optimal activity, stresses the value of creativity at work as a direct source of job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction does not concern the material side exclusively. It is also connected with other work-related factors such as atmosphere at the workplace or commitment. Job satisfaction determines employees' attitude towards the company and their loyalty towards the employer. It is the outcome of success already achieved and to be achieved. Employees are fully satisfied with their work if they find a balance between their work-related expectations and the possibility to meet them.

As there are many concepts and definitions concerning job satisfaction, A. Czerw has grouped them into individual areas. The classical areas determining job satisfaction include:

- economic aspects that is pay, financial benefits, insurance packages, etc.
- working conditions that is external conditions such as safety, noise level, quality of lighting, room temperature, and equipment provided at the workplace,
- interpersonal relations that is relations with supervisors, colleagues, and workplace atmosphere.
- activities and tasks that is whether work is monotonous and repetitive or diversified, if it is a responsible and independent job, and if we can say, subjectively, that it is attractive (Czerw, 2010).

Researchers tend to refer to classical definitions of job satisfaction based exclusively on the work environment. A more modern perspective on this issue proposes a different way of looking at job satisfaction. Since the 1980s a number of researchers have pointed to the inner traits of an employee such as personality or cognitive judgement as factors responsible for gaining job satisfaction. However, we should stress that what characterises research conducted in this vein is its total concentration on connecting individual differences and an individual's cognitive processes with job satisfaction, while neglecting the meaning and role of the work

environment. It seems that focusing only on cognitive and personality-related dimensions of a man in the work environment is not enough (Czerw, *ibidem*, cf. Mróz, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c).

In research on job satisfaction being conducted at the Wrocław University of Technology, researchers have broadened the group of individual traits by adding aspects of emotional functionality (cf. defined by A. Bańka), in particular professional interests and values an employee would like to realise in his/her work. Therefore, employee's qualities, that is subjective determinants of an employee's functioning, may be expressed using those four groups of inner factors. However, researchers realise that focusing exclusively on subjective factors such as satisfaction determinants seems to be a too individualistic approach. Clearly, job satisfaction is determined by two groups of factors. On the one hand, we can rely on the work environment as a source of so-called partial job satisfaction. However, more and more often job satisfaction is said to depend also on an employee's traits, which has been proved by a number of researchers (Nosal, 1999; Bajcar, Borkowska, Czerw, Gąsiorowska, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to consider both situational and subjective factors as determinants of experienced job satisfaction. However, as stated by Czerw, whose analyses are based on the positive psychology concept, there is one more aspect to be considered, namely, the type of profession practiced. The type of profession works as a kind of filter for both main determinants of satisfaction (Czerw, 2010). This statement positively corresponds to assumptions and the objective of this research, and completes the above-mentioned information.

A satisfying permanent job as one of the ways of finding purpose in life

"Purpose" generally means or expresses right meaning, logic and reason (Kopaliński, 1989). In psychology "purpose" is always associated with life (existence). On this level it is treated as a need, experience, or feeling. In the context of feeling its meaning is broader. When we admit to having or lacking a purpose in life, we refer it to ourselves, our life, reflections, decisions connected with our actions and also to our behavior in the professional area.

The main representative of existential psychologists who deeply analysed the notion of purpose in life was V.E. Frankl, the creator of logotherapy and logotherapy, that is a therapy connected with searching for purpose in life (Frankl, 1972). Logotherapy did not impose a specific purpose. Its aim was to help a man find purpose in life himself/herself.

According to Frankl, the purpose in life is a state of subjective satisfaction experienced by an individual, which is connected with targeted value-oriented ac-

tions. By “purposeful” we should understand as a way of living chosen by a person that corresponds to his/her goals and understanding of his/her role in the world; it refers to a subjective purpose resulting in finding a purpose in life (Frankl, 1971).

Frankl's logotherapy has two main sources of origin. The first is the author's interest in both existential philosophy and philosophical anthropology. He also wanted to capture truly human experiences by describing them using the language of pathology – like analyses prepared by psychoanalysts – or by using behavioural therapy language to describe neglected experiences. The second source of logotherapy is connected with the time Frankl spent in concentration camps, where, in extremely difficult situations, he realised that people strive after purpose in life as well as meaning in suffering and death. Searching for meaning in suffering, Frankl turned to the spiritual dimension of human existence, described it and stressed its value for current choices we make in our lives. In this way, apart from formulating the logothetical concept, he also created logotherapy, a method of curing disorders connected with lack of purpose and value in life (Frankl, 1975, 2009).

According to logotherapy, each person himself/herself decides if in a given situation he/she acts in compliance with his/her hierarchy of values. Biological, psychological and existential factors determine the human condition but cannot deprive us of our freedom of choice (Frankl, 1978).

What gives life its satisfaction is our right approach to tasks we face and to their performance. A deeper sense of purpose in life can be felt by fulfilling oneself in three different ways: through creative values, in particular work and achievements; through experiential values by experiencing good, truth, beauty and positive feelings towards other people, in particular through love; through values of attitude by enduring inevitable adversities, extreme situations and suffering.

Frankl proved that negligence of the noetic dimension, even when fully fulfilling biological needs, may disturb our lives – usually creating a peculiar existential void leading to “neogenic neurosis”. It manifests itself, among other ways, in boredom, nihilism, depression, isolation, aggression and escape from life. These are periodical reactions experienced in difficult moments of our life (Frankl, 2009).

This concept triggered a number of research projects on the role of purpose in life in different groups of people. K. Popielski (1987b, 2009) presented a vast plane of such an interpretation, in particular in connection with a hierarchy of values. The author has for many years been examining the notion of purpose in life in which he found a close connection between purpose and a satisfying permanent job that required personal involvement or success in management (Mróz, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2009).

From the point of view of mental health, the “ideal” model for approaching professional requirements consists in a positive attitude towards one's profession-

al duties, i.e. a positive meaning of work on one hand and the ability to distance oneself from negative work-related phenomena on the other.

A satisfying permanent job as one of the ways to avoid depression

Aaron T. Beck, an American psychiatrist, has authored a cognitive concept of sources of depression and neurotic disorders. According to Beck, disorders have genetic, psychological and environmental determinants (Beck, 1987).

In his opinion, genetic factors determine certain neurochemical processes in the central nervous system and are responsible for emotional and cognitive hyperactivity. Psychological factors also trigger or block given responses. Likewise, environmental factors, in particular upbringing, are responsible for our attitude towards ourselves, other people, and the environment as well as events in our lives (Beck, Laude, Bohnert, 1974).

The cognitive interpretation of difficult situations is disadaptive by nature; the imbalance between man and the environment has a negative impact on the way we manage our lives. Such an interpretation of difficulties has an adverse effect on both our motivation to make an effort as well as our confrontation with factors treated as stress-inducing ones.

Beck defines stress-inducing factors as factors that result in real loss of a desired objective; they may be physical threats or consequences of temporary tough situations. Cognitive properties are crucial as adaptation mechanisms; they are determined genetically and connected with our biological functioning. According to Beck, disorders are conditioned by specific conceptualisations of events which make natural adaptability (expressing sadness, rage, aggression, excitement) dysfunctional. Instead of regulating they become a burden. As a result, a person starts to interpret his/her experiences based on a negative frame of reference (Beck et al., 1977).

People suffering from depression are dominated by strong and negative emotions – fear, anger, sadness, and lowered self-esteem – which do not correspond to a given situation. Beck distinguished different cognitive schemes related to depression they are ways of interpreting reality which lead to negative emotions (Beck, Alford, 2005). They constitute the so-called depression triad consisting of:

- perceiving oneself in negative categories,
- approaching life events in negative categories, and
- creating a negative outlook on the future.

A distorted way of thinking shapes negative beliefs, patterns of thought and behaviour. It may not have any positive significance and create a negative impact on our mood, emotions and behaviour (Karakula et al., 1996, Kowalczyk, Styła, Skrzypulec, 2006).

If we place those areas – important in the process of thinking and our behaviour according to Beck – against the backdrop of our professional life, we produce an image in which job satisfaction reflects a positive image of ourselves, an adequate way of perceiving ourselves and our skills, and an optimistic attitude towards life and the future.

We should also separate the notion of purpose in life (Frankl) from depression (Beck). Results of search conducted in this field (differing on the PIL scale with results on the D scale in the MMPI test) were published by Popielski (1987b). So far his projects have described sources of stress connected with work overload or lack of rewards. What has not been verified, it seems, is a variable correlating job satisfaction with education (Czerw, 2010).

Research methods and description of respondents

The problem we are dealing with here can be formulated in the form of a question: Is the choice and performance of a job which corresponds to one's education in any way connected with a sense of purpose in life or, obversely, with depression symptoms? Research results already mentioned, which were produced by a team of researchers led by B. Bajcar (2010), and A. Czerw's (2010) assumptions concerning the relation between job choice and satisfaction resulting from it based on positive psychology, encourage deeper exploration of this highly interesting topic.

A permanent job corresponding to our interests is connected with important aspects of our life – with enduring fascination within a given area, which in some cases began in early childhood. If a person has known for a long time what he/she wants to do in the future and what his/her interests are, he/she can take actions aimed at development in a given field. If we do what we enjoy and feel fulfilled in doing it, our job satisfaction is likely to increase. People who have not followed their desires and have a job which does not bring them any satisfaction will not feel fulfilled. Work-related problems will impact other spheres of their life and the level of general satisfaction will decrease.

The concepts and foregoing research allow me to put forward the following hypotheses:

- H1. A satisfying permanent job has a positive impact on our mental condition, in particular the sense of purpose in life (quantity analysis – part A on the PIL scale).
- H2. Most of the five analysis categories that determine our sense of purpose in life (aspirations and goals, life achievements, assessment of a difficult and unpleasant situation, attitude to death and suicide, and assessment of

help provided by other people) will differ in the case of the analysed groups (quality analysis – part B on the PIL scale).

- H3. Persons who have permanent jobs which bring them satisfaction will not experience depression as severely as those whose jobs do not give them any satisfaction.

In order to verify those hypotheses I applied the following research methods:

- PIL scale – Purpose in Life Test (PIL) by J.C. Crumbaugh, L.T. Maholick (1996).
- Beck Depression Inventory (BDI); (Beck et al., 1961) by A.T. Beck.
- Research on job satisfaction, based on a concept presented by H. M. Weiss (2002), i.e. an examination of the level of job satisfaction based on single-dimension intensity.

The PIL scale was constructed based on V. E. Frankl's theory of neogenic neuroses and measures "lack of or having purpose in life" (Crumbaugh, Maholick, 1996). The PIL test consists of three parts:

- Part A – comprises 20 statements, each of which is scored from 1 to 7 or 7 to 1. The respondent is to mark only one of the seven numbers, while 1 reflects a negative approach to the statement, 4 a neutral one, and 7 the most positive approach.
- Part B – is a projection in which the respondent completes unfinished sentences; the part covers five areas).
- Part C – is a respondent's autobiographical statement concerning his/her ambitions and future goals.

The Beck Depression Inventory is used to assess the intensity of depression symptoms. The test comprises 21 items. Each question is accompanied by four answers. Answer "0" informs that there are no depression symptoms while answers from 1 to 3 confirm depression in an ascending order. What mattered in this research was the general result of the inventory to show trends and the direction between sense of purpose in life and symptoms of depression or lack of them among working people.

In order to assess the level of job satisfaction, I used a statement which respondents assessed, on a 10-point scale, their job satisfaction (Weiss, 2002, cf. Stelcer, 2010). The results were assessed according to the following indicators: 1 to 3 points reflected low job satisfaction, 4 to 7 average job satisfaction, and 8 to 10 high levels of job satisfaction. Such a form also corresponds to a definition formulated by A. Bańka, as the respondents had at the same time an opportunity to express emotions connected with their work (2002, p. 329).

Sixty men aged 27–43 took part in the research.. They were divided into two groups: 1) people whose jobs corresponded to their education (40 people), aver-

age age: 37.1;2) people whose jobs did not correspond to their education (20 people), average age: 34.9. Most of them were married (89.5%). This fact is important since, according to researchers, a stable family life influences considerably one's sense of purpose in life and one's general life satisfaction (Popielski 1987b; Braun-Galkowska, 1992, 2007). The respondents lived in Lower Silesia: 55.9% in Wrocław, 30.2% in towns up to 50,000 inhabitants and 13.9% in the countryside. Most were secondary school graduates (70.4%), 26.2% were university graduates and 3.4% had primary education. Participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous, which increased the reliability of the results.

Research results and discussion

On the scale of permanent job satisfaction, 86.3% of respondents who had consistently followed their earlier education-related choices obtained 8 points and above ($M=8.75$, $SD\ 3.9$), while 13.7% obtained average results ($M=5.2$, $SD=2.7$); nobody in this group obtained 3 points or fewer, which would indicate a low level of job satisfaction. On the other hand, among people whose work did not correspond to their education, as few as 19.3% obtained more than 8 points ($M=8.16$, $SD=3.2$), 34.7% obtained average results ($M=4.85$, $SD=1.8$), while 46% obtained low results ($M=3.3$, $SD=1.4$). Stelcer, who achieved similar results, concluded that lower individual activity and decreasing numbers of satisfying social interactions favour low levels of satisfaction (Stelcer, 2010).

As for the Purpose in Life scale, respondents from group 1 (whose work corresponded to their education) obtained 118.8 points, which indicates a strong sense of purpose in life. Respondents from group 2 (whose work did not correspond to their education) obtained 94.5 points, which indicates a weak sense of purpose in life. The results differ statistically at the level of 0.001 and support hypothesis 1.

The percentage results obtained by both groups in part A of the PIL scale are shown in Table 1, while diagram 2 presents individual statements included in the test.

Table 1. Percentage results obtained by both groups in part A of the PIL scale

PIL results	Group No. 1	Group No. 2
Low (52–79)	3.5	9.8
Average (80–107)	26.2	67.9
High (108–133)	70.3	22.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Results were divided into three categories corresponding to different levels of sense of purpose in life (Mróz, 2008c):

- Values 52 to 79 – weak sense of purpose in life.
- Values 80 to 107 – above average and average.
- Values 108 to 133 – strong sense of purpose in life.

In the group of people whose work corresponded to their education, 3.5% of respondents obtained low results; 26.2% average results, and 70.3% high results. In the group whose work did not correspond to their education, 9.8% obtained low results; 67.9% average; and as little as 22.3% high results. These tabulations already indicate an unexpected disproportion in assessing sense of purpose in life between people whose jobs do and do not correspond to their education.

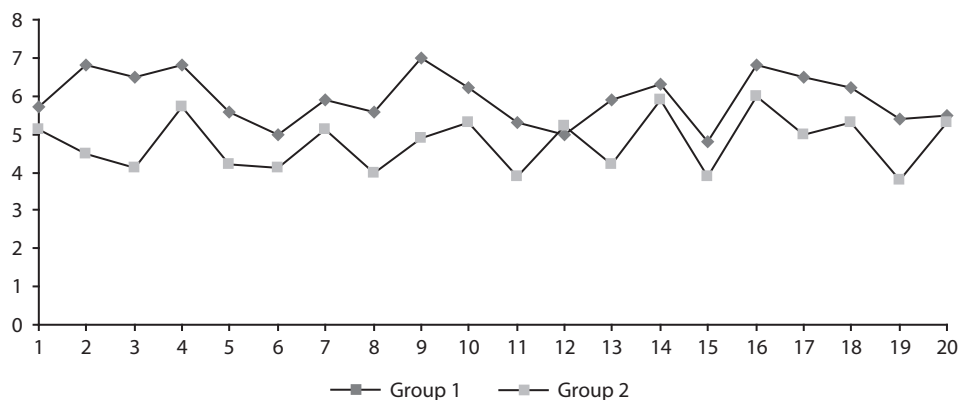


Diagram 1. Individual statements in the PIL test, part A

The lowest number of points obtained by respondents in part A of the PIL scale in the group whose work corresponded to their education was 79, while the highest result was 135. In the case of people whose work did not correspond to their education, the lowest was 66 and the highest 120.

Table 2. Average results (M) and significance of differences for individual statements being part A of the PIL scale, for both groups

Statement No.	Group No. 1		Group No. 2		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
2	6.8	2.85	4.5	2.81	3.502	0.001
3	6.5	2.09	4.1	2.55	4.940	0.001
8	5.6	1.49	4.0	2.40	2.641	0.05

Statement No.	Group No. 1		Group No. 2		t	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
9	7.0	2.68	4.9	2.43	4.282	0.001
11	5.3	2.58	3.9	2.55	2.899	0.05
13	5.9	2.96	4.2	2.96	2.896	0.05
19	5.4	2.08	3.8	2.11	2.711	0.05

The table includes only those statements which were significantly different in terms of statistics in both groups. There were seven : 2) "It seems to me that there is always something exciting in life vs. Life is always dull", 3) "I don't have any goals in my life and there is nothing I want to achieve vs. I've got clear goals and aspirations", 8) "I have never succeeded in achieving my life goals vs. I've managed to meet my needs", 9) "My life is pointless and full of despair vs. Everything goes well in my life", 11) "Thinking about my life I often wonder what the purpose in my life is vs. I always find a reason to live for", 13) "I'm completely irresponsible vs. I am very responsible", and 19) "My day-to-day duties give me satisfaction and joy vs. My day-to-day duties are a dreadful ordeal". Persons from group 1 gave definitely more optimistic responses to those statements, being convinced that they achieve set goals, are free to take given actions and do not experience any fears. Respondents from group 2 are definitely less satisfied, tend to worry and feel that life slips through their fingers and is led by others, are irresponsible and their duties are a source of torment.

Analysis of the PIL scale results indicated a relation between quantitative part A and the projected part B. Persons with low results in part A confirmed their responses with unfinished sentences in the their statements in part B. It was noticed in the high results in part A as well as low results in the unfinished sentences, [whose results were not same as the above-mentioned ones], but with the obverse being true, that some respondents obtained low results in part A while in part B they obtained results stressing satisfaction with their job and life in general. This phenomenon is called the PIL paradox (Popielski, 1987, Mróz, 1998).

Part B of the PIL scale which consisted in providing personal responses was categorised and assessed in terms of different dimensions grouped into five categories, which had already been practiced by Popielski (1987a) and Cekiera (1999):

- Aspirations and goals.
- Life achievements.
- Assessment of a difficult and unpleasant situation.
- Attitude to death and suicide.
- Assessment of help provided by others.

The first category, "Aspirations and goals", was the most important for this research. Analysis showed significant differences between answers given by people whose jobs corresponded to their education and by those whose jobs did not. What was important for people whose job did not correspond to their education was, among others, the value of the job itself (with answers given as "find a better job", "a normal job", and "a good job"). In the group whose jobs corresponded to their education, work-related values are positive (with answers like "making dreams come true", "self-fulfilment", "being a good person", and "professional fulfilment").

Concerning the second category, "Life achievements", people whose jobs did not correspond to their education most often said: I have achieved – "nothing", "not too much", or "something". People whose jobs corresponded to their education in most cases replied: I have achieved – "a lot", "all my dreams have come true", or "a lot which gave me satisfaction" (cf. Mróz, 1998).

In the third category, "Assessment of a difficult and unpleasant situation", the majority of answers given by people whose jobs did not correspond to their education were "nonsense", "when I break down", "that there is nothing I can do about it", and the like. People whose jobs corresponded to their education most often mentioned "lie", "illness" and "hypocrisy".

In the fourth category, "Attitude to death and suicide", both groups displayed similar attitudes, namely that death is "inevitable". We observed a similar response in their attitude to suicide ("stupidity", "is no solution", "a dreadful idea", and so on).

In the fifth category, "Attitude towards help provided by others", both groups gave similar answers (like help is "needed", "needs to be supportive", "is necessary"). The results confirm the second hypothesis : answers given in most of the five categories concerning sense of purpose in life differ in both groups.

Similar results were obtained by Ogińska-Bulik (2006) and Bulzak with Celińska-Miszczyk (2009), who analysed stress-fighting strategies.

The level of stress experienced by working people corresponds to tension connected with their work. The level of stress experienced by employees is determined above all by the nature of their work; according to Ogińska-Bulik it is less connected with demographical variables. The attitude towards help provided by others is most often connected with social and emotional support, and with practical help (ibidem, p. 141).

Work-related costs are most often connected with contacts with other people, through social exposure. On the other hand, lack of rewards and work overload are among the most stress-inducing factors at work.

Similarly, research conducted by Bulzak and Celińska-Miszczyk proved that synergic actions increase the quality of life. If a satisfying job is one which gives

a more profound purpose, if we assume that a satisfying job is one which makes our life purposeful, then joint actions which strengthen the condition of employees will protect them best against a meaninglessness life and professional burnout. By choosing synergic actions, we not only feel satisfaction with our life and with the past, but feel that our life is purposeful; we are content with our past, are open to the future, and are more motivated to broaden the scope of purposes in our existence (Bulzak, Celińska-Miszczuk, 2009).

In part C of the PIL test consisting of describing goals and aspirations, results by the group whose job corresponded to their education (group 1) and those whose job did not correspond to their education (group 2) differed. In group 1 as much as 28.8% of respondents did not answer the question concerning their aspirations, ambitions and life goals. It may indicate difficulties in specifying their aspirations. Among the answers given (71.5%), we most often came across fulfilment in the following fields: professional, family, emotional and social. Their main goals were connected with development, job satisfaction, starting a family and having children. In the majority of answers given, the goal perceived was that of success; however, the group also valued their family life as well as their mental development.

Group 1 gave answers such as "To be rich so that I could afford different things," "My goal is my family, social status and achievement of my aspirations", and "To be independent and make my dreams come true". People whose jobs corresponded to their education very enthusiastically assessed fulfilment of their dreams and goals. The assessment coincides with the general result concerning sense of purpose in life among people whose jobs corresponded to their education and who scored low on the Beck Depression Scale.

In group 2, as few as 16% of respondents did not give any answer in part C; 84% of the respondents wrote about their life goals. Persons whose work does not correspond to their education value life as a value in itself. What matters most for them is family, children and relations with their family and friends. Most of them mentioned the desire to find a satisfying, permanent and well-paid job to ensure "a good life for themselves and their families". Among answers given by this group we find statements such as "Find a normal, well-paid job", and "I would like to find a job which gives satisfaction and offers development opportunities". Some answers also pointed to their desire for safety, love and happiness in general: "I live to live for somebody", "To be, be, be", and "To be a good person".

Answers given by the two groups to questions concerning important goals and aspirations differ significantly. In group 1 we noticed a desire for self-fulfilment while in group No. 2 we observed perception of life as a value in itself.

Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the PIL test results already mentioned shows us how important our work is in our lives. According to Frankl, work is one

of the creative values (Frankl, 1972). As it seems work understood in this way is a kind of potential, but we must be aware that we may squander this opportunity.

Results obtained in the Beck Depression Inventory were divided into four categories depending on the level of indicators:

- 0–11 no symptoms of depression.
- 12–26 mild depression.
- 27–49 moderate depression.
- 50–63 deep depression.

The lowest result in group 1 – persons whose job corresponded to their education – was 0 and the highest 17 points. In group No. 2 – persons whose job did not correspond to their education – the lowest result was 0 and the highest 29.

Table 3. Percentage results obtained by both groups in the Beck Depression Inventory

BDI Beck	Group No. 1	Group No. 2
0–11	86.5	48.4
12–26	13.5	46.4
27–49	--	5.2
50–63	--	--

Mild depression was reported in 13.5% of respondents from group 1; a great majority of respondents from this group displayed no symptoms of depression (86.5%). As for persons whose job did not correspond to their education (i.e. group 2), moderate depression was reported among 5.2% of respondents, mild depression among 46.4% while 48.4% displayed no symptoms of depression.

Results obtained in the Beck Depression Inventory confirmed hypothesis 3: Persons who like their job and do it with satisfaction will not experience depression so deeply as persons who find no satisfaction in their work.

A satisfying permanent job has a positive impact on the sense of purpose in life and helps us avoid depression. Persons whose jobs donot correspond to their education (group No. 2) have a weaker sense of purpose in life (PIL) according to Frankl's concept and a higher depression quotient in the Beck Depression Inventory.

The author's research also shows that persons whose jobs do not correspond to their education and who obtained at least 12 points in the Beck's test (the minimum result pointing to symptoms of depression) also obtained quite low results in the PIL test (the lower the result, the weaker the sense of purpose in life).

The conclusion resulting from the author's research is that persons whose job corresponds to their education have a lower level of mild depression (13.5%) than

those whose job does not correspond to their education (46.4%). Given the above, we may conclude that persons whose job does not correspond to their education are more prone to depression. It was observed, however, that professional success does not mean that this disorder will remain permanently in abeyance, as virtually all spheres of our life influence our mental state. A similar conclusion was drawn by Ogińska-Bulik. Experiencing strong stress at work is connected with a lower level of personal and social resources. It mainly concerns the sense of coherence (resourcefulness and wisdom), self-esteem, efficiency, emotional intelligence, and social support as well as dispositional optimism (Ogińska-Bulik, 2006, p. 144).

This research showed that persons whose jobs do not correspond to their education and who indicated symptoms of depression (based on Beck's test) also indicated a weak sense of purpose in life (based on the PIL test). The sense of purpose in life positively correlates with depression indicators; however, as already mentioned, it is not identical to them. K. Popielski has come to similar conclusions in this field. He writes that having a full sense of purpose in life is connected with self-fulfilment on the biological, psychological and noetical plane. If values (e.g. job satisfaction) decrease in one field (e.g. the psychological one), then processes may follow that trigger a negative assessment of one's entire life. It is strongly connected with the hierarchy of values. If in tough or extreme situations values which a person believes in are wrecked, then they are replaced by beliefs that distort reality, disturb one's life orientation and make his/her day-to-day life more difficult (Popielski, 2009).

To finish, I would like to mention that there is no similar research available on satisfying permanent jobs. Therefore, it is not possible to reference other empirical works (except for research conducted by Seligman, Rashid and Parks, 2006, already mentioned); we can only refer to Seligman's concept of positive psychology and Frankl's logotherapy as aids that help to explain this author's research results. Emphasising the positive value of a permanent job, in particular if we have not paid attention to this aspect so far, is a sign of positive prevention described by Seligman (2005). Also Frankl, by stressing that satisfaction with life comes primarily from a proper recognition of tasks we face and pointing to their execution as a source of satisfaction, confirms the author's research assumptions and results (Frankl, 1978). A permanent, satisfying job undoubtedly corresponds to this "recognition" – as it has done for a long period of time. No wonder then that it should also be a source of self-fulfilment. And if so, we should not be surprised that it gives a stronger sense of purpose in life.

Therefore, the role of a purposeful, inspiring permanent job is not connected only with material benefits, such as a source of income, but has a much more profound impact on our lives and our sense of satisfaction. I find such research

extremely worthwhile in its practical applications (e.g. in the field of professional or personal counselling) and may be of importance to all those persons interested about the future.

Conclusions

The observations, research, and analyses conducted prove the correctness of the hypotheses proposed and prove that a job that does not correspond to one's education and interests results in a weaker sense of purpose in life and in possible symptoms of depression occurring.

In Frankl's concept, the value of work is one of three main sources of feeling a sense of purpose in life. Recognition of what the task is and what area the person works in constitutes the foundation for attaining satisfaction not only with one's life but also with one's job. Undoubtedly, we feel a stronger sense of purpose in life by fulfilling ourselves through creative values, in particular through our job and achievements (Frankl, 1972, 2009).

Besides, as stressed by Beck, the professional sphere and its qualities also highly influence our self-esteem. Most often it reflects either our positive or negative self-perception (Beck, Alford, 2005).

Work which is done without any interest or commitment is in a way forced. It may shape negative beliefs, patterns of thought and behaviour. Our research fully confirms former colleagues' research that focused on the reasons for gloomy moods, emotions and behaviour (Karakula et al., 1996, Mróz, 1998, Kowalczyk, Styła, Skrzypulec, 2006).

So far research projects have described sources of stress connected with work overload or lack of rewards. What has not been verified, it seems, is a variable – of no lesser importance for job satisfaction – which correlates work and education (Czerw, 2010).

A job which complies with our interests and education reflects our positive sense of purpose in life and our mental well-being in general, a link which has already been proven by other quoted psychologists (Bajcar B., Borkowska A., Czerw A., Gąsiorowska A. 2010; Czerw, 2010).

It results from the fact that we often choose our profession based on our individual characteristics, i.e. skills, values, cognitive style, and temperament. As Czerw writes, what is important is that our traits meet requirements connected with a given profession. Succinctly stated, it means that one characteristic of an employee in a given professional field will increase their job satisfaction while in another field it may even be a problem; it also confirms Holland's theory (1985). Let us imagine a man who is strongly committed to values such as social usefulness

or helping others. If he or she becomes a teacher, this particular characteristic will increase his or her job satisfaction. On the other hand, if that person becomes a shop assistant, this value may be an obstacle blocking both recognition at work and a feeling of job satisfaction (Czerw, 2010).

Commitment to an activity, or even undertaking an action or preparing for it, initiates a number of processes that result in our taking up the action or proceeding with it despite serious costs. Taking into account this theory, we should pay attention to the fact that an early commitment to work and to a planned course of education compliant with our interests may be a source of greater job satisfaction in the future.

The practical conclusions arising from this author's research may be of particular significance for psychological prevention, upbringing and education, fields seemingly distant from problems of adult professional life. The more time young people devote to thinking about their future and planning it and the more they are involved in the process of education, the greater their chances will be to experience job satisfaction. This experience, in turn, will translate into a general sense of purpose in life. Each area of work may bring satisfaction but at some time may be a torment; much depends on the choices we make from the very beginning of our education. Researchers have shown that those who enjoy job permanence feel a stronger sense of purpose in life.

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