

Curiosity and Meaning of life leading towards Personal Growth: The role of Emotional Intelligence

Atasi Mohanty, Rabindra Kumar Pradhan and Lalatendu Kesari Jena
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Curiosity is innate character strength of an individual motivating oneself to investigate and learn about the subject matter of interest leading towards the personal and professional satisfaction in life. Meaning in life charts the way of regulating and directing attention to continuously evaluate one's personal values and life goals. Emotional intelligence influences an individual's physical and mental health as well as career aspirations and achievements in changing environmental situations. All these three factors may possibly influence an individual's present and past experiences to forecast one's potential areas for growth and development in the form of personal growth initiative. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to assess the influence of curiosity and meaning of life on one's personal growth, moderated with emotional intelligence. The empirical study has been carried out with the professional students of a premier technical institution in India. Results have revealed that personal growth initiative is positively associated with curiosity and meaningful life. Findings have indicated that both the constructs are significantly moderated by emotional intelligence for predicting personal growth.

Keywords: Curiosity, Meaningful Life, Personal Growth, Emotional Intelligence.

Our complex society demands varied role requirements in personal and professional sphere. An adolescent requires cognitive and socio-emotional tools and processes not only to maximize one's learning and development outcomes, but also to lead a happy and meaningful life (Duckworth et.al, 2005). In this context, curiosity stands as a fundamental personality trait of human motivation (Izard, 1977), which is primarily governed by the way an individual directs his/her attention towards a novel or a valued stimuli happening in its immediate environment for learning and growth (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Curiosity basically provides an undivided attention to an activity and when a person gets a feeling of curiosity within and he/she can persist on task until the goal is achieved (Silvia, 2006). Many research findings have assumed that curiosity use to play an integral role in development of intelligence and wisdom (Renninger, Hidi & Krapp, 1992) leading to a meaningful life with an engaging social relationship (Siddique & D'Arcy 1984; Kasdan, 2009). The concept of meaning of life in this study is referred to the fundamental means of understanding, the way an individual

confronts challenges of life, while maximizing his/her unique potential.

The constructs of curiosity and meaningfulness promote an individual's purposive orientation towards engaging in growth seeking process. Therefore, personal growth initiative (PGI) stands as a meta-cognitive process containing the "cognitive elements (like motivation to change, personal efficacy to address the change process) and behavioral components for e.g. roles relating to alignment of personal characteristics for attaining goals" (Robitschek, 2003). In order to promote the capacity of engaging in valued behavior, a professional need to accurately perceive and use his own and other's emotions for achieving personal and professional goals. Therefore, the current study is an effort of the present researchers to understand the linking pin between the constructs of curiosity and meaningful life to personal growth initiative.

Curiosity and meaningful life

Curiosity is a mixture of cognition and intrinsic motivation that is inherent in information processing of an individual (Hunt, 1963). In a