

# Logotherapy To Improve The Meaning of Life For Prostitutes

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## Abstract

In general, prostitutes who are in *panti sosial* often feel that their lives are less meaningful. Therefore, intervention is needed to increase the meaning of life. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of logotherapy intervention in increasing the meaning of life in prostitutes in *Panti Sosial X*. This study used a quasi-experimental method in the form of a one group pretest-posttest design. The results showed that there was a significant increase in the meaning of life before and after the intervention with logotherapy. The dimension of seeking the meaning of life shows a greater increase, than the dimension of the emergence of meaning in life. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that logotherapy intervention is effective in increasing the meaning of life for prostitutes in *Panti Sosial X*. These results can also be a recommendation regarding the need for routine logotherapy interventions for prostitutes in social institutions.

Keyword: Logotherapy, Meaning of life, Prostitutes

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## 1. Introduction

The existence of prostitutes is a familiar phenomenon in Indonesian society. Data and Information Center for Social Welfare, Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in 2015 showed that the population of prostituted women throughout Indonesia in 2000 was 73,037 people, in 2003 there were 81,893 people, and on March 2015 as many as 64,435 people who became prostitutes in legal and illegal localizations. (Ramdhani, Sulastri, & Nurhaqim, 2017). In certain cases, women become prostitutes because they have experienced pathological violence, while in others to earn a living that is sufficient for themselves or their families, and some are looking for a father figure or a love relationship, especially with a man. The condition of prostitutes also often raises pros and cons in society. The question of whether prostitutes are among the excluded or the humiliated, perhaps until now there has been no answer that can accommodate this concept.

Various efforts have been made by the government to handle or reduce the number of prostitutes. One of them is by conducting coaching in various government-owned social institutions. Various programs are carried out with the aim of increasing awareness and skills so that later after leaving the institution, the lives of former prostitute become more focused and can carry out better jobs. This vigor of directed and purposeful life will encourage individuals to try to carry out various activities that will make their lives meaningful. The

meaning of life is a topic that is currently important because, as stated by Heintzelman and King (2014), meaning in life reflects the feeling that one's existence has significance, purpose, and coherence.

Bastaman (2007) explained that the meaning of life serves as a guide for various activities, so that the meaning of life seems to challenge and invites someone to fulfill it, so the behavior to be displayed becomes directed. If someone succeeds in finding the meaning of his life, then his life will feel to be important and valuable, which will then lead to a meaningful of happiness (Bastaman, 2007). However, according to Frankl (2004) the meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. It denotes the fact that being human always points, and directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself — be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter. Bastaman (2007) also states that the meaning of life is specific, unique, and cannot be given by anyone, but must be sought and found by yourself.

To help someone in finding the meaning of his life, Frankl (2004) then proposed logotherapy, which focuses on the meaning of human existence and on man's search for such meaning. Bastaman (2007), said that logotherapy is a form of psychotherapy that recognizes the existence of a spiritual dimension in humans in addition to the physical and psychological dimensions, and assumes that the meaning of life and the desire to live meaningfully (the will to meaning) are the main motivations for humans to achieve the desired level of meaningful life. According to Wong (2002), logotherapy describes the struggle to find meaning in one's life, and is the main motivation for one's strength to interpret oneself in the future.

Problems regarding the meaning of life must also be experienced by prostitutes as well as humans in general. Especially with her condition as a prostitutes and undergoing coaching at a government social institution, it is very possible that she will often feel that her life is less meaningful. As prostitutes, of course, they also have hopes, desires, and goals so that their lives can be more focused on activities that are more positive and meaningful both for themselves and for others. The process of finding the meaning of life itself is not an easy journey, especially for prostitutes. Therefore, it is necessary to have a special intervention, in this case logotherapy, to increase the meaning of life in prostitutes. This background has prompted researchers to conduct and test the effectiveness of logotherapy interventions in increasing the meaning of life for prostitutes in Panti Sosial X.

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1. Research Design

This research method was quasi-experimental, using one group pretest-posttest design

| Pretestt | Treatment | Posttest |
|----------|-----------|----------|
| $O_1$    | $X$       | $O_2$    |

Fig. 1. Research design

### 2.2. Method of Collecting Data

- Quantitative

The data for pretest and posttest were using The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) from Steger,

Frazier, Oishi, and Kaler (2006). This questionnaire consists of two dimensions, the first one was looking for the meaning of life (how far the respondent tried to understand the life they live, to get the meaning of life) and the second one was, emergence of meaning in life (how far the respondent felt that their life was meaningful).

- Qualitative

The qualitative data were obtained from the results of interviews at the end of each session, the results of sharing and discussions, as well as subject progress sheets (booklets or evaluation sheets), to strengthen the results of quantitative data.

### 2.3. Intervention Module

The Materials of the intervention were psychoeducation to increase the subject's understanding of the work context and the meaning of life, individual exercises, sharing and discussion of the subject's life experiences, and positive self-talk exercises.

### 2.4. Research Subjects

The research subjects were socially assisted residents who work as prostitutes, and were undergoing rehabilitation at Panti Sosial X. The inclusion criteria were as followed, ages between 18-40 years, had been in the institution for about 2-3 months, and did not experience psychotic disorders. To obtain research subjects, screening was carried out first, from the 28 people who filled out the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), 6 subjects were taken with the lowest meaning in life scores, and willing to take part in a series of interventions.

### 2.5. Research Stages

This research conducted through preparation and implementation stages. In the preparatory stage, the activities carried out were as followed, administration, needs analysis, the adaptation to measuring instruments, preparation of intervention modules and worksheets, and screening of research subjects. In the implementation phase, the location of the intervention was at Panti Sosial X. The intervention carried out of 4 sessions in 8 days. The activities carried out in session 1 were explaining the objectives and benefits of the intervention, filling out informed consent, sharing and discussing the subject's work and the subject's current condition. Session 2 provided an understanding of the subject's work context (audio visual showed), psychoeducation about the meaning of life, individual task exercises and discussions. Session 3 conducted a discussion to review the meaning of the subject's life, and practice positive self-talk. Session 4 as the last session was reviewing the material that had been given, and sharing what had been and had not been achieved related to the meaning of life during the intervention. After that, it ended by filling out the posttest.

### 2.6. Data analysis

The different test for the pretest and posttest subjects, used the Wilcoxon Signed Test, accompanied by a description of each subject and each dimension. For qualitative data, thematic analysis were used (based on the themes that emerged during the interview, as well as during sharing and discussion).

### 3. Result

#### 3.1. Quantitative

From the results of data analysis with the Wilcoxon Signed Test, the Z value was -2.207 with a significance of 0.027 ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results indicated that there was a significant difference in the meaning of life between before and after logotherapy intervention. This meant that there was an increase in the meaningfulness of life in the subject after receiving logotherapy intervention. The description of meaning of life for each subject can be seen in Figure 2 below:

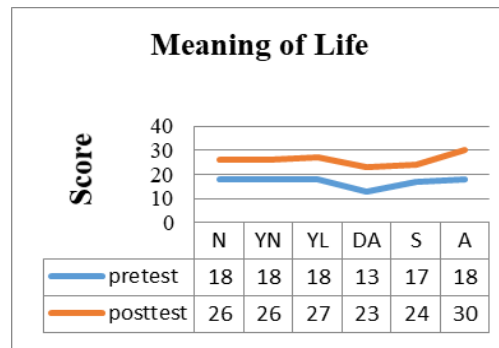


Figure 2. The Subject's Meaning of Life

Figure 2 showed an increase in the meaning of life in each subject. In general, there was an increase in the meaning of life from 42.5% to 65%. In more detail, an overview of the dimensions of the meaning of life in each subject as followed:

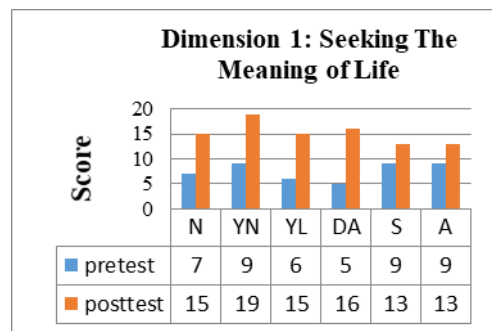


Figure 3. The Dimension of Seeking The Meaning in Life

Figure 3 showed an increase in the dimensions of seeking meaning in life in all subjects. In this dimension, the increase that occurs was from 37.5% to 75.8%.

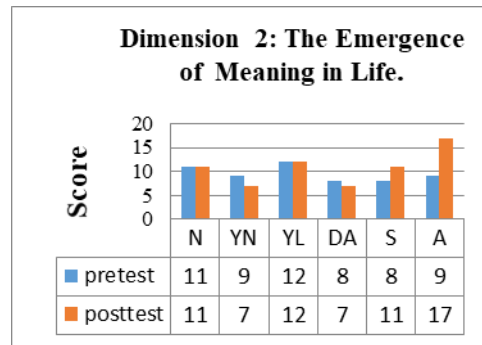


Figure 4. The Dimension of the emergence of Meaning in Life

Figure 4 showed that although there was an increase in the dimension of the emergence of meaning in life, in general it was not that much, from 47.5% to 54.2%. When viewed in more detail, there were differences in results between subjects. In subjects 5 and 6, there were an increase in scores from before and after the intervention. In subjects 1 and 2, the scores obtained remained the same between before and after intervention. As for subjects 2 and 4, there were a decrease in scores from before and after the intervention was given

### 3.2. Qualitative

Based on the results of interviews as well as sharing and discussion, had been known that the comparison of themes that emerged during the initial and final sessions were as follows:

Table 1. Qualitative Analysis Results

| Dimensions of the Meaning of Life | Themes that appear                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   | Early intervention                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | End of intervention                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Seeking Meaning of Life           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to apologize to family</li> <li>Wanting to repent but afraid of not being accepted</li> <li>Wanting to apologize to the family for his actions</li> <li>Confusing about the direction of life</li> <li>How to improve yourself</li> <li>Wanting to have a clear purpose in life</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What else is my purpose in life besides family, because I want to be happy</li> <li>How can I be forgiven</li> <li>How to apologize for all the mistakes that have been made so far</li> <li>After from here, what will be done</li> <li>What to do after getting out of here</li> <li>How not to go back to work like before</li> </ul> |
| Emergence/Gaining meaning in life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desire not to embarrass family anymore</li> <li>Realizing that what has been done all this time is a sin</li> <li>Feelings of sadness and shame towards children and families</li> <li>Feelings of shame towards the family</li> </ul>                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the purpose of working</li> <li>Awareness that the life she through is for her family</li> <li>The purpose of life is clear and will continue to improve</li> <li>Many new things were discovered about the purpose of life</li> <li>Awareness must have a direction in life</li> </ul>                                    |

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- |                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So understand how people perceive themselves</li> <li>• Feelings of sadness have embarrassed the family</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of self-improvement, hope that the purpose of life will continue like this</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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#### 4. Discussion

The results showed that there was a significant difference in the meaning of life between before and after the subjects had been given logotherapy intervention. In general it is said that the logotherapy interventions can increase the meaning of the subject's life. The intervention in which the subject is given material regarding the context of the work that has been undertaken so far, was sufficient to increase the subject's understanding of the risks of work, and the impact on themselves and those closest to them, for example children or families. The introduction of the concept of the meaning of life also raises the subject's awareness of his life, for example realizing that she is confused with the direction of her life, feels sad or guilty towards her children and family, and want to apologize to her family.

Through sharing and discussion about life experiences and the existence of task exercises, can make the subject to be able to catharsis, exchange ideas, and provide mutual support. Positive self-talk exercises also encourage subjects to evaluate themselves positively and encourage the subject's belief that in the future they will be able to become better human beings. From the interviews conducted at the end of each meeting, it appeared that the subject was quite able to find new meanings from each meeting session. Each subject can perceive the positive values that exist in her life so far.

The results of this study also had similarities with the results of other studies regarding the effectiveness of logotherapy interventions in increasing the meaning of life. Vera's research (2015) on the effect of the application of logotherapy on the meaning of life in the elderly, showed significant results. The results also showed that the intervention group experienced an increase in the ability to interpret life by 16.5%, from 51.1% to 67.6%. In addition, research on early adult women who were diagnosed with HIV due to contracting their husbands (Utami, 2017), showed that logotherapy was successful in helping subjects to achieve a more positive meaning in life related to their current condition who was diagnosed as HIV positive. Qualitatively, the subject was able to perceive their life to be more positive than before the logotherapy intervention. Quantitatively, there was an increase in the subject's meaning of life, from 0.50% to 0.65%. Although the two studies were not conducted on prostitute subjects, in general it could be seen that there were similarities in the results that the logotherapy interventions are quite effective in increasing the meaning of life.

Based on the results of the analysis of each dimension, it can be seen that the increase was more visible in the dimension of seeking the meaning of life (37.5%), compared to the dimension of the emergence of meaning in life (5.7%). In addition, the increase in the dimension of seeking the meaning of life is experienced by all subjects, while for the dimension of the emergence of the meaning of life, various results were obtained. Two subjects experienced an increase in the meaning of life, two subjects remained the same, and the other two subjects experienced a decrease. The concept of seeking the meaning of life according to Steger et al (2006) has similarities with the concept of meaning making process from Park (2010). According to Park (2010), the meaning-making process shows the existence of individual efforts so that the life events experienced can be accepted or understood logically and there are individual efforts to find positive things or the good side of the life events they experience.

The concept of the emergence or acquisition of meaning in life according to Steger et al (2006) has similarities with the concept of meanings made from Park (2010). Meanings made is defined as the result of an individual's efforts in interpreting the situation experienced, which usually refers to the product, the result or the changes that occur in the individual. In the meaning-making model proposed by Park (2010), it is

described that usually individuals will first carry out the process to interpret or seek meaning from the situation that they experienced, then they will arrive at the stage of the meaning-making results. Individuals can get meaning from the efforts they made, but they can also not or have not found it. The meaning found can be positive (for example, finding direction or purpose in life, wanting to improve their life) or it can be negative (for example, blaming yourself, others, or God).

From the concept proposed by Park, it can be understood why for the dimension of seeking the meaning of life, all subjects experienced an increase. This meant that all subjects had had undergone a process to find meaning from the situation they were experiencing. On the other hand, for the dimension of the emergence of the meaning of life, it showed that only two subjects have reached the stage of finding the meaning of life and the meaning was positive, so there is an increase. That was very possible, because the time span in giving the intervention is only short (4 sessions in 8 days), because of that for the other four subjects the changes can not be seen yet (having various understandings or awareness, which can increase the meaning of life).

For related factors, from the results of interviews and discussions, it can be seen that the role of social support (my family supported me so far, many people loved me), can built the spirit of the subject to continue living a better life (now I have to have a direction in life, goals & objectives, my life was now clear and I wanted to continue to improve myself). According to Brockmeier (2009), meaning is a concept that can not be separated from context. How individuals give meaning to a condition will be influenced by the values that exist in their environment, the existence of individual interactions with other people or their environment, beside the personal factors. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), said that social support influences an individual's assessment of the situation at hand and the coping strategies that will be used.

Another factor is religiosity and spirituality (I realized that what I had done was a sin, I wanted to repent, I was on the wrong path all this time,). Subjects who had been able to recognize the conditions experienced by themselves, allowed them to accept the presence of God, which will be able to contribute to an important role for the subject in facing the challenges of life. As stated by Peterson and Seligman (2004), that religiosity and spirituality have the power to provide a sense of direction, and feelings of calm in individuals.

Although the interventions provided effective results, there were some limitations to this study, including the insufficient number of subjects. For further research, hoped that this intervention can be given to more subjects so that it can be more beneficial to many people. Furthermore, handle prostitute cases is not as easy as we could immediately ask to stop. This case is related to many factors, especially the reason that is widely used is the economic factor. However, this logotherapy intervention is expected to be an alternative to open the subject's understanding of the impact of work and the awareness of prostitute to the meaning of life. The existence that meaningful life is related to other people (such as family, children), is expected to encourage the subject to reconsider the work that will be undertaken after leaving the *panti sosial*

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

### 5.1. Conclusion

This study aims to determine the changes in meaning of life of subjects that were prostitute, before and after the logotherapy intervention was carried out. The results showed that the logotherapy intervention was effective to increase the meaning of life in subjects also inmates at *Panti Sosial X*.

### 5.2. Suggestions

The suggestions given are as follows:

### 1. Pantis Sosial X

- Hoping that psychologists can be used logotherapy interventions to help social inmates in many of Pantis Sosial. It is recommended that this intervention be given to socially assisted residents whose rehabilitation period is in underway or will be completed, so that their condition is more supportive in their efforts to find and increase the meaning of life behind their work as prostitutes
- Pantis sosial needs to optimize various skill programs, to provide social assistance for residents when they leave the institution, so that later they can live a better life.
- Building a sense of self-worth so that inmates can rise from the past and assess themselves as someone who is very valuable for the future.

### 2. Science Development

- The results of this study can be used as evidence based in developing logotherapy interventions for prostitutes.
- The results of this study can also be used as evidence based in comparing the effectiveness of various therapies that can be given to social inmates, especially prostitutes.

### 3. Further Research

- It may be possible to intervene with a sufficient time span so that all subjects can reach the stage of emergence or obtaining the meaning of life.
- Future research may consider the need to provide other forms of psychological intervention such as improving problem-solving and decision-making skills, or training to increase self-esteem.

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