

## Description of The Meaning of Life of Women Commercial Sex Workers in Semarang

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**Abstract** - Every person wants to live in kindness, with a partner who is responsible. Farewell in the household becomes painful and forces one to take action to maintain life. Working as a commercial sex worker was a compulsion that was finally chosen because there was no other way to support the family after separation. The purpose of this study was to find out the meaning of the lives of women commercial sex workers. This research method uses analytical descriptive quantitative research design, with a total sample of 150 respondents taken in total sampling. Data collection was carried out using a demographic questionnaire and the meaning of life. Based on the results obtained by the respondents, most of them were 20-25 years old, namely 39 people (26%), 63 elementary school students (42%), working as commercial sex workers because of the economic demands of 81 people (54%) and long working more than 1 year as many as 89 people (59.3%). Has the meaning of moderate life as many as 99 people (66%).

**Keywords:** Meaning of Life, Women, Commercial Sex Workers

### 1. Introduction

The stages of adult age can be divided into two, namely early adults (22 years-30 years) and middle adults (> 30 years-60). The task of psychosocial development that must be passed at the early adult stage is the achievement of intimacy, or close relationships with same-sex and different sexes. Whereas in middle adults is involved in family life, community and environment. If the task of development in early adulthood is not fulfilled or is not achieved, it causes the individual to stay away from relationships and feel lonely and then be alone. Not achieving the developmental tasks of middle adulthood will cause dependence on work and finance. (Tridhonanto, 2010).

Adult age is a productive age and produces and ages to reach the peak of self-actualization. But if it cannot be fulfilled, then it will do everything possible to maintain the continuity of life. Most of the productive age is dominated by women. Women who have skills will easily get good jobs. But women commercial sex workers do not have the skills and skills that can make them get decent jobs. So he decided to cut corners into a commercial sex worker. Humans have the freedom to choose and determine their way of life. Freedom here is the freedom to take a stand on these conditions, both environmental conditions and the condition of oneself. In accordance with the nickname of human honor as "the self-determining being" means that humans within certain limits have the ability and freedom to change their living conditions in order to achieve a quality life. But the mistake in choosing a way of life causes a person to experience a disturbance or psychological change that causes the change in the meaning of life.

The number of female commercial sex workers in Semarang decreased by 50% from the previous year, of which there were 300 female sex workers. The

decrease in number is not because they quit their jobs, but because they moved places. As many as 80% of female sex workers do this work because of economic demands. Based on preliminary interviews conducted with 10 women sex workers, information was obtained that 8 out of 10 people did this work because they were left cheating on their husbands and they did not have reliable expertise. Women who are sex workers who are for the first time undergoing work will experience psychological changes. This is because they have to make adjustments to their new lives so that negative emotions that emerge will influence their concept (Atmasasmita, 1995, in Yulianti, 2009).

## 2. Method

This study uses descriptive analytical quantitative methods. The population in this study were women commercial sex workers in the study area in the city of Semarang. In this study sampling using total sampling, namely taking all samples with the criteria of having worked for 2 to 5 years and being willing to become respondents. Data collection time was carried out for 6 months, starting from February to August and there were 150 respondents.

The method of data collection in this study was done by: selecting prospective respondents who met the criteria (working 2 to 5 years, being able to communicate well, being willing to become respondents). Data is obtained by using a demographic questionnaire that contains identities Commercial sex worker women include age, education, reasons for doing work, and length of work. Measurement of the meaning of life is done by Crumbaugh and Maholick's Purpose in Life Test (PIL Test) using a semantic differential scale that has been translated in Indonesian by Niniek Kartini (Nisfulaili, 2010). The scale of the meaning of life has been tested for validity with a result of 0.776. The meaning meaning questionnaire has 20 questions consisting of 1-7 points with a minimum of 20 points per point and a maximum point value of 140. The final score consists of the meaning of high life ( $\geq 100$ ), the meaning of moderate life (80-100) and the meaning of low life ( $<80$ ).

## 3. Result

### A. Characteristics of Respondents

#### 1) Age

**Table 1. Frequency distribution of respondents by age (n = 150)**

Age Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-25	39	26
26-30	36	24
31-35	26	17,3
36-40	28	18,7
41-45	21	14
Total	150	100

Table 1 shows the results that the highest number of respondents in this study is aged 20-25 year totaling 39 respondents (26%). While the ages of 41-45 years amounted to 21 respondents (14%).

## 2) Education

**Table 2. Frequency distribution of respondents based on education (n = 150)**

Educational Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No School	19	12,7
Elementary School	63	42
Junior High School	48	32
Senior High School	20	13,3
Total	150	100

Table 2 shows the results that the most respondents' education in this study was primary school graduates as many as 63 respondents (42%) and not at school / dropped out as many as 19 respondents (12.7%).

## 3) Respondent's Job Background

**Table 3. Frequency distribution of respondents based on work background (n = 150)**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Left by her husband's cheating	15	10
Breakup	9	6
Economic demand	81	54
No other Jobs	30	20
Etc	15	10
Total	150	100

Table 3 shows the results that the highest number of jobs was chosen due to economic demands, namely 81 respondents (54%) and the lowest frequency was due to breakups, namely 9 respondents (6%).

## 4) Length of Work

**Table 4 Frequency distribution of respondents based on length of work (n = 150)**

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 1 tahun	61	40,7
≥ 1 tahun	89	59,3
Total	150	100

Table 4 shows the results that the length of the work for more than 1 year is 89 respondents (59.3%) and less than 1 year as many as 61 respondents (40.7%).

## 5) Meaning of Life

**Table 5. Respondent frequency distribution based on the meaning of Life Pre intervention for Women Commercial Sex Workers (n = 150)**

Meaning of Life	Amount	Percentage (%)
High	37	9,33
Medium	99	66
Low	14	24,67
Total	150	100

Table 5 shows that the results of 150 respondents mostly have a meaning of moderate life as many as 99 respondents (66%) and the meaning of life is low as many as 14 respondents (24.67%).

#### **4. Discussion**

Most of the women commercial sex workers have the meaning of moderate life. Data was obtained from 150 respondents, on the measurement of the meaning of life with the mean value there were as many as 99 people (66%).

According to Bastaman (2007), the meaning of life can be found through self-understanding, acting positively, familiarizing relationships, implementing worship and deepening chess scores. Individuals can find the meaning of life through the source of the meaning of life, namely the ability to determine attitudes and change thinking, that there must be hidden wisdom behind the suffering experienced (Frankl, 1984). Commercial sex workers live a life full of suffering. Despised, isolated, disrupting the stability of other people's households. Although women commercial sex workers experience things that they perceive as suffering, they can take the right attitude to deal with it so that the meaning of life can still be found.

An understanding of the meaning of life makes women commercial sex workers have positive thoughts and eventually a positive hope is formed to lead a better life in the future. Women of commercial sex workers have the hope and aspiration that they will not be in that place forever and carry out the work. When they have the chance, they will leave the place and work to start a better life full of self-respect and honor.

Research conducted by Yulana (2007), about the meaning of life in commercial sex workers, shows that the meaning of their lives is based on the purpose of life to support themselves and their families. The meaning is formed from the results of a failure experience in having a relationship with a partner in the past. The incident made them realize that life will and must continue, whatever the conditions, and that life is not only for themselves, but for other people and families. Others see it as suffering because the work they live in is low and despicable, but they see it as a struggle to continue to achieve a meaningful life to support themselves and their families. Spiritual value determines the discovery of the meaning of life (Kirschbaum, 1996). That trust in the creator is believed to give strength to someone to live all the life that must be passed.

The results showed that 37 people (9.33%) had a high meaning of life. This was obtained by women commercial sex workers who had worked for almost 4 years. They realize that the path he took was wrong. But they get happiness that their work has been able to support their families (parents and children) after being abandoned by her husband having an affair with another woman. They are willing to sacrifice themselves and their dignity for the success and survival of their families. They also have a hope that one day they will start a better and halal independent work, which does not have to be a commercial sex worker.

Most of the respondents, namely 99 people (66%) have the meaning of being moderate according to the results of the study. Respondents are at a time between adjusting to work and rejection of work. Respondents felt that their work behavior was actually beneficial for themselves and their families, but respondents also felt that this condition was not desirable. Respondents do not

have direction for their future, what they will live, whether they continue to pursue the work that is being carried out or switch other, more respectable jobs.

While as many as 14 people (24.67%) have a meaning of low life according to the results of the study. This is experienced by women commercial sex workers who are aged between 20-25 years and have junior and senior high school education. They think that they actually have a pretty good education, so they can actually get a better job. This respondent underwent his work for less than 1 year, there were those who fell into being deceived by his friends, followed by friends in his group and there were also those who were left broken by their lovers. Respondents undergo this work because they experience emotional disfigurement so that they are not right in making decisions and weak family support.

## 5. Conclusion

The most respondents were aged 20-25 years, namely 39 people (26%), elementary school educated as many as 63 people (42%), served as Commercial Sex Workers because of the economic demands of 81 people (54%) and long working for more than 1 year 89 people (59.3%). Respondents have a mean of 99 people (66%), the meaning of life is obtained by undergoing an action. That there is always wisdom behind every suffering.

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