SENSE OF PURPOSE INVENTORY: DEVELOPMENT, PSYCHOMETRIC EXAMINATION AND CONSTRUCT VALIDATION

A Dissertation in
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by
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ABSTRACT

The focus of this dissertation is the measurement of construct *purpose*. In an earlier study, my colleague and I constructed an instrument titled the Sense of Purpose Inventory (Sharma & Kang, 2013). The aim of this dissertation was to establish the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s factor structure, internal consistency reliability, construct validity, and relationship with a measure of social desirability. Data were collected online through survey monkey. The total number of participants was 302 undergraduate students. Exploratory principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was utilized to explore the inventory’s factor structure. In the final analysis the three factor solution was considered most conceptually clear, empirically sound, and interpretable. The three factors were labelled as Awareness of One’s Purpose, Awakening to One’s Purpose, and Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others. Following exploratory analysis, the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s internal consistency was explored. The overall inventory demonstrated adequate reliability with .93 as the alpha coefficient. In addition, each factor of the Sense of Purpose Inventory displayed satisfactory reliability with alpha levels ranging from .73 to .92. The construct validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory was explored by examining the correlations between the scores from the inventory and instruments that measured related and unrelated constructs. These results provided evidence for the inventory’s construct validity. Finally, the low correlation between Sense of Purpose Inventory and Social Desirability Scale indicated that Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scores’ are not associated with impression management. The strengths and limitations of this study are presented. Implications for counseling are discussed, and recommendations are made for future research.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A strong sense of purpose contributes to an individual’s motivation to learn, commitment to fulfilling one’s goals, contentment, hope, and greater life satisfaction (e.g. Bronk, 2008; Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib & Finch, 2009; Conner, Daugherty, & Gilmore, 2012; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). A comprehensive understanding about the construct purpose can hence enable counselors, psychologists and educators to support clients and students’ wellbeing in multiple areas. Examining purpose as it is conceptualized and measured will add to the growing knowledge on the ways through which people’s sense of purpose can be strengthened (Mariano & Savage, 2009). However, minimal empirical work has investigated the extent to which people recognize a purpose for themselves (Burrow, O’Dell, & Hill, 2010) and the ways in which we can support the development of their sense of purpose and also measure the effectiveness of these interventions.

The focus of this study relates to the measurement of the construct purpose. According to Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003) various scholars in the domains of cognitive, emotional, moral, motivational, and spiritual development have explored the construct purpose. Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003) defined purpose as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (p. 121). Based on this definition, in an earlier study, my colleague and I constructed an instrument titled the Sense of Purpose Inventory to measure the construct purpose among adolescents and adults (Sharma & Kang, 2013). One of the aims of the current study is to examine if the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) also emerge in the sample used in the current study. Another aim of the study is to establish the internal-consistency reliability and construct validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory. The current study will also be used to explore if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is
sufficiently independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale.

**Statement of the Problem**

One of the first psychologists who focused on the construct purpose was Frankl, a holocaust survivor. In his book *Man’s Search for Meaning*, he referred to purpose as a source of motivation in a person’s life and a deep reason for living (Frankl, 1959). Since then there have been several empirical studies to demonstrate the role of purpose (e.g. Bronk, 2011; Mariano & Savage, 2009; Pinquart, Silbereisen, & Fröhlich, 2009; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). However, the scholars have not always defined the construct in similar ways (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). For instance, some scholars have referred to purpose as a deeper reason for living, a fundamental intention behind one’s goals and life’s ultimate aim (Frankl, 1959; McKnight & Kashdan, 2009; Staples & Troutman, 2010). Others have defined purpose as a source of motivation that provides a sense of directedness and deeper meaning to people’s current pursuits (Damon, 2008; Ryff, 1989). These and several other definitions of purpose show that even if there has been uniform agreement about the role of purpose in people’s lives, there is little agreement on what the term means (Dik, Steger, Gibson, & Peisner, 2011).

Given the important role that purpose plays in the lives of people, it is vital to have a clear conceptualization and a comprehensive measurement of this construct. There have been several attempts to design instruments to measure the construct purpose. However, just as the many definitions on purpose, these instruments too are confounded with several variables. Due to the confounded nature of the items, the instruments that were designed to measure the construct *purpose* have limitations that muddle the nomological network (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955).
Some of these limitations are (a) the current instruments are unidimensional in nature when the construct itself is multidimensional; (b) the current instruments do not have items that focus on respondents’ desire to contribute to society, which is an important component of the recent and most widely used definition of purpose; (c) the items on instruments are time-insensitive, which makes it difficult to assess changes in people’s sense of purpose over time (Scheier, Wrosch, Baum, Cohen, Martire, Matthews et al., 2006); (d) the instruments are confounded with items that measure other constructs such as meaning in life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006); (e) the instruments lack psychometric evidence on their utility with people belonging to varied age-groups.

To address these limitations, Sharma and Kang (2013) constructed a new instrument to measure the construct *purpose* titled Sense of Purpose Inventory with the goal to have following desirable properties: (a) all items of the instrument should be informed by a clear conceptualization and definition of the construct; (b) the instrument should consist of items related to all important dimensions of purpose such as goal clarity, altruism, and active engagement around purpose; (c) the instrument should be time-sensitive so that it can assess changes in one’s sense of purpose over-time and thus be able to measure the effectiveness of an intervention; (d) the instrument should be developmentally appropriate for people across age groups; (e) the instrument should be independent of any specific religious persuasion; (f) the instrument should have univocal items that are short and easy to comprehend; and (g) the instrument should be reasonably homogenous and have well-defined factors. The aim of this study is to examine the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s psychometric properties and suggest its implications for research and counseling practice. The following section elaborates on the purpose of this study.
Purpose of the Study

In an earlier study, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to explore the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s factor structure (Sharma & Kang, 2013). A three-factor solution was suggested and the factors were interpreted as Awareness of One’s purpose, Awakening to One’s Purpose, and Desire to Contribute to the Wellbeing of Others. This study is being conducted to examine if the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) also emerge in the sample used in the current study.

The purpose of this study is also to establish the internal-consistency reliability and construct validity of all three scales of the Sense of Purpose Inventory. Validity can be defined as “the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed uses of tests” (AERA et al., 1999, p. 9). It is, among other things, concerned with whether the test has strong association with the variables it has been postulated to be associated (Walsh & Betz, 2001). One of the important kinds of a test’s validity can be established based on its relationship with other tests that are hypothesized to measure the similar as well as different constructs. Relationships between scores from the test of interest and scores from other tests intended to measure similar constructs provide evidence for convergent validity. Whereas, relationships between scores from the test of interest and scores from other tests designed to measure different constructs provide evidence for discriminant validity (AERA et al., 1999).

Accordingly, if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is found to be highly related to other scales that measure purpose, meaning, and compassion to strive for benefitting the world beyond self, then this would support the evidence for the convergent validity of the scale. Similarly, to establish the discriminant validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory it is important to provide evidence that the scale is not simply measuring other variables such as religiosity and masculinity. Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to demonstrate if the Sense of Purpose
Inventory is highly related with the other scales that are indicators of construct purpose. And if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is unrelated to the variables that are theoretically different from the construct of purpose (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

The current study will also be used to explore if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is sufficiently independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale. Next section provides the specific research questions of the current study.

**Research Questions**

This study will address the following research questions:

1. Does the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) also emerge in the sample used in the current study?

2. Do the scales of the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrate evidence of adequate internal consistency reliability?

3. Does the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrate evidence of adequate convergent validity by strongly correlating with the selected measures that are theoretically related to the construct purpose?
   
   a. Is there a strong correlation between the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Presence of Meaning and the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awareness of One’s Purpose?

   b. Is there a strong correlation between the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Search for Meaning and the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awakening to One’s Purpose?
c. Is there a strong correlation between the Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale and the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Desire to Contribute to the Wellbeing of Others?

4. Does the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrate evidence of adequate discriminant validity by not correlating excessively with the selected measures that are theoretically unrelated to the construct purpose?

   a. Is there a weak correlation between the Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale and the Sense of Purpose Inventory?
   
   b. Is there a weak correlation between the Masculine Behavior Scale and the Sense of Purpose Inventory?

5. Is Sense of Purpose Inventory sufficiently independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale?

**Significance of the Study**

Literature on resilience has emphasized upon sense of purpose as a protective factor. Benard (1991) explained that one of the characteristic of resilient youth is having a sense of purpose, which enhances their several attributes such as healthy expectancies, goal-directedness, success orientation, achievement motivation, educational aspirations, persistence, hope, belief in a bright future, a sense of anticipation, and a sense of a compelling future. The Search Institute’s Developmental Assets model that focuses on young people’s capacities and attributes for positive development has listed purpose as an internal asset (Benson, 1997). In referring to three domains of lives that exemplify happiness, positive psychologists listed meaningful life that derives from serving something larger than oneself as one of the domains (Duckworth, Steen & Seligman, 2005). Fulfilling one’s purpose is hence regarded by positive psychologists as a key aspect of achieving the fortuitous ends such as authentic happiness, flow, and creativity.
Dunn (1961), one of the pioneers in promoting wellness within the profession of counseling, stated that the pursuit of wellness requires maintenance of a purposeful direction. And he defined purpose as a process of moving towards one’s greater potential. Steger, Frazier, Oishi and Kaler (2006) asserted that the crises that clients express in counseling sessions often present opportunities for clients’ further growth, and supporting clients to develop a greater sense of purpose may be an important outcome of therapy.

Savolaine and Granello (2003) argued that while most counseling models recognize the theoretical significance of purpose in life as an important aspect of wellness, the research in this area is lacking. Especially, in contrast to many correlational studies that have demonstrated the role of purpose, there is little empirical work that has investigated the extent to which people recognize a purpose in life (Burrow, O’Dell, & Hill, 2010) and the ways in which we can evaluate the effectiveness of interventions that might enhance people’s sense of purpose.

Dik et al. (2011) proclaimed that in spite of the developmental relevance of purpose, there is a lack of studies that can inform us about the effectiveness of various interventions to enhance people’s sense of purpose. After conducting a quasi-experimental design to explore the efficacy of an intervention, Dik et al. (2011) reported that people’s sense of purpose might develop more gradually than would be detected with a post-intervention survey. Thus, instead of using surveys that focus only on absolute presence of purpose in people’s lives, it is necessary to use instruments that are time-sensitive and can measure the recent changes in the ways people start thinking about their purpose in life. The Sense of Purpose Inventory developed by Sharma and Kang (2013) has items that are time-sensitive and indicate the recent changes in one’s sense of purpose.
Consequently, establishing the psychometric properties of the Sense of Purpose Inventory can help in reducing the knowledge gap by suggesting the effective methods to measure the construct purpose and evaluate the efficacy of the interventions used to increase people’s sense of purpose. Subsequent sections describe some of the limitations and delimitations of this study.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study can be a low response rate as all of the students whom I request to respond to the surveys might not respond. Due to this, the study can have random error as an external validity threat, which can limit the potential of generalizability (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Also, those who agree to participate in the research project might not complete all the surveys. The missing data can further reduce sample size. This can limit the power of the statistical analyses.

Another limitation of this study is that only those students who freely volunteer to participate in the study will be asked to respond to the surveys and their responses might differ from the students who do not volunteer. For instance, the students who participate might value having a purpose in life more than those who do not participate. This will also minimize the study’s potential of generalizability. Lastly, all participants might not respond honestly to the items in self-report measures. This can lead to a bias in data interpretations.

**Delimitations**

There are several delimitations of this study. Firstly, the sample selected for this study will only be undergraduate students at a public-research university in America. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to other age-groups even if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is designed for adolescents as well as adults.

Secondly, the study is based only on self-report measures, which may lead to a bias in responses. Participants may respond in a socially desirable manner. They might perceive their
sense of purpose and variables that other self-reports measure as being higher or lower than they actually are.

Finally, the sample size as well as diversity among the sample for this study will be limited because the study will be conducted only in one geographical location. This can lead to bias error as an external validity threat and inability to generalize the results (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

**Definitions**

This section focuses on the theoretical and operational definitions of the construct purpose as well as other constructs that will be measured in this study to establish Sense of Purpose Inventory’s construct validity. The constructs meaning in life and compassion are defined as their measures are used to establish scale’s convergent validity. And the constructs religiosity and masculine behavior are defined as their measures are used to establish scale’s discriminant validity. The construct social desirability is also defined because a scale that measures social desirability will be used to explore if Sense of Purpose Inventory scores are susceptible to socially desirable behavior responding.

**Purpose**

**Conceptual Definition.** Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) defined purpose as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (p. 121). This definition thus encompasses (a) clarity about one’s far-reaching goals, (b) the role of one’s purpose for self, (c) the role of one’s purpose in contributing to the wellbeing of others, and (d) a sense of direction and engagement.

**Operational Definition.** The construct purpose is measured in this study through the Sense of Purpose Inventory designed by Sharma and Kang (2013). The Sense of Purpose Inventory is multi-dimensional in nature and its items are based on the above definition of
purpose. Sharma and Kang (2013) examined the inventory’s factor structure through exploratory factor analysis and interpreted the factors as follows: Awareness of One’s Purpose, Awakening to One’s Purpose, and Desire to Contribute to the Wellbeing of Others. The revised inventory has a total of 30 items. The responses for these items are made on 5-point Likert scales ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Some of the items are “I have no idea where my life is going”, “Recent experiences made me aware of my purpose”, and “I make efforts to promote other people’s wellbeing” (see Appendix A for full content of the inventory).

**Meaning in Life**

**Conceptual Definition.** Steger, Frazier, Oishi, and Kaler (2006) defined meaning in life as “the sense made of, and significance felt regarding, the nature of one’s being and existence” (p. 81). Because many studies have used the terms purpose and meaning indiscriminately (Yeager & Bundick, 2009) due to strong association between these constructs, the scale measuring meaning in life can be used to establish convergent validity for Sense of Purpose Inventory.

**Operational Definition.** In this study, I used Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006) to measure the construct meaning. The MLQ has two subscales: Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning. Each subscale consists of five items such as “My life has a clear sense of purpose” and “I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life”. The responses for these items are made on a 7-point Likert scales ranging from “absolutely untrue” to “absolutely true” (see Appendix B for full content of each sub-scale).

**Compassion**

**Conceptual Definition.** Lazarus (1991) defined compassion as “being moved by another’s suffering and wanting to help” (p. 289). According to Sprecher and Fehr (2005)
compassionate (or altruistic) love is a type of love that can be experienced for all humankind. It encompasses “feelings, cognitions, and behaviors that are focused on caring, concern, tenderness, and an orientation toward supporting, helping, and understanding the other(s)” (p. 630). Because compassion is strongly associated with prosocial behavior (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005), the scale measuring this construct can be used to establish convergent validity for the Sense of Purpose Inventory, especially for the items that focus on one’s desire to contribute to the wellbeing of others.

**Operational Definition.** The Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale (Hwang, Plante, & Lackey, 2008) is used to assess the participants’ compassion. This scale is a brief version of the Compassionate Love Scale (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). The scale has five items. The responses for these items are made on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “not at all true of me” to 7 “very true of me”. Some of the items on the scale are “I tend to feel compassion for people, even though I do not know them” and “I often have tender feelings toward people (strangers) when they seem to be in need” (see Appendix C for full content of the scale).

**Extrinsic Religiosity**

**Conceptual Definition.** McDaniel and Burnett (1990) defined religiosity as a person’s faith in God. Allport and Ross (1967) explained three dimensions of religiosity: intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic religiosity-social and extrinsic religiosity-personal. Extrinsic religious values are instrumental and utilitarian in nature (Allport & Ross, 1967). Extrinsic religiosity provides people with sense of security, solace, sociability, distraction, status, and self-justification (Allport & Ross, 1967). As extrinsic religiosity and purpose are distinct constructs, I will use its measure to establish Sense of Purpose Inventory’s discriminant validity.
Operational Definition. The Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale — Revised (I/E-ROS; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989) is used to measure participants’ religiosity. The I/E-ROS comprises of two sub-scales: Intrinsic Religious Orientation and Extrinsic Religious Orientation. The Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale has six items. The responses for these items are made on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Some of the items on the extrinsic religious orientation sub-scale are “What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow” and “I go to my place of worship mostly to spend time with my friends” (see Appendix D for full content of the scale).

Masculine Behavior

Conceptual Definition. The personality attributes, goals, lifestyles, preferences, and ambitions that are attributed to men, are usually described in terms of masculinity (Snell, 1989). Masculine behavior is usually defined in terms of the behavioral tendencies that are stereotypically attributed more often to males than females (Snell, 1989).

Operational Definition. The Masculine Behavior Scale designed by Snell (1989) is used in this study. The scale has total of 20 items. The responses for these items are made on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “agree” to “disagree”. Some of the items on the scale are “I don’t devote much time to intimate relationships” and “I try to be in control of everything in my life” (see Appendix E for full scale).

Social Desirability

Conceptual Definition. Crowne and Marlowe (1964) defined social desirability as one’s need for social approval. Usually, people who have higher need for social approval, respond in a manner that is socially and culturally desired (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964).
Operational Definition. Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale is used in this study. The scale has a total of 10 true or false items. Some of the items on the scale are “There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things” and “I never resent being asked to return a favor” (see Appendix F for full content of the scale).
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The focus of this chapter is on the multidimensional nature of the construct purpose. A review of the similarities and differences among many definitions of purpose are discussed first. Then, the study’s conceptual framework is presented. Afterwards, the ways in which disciplines such as existentialism, identity development, career development, and spirituality and wellness have conceptualized the construct purpose are described. Further, the empirical studies that demonstrate importance of purpose and its relations with other variables such as meaning, motivation, persistence, goal-achievement, psychological wellbeing, self-efficacy, and altruism are illustrated. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the instruments that are used to measure purpose and the rationale for constructing a new instrument.

**Defining the Construct Purpose**

Even if there has been uniform agreement about the positive role of purpose in people’s lives, there is little agreement on what the term means (Dik, Steger, Gibson, & Peisner, 2011). This section provides a review of the similarities and differences among many definitions of purpose.

One of the pioneers in Modern Psychology to write about sense of purpose was Frankl (1959) who published the book *Man’s Search for Meaning* and referred to purpose as a source of motivation in a person’s life and a deep reason for living. Through quoting Friedrich Nietzsche: “He who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how” (p. 101), Frankl (1984) explained that fostering a sense of purpose can help people to cope with difficult situations. Based on Frankl’s (1984) theory, Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) defined purpose in life as the ontological significance of life from the viewpoint of the experiencing individual.

Erikson (1968) was one of the earliest scholars in the discipline identity development, who focused on development of purpose among adolescents. Based on Erikson’s theory,
Chickering (1969) stated that developing purpose refers to being intentional, clarifying goals, and making plans that can unify one’s goals within the scope of a larger purpose. Similar to this definition, Ryff (1989) expressed that purpose in life is characterized by having a sense of directedness. Damon (2008) defined purpose as a deeper reason that drives a person to fulfill his current goals. In a similar way, Kosine, Steger, and Duncan (2008) defined purpose as people’s important goals that help them manifest their true potential and achieve satisfaction. According to Mariano and Savage (2009), purpose involves future-mindedness, potentially manifesting itself in one’s behavior.

McKnight and Kashdan (2009) defined purpose as a “central, self-organizing life aim that organizes and stimulates goals, manages behaviors, and provides a sense of meaning” (p.242). They also suggested that purpose involves a higher level of cognitive processing by the cerebral cortex instead of just being driven by primitive drives for food, safety, and pleasure. According to McKnight and Kashdan (2009), purpose can be explained along a three-dimensional continuum—scope, strength, and awareness. Scope indicates how universal the purpose is in a person’s life under different contexts and conditions. Strength reflects the magnitude to which purpose influence the actions, thoughts, and emotions of a person. Awareness refers to the extent to which a person is aware and can articulate her purpose.

Hill, Burrow, and Thornton (2010) used a free response format to explore adolescents’ definitions of purpose and coded them based on five categories: foundation and direction, happiness, prosocial content, financial or occupational goals, and religious content. Adolescents’ stated that to have purpose in life means (a) to have a goal and to succeed at that goal, (b) to do something that brings happiness, (c) to help other people, (d) to get a job, and (e) to become closer to God.
Similarly, Moran (2013) conducted research to explore youth’s own definitions of purpose, and whether youth’s definitions form bases for cultures of purpose that encompass youth’s content of, confidence in, and integration of their purposes. Based on the multiple correspondence analyses, statistically significant chi-square tests on cross-tabulations of variables with cluster membership and a content analysis of the case summaries organized by cluster membership, four cultures of purpose were identified: Supported, Strivers, Givers, and Disciples. The Supported focused on reasons and meaning for what they could gain from others. Strivers aimed for primarily standard career success goals. Givers felt certain about their aims to help others. Disciples, felt certain about their faith-focused purpose to serve God.

Bronk (2011) described purpose as an “enduring, personally meaningful commitment to what one hopes to accomplish or work toward in life” (p.32). Staples and Troutman (2010) explained that purpose refers to the intentions that people form to give their lives a meaningful direction and also to contribute to the greater good. Based on a qualitative study, Staples and Troutman (2010) found that adolescents define purpose as a reason for living, a fundamental intention and a function that can lead to positive effects in one’s own life as well as the lives of others.

I perceive purpose as a multidimensional construct that focuses on people’s deeper reason behind pursuing a goal, whose fulfillment not only benefits them but also enables them to contribute to the society. Most of the definitions mentioned above take into consideration the dimension of intentionality and goal-setting but do not focus on the altruistic dimension of purpose. The above definitions also illustrate the variability in understanding of the construct purpose among many scholars. In fact, many times the same scholar has defined purpose in different ways within the same work (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Because the construct
purpose has been defined in multiple ways and is confounded with various other variables. Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003) suggested that more empirical studies are needed to enhance the understanding of the construct purpose especially by differentiating it with other constructs. One of the aims of this study is to establish construct validity of an instrument that measures purpose by demonstrating the instrument’s relationship with other variables.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study is based on the definition provided by Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003), who defined purpose as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (p. 121). This definition is informed by extensive research conducted by scholars who are associated with the Stanford Center on Adolescence, which is dedicated to providing research grants and awards to scholars pursuing studies related to youth purpose.

The Sense of Purpose Inventory (Sharma & Kang, 2013), for which the current study examines internal consistency reliability and construct validity is especially based on Damon’s conceptualization of purpose. Damon is a professor of education and Director of the Center on Adolescence at Stanford University. Damon has written widely about human development, moral commitment, and character education for more than thirty years. Currently, his main research area is sense of purpose among youth. His work is now considered seminal in understanding of the construct purpose. As a founding editor of *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, he has promoted publication of scholarly work on exploring the role and development of purpose in young people’s lives.

In his book *The Path to Purpose*, Damon (2008) emphasized that one of the major differences between young people who could thrive and those who floundered lied in whether
they had found a compelling purpose in life. He defined purpose as “a deeper reason for the immediate goals and motives that drive most daily behavior” (Damon, 2008, p. 22). He also elaborated on empirical studies in developmental and positive psychology literature that focus on the valuable role played by sense of purpose in people’s lives. Damon (2008) stressed that “a purpose is an end in itself, an ultimate concern that drives the short-term goals…The pursuit of purpose can organize an entire life, imparting not only meaning and exhilaration but also motivation for learning and achievement” (p. 34).

To further investigate the role of purpose, Damon and his team of researchers conducted a series of studies with adolescents and young adults living in several parts of United States. Since 2003, they surveyed over twelve hundred young people (12 to 26 years of age), and interviewed about a quarter of them. The surveys explored if, where and in what way have young people found a purpose in life. During the interviews, researchers probed these questions in greater depth. The results revealed four groups of young people: disengaged, dreamers, dabblers, and the purposeful. Disengaged group refers to youth who did not express any purpose in life or signs of exploring one’s life purpose. Dreamers group expressed idealistic aspirations and imaginative purposes that they would like to have but did nothing actively to implement these ideas. Dabblers group refers to youth who have engaged in potentially purposeful activities but lacked commitment and sense of meaning behind pursuing these activities beyond present. Purposeful youth were described as those who have found something meaningful to dedicate themselves to, expressed clearly what they are trying to accomplish and why, have sustained this aspiration over a period of time, and have taken resolute steps to achieve their ambitions (Damon, 2008).
Damon and his team of researchers also developed case studies of youth who demonstrated high commitment to one’s purpose. They found that some youth had one strong purpose related to their family, faith, work, or community aspirations. Whereas, others purposes were acquired across several of these fronts, and were nested. Also, though a strong sense of purpose requires stable and long-term commitment, they are not necessarily unchangeable. For many youth, purpose might evolve into a new or expanded purpose as they learn more about themselves and the nature of their ultimate concerns.

Based on an in-depth review of the literature on purpose and the goal to distinguish purpose from other related constructs such as meaning in life, Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) elaborated on following key aspects of the construct purpose:

1. Purpose is a stable and far-reaching goal.
2. Purpose is a part of one’s personal search for meaning.
3. Purpose encompasses the desire to make a difference in the world and contribute to matters larger than the self.
4. Purpose is always directed at an accomplishment (material or non-material, and external or internal) towards which one can make progress.

The Sense of Purpose Inventory items are informed by each of the above characteristics of the construct purpose. I used this framework to construct the Sense of Purpose Inventory because of several reasons. Many scholars have recently demonstrated the effectiveness of Damon, Menon and Bronk’s (2003) conceptualization of purpose as a theoretical framework due to its comprehensiveness as well as clear distinction from other related constructs such as meaning in life (e.g. Dik, Steger, Gibson, & Peisner, 2011; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). This framework is comprehensive especially because it takes into consideration the altruistic
dimension of purpose or one’s desire to contribute to society. It also focuses on purpose as an intention towards fulfillment of which an individual makes progress. This aspect of intentionality and direction distinguishes it from other related constructs such as meaning in life. Finally, an inventory based on this definition encompasses items that focus on moving towards awakening and fulfillment of purpose, which can help to measure recent changes in one’s sense of purpose and thus evaluate the effectiveness of a short-term intervention.

**Theoretical Perspectives on Purpose**

According to Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003) various scholars in the domains of cognitive, emotional, moral, motivational, and spiritual development have inquired about the construct purpose. Following content describes the ways in which scholars in the domains of existentialism, identity development, career development, and spirituality and wellness have conceptualized purpose.

**Purpose and Existentialism**

Existentialists focus on people’s “yearning for understanding of the human condition and searching for significance, meaning, and purpose of one’s life” (Sterner, 2012, p. 152). Brown and Parish (2011) argue that in recent years, college students are reporting growing anxiety to seek something of permanent value, which can give them a sense of security and meaning in this fast-paced world where politics, values, economics, culture and philosophies are continually changing. This growing anxiety might be a result of dissolution of family structure, recent violence on campuses as well as students’ concerns related to authenticity and identity development (Brown & Parrish, 2011). However, in spite of the increased interest in existential questions and spirituality, the traditional education system in colleges and universities provide little support for students to explore these aspects of being (Speck, 2005).
Frankl’s perspectives on role of purpose. Frankl (1984) explained that giving meaning to suffering and fostering a sense of purpose can help people to cope with difficult situations. On the other hand, if people are not able to find a sense of purpose and meaning, they may report feelings of frustration, emptiness, depression and apathy. This can result in *Existential vacuum*, which is characterized by lack of purpose and meaning to live for, and is manifested as anxiety and distress in people’s lives. Frankl (1984) developed logotherapy, as a means to understand people’s creation of meaning in life. He suggested that individuals can find meaning by doing something of personal significance as they engage in their daily activities, by encountering someone or something of significance and by transcending hardship or suffering.

The life mission theory’s perspectives on purpose. The existential view is based on the belief that people are continually transcending their past and present to reach the future through current actions and interactions (May & Yalom, 2005). The life mission theory expresses that the core of human existence is to have a purpose in life, which can be seen as an individual’s existential duty, gift to the world, path in life, key intention, or the realization of greatest talent (Ventegodt, 2003). Therapeutic approaches based on this theory emphasize that people’s sense of joy in life, energy and intuitive competence cause to flow from their primary purpose in life (Ventegodt, Andersen, & Merrick, 2003). On the other hand, feelings of insufficiency, depression and low self-esteem are many times symptoms caused by the loss of connection to one’s primary purpose in life (Ventegodt, Andersen, & Merrick, 2003).

Purpose and Identity Development

Scholars have reported a significant overlap between one’s sense of purpose and identity development (e.g. Bronk, 2011; Burrow, O’Dell, & Hill, 2010; Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968). In order to understand how purpose is related to identity development, Bronk (2011)
conducted a study using grounded theory method. In the study, he explained that having a sense of purpose impacted the ways in which the adolescents perceived themselves in relation to the broader social world. A sense of purpose helped them to establish both social and ego identities. These identities further reinforced their purposeful commitments. Bronk (2011) found that “in addition to being reinforcing constructs, purpose and identity were largely overlapping constructs in the lives of adolescent purpose exemplars” (p.39). As, adolescents expressed that who they were, was synonymous with what they wanted to achieve.

**Role of purpose in one’s identity achievement.** Based on Marcia’s (1966) theory of four identity statuses (Foreclosure, Identity Diffusion, Moratorium, and Identity Achievement), Burrow, O’Dell, & Hill (2010) performed hierarchical cluster analysis to classify adolescents (N=318) by levels of purpose exploration and commitment. The results were in alignment with theory of four identity statuses and indicated four profiles of youth purpose: Achieved, Foreclosed, Uncommitted, and Diffused. The authors suggested that for many young people, exploring and committing to a purpose had important consequences for the development of their identity. Youth with greater purpose exploration scored higher on identity exploration. And youth with stronger purpose commitment reported greater identity commitment, hope, and positive affect (Burrow, O’Dell, & Hill, 2010).

**Erikson’s perspectives on the role of purpose.** Erikson (1968) defined identity achievement as a sense of psychosocial well-being which is characterized by “knowing where one is going” (p. 165). He suggested that resolving identity crisis often involves defining one's purpose in life. Based on his theory about the stages of psychosocial development, he proposed that the resolution of one stage directly affects all subsequent developmental outcomes. Therefore, finding a purpose for one's life can lead to positive outcomes both immediately and in
the future. One such outcome is the individual's level of generativity, which refers to one's desire to contribute to the wellbeing of future generations (Erikson, 1950). Developing clarity about the goal to which a person wants to dedicate his/her life therefore supports the development of motivating belief systems later in life. Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) suggested that value of purpose to the self continues throughout the rest of life and not only plays a positive role in self-development but also a generative role for the person’s contributions to society. On the other hand, when young people do not find anything to dedicate their lives to beyond self-preservation, this can result in a sense of “drift” leading to personal and social pathologies (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). It is therefore important to understand the processes and educational conditions that can support youth to develop a strong sense of purpose.

**Chickering’s perspectives on the development of purpose.** Based on Erikson’s identity formation stage, Chickering (1969) formulated a model of identity development that describes seven vectors along which college student development proceeds. He suggested that development of a strong identity among college students contributes to their sense of purpose and integrity. Chickering et al. (2006) emphasized on the importance of providing students a safe forum to explore the answers related to meaning and purpose.

**Purpose and Career Development**

Work and other creative pursuits have the potential to provide a sense of purpose to one’s life and one of the primary factors that motivate people’s vocational choice is a search for a meaningful vocation (Cohen, 2003). Recently, Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2013) suggested that career is a way for an individual to express his or her life’s purpose. People often want to choose careers that can provide a sense of purpose for their lives (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2013).
**Spirit at work.** Some of the career theorists have begun to focus on meaning and purpose in work beyond economic gains. Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2004) have focused on promotion of spirit at work, which is conceptualized as a life-force of certain employees that motivates them towards having a meaningful and purposeful work aimed towards making a difference or contribution. Empirical studies demonstrate that through focusing on meaning and purpose, organizations can enhance employees’ occupational wellness, job satisfaction, productivity, and retention (Robert, Young, & Kelly, 2006).

**Career constructivism.** Savickas (2008) acknowledged Tiedeman (1985) as the first career theorist to see purpose as a key mechanism in self-organization who considered purpose as the engine of career. Tiedeman and Miller-Tiedeman (1985) expressed that many guidance programs focus only on job information, interest and personality assessments, and rational decision-making strategies. However, Tiedeman and Miller-Tiedeman suggested the importance of understanding the role of the individual’s purpose in a career unfolding. They emphasized that that life purpose enables people to bridge the discontinuities in their career unfolding in a more adaptive way. Tiedeman and Miller-Tiedeman (1985) believed that goal of person’s career development lies in evolution of existential meanings, importance of perceiving and constructing one’s own life and vision.

**Purpose and career calling.** One pathway for people to believe that their life is purposeful and has meaning is through a career (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). Purpose at work is often seen as the form of calling (Dik & Duffy, 2009). The word calling can be defined as “a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation” (Dik, & Duffy,
Calling refers to a sense of direction sometimes with reference to the divine, or one’s own passion that encourages a person to engage in a personally or socially significant work role (Dik & Duffy, 2009). Duffy and Sedlacek (2010) regarded it as crucial for counseling practitioners to understand a range of variables such as career calling while supporting students’ career decision making process.

It is especially important to support adolescents and young adults to develop clarity about their purpose and make career decisions that align with their purpose. Super (1980) proposed that during late adolescence and young adulthood, most individuals are engaged in the process of actively exploring varied aspects of themselves, forming goals and making career decisions (Super, 1980). Adolescents seek personal consistency based on values and develop sensitivity to ideas concerning future of society as well as what they dream of becoming (Guichard, 2003). During adolescence occupational choices that reflect one’s subjective sense of purpose become more specific, clear, and certain (Jepsen & Dickson, 2003). Kosine, Steger, and Duncan (2008) suggested that having a sense of purpose can support adolescents and young adults to have satisfying, sustaining careers, and deeper levels of commitment and persistence. And thus, emphasized that through focusing on purpose, career counselors can support students to define work that is personally meaningful to them and also enables them to contribute to their community (Kosine, Steger, & Duncan, 2008).

**Purpose and Spiritual Wellness**

Individuals striving to understand meaning and purpose in life often look for guidance in the realm of spirituality (Graham, Furr, Flowers, & Burke, 2001). Spirituality encompasses human development dimensions such as integrity, identity, autonomy, interdependence, meaning
and purpose as it is people’s character, purposes and values, which express their spirituality as a way of life that affects their daily existence (Chickering, 2006).

**Defining spirituality in relation to purpose.** The literature often defines spirituality in terms of a personal commitment to a larger goal that encompasses the good of the social order (Speck, 2005). For many people spiritual well-being includes searching for meaning and purpose in life, and making a contribution in the world (Robert, Young, & Kelly, 2006).

**Role of spirituality in development of purpose.** Case studies reveal that spirituality with or without religiosity may provide youth a path to purpose (Tirri & Quinn, 2010). A spiritual context can many times be an expedient means for youth to develop an understanding about achieving a balance between taking care of “self” and others that sustained purpose requires. Also, at times religious faith supports and inspires people’s purpose in life because that purpose might be connected to the shared purpose of the religious community (Tirri & Quinn, 2010). Koenigi and Larson (2001) expressed that through promoting a focus beyond self, and encouraging people to take action for others benefit, spiritual communities might enhance people’s wellbeing.

**Theories on wellness encompass purpose in life.** The counseling profession regards wellness as a central tenet and defines it as “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community” (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000, p. 252). Halbert Dunn (1961), a pioneer in field of wellness, stated that the pursuit of wellness requires that people maintain a purposeful direction. And he defined purpose as a process of moving towards one’s greater potential.
Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) developed a wheel of wellness model with spirituality and self-direction as two of the five life tasks depicted in the wheel of wellness. They referred to spirituality as the center of the wheel to convey that healthy spirituality is the foundation for the rest of the components. They included tasks of self-direction as spokes in a wheel to indicate the role of self-direction in providing people a solid balance while moving forward through time and space to achieve their daily as well as long-term goals. The task of self-direction includes 12 subtasks such as sense of worth, sense of control, realistic beliefs, emotional awareness and coping, problem solving and creativity, nutrition, self-care, and stress management (Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney, 1999). Accordingly, the theorists speculate that individuals without purpose or direction in life, who lack optimism or hope are less likely to have an essential sense of wellbeing and motivation for self-care; thereby putting them at risk for both mental and physical illness.

**The Importance of Sense of Purpose**

Many studies have suggested the clinical and theoretical value of attending to existential themes in psychotherapy such as sense of meaning and purpose for promoting people’s wellbeing (Heisel & Flett, 2004). This section focuses on the review of empirical studies that demonstrate the role of purpose in people’s lives. It does so by illustrating the relationship of purpose with other constructs such as meaning, motivation, persistence, goal-achievement, psychological wellbeing, self-efficacy, and altruism.

**Purpose and Meaning in Life**

Purpose and meaning have been used indiscriminately in the literature (Yeager & Bundick, 2009). However, sense of purpose is distinct from the related construct of meaning. According to Reker, Peacock, and Wong (1987), meaning refers to “making sense, order, or
coherence out of one’s existence” (p.44). Purpose on the other hand, refers to “intention, some function to be fulfilled, or goals to be achieved” (Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987, p.44).

Baumeister (1991) suggested that a person’s meaning of life is the sum of ways he or she has of satisfying four basic needs for meaning: purpose, value, efficacy, and self-worth. He speculated that present events and activities obtain meaning by being connected with possible future outcomes. Thus, one of the important aspects of living a meaningful life is to engage in activities that derive meaning from the ideas of possible future events, states, or outcomes. In a similar vein, Myers and Sweeney (2008) suggested that meaning-making encompasses goals, personal direction, and achievement.

Another study suggested that a strong purpose for fulfillment of goals greater than self, can provide people a deeper sense of meaning in life. Using a mixed-methods study of a diverse sample of 6th, 9th and 12th grade adolescents (N=148), Yeager and Bundick (2009) investigated the relationship between work goals, purpose, and meaning. Through conducting a semi-structured interview, the authors identified four different types of reasons for work goals that were provided by adolescents in this study: intrinsic self-oriented reasons, intrinsic beyond-the-self-oriented reasons, extrinsic self-oriented reasons and extrinsic beyond-the-self-oriented reasons. The scholars also administered several scales including sense of purpose in life subscale (Ryff, 1989), presence of meaning in life subscale (Steger et al., 2006), and meaningfulness of school work scale (Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Based on regression analyses, the scholars concluded that young people with purposeful work goals (i.e., a beyond-the-self purpose in life) reported higher scores on these three scales, even after controlling for demographics and the type of career that youth mentioned. They also reported that by thinking
about what they want to accomplish in life, adolescents might see meaning in their lives and be inspired to learn.

Purpose and Motivation

Damon (2008) speculated that young people, who are committed to a purpose in life, are likely to be more motivated students. Similar to his speculation, Bronk’s (2008) study revealed that youth with greater sense of purpose showed higher motivation to learn. Bronk (2008) conducted a qualitative study utilizing an extreme-groups design, in which he interviewed nine highly purposeful youth and nine youth without purpose in life ($N=18$). The interviews focused on the rationale or motivation behind participant’s primary interests or potential purpose. Through following grounded theory method, the author shared that vitality, openness, focus, and humility emerged as codes representing the characteristics shared by the sample of purposeful youth (Bronk, 2008).

Bronk (2008) reported that one hundred and seven instances of humility emerged from the purposeful interviews in contrast to 12 instances from the non-purposeful transcripts. Openness was the most prevalent form of humility to emerge that included an open mindedness, an interest in opposing perspectives, and an eagerness to learn and grow. The two characteristics of humility and openness also encouraged youth to facilitate relationships with mentors and like-minded peers. Rather than working in isolation toward their aims, the purposeful youth sought friends and adults who shared and supported their interests. This enabled them to stay committed instead of getting off course and start progressing in less positive directions. Purposeful exemplars also felt motivated to build practical knowledge that is an important step in progressing toward purpose.
Reilly (2009) reported that one of the primary goal orientations that shape the goal setting of talented adolescents is contribution orientation, which refers to desire to achieve beyond-the-self outcomes. Students with contribution orientation reported strong mastery orientation towards their intentions, efforts to work hard and desire to improve (Reilly, 2009). Leppel (2005) found that those students who highly value a career on the basis of high salaries instead of other reasons such as being able to contribute to society, are less likely to continue college education. This might be because as they may have chosen their major solely on the basis of material gain rather than personal fit, and once they realized their chosen career path was not compatible, they dropped out so they could immediately realize their financial aspirations (Leppel, 2005). Therefore, it is important to support students in recognizing varied long-term reasons behind education and those reasons can help them cope with situational or life stressors that might interfere with that goal.

Yeager and Bundick (2009) suggested that the length of time between school and a future career as well as a disconnect in between the school work and one’s career aspirations can make it difficult for middle and high school students to find personal meaning in their studies. However, when adolescents think about who they want to be and feel connected to important personal strivings, their decisions and daily tasks may become more meaningful (Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Hence, having a sense of purpose may strengthen students’ motivation, dedication and effort to do well in academics.

In a similar vein, Damon (2008) suggested that if during the early years of effort and achievement, students find purposes that go deeper than immediate awards and grades, then they are more eager to gain knowledge and skills that can help them better accomplish their chosen purposes. Empirical studies also demonstrate that programs and courses on Life Calling, which
provide students with support and engagement in discussing their goals, positively influence students’ success (Conner, Daugherty, & Gilmore, 2012). Such courses facilitate student involvement, sense of direction, and commitment to goal attainment, thereby contributing to their retention.

**Purpose and Persistence**

According to McKnight and Kashdan (2009), being a central and self-organizing life aim that lasts across time and contexts, purpose in comparison to other short-term goals, can support people’s persistence (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). Savolaine and Granello (2002) proposed that sense of purpose and meaning helps people to endure through negative events or setbacks by enabling them to focus on the underlying purpose of the activity and not just on the activity as an isolated event.

One of the most well-known and widely used retention models is illustrated by Tinto (1993). He explained that students’ intentions, goals, purposes and commitments play a significant role in influencing their academic and social integration, which impacts their decision to persist or withdraw. In alignment with this theory, Wessell, Engle, and Smidchens (1978) found that students who made early decisions of clear, purposeful educational goals persisted more in school than the students who delayed making such decisions. Another study conducted by Allen and Nora (1995) demonstrated that goal commitment, certainty of purpose, and generalized goals significantly accounted for the variance explained in students' intention to re-enroll for the next semester and for consequent withdrawal or persistence decisions.

**Purpose and Goal-Achievement**

McKnight and Kashdan (2009) emphasized that purpose stimulates behavioral consistency, motivates a person to persevere in spite of presenting obstacles, generates approach
oriented motivated behaviors, fosters efficient resource distribution and leads to more productivity. Similar to a compass that directs navigator, purpose directs people’s goals and decisions by guiding the use of personal resources (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). Having strong sense of purpose offers an individual “a self-sustaining source of meaning through goal pursuit and goal attainment” (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009, p.242). Through using three waves of interviews over a five year period with nine adolescents who demonstrated strong commitments to various noble purposes, Bronk (2011) developed a grounded theory of the development of purpose. He reported that committing to a purpose serves as an important means for development of identity, as it offers youth a direction towards which to dedicate their energy and focus.

Empirical studies indicate that people with higher sense of purpose have different goal orientations than people with lower sense of purpose. For instance, Pinquart, Silbereisen, and Fröhlich (2009) conducted a study with 153 cancer patients to analyze associations between life goals and purpose in life in cancer patients. They found that higher purpose in life is associated with high importance of social, psychological, and health-related goals. However, lower purpose in life is associated with higher importance for material goals.

Also, the nature of goals and work-pursuits that a person engages in has potential to affect his or her sense of purpose. Based on survey of 270 high school students, Shamah (2011) found that that the academic, extra-curricular, and community activities youth participated contributed to the development of their purpose. Work activities that enabled to youth to engage in community, assume sense of responsibility and participate in some decision-making, supported them in developing a strong sense of purpose. Through engaging in service-learning, meaningful work, community-based programs, and apprenticeships youth felt valued, developed
intergenerational interactions, and learned from observing adults engaged in community-work with a sense of purpose. These activities also provided youth a forum to solidify their goals and explore how those goals matter beyond themselves (Shamah, 2011).

**Purpose and Psychological Wellbeing**

One of the dimensions of psychological wellbeing is purpose in life (Ryff, 1989). Responding to needs of meaning and purpose is positively related with physical wellbeing, sense of hope, effective coping, mental health and wellness (Brown & Parish, 2011). Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, and Holmes Finch (2009) conducted a study to examine the relationship among purpose, hope, and life satisfaction among 153 adolescents, 237 emerging adults, and 416 adults. They used the Revised Youth Purpose Survey (Bundick et al., 2006), the Trait Hope Scale (Synder, Harris, Anderson, Holeran, Irving, & Sigmon, 1991), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) for this cross-sectional study. Regression analysis of the data demonstrated that there was a significant positive relationship between the Identified Purpose subscale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Identified Purpose subscale positively predicted the mediator Agency, and Identified Purpose also predicted Hope among all three sub-groups. The authors concluded that individuals who had identified a purpose in life reported greater life satisfaction, consistent presence of hope, contentment, and motivation to work toward their ultimate aim (Bronk et al., 2009).

Based on a combined qualitative and quantitative research design, Debats, Drost, and Hansen (1995) suggested that having a purpose in life positively correlates with effective coping with stress. Similarly, Wang, Lightsey, Pietruszka, Ciftciuruk, and Wells (2007) found that a strong sense of purpose plays a mediating role against suicidal ideation through an inverse effect on depression. They reported that purpose is more protective against suicide than life
satisfaction. And purpose mediated the relationship between satisfaction with life and suicide ideation. Heisel and Flett (2004) also conducted a study with a clinical psychiatric sample to examine the role that their purpose and satisfaction in life plays in protecting them against suicide ideation. They administered self-reported measures of suicide ideation, purpose in life, satisfaction with life, neuroticism, depression, and social hopelessness. The findings demonstrated that purpose in life was more protective against suicide ideation than satisfaction in life. Also, purpose in life significantly moderated the association between depression and suicide ideation.

Using the model on identity capital as theoretical framework, Burrow and Hill (2011) examined the role that purpose plays as a mediator between identity and wellbeing among adolescents and young adults. They found that purpose commitment was strongly associated with positive affect, hope, and happiness. Also, purpose commitment completely mediated associations between identity commitment and these indices of wellbeing. Based on multilevel random coefficient modeling analyses, they demonstrated that purpose commitment fully mediated the relationship between identity and variations in one’s daily affect. The authors concluded that having a sense of purpose might be an important mediator through which a stable identity contributes to people’s wellbeing.

Rice and Dellwo (2002) conducted a study on perfectionism and self-development among college students. They reported that greater certainty about goal directions predicted higher self-esteem. On the other hand lack of direction can lead to a pervasive sense of not being good enough or not meeting one’s own internalized expectations for performance (Rice & Dellwo, 2002). Through supporting people’s goal-orientation and achievement, sense of purpose can thus promote their self-esteem.
Reker, Peacock, and Wong (1987) investigated the relationship of both the presence and absence of meaning and purpose to perceived psychological and physical wellbeing across five developmental stages. Results showed that two of the most significant life attitudes to differentiate between developmental stages were the desire to achieve new goals and the anticipation of a meaningful future. For young people, the uncertainties about one’s future and absence of a clear goal may lead to a sense of futility and emptiness. Elderly men too reported increasing level of existential vacuum, which may be due to their role loss and reduction in active participation. This pattern of low existential wellbeing is strikingly similar to the pattern of suicide rates in North America, which are highest in young and elderly adults. Overall, the life attitudes of Future Meaning, Life Purpose and Life Control were positively related to psychological and physical wellbeing. On the other hand, a lack of meaning and purpose in life were associated with perceived mental and physical discomforts.

Davis, Kerr, and Kurpius (2003) investigated the relationship between spiritual wellbeing and anxiety in risk-taking adolescents. They used the Spiritual Wellbeing Scale (Ellison, 1983) for their study. The scale consists of 20 items responded to on a seven-point Likert-type scale. Ten items measure religious wellbeing that referred to one’s wellbeing in relation to “God” and the other ten items measure existential wellbeing, which refers to a sense of life purpose and life-satisfaction with no reference to anything specifically religious. The results of this study indicate that existential wellbeing is more predictive of trait anxiety than is religious wellbeing. The authors implied that through helping at-risk adolescents resolve concerns about the ultimate significance of their lives and facilitating the development of their meaningful vision of the future; counselors can facilitate the discovery of meaning and purpose and alleviate young people’s anxiety (Davis, Kerr, & Kurpius, 2003). Another study demonstrates that although
positive associations were found between religiosity and happiness measures, when purpose in life was partialled out, the associations no longer remained. The association between religiosity and happiness thus, might be accounted for by purpose in life (French & Joseph, 1999).

**Purpose and Altruism**

Bronk and Holmes Finch (2010) asserted that young people who have long-term aims through which they can contribute to the society are most likely to be searching for and to have identified a purpose for their lives. Positive purpose promotes the wellbeing of others by a beyond-the-self focus (Koshy & Mariano, 2011). The beyond-the-self quality of purpose can help people to think beyond personal gains and take actions for the wellbeing of others.

Through interviewing 229 adolescents Hill et al (2010) explored the typology of undergraduates’ purposes and revealed four different purpose orientations: financial, pro-social, personal recognition and creative. These different types of purpose lead to differential profiles of wellbeing among students. The pro-social purpose scores are most positively related to college satisfaction and predicted wellbeing at middle-adulthood (Hill et al., 2010).

Mariano and Savage (2009) conducted a study to examine the experiential benefits of purposefulness to the adolescents. They demonstrated that adolescents engaged in reflection about their purposes in life mentioned generosity, optimism, confidence, vitality, and openness in comparison to their peers. Based on exploratory correlational analyses scholars reported that youth with purposes that were both realized (i.e., in action) and directed beyond-the-self reported more generosity and empathy compared to those exhibiting unformed or idealized, or realized self-oriented purposes. They also reported positive correlations between seeking purpose and focusing on positive events and future states in adolescence (Mariano & Savage, 2009).
Bronk and Holmes Finch (2010) administered surveys to 144 adolescents to determine if young people varied based on the type of long-term aspirations they had. Using cluster analysis, they identified four groups: youth without clear long-term aims, youth with self-oriented long-term aims, youth with other-oriented long-term aims, and youth with both self-oriented and other-oriented long-term aims. The authors then used multivariate analysis of variance, discriminant analysis, and analysis of variance to compare these groups with respect to other constructs related to purpose. They found that those young people who expressed both self- and other-oriented long-term aims demonstrated more positive developmental outcomes and life satisfaction than those who expressed only other oriented interests. The authors concluded that it is important to encourage young people to link their own aims to personal as well as others’ needs.

**Development of Purpose**

Given the positive role that purpose plays in lives of people, it is important to understand the ways in adolescents as well as adults can be supported in development of their sense of purpose. Damon (2008) explained that purpose is both an individual and a social phenomenon as “it is internally constructed, yet it manifests itself in engagement with others” (Damon, 2008, p. 161). A person awakens to his or her purpose in life through inner examination along with outer exploration. A person’s purpose reflects his or her interests, beliefs, and aspirations for self as well as the needs of society that he or she wants to respond to. Therefore, to support development of purpose among youth, it is important for adults to provide them with inspirations, encourage them to pursue noble aspirations, and expand their sense of what they can achieve for themselves and for society at large (Damon, 2008). Following paragraphs provide a
review of the interventions suggested and implemented by scholars in various professions such as counseling, education, human development, psychology, and spirituality.

Tiedeman (1964) stated that the goal of career counseling is to support people to think in terms of purpose. Life purpose enables the person to bridge the discontinuities in one’s career in an adaptive way (Tiedeman, 1985). A person, as a self-organizing system, is able to hold on to one’s purpose, while going through career transitions and other challenges (Savickas, 2008).

Savickas (2012) explained life design intervention as a career counseling approach. The life design intervention focuses on narration and regards stories as construction tools for building identities and careers out of complex social interactions. Savickas et al (2009) also suggested the importance of encouraging clients to engage in diverse activities and roles that can help them to identify those activities that resonate with their core self and purposes.

Kosine, Steger, and Duncan (2008) illustrated person-centered approach in career development, which focuses on five components that reinforce the development of purpose: identity, self-efficacy, metacognition, culture, and service. Counselors can encourage students’ identity formation by encouraging their active engagement in meaningful dialogues with peers and adults about different careers that resonate with their purpose. Self-efficacy refers to belief in one’s abilities. Metacognition refers to self-awareness regarding one’s own thinking processes, strengths, weaknesses and career decision making. It is also important to support students to consider the role of their culture in career decisions and how their career pursuits can impact their community. Lastly, the component of service inspires students to advance greater good and explore the ways in which their career can assist them in contributing to society. At core, this framework focuses on supporting youth to engage in dialogues and deeper self-
exploration for identifying their purpose and determining what career they find most meaningful to fulfill their personal goals as well as contribute to the wellbeing of others.

According to identity development theorists, formation of identity during adolescence and young adulthood can enhance one’s sense of purpose. Thus, through assisting students in discovery of their own abilities, goals and values as a part of creating a sense of self-identity, counselors can support the development of their sense of purpose (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). One of the identity development theorists, Chickering (1994) suggested that academic advisors play a vital role in supporting students to choose majors that resonate with their purpose in life. They can do so by encouraging students to integrate their vocational plans, interests, values, and current pursuits in the framework of their larger purpose. They can also support students in understanding more about their major and the ways in which they can use their education to fulfill their long-term goals and purpose (Chickering, 1994).

Apart from supporting students individually, academic advisors and career counselors can also encourage incorporation of active application and reflection in curriculum so that students can integrate what they learn with their purposes and become more intentional about their own learning (Chickering, 1994). In a similar vein, Mariano and Savage (2009) suggested the need for educational approaches that connect students’ personal goals with broader, ultimate, purposes that can enable them to contribute to society.

Moran (2009) emphasized that being told what one’s purpose in life is may not be an effective educational intervention. In order to develop a strong sense of purpose, it is important to provide young people in developing empathy for pro-social reasons, emotional resonance and reflection to integrate one’s interests, and foresight into a purpose. Also, through fostering a sense of interdependence, educators can inspire youth to understand that one’s intentions and
actions matter to others and it is important to steer oneself towards realizing one’s own goals as well as common good (Moran, 2009). Similarly, Bronk and Finch (2010) using hierarchical cluster analysis found that young people who have other-oriented long-term aims are more likely to demonstrate purpose in life. It is thus important for adults to share with youth the positive influences of their own other-oriented life aims and encourage them to connect their personal interests and goals to prosocial aims.

After conducting a qualitative study with adolescents who were characterized to have high sense of purpose, Bronk (2008) reported that being open to learning, gaining practical knowledge and seeking a variety of important lessons helped youth to find and maintain their purposes. Bronk (2008) also found that relationship with mentors and association with like-minded peers played an important role in keeping adolescents committed to their long term aims and purposes over time.

Bronk (2012) conducted a grounded theory to understand development of purpose among youth. The results indicated that initially adolescents with high sense of purpose made minor commitments to the prosocial opportunities that were available to them. When these opportunities provided them satisfaction and sense of meaning, they could sustain their commitments and prosocial motivation. Through positive feedback and support of like-minded peers and mentors, these commitments grew and further evolved. Overtime, while adolescents’ ultimate aims remained same but the means of fulfilling them often changed. Based on these results, Bronk (2012) suggested the importance of providing youth with wide variety of activities that can support youth to discover their unique talents and skills through which they can fulfill a goal that has both personal and social value. Out of these activities, there might be some
activities that can inspire lifelong commitment among adolescents and enhance their sense of purpose in future.

Based on categorical analysis of interviews conducted with twenty high school-age youth in Wallowa County, Shamah (2011) reported that encouraging youth to explore their identities, participate in service-learning and experience being part of prosocial initiatives that are beyond just personal success, enhanced their sense of purpose. Also, work activities outside school that provided youth a sense of responsibility and decision making opportunities supported in development of adolescents’ purpose in life. Similarly, community-based programs that valued youth and had adults who encouraged youth to pursue their dreams played an important role in strengthening adolescents goals and being able to recognize the value of these goals to matters beyond self. Shamah (2011) concluded that schools can support development of purpose among adolescents by intentionally evaluating purpose using surveys, engage students in discussions about purpose in life and reinforce the value to contribute to society.

In another study, Bundick (2011) investigated whether engaging in one-time session of reflection and discussion on one’s purpose in life could lead to an increase in college students’ sense of purpose after nine months. He found that though one-time session did not increase students’ awareness of their purpose in life, but it strengthened their goal-directedness. Bundick (2011) implied that regular discussions about purpose in educational settings in form of reflection-based assignments, career counseling and academic advising can act as triggering events to support development of purpose among youth. Outside school conservations with parents, community leaders and coaches can also encourage youth to regularly reflect on their long-term goals and ways in which they can contribute to the community.
Pizzolato, Brown, and Kanny (2011) implemented an 18 weeks intervention program to enhance high school students’ sense of purpose. The first session of the intervention supported students to identify their postsecondary purpose. The second session encouraged students to engage in discussions about how to use, enact and achieve their purpose in life. The third and fourth sessions focused on supporting youth to build a timeline to achieve mini-goals and identify support network to fulfill these goals. Last three sessions focused on increasing students’ internal control. The scholars found that it was possible to enhance students’ sense of purpose through this short-term intervention.

Dik, Steger, Gibson, and Peisner (2011) developed and evaluated the effectiveness of a purpose-centered career education intervention. This intervention consists of three modules: parent interview, values card sort, and one village game. Parent interview enables youth to engage in conversations about role of work, identity, self-efficacy and one’s cultural heritage with parents or other significant adults. Values card sort is a classroom activity that facilitates students’ reflection on work values and their implications for career decisions. One village game is a board game that focuses on the idea of service and encourages youth to think about ways in which different occupations contribute to the wellbeing of the whole village. Overall, the intervention focuses on providing youth structured activities that can enable them to discuss their goals, values, purposeful work, interconnectedness in society, and prosocial functions of various occupations. The evaluation of this intervention demonstrated its effectiveness in enhancing adolescents’ sense of direction, preparedness for future and understanding about their interests and abilities. The scholars also concluded that development of one’s sense of purpose may be more gradual than detected by current post-intervention surveys (Dik et al., 2011). This implies
a need to have an instrument that can measure recent changes in people’s awareness as well as efforts to gain clarity about their purpose in life.

**Measuring the Construct Purpose**

There have been several attempts to design instruments that measure the construct purpose. However, just as the many definitions on purpose, which are explained above, these measurements too are confounded with several variables. Due to their confounded nature, these instruments have features that muddle the nomological network (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Following is an overview of the instruments that were designed to measure purpose. The review ends with the rationale behind construction of a new instrument and the procedure that was followed to construct the Sense of Purpose Inventory (Sharma & Kang, 2013).

**Purpose in Life Test**

Based on Frankl’s (1959) theory and measure of purpose in life, Crumbaugh and Maholick (1964) constructed a Purpose in Life (PIL) test, which is a unidimensional attitude test that measures the degree to which a person experiences purpose and meaning in life. The Purpose in Life test was mainly designed to distinguish pathological groups from normal populations.

The test has a total of 20 items, which are scored on a 7-point Likert scale. The score can thus range from 20 to 140. A score in the range of 113-140 indicates a greater sense of purpose in life, a score between 92 -112 indicates moderate levels of purpose, and a score below 92 indicates a lack of life purpose (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964). PIL test is most widely used to show the relationship between an individual’s sense of purpose and with other psychological variables (DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh, 2009).
However, PIL test is critiqued for its confounding with variables unrelated to purpose in life (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). For instance, PIL contains items such as “Every day is – (1) exactly the same – (7) constantly new and different”, and “I am a – (1) very irresponsible person – (7) very responsible person”. The response to these items could result from any number of variables such as an individual’s mood and not necessarily presence or absence of a sense of purpose (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Therefore, Purpose in Life test’s items could tap any number of constructs aside from sense of purpose (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006).

It is also critical to examine the structure of the scale when used with various groups as simply adding scores of all 20 items is likely to compromise the reliability and validity of the results because the scale’s items address a number of issues (Marsh, Smith, Piek, & Saunders, 2003). Some of these issues are satisfaction with daily life, whether there are clear goals in life, sense of overall meaning in life, sense of personal responsibility, and sense of control. Also, the scale does not include items that focus on a person’s desire to contribute to society or a concern for the world beyond oneself, which is an essential part of the definition of purpose that I will use for this study (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Moreover, the items are appropriate mainly for adult population and thus scale is not of much utility while assessing sense of purpose among youth.

**Life Attitude Profile**

Reker and Peackock (1981) developed a multidimensional instrument for assessing attitudes toward life. The instrument is called as Life Attitude Profile. It assesses the degree of existential meaning and purpose in people’s life and the strength of their motivation to find meaning and purpose. The scale has 46 items, which can be scored on a 7-point Likert Scale. The scale consists of seven dimensions: Life Purpose, Existential Vacuum, Life Control, Death
Acceptance, Will to Meaning, Goal Seeking, and Future Meaning. The dimension on Life Purpose is a 9-item measure that focuses on questions related to zest for life, fulfillment, contentment, and satisfaction (Reker & Peackock, 1981). The alpha internal consistency estimates of the factor scales range from .83 (life purpose) to 0.55 (future meaning to fulfill). The Life Attitude Profile does not explore the construct purpose comprehensively. It especially does not focus on the dimension of one’s desire to contribute to society and active engagement towards awakening to one’s purpose.

**Psychological Wellbeing Scale**

Ryff (1989) developed a Psychological Well-Being measure in which one of the subscales is called the Sense of Purpose in Life scale. Its items are rated on 6-point Likert-type scales with higher scores indicating the presence of more goals, greater direction in life, and a stronger purpose. Though the scale is shown to have acceptable internal consistency and validity, its items mainly focus on a general sense of intentionality and future-directedness (Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Thus, the scale is not based on a multi-dimensional and more comprehensive definition of purpose. For instance, the scale does not take into consideration the desire to contribute to society. Another concern related to this scale is that it was designed for adult participants and some of the statements are not developmentally appropriate for younger participants (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003).

**Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment**

Another instrument that measures development of purpose task among college students is called Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Assessment (SDTLA; Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). SDTLA “represents a sample of behavior and reports about feelings and attitudes that are indicative of students who have satisfactorily achieved certain developmental
tasks common to young adult college students” (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999, p. 10). The instrument is based on Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) theory of identity and seven vectors of student development. SDTLA is a 153 multiple-choice-question survey. The instrument measures three developmental tasks: establishing and clarifying purpose, developing autonomy, and developing mature interpersonal relationships (Winston, Miller, & Cooper, 1999). The establishing and clarifying purpose task measures if students explored and defined their educational goals, synthesized knowledge about the world of work, established personal direction for their future, and exhibited a wide range of cultural interests and participated in cultural events.

SDTLA consists of 68 items divided into five subtasks. The first is Educational Involvement (16 items), which measures the extent to which students have explored and identified goals for their educational experience. The second dimension is Career Planning (19 items), which measures the degree to which students have devised a professional plan and have emotionally committed to a career plan. The third dimension, Lifestyle Planning (11 items), assesses the extent to which students have identified a personal direction for their lives that takes into account their religious and moral beliefs. Fourth, dimension, Life Management (16 items), assesses the degree to which students organize their lives to satisfy their daily needs and responsibilities. Finally, the fifth dimension is Cultural Participation (6 items), which measures students’ range of cultural interests and participation in cultural activities (Bronk, 204).

Though, SDTLA-PUR is used by scholars in college student development and higher education, research on validity and reliability of the scale in measuring students’ sense of purpose is not available (Molasso, 2006). Further, SDTLA does not have items that demonstrate individuals’ concern for others and desire to contribute to society.
Youth Purpose Survey

Finally, Bundick et al (2006) developed a survey to explore purpose among adolescents and college students titled Revised Youth Purpose Survey. This survey draws items from Purpose in Life test (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964), the Sense of Purpose in Life subscale (Ryff, 1989), and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger et al., 2006). The survey has several items rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale that focus on purpose among youth and college students. Some of the items are “I have discovered a satisfying life purpose”, and “I have a purpose in my life that says a lot about who I am”. Though, this survey is based on a more comprehensive conceptualization of purpose, it lacks empirical evidence for psychometric soundness. It is also not time-sensitive as it does not measure recent changes in one’s sense of purpose, which limits its use in experimental studies that aim to assess effectiveness of an intervention on people’s sense of purpose (Scheier et al., 2006).

Rationale for Designing a Psychometrically Sound Measurement of Purpose

As reviewed above, the existing instruments that measure purpose have several limitations, which make it necessary to construct a new instrument. Overall, some of these limitations are that most of these instruments are unidimensional and they do not include items on people’s desire to contribute to the wellbeing of others. They are also time insensitive and make it difficult to assess changes in people’s sense of purpose over time (Scheier et al., 2006). This limits the use of instrument as a tool to assess growth in someone’s sense of purpose as a result of an intervention. Also, most of these measures contain items that measure other constructs such as meaning and contentment in addition to purpose in life. Such confounding makes it difficult to conclude which scale components are responsible for producing the
associations that emerge (Scheier et al. 2006). Moreover, these instruments are either suitable just for adult population or adolescents, and lack psychometric support for their utility in measuring purpose among people across a wider range of age-groups.

Due to the above-mentioned limitations of the instruments used to measure purpose, a new measure is needed that does not have characteristics such as (a) the instrument should not be a measure of distinct construct such as religiosity and satisfaction in life, (b) the instrument’s items should not be confounded with related variables such as sense of meaning and wellbeing, (c) the instrument is not influenced by other factors such as one’s mood, and (d) the instrument should not be a particular career or interest related.

Furthermore the new instrument to measure purpose should have several desirable qualities including (a) instrument should be time-sensitive so that it can assess changes in one’s sense of purpose over-time, (b) instrument should be able to measure the effectiveness of an intervention, (c) instrument should be developmentally appropriate for people across age groups, (d) all items should be informed by a clear conceptualization and definition of the construct, (e) instrument should consist of items related to all important dimensions of purpose such as goal clarity, altruism, and active engagement around purpose, (f) instrument should be independent of any specific religious persuasion, (g) instrument should have univocal items that are short and easy to comprehend, (h) instrument should be reasonably homogenous and have well-defined factors, (i) instrument should have strong criterion-validity, and (h) scale should have well-established construct validity.

Based on the above desirable properties, a colleague and I constructed a new instrument titled the Sense of Purpose Inventory (Sharma & Kang, 2013). This inventory is based on the definition provided by Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003), who referred to purpose as “a stable
and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self” (p. 121). We utilized exploratory factor analysis to examine the factor structure of the inventory and used principal axis factoring as the extraction method. And as the factor rotation method, we used varimax rotation. The number of factors was determined using a scree plot. A three-factor solution was suggested. After rotation, the three factors were interpreted as follows: Awareness of One’s Purpose, Awakening to One’s Purpose, and Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others. Next chapter elaborates on the psychometric properties of the inventory and the methods utilized to establish the inventory’s internal consistency reliability and construct validity.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The focus of this study is the measurement of construct purpose. According to Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003), purpose can be defined as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (p. 121). Based on this definition, in an earlier study, my colleague and I constructed an instrument titled the Sense of Purpose Inventory to measure the construct purpose (Sharma & Kang, 2013). One of the aims of this study was to see if the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study also emerges in the sample used in the present study. Another objective of this study was to establish the internal-consistency reliability and construct validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory. This study also investigated the extent to which the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scores are independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale.

This chapter describes the methods used to demonstrate the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s factor structure, internal consistency reliability, construct validity and susceptibility to social desirability response style. The following section lists the specific research questions of the study.

Research Questions

This study will address the following research questions:

1. Does the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) also emerge in the sample used in the current study?

2. Do the scales of the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrate evidence of adequate internal consistency reliability?
3. Does the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrate evidence of adequate convergent validity by strongly correlating with the selected measures that are theoretically related to the construct purpose?
   a. Is there a strong correlation between the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Presence of Meaning and the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awareness of One’s Purpose?
   b. Is there a strong correlation between the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Search for Meaning and the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awakening to One’s Purpose?
   c. Is there a strong correlation between the Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale and the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Desire to Contribute to the Wellbeing of Others?

4. Does the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrate evidence of adequate discriminant validity by not correlating excessively with the selected measures that are theoretically unrelated to the construct purpose?
   a. Is there a weak correlation between the Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale and the Sense of Purpose Inventory?
   b. Is there a weak correlation between the Masculine Behavior Scale and the Sense of Purpose Inventory?

5. Is Sense of Purpose Inventory sufficiently independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale?
Research Design

Initial Development of Sense of Purpose Inventory

Based on extensive literature review, Damon, Menon, and Bronk’s (2003) conceptualization of purpose was identified as the most comprehensive framework to generate items that can measure people’s sense of purpose. Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) defined purpose as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (p.121). As a member of the research team (Dr. Gary Gottfredson and ZiYoung Kang), I first generated a large pool of items (%126) that represented all of this definition’s dimensions. The research team members examined these items’ content validity, reading level, redundancy and clarity. A total of 48 items were then administered to obtain data for exploratory factor analysis and instrument revision (Sharma & Kang, 2013).

These 48 items were administered to 487 undergraduate students at a large mid-Atlantic university in the USA. Participants were 60.9% females. With respect to race, 302 (65.9%) were White, 70 (15.3%) were Asian, 52 (11.4%) were Black or African-American, and 34 (7.4%) were from multiple races. A total of 21 participants selected other race as the option and 39 participants skipped this question. The participants were asked to indicate how accurately each item describes them on a five-point Likert-type response format ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Exploratory principal axis factor analysis was utilized with varimax rotation to examine the instrument’s factor structure. A scree plot, which represents eigenvalues of the correlation matrix (Figure 1) was used in deciding the number of factors to extract. In a scree plot, the maximum number of factors is suggested by the point preceding the “elbow” or the point when
the plot levels off (Cattell, 1966). A three-factor solution was suggested. The initial eigenvalues for the three factors were 16.8, 4.5, and 2.6 respectively. After rotation, the three factors were interpreted as follows: Awareness of one’s purpose, Awakening to One’s Purpose, and Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others. The percentage of variance explained by these three factors was 50%.

*Figure 1. Scree Plot*

As demonstrated in Table 1 below, among 48 items, 28 items loaded mainly on Factor 1 (awareness of one’s purpose), 7 items loaded mainly on Factor 2 (desire to contribute to the wellbeing of others), and 9 items loaded mainly on Factor 3 (awakening to one’s purpose). Four items were removed because they had less than a third of their variance in the factor space.
Table 1

*Factor Pattern Matrix: Varimax Rotated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
<th>$h^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel aimless.</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lack sense of direction.</td>
<td>-0.80</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am making progress towards fulfilling my aims.</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am moving towards fulfillment of my life’s purpose.</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am clear about what I want to achieve in the future.</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have begun to feel more confident about where my life is going.</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What I do now, will help fulfill my purpose.</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no idea where my life is going.</td>
<td>-0.71</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My purpose in life is clear.</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My current aims align with my future aspirations.</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The important decisions I make align with my purpose.</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My vision for the future helps me persevere.</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not see any purpose in what I am doing.</td>
<td>-0.66</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In recent times, I have developed clarity about how I can fulfill my vision.</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My life lacks purpose.</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In recent times, I have formulated steps towards what I ultimately wish to achieve.</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recently, my long-term goals have become more clear and specific.</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sense of purpose fulfills me.</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My life’s purpose makes me happy.</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have recently developed clear aims in life.</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no connection between my current activities and my life’s purpose.</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My career choice reflects my long-term aims.</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A strong sense of purpose motivates me to do my best.</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My overarching goals have started to motivate me to learn.</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek opportunities to fulfill my aspirations.</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a sense of purpose helps me overcome obstacles.</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I reflect on my over-arching aims while making current plans.</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Factor 1</td>
<td>Factor 2</td>
<td>Factor 3</td>
<td>Factor 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I easily give up on my goals.</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no point in clinging to difficult goals.</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I depend on approval of others for developing my goals.</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through my career I aim to make the world a better place.</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to make a positive difference in society.</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My life’s purpose has nothing to do with common good.</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek to serve society in many ways, large and small.</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I seek education so that I can help others.</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My goals extend beyond my personal welfare.</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have often volunteered to contribute to well-being of others.</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have become interested in searching for my purpose in life.</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have started thinking about what is truly important for me to achieve.</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have begun to wonder what will be truly meaningful to achieve in life.</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have recently become concerned about ways in which I can contribute to society.</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not interested in searching for purpose in life.</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have recently started to see the purpose behind my current pursuits.</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy activities that encourage me to think about life’s purpose.</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t think of purpose in life.</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These days, I often discuss with others my concerns related to meaning and purpose.</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to learn new things so that I can realize my vision.</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been told by others what the purpose of my life is.</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Variance (post-rotation)</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $h^2 =$ communality.

The internal consistency reliability, alpha, was .95 for the inventory composed of all 48 items, .96 for Awareness of One’s Purpose (28 items), .90 for the Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others (7 items), and .79 for Awakening to One’s Purpose (9 items). One of the goals of the earlier study was also to reduce the number of items and make the inventory more
concise. Items with high squared multiple correlation values that were too similar to other items, and thus redundant were deleted. Items with low corrected item-total correlation values were deleted. Items that had low content validity and lacked clarity were also deleted. Only a total of 14 items were retained so that more items for second and third factors, namely, desire to contribute to wellbeing of others and awakening to one’s purpose could be added. The final instrument consists of 30 items (see Appendix A). The responses for these items are made on 5 point Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Factor Structure with Different Sample**

One of the aims of this study was to examine if the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) also emerge in the sample used in the current study. Exploratory principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was utilized. The reason for using exploratory factor analysis was to identify the underlying latent factors of Sense of Purpose Inventory when used with a different sample by exploring the relationship among observed variables instead of relying on a priori hypotheses about the number of factors (Gorsuch, 1983). Also, after the addition of 16 more items to Sense of Purpose Inventory in the earlier above-mentioned study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) it was important to again explore the factor structure of the inventory using Exploratory factor analysis, which is a preferred method for less mature research areas where basic measurement questions are not yet resolved (Gorsuch, 1983).

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Internal Consistency Reliability**

Another aim of this study was to assess the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s internal-consistency reliability. Coefficient alpha was utilized to determine whether the Sense of Purpose Inventory scales have adequate internal consistency reliability.
**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Convergent Validity**

Validity can be defined as “the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores entailed by proposed uses of tests” (AERA et al., 1999, p.9).  

Construct validity focuses on what constructs account for variance in test performance (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). For establishing an instrument’s construct validity, both convergent and discriminant validity are of concern.

Campbell and Fiske (1959) referred to convergent validity as the degree to which a scale is related to other measures of the same construct. If a scale is measuring the construct that it designed to measure, then it is expected to be highly related to other scales that measure the same construct (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Therefore, an aim of this study was to demonstrate if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is significantly related with the other instruments that are indicators of same construct. In this study, purpose is defined as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003, p. 121). Accordingly, if the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scales were found to be significantly related to other scales that measure similar construct, then this would provide evidence for the convergent validity of the scale. For this study, I explored Sense of Purpose Inventory’s convergent validity by examining the correlations of the inventory’s three scales (awareness of one’s purpose, awakening to one’s purpose, and desire to contribute to wellbeing of others) with other self-report measures of the similar constructs: presence of meaning in life, search for meaning in life, and compassion.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Discriminant Validity**

Campbell and Fiske (1959) referred to discriminant validity as the degree to which an instrument is unrelated with the measures that are not associated with the same construct. If a
scale is unrelated to the variables that are not theoretically associated with the construct that the scale is designed to measure, then the scale’s discriminant validity is to some extent supported (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Therefore, it is important to show that the inventory is not measuring other variables that are not related to the constructs purpose. Empirical studies have been done to show the relationship between sense of purpose and religion. However, I wanted to use the study to demonstrate sense of purpose and religion as distinct constructs. Thus, I selected a measure of religiosity as one of the instruments to establish Sense of Purpose Inventory’s discriminant validity.

I also selected a measure of masculine behavior as another instrument to establish discriminant validity with the aim to demonstrate sense of purpose and a measure of gender stereotypes as distinct constructs. Discriminant validity can be demonstrated by low correlations between different traits assessed by same or different methods. For this study, I used the approach of assessing correlations between different traits using the same method of self-assessment. I explored whether the correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory and measures of different constructs are lower than the measures of similar constructs.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory and Social Desirability Scale**

The current study was also used to explore if the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scores are sufficiently independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale. For this purpose, I investigated whether the correlation between Sense of Purpose Inventory and Social Desirability Scale is sufficiently low.

**Participants**

The participants were volunteer under-graduate students enrolled in two large public universities located in the East Coast of USA. Both full-time and part-time students irrespective
of their race, religion, gender, and college major were eligible to participate. The total number of participants for this study is 302. Their mean age was 21.5 years. A majority (72%) of the participants were females. Among the participants, 73% were White, 2% were American Indian, 11% were Asian, 9% were Black, 8% were Hispanic, 3% were multiracial, and 4% chose other race. The participants’ majors were diverse including communications, psychology, criminology, health policy, kinesiology, sciences, and so on.

**Recruitment and Data Collection**

Data were collected during spring and summer sessions of 2014. Before collecting data, I sought approval by the Behavioral/Social Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Pennsylvania State University. The IRB Approval Letter is included in Appendix J. To begin the recruitment process, I sought an appointment with the faculty members teaching introductory courses to undergraduate students at a university in the East Coast of USA. I shared with them a brief overview and significance of the study and requested them to email a survey link to their students to seek their participation. I also contacted academic advisor of another university in the East Coast of USA and requested to send an email with survey link to the undergraduate students. The survey link included an informed consent form which students could sign before responding to the questionnaires (see Appendix J). The link was emailed to a total of 1052 students. After, receiving sufficient number of complete responses ($N \geq 300$), I concluded the process of data collection and began data analyses.

**Instruments**

The instruments that were administered include the Sense of Purpose Inventory (Sharma & Kang, 2013), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Steger, et al., 2006), Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale (Hwang, Plante, & Lackey, 2008), Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale-
Revised (I/E-ROS; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989), Masculine Behavior Scale (Snell, 1989), and the shortened version of Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Strahan & Gerbasi’s, 1972).

**Sense of Purpose Inventory.** The Sense of Purpose Inventory consists of 30 items divided into three scales: Awareness of One’s purpose, Awakening to One’s Purpose, and Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others. The responses for these items are made on 5 point Likert type scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Some of the items on the scale are “My purpose in life is clear”, “I am in the process of formulating my long-term goals”, and “My goals extend beyond benefits for myself” (see Appendix A for all items of the inventory). The purpose of this study was to further establish the psychometric properties of this scale.

**The Meaning in Life Questionnaire.** The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006) was used to assess the participants’ sense of meaning and purpose in life. Steger et al (2006) defined meaning in life as “the sense made of, and significance felt regarding, the nature of one’s being and existence” (p.81). The MLQ is a 10-item, self-report instrument. The items are scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (absolutely untrue) to 7 (absolutely true). The MLQ has two subscales: Presence of Meaning (MLQ-P) and Search for Meaning (MLQ-S). Each sub-scale consists of five items. The items of the Presence of Meaning Sub-Scale reflect the respondents’ subjective sense that their life is meaningful. The items of the Search for Meaning Sub-Scale reflect the respondents’ drive and motivation to find meaning in life. Steger, etl.al (2006) reported that the alpha coefficients for the self-reports on MLQ-P and MLQ-S were .86 and .92 respectively, in a sample of 151 undergraduate students. Also, the one-month stability coefficients were .70 for MLQ-P and .73
for MLQ-S in this sample. Some of items on the scale are “I have discovered a satisfying life purpose” and “I am searching for meaning in my life” (see Appendix B for the scale).

**Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale.** Lazarus (1991) defined compassion as “being moved by another’s suffering and wanting to help” (p. 289). Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale (Hwang, Plante, & Lackey, 2008) is an abbreviated version of Sprecher and Fehr’s (2005) Compassionate Love Scale. Sprecher and Fehr (2005) defined compassionate love toward humanity as an attitude involving behavior, feeling, and thinking that focuses on concern, caring, and support for humanity, as well as a motivation to understand and help strangers when they are in need. Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale (Hwang, Plante, & Lackey, 2008) has five items. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 7 (*very true of me*). These items were selected by Hwang, Plante, and Lackey (2008) based on factor analysis as well as the evaluation of high correlation coefficients between individual item responses and overall 21 items scores. Alpha of the brief version was found to 0.90 in the sample of Santa Clara University’s undergraduate students. Regarding the associations between compassionate love and other related scales; the total score of each version of the compassionate love scale was positively and significantly correlated with two empathy scales ($r = .50$ to $.68$). Additional data that supports compassion scale’s validation is weak correlation between the compassionate love scale and Paulhus (1991) Inventory of Desirable Responding (Sprecher & Fehr, 2005). Some of the items on the scale are “I tend to feel compassion for people, even though I do not know them” and “One of the activities that provides me with the most meaning to my life is helping others in the world who need help” (see Appendix C for the scale).
Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale — Revised. The Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Religious Orientation Scale consists of 14 items that tap religious behaviors, values, and attitudes. The items can be divided into two sub-scales: (a) Intrinsic Religious Orientation (8 items) and (b) Extrinsic Religious Orientation (6 items). These items are scored using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) reported internal consistency estimates for the intrinsic religious orientation subscale as .83 and for extrinsic religious orientation subscale as .65 in a sample of 771 students from secular and religious colleges in Southern California. For this study, only the sub-scale: Extrinsic Religious Orientation will be used. The rationale for doing so is that sense of purpose is often considered as a dimension of intrinsic spiritual values that focus on people’s commitment to a goal that encompasses the good of the social order (Speck, 2005). However, according to Allport and Ross (1967), people with extrinsic religious orientation find religion useful to provide security and solace, sociability and distraction, status and self-justification. Extrinsic religiosity is thus considered a different construct than sense of purpose as it describes the component of religiousness that is concerned with instrumental and utilitarian values (Allport & Ross, 1967). Some of the items on the Extrinsic Religious Orientation sub-scale are “I go to church because it helps me to make friends” and “I pray mainly to gain relief and protection” (see Appendix D for the sub-scale).

Masculine Behavior Scale. The Masculine Behavior Scale is based on the observation that men and women differ in the extent to which their behavioral tendencies align with the traits that are associated with conventional male role (Snell, 1989). The scale has 20 items that are stereotypically linked more with men than women. The responses for these items are made on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from agree to disagree. Snell (1989) conducted principal axis
factor analysis, using varimax rotation, which revealed a four factor structure. The four subscales are success dedication, restrictive emotionality, inhibited affection, and exaggerated self-reliance. Snell (1989) reported that internal consistencies of these four subscales ranged from .69 to .89 in a sample of 294 female and 103 male undergraduate students enrolled in psychology course at a Midwestern university. Also, the test-retest coefficient was on average .61 for the four subscales. The reliability results demonstrated that the items on each of the subscales are internally coherent and consistent across time. I will use all the four subscales for this study. Some of the items on the scale are “I don’t let others tell me what to do with my life”, and “I don’t often admit that I have emotional feelings” (see Appendix E for the scale).

**Social Desirability Scale.** Social desirability was measured by using a brief version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Crowne and Marlowe (1964) defined social desirability as the need for social approval. The original scale constructed by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) consists of 33 true-false items concerning everyday behaviors. Due to the length of the original scale, many scholars have devised shortened versions of the scale. The present study used Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version. It is a 10 items true or false scale. The scale has high correlation with the standard 33-item scale \( r = 0.96 \). Some of the sample items of the scale are “There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone” and “I like to gossip at times” (see Appendix F for the scale).

**Demographic Questionnaire.** A demographic questionnaire was used to request participants to report their age, sex, college major, and ethnicity (see Appendix G).

**Data Analysis**

The data analysis focused on the development and validation of the Sense of Purpose Inventory. Data were collected online through survey monkey. The data file was imported
directly into SPSS. Descriptive statistics were calculated first. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s factor structure. Coefficient alpha was obtained to determine whether the Sense of Purpose Inventory scores had adequate internal consistency. For the establishment of construct validity, both convergent and discriminant validation are required (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). One of the most effective methods to do so is to present a multitrait–multimethod matrix that represents all of the intercorrelations resulting when several traits are measured by several methods (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). For this study, I assessed relationship between multiple traits and used a single method (self-report measures). For convergent validity, I assessed the relationship between the traits – purpose, meaning, and compassion. And for discriminant validity, I assessed the relationship between the traits – purpose, religiosity, and masculine behavior. The matrix of these multiple traits intercorrelations is presented in next chapter. Lastly, the correlation coefficient between respondents’ total score on Sense of Purpose Inventory and Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Social Desirability Scale was calculated to investigate the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scores susceptibility to socially desirable responding behavior. The next chapter presents the results of the study.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Data were collected online through survey monkey. The survey-link was sent by email to 1052 undergraduate students in two universities. A total of 450 students participated to some extent in the study, but only 67% of them completed the questionnaire. Those who did not complete the questionnaire were not included in the study. The total number of participants for this study is 302. The response rate was 29% of those who were invited to participate. The participants’ ages ranged from 18 to 28 years. Their mean age was 21.5 years. 72% of respondents were females. A majority (73%) of the participants indicated they were White. Of participants, 2% were American Indian, 11% were Asian, 9% were Black, 8% were Hispanic, 3% were multiracial, and 4% chose other race. The participants’ majors were diverse including communications, psychology, criminology, health policy, kinesiology, sciences, and so on.

Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Factor Structure

One of the aims of this study was to explore the factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory. I used exploratory principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation to examine the instrument’s factor structure. According to Thompson (2004) when the aim of a study is scale development, principal axis factoring is preferred as the factor extraction method because it produces more reliable results. Also, varimax rotation method was used because through maximizing the variance of the structure coefficients for each factor, it yields simple structure in most EFA studies where the factors are uncorrelated (Thompson, 2004). To decide the inventory’s factor structure, apart from examining the eigenvalues and scree plot, the criteria of each factor’s “conceptual interpretability” (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006, p. 822) was used. Through using this criterion, I aimed to retain only those factors that can be interpreted in a meaningful way. The criteria used to determine item retention, consisted of identifying a
minimum item-factor loading (in this study, the criterion was loadings ≥ .35) and items’ content validity.

In the first EFA, five factors emerged with eigenvalues over 1.0, which explained 53% of the total variance. However, the fifth factor just had two items, indicating that too many factors were extracted initially. The first EFA was also used to determine item retention. Upon analyzing the factor loadings of all items, item 29, which had factor loading below .35 across all five factors, was removed. This process yielded 29 items for further examination. Next, I executed EFA with forced four-factor solution, which yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. In the four-factor solution, the third rotated factor consisted of all negatively worded items and lacked conceptual clarity. Also, the fourth factor had only two items with substantial loadings. Thus, too many factors were extracted and therefore I executed EFA with forced three-factor solution. In the three-factor solution, the third factor consisted of all negatively worded items. Two of these items (items 26 and 9) upon second review, lacked content validity and were thus deleted. After deleting these two items, I again performed EFA that yielded three conceptually clear factors. Figure 2 presents the scree plot, which represents eigenvalues of the correlation matrix. The percentage of total variance (post-rotation) for the three factors was 19.45%, 19.36%, and 9.29% respectively. The proportion of total variance explained by these three factors together was 48%. 
Figure 2. Scree Plot (Eigen Values of Full Correlation Matrix)

As shown in Table 2, among 27 items, nine items loaded on Factor 1 labelled Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others. Three items (items 13, 14, and 4) had loadings above .4 in both Factor 1 and Factor 2. These three items reflected clarity regarding one’s sense of purpose and conceptually aligned with items on factor two. Thus, they empirically and theoretically belong to factor two. A total of thirteen items hence loaded on Factor 2 labelled Awareness of One’s Purpose. Finally, five items loaded on Factor 3 labelled Awakening to One’s Purpose.

Table 2

Factor Pattern Matrix: Varimax Rotated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I seek to serve society in many ways, large and small.</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I am engaged in activities to help others.</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am striving to make a positive difference in society.</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Through my career I aim to make the world a better place. & 0.61 & 0.17 & 0.26  
27. My current pursuits will help me to contribute to society. & 0.61 & 0.33 & 0.20  
30. I make efforts to promote other people’s wellbeing. & 0.60 & 0.20 & 0.22  
21. I have often volunteered to contribute to well-being of others. & 0.56 & 0.07 & 0.12  
15. I seek to learn so that I can help others. & 0.53 & 0.21 & 0.33  
13. My current aims match with my future aspirations. & 0.53 & 0.45 & 0.21  
14. My current activities have helped me to develop clear aims. & 0.51 & 0.48 & 0.08  
4. I am moving towards fulfillment of my life’s purpose. & 0.50 & 0.45 & 0.23  
18. My goals extend beyond benefits for myself. & 0.46 & 0.28 & 0.42  
7. I have no idea where my life is going. & 0.06 & 0.83 & 0.06  
22. I feel aimless. & 0.07 & 0.75 & 0.24  
28. I can describe my life’s purpose. & 0.38 & 0.69 & 0.02  
25. I feel confident about my life’s purpose. & 0.45 & 0.66 & 0.03  
1. My purpose in life is clear. & 0.41 & 0.66 & 0.06  
19. My life lacks purpose. & 0.09 & 0.64 & 0.34  
16. I do not see any purpose in what I am doing. & 0.07 & 0.61 & 0.39  
11. I have become more certain about my future goals. & 0.39 & 0.60 & 0.02  
10. The important decisions I make are in line with my purpose. & 0.45 & 0.46 & 0.19  
8. Recent experiences made me aware of my purpose. & 0.31 & 0.36 & 0.12  
20. I have started thinking about what I truly want to achieve. & 0.20 & 0.11 & 0.65  
17. I have become interested in searching for my purpose in life. & 0.27 & -0.11 & 0.53  
2. I have begun to contemplate what I ultimately wish to achieve. & 0.24 & 0.12 & 0.52  
23. I am not interested in searching for purpose in life. & 0.02 & 0.17 & 0.47  
5. I am in the process of formulating my long-term goals. & 0.25 & 0.22 & 0.47  

| % of Total Variance (post-rotation) | 19.45 | 19.36 | 9.29 |
The revised instrument now consists of 27 items with three scales: desire to contribute to wellbeing of others, awareness of one’s purpose, and awakening to one’s purpose (see Appendix H). The responses for these items are made on 5 point Likert type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Following sections illustrate the internal consistency reliability and construct validity for the revised scales of the inventory.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Internal Consistency Reliability**

The alpha value for the overall Sense of Purpose Inventory (27 items) was .93. The alpha values for Awareness of Purpose scale (13 items) was .92, for Awakening to One’s Purpose scale (5 items) was .73, and for Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others scale (9 items) was .89. These values provide evidence for adequate internal consistency for the Sense of Purpose Inventory and each of the three scales.

Apart from computing the alpha values for the inventory and each of its scales, the item-total correlations were also computed to identify if there are any items that are inconsistent and can be deleted. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggested that item-total correlation should be at least .3 for an item to be included. In this study, all 27 items had item-total correlations above .3 and thus none of the items was deleted.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Convergent Validity**

The convergent validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory was explored by examining the correlations between the scores from the Sense of Purpose Inventory and instruments that measured other related constructs. The matrix of correlations is presented in Table 3.

To demonstrate the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s convergent validity, I investigated the relationship between the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s three scales (awareness of one’s purpose, awakening to one’s purpose, and desire to contribute to the wellbeing of others) and other scales
that measure similar constructs (presence of meaning, search for meaning, and compassion for humanity). As predicted, the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awareness of One’s Purpose is correlated with the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Presence of Meaning ($r = .86$, CI = .83 to .89). The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awakening to One’s Purpose correlated with the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Search for Meaning ($r = .50$, CI = .41 to .58). Finally, the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others correlated with the Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale ($r = .53$, CI = .44 to .61). Apart from computing the correlations, I also calculated estimates of the true score correlation between the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scales and the measurements of similar constructs. The estimated true score correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Awareness of One’s Purpose scale and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Presence of Meaning was 0.94. The estimated true score correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Awakening to One’s Purpose scale and the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Search for Meaning was 0.63. The estimated true score correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others and the Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale was 0.59. These results indicate high correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory and similar constructs, thus providing preliminary evidence of the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s convergent validity.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Discriminant Validity**

The discriminant validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory was explored by examining the correlations between the scores from the Sense of Purpose Inventory and instruments that measured unrelated constructs. The matrix of correlations is presented in Table 3.
To demonstrate the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s discriminant validity, I explored the degree to which the inventory is unrelated with the measures that are not associated with the construct purpose such as extrinsic religiosity and masculine behavior. As predicted, the Sense of Purpose Inventory had non-significant correlations with the Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale and the Masculine Behavior Scale. The correlation value between Sense of Purpose Inventory and Extrinsic Religious Orientation Subscale was significantly lower than correlation values between the inventory and other related scales ($r = .05, CI = -.06$ to $.14$). The correlation between Sense of Purpose Inventory and Masculine Behavior Scale was significantly lower than the correlation values between the inventory and other related scales ($r = -.09, CI = -.20$ to $.02$).

In addition to computing correlations, I also calculated estimates of the true score correlation between the Sense of Purpose Inventory and the measurements of dissimilar constructs. The estimated true score correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory and the Extrinsic Religious Orientation Subscale was $0.05$. The estimated true score correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory and the Masculine Behavior Scale was $-0.09$. These results provide preliminary evidence for the inventory’s discriminant validity.
Table 3

**Correlations Between Sense of Purpose Inventory Scales and Other Instruments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sense of Purpose Inventory</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Awareness of one’s purpose Subscale</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Awakening to one’s purpose Subscale</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Desire to contribute to wellbeing of others Subscale</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. MLQ Presence of Meaning Subscale</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MLQ Search for Meaning Subscale</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Extrinsic Religious Orientation Subscale</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Masculine Behavior Scale</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Social Desirability Scale</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sense of Purpose Inventory and Social Desirability Scale**

Table 3 indicates a significant but low correlation ($r = .15$, CI = .04 to .26) between the Sense of Purpose Inventory total score and the Social Desirability Scale. Apart from computing the correlation, I calculated estimates of the true score correlation between the Sense of Purpose Inventory and the Social Desirability Scale. The estimated true score correlations between Sense of Purpose Inventory and the Social Desirability Scale was 0.32. I also computed the correlations between the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s each item and the total score on the Social Desirability Scale. These correlations ranged from .01 to .18, which indicates that no item responses were even moderately correlated with Social Desirability Scale. This supports the evidence for Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scores’ sufficient independence from Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale.
The purpose of this study was to further develop an instrument to measure the construct purpose and examine the instrument’s psychometric properties. There have been several attempts to design instruments to measure the construct purpose before. But these instruments are confounded with several variables that muddle the measurement of the construct. Some of these limitations are (a) the current instruments are unidimensional in nature when the construct itself is multidimensional; (b) they lack items that focus on respondents’ desire to contribute to society, which is an important dimension of the recent and most widely used definition of purpose; (c) items are time-insensitive, which makes it difficult to assess changes in people’s sense of purpose over time (Scheier et al., 2006); (d) they are confounded with items that measure other constructs such as meaning (Steger et al., 2006); (e) they lack psychometric evidence on their utility with people belonging to different age-groups.

According to Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003), purpose can be defined as “a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to world beyond the self” (p. 121). Based on this definition, in an earlier study, my colleague and I constructed an instrument titled the Sense of Purpose Inventory to measure the construct purpose (Sharma & Kang, 2013). The Sense of Purpose Inventory addresses above-mentioned limitations and has several desirable properties. The focus of current study was to revise the Sense of Purpose Inventory and examine its factor structure, internal consistency reliability, construct validity, and the relationship with an instrument that measures socially desirable behavior.
Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Factor Structure

The first research question of this study focused on exploring whether the three-factor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory found in the earlier study (Sharma & Kang, 2013) also emerge in the sample used in the current study. Exploratory principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was utilized to explore the inventory’s factor structure. The decision regarding the number of factors to retain was based on the eigenvalues, scree test, and each factor’s “conceptual interpretability” (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006, p. 822). Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were considered.

In the first EFA, five factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. However the fifth factor just had two items, indicating that too many factors were extracted initially. The next EFA yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 but the fourth factor had only two items with substantial loadings. Thus, again too many factors were extracted. In the final analysis the three factor solution was considered the most conceptually clear, empirically sound, and interpretable. These three factors resonated with the dimensions that Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) concentrated on while defining the construct *purpose*. These dimensions as illustrated in the literature review are clarity about one’s far-reaching goal, desire to make a difference in the world, and making progress towards awakening to and fulfilling of one’s purpose.

The Final 3-Factor Solution

The results from the exploratory factor analysis suggested a three-factor model. The final analysis included 27 items (see Appendix H). The percentage of total variance (post-rotation) for the three factors was 19.45%, 19.36%, and 9.29% respectively. The proportion of total variance explained by these three factors together was 48%. The first factor labelled as Desire to
Contribute to Wellbeing of Others consisted of nine items. The second factor labelled Awareness of One’s Purpose consisted of thirteen items. The third factor labelled Awakening to One’s Purpose consisted of five items. The multifactor structure of the Sense of Purpose Inventory is an important contribution to literature as one of the limitations of other existing measures of the construct purpose is their one-dimensional nature when the construct itself is multidimensional.

**Factor # 1 (Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others)**

As shown in Table 2, nine items loaded on Factor 1 labelled Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others. This factor explained the largest proportion of total variance. The items on this scale focus on one’s altruistic aspirations and desire to make a difference in the world. Various scholars have included the desire to contribute to greater good in the definition of purpose (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003; Hill, Burrow, & Thornton, 2010; Staples & Troutman, 2010). But the current instruments that measure people’s purpose in life do not have items that focus on respondents’ desire to contribute to greater good. Moreover, several researchers have found that people with altruistic purpose report greater presence of meaning in life, efforts to work hard, motivation, persistence, and life satisfaction (Bronk & Holmes Finch, 2010; Leppel, 2005; Reilly, 2009; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Therefore, it is important to support people in developing a sense of purpose that focuses on desire to contribute to the matters beyond self. The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s multifactor structure supports inclusion of items that focus on one’s desire to contribute to society. It can thus be used to assess one’s sense of purpose comprehensively and also evaluate the effectiveness of interventions that specifically focus on inspiring people to develop altruistic long-term aspirations.
Factor # 2 (Awareness of One’s Purpose)

The second factor consists of thirteen items and is labelled as Awareness of One’s Purpose. This factor explained 19.36% of total variance – almost as much as the first factor. The items on this scale were designed to assess the presence or absence of sense of purpose in people’s life. Some of the items are “my purpose in life is clear,” “I feel aimless,” “I can describe my life’s purpose” and so on. Most of the current instruments such as Purpose in Life Test (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964) consist of similar items as in Factor 2 of the Sense of Purpose Inventory. However, these instruments are critiqued for its confounding with variables unrelated to purpose in life (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s items are univocal, not confounded with other variables, and informed by a clear conceptualization and definition of the construct.

Factor # 3 (Awakening to One’s Purpose)

The third factor consists of five items and is labelled Awakening to One’s Purpose. This factor explained 9.29% of total variance. The items on this scale have stems such as “I have started”, “I have become interested”, and “I am in the process of”, which suggest one’s awakening to one’s purpose in life. One of the major limitations of the current instruments that measure the construct purpose is that they either focus on absolute presence or absolute absence of purpose in life. The items on current instruments are not time-sensitive and do not measure recent changes in one’s sense of purpose (Scheier et al., 2006). This limits the use of these instruments to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions implemented to increase people’s sense of purpose. The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s third factor includes items that assess the process of awakening to one’s purpose or recent increase in someone’s sense of purpose is extremely valuable to assess the effectiveness of interventions. And thus has the potential to encourage
further experimental studies focusing on implementing and measuring the efficacy of interventions that can enhance people’s sense of purpose.

Overall, the results of this study supported the same factor structure for the Sense of Purpose Inventory as was found in previous study with different sample (Sharma & Kang, 2013). In the future, a confirmatory factor analysis study is needed to assess if the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s structure is consistent with the theoretical conceptualization of the construct purpose.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Internal Consistency Reliability**

The second research question focused on the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s internal consistency reliability. For establishing a psychometrically sound scale, reliability is considered an important requirement. Following exploratory analysis, the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s internal consistency was explored.

The overall inventory demonstrated adequate reliability with .93 as the alpha coefficient. In addition, each factor-based scale scored from the Sense of Purpose Inventory displayed satisfactory reliability with alpha levels ranging from .73 to .92. The alpha values for Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others scale was .89, for Awareness of Purpose scale was .92, and for Awakening to One’s Purpose scale was .73.

The alpha value for the third scale (Awakening to One’s Purpose), although adequate (.73), might have been lower than other scales due to several reasons. First, awakening to purpose being a process is difficult to quantify and thus is relatively more challenging to measure than awareness of purpose. Second, regarding awakening to one’s purpose, people can be in various stages and thus it is a more difficult construct to measure than a construct that follows linear process. Third, the Awakening to One’s Purpose scale had smaller number of items (5 items) than other scales and perhaps therefore lower reliability.
Overall, the Sense of Purpose Inventory demonstrates adequate internal consistency. The high alpha for all of the inventory’s items scored as an overall scale implies that all of the items on the inventory measure the same latent variable, which is sense of purpose. Also, all three scales of the inventory demonstrated sufficient internal consistency, which suggests that the scores on the similar items of each of the three scales are related as well as each scale contributes unique information. Hence, the acceptable alpha values together with sufficient independence of each scale from each other permits researchers and counselors to attend to them separately.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Convergent Validity**

The third research question of this study concentrated on establishing the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s convergent validity. Psychological constructs such as purpose, are not directly observable, and in order to assess the validity of their measures, it is important to show how the measure relates to measures of other constructs (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). For establishing an instrument’s construct validity, evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity should be demonstrated. According to Campbell and Fiske (1959) convergent validity is established through exploring the degree to which a scale is related to other measures of the same construct. In this study, I explored the correlation between the inventory’s three scales (awareness of one’s purpose, awakening to one’s purpose, and desire to contribute to wellbeing of others) with other self-report measures of the similar constructs (presence of meaning in life, search for meaning in life, and compassion). It was found in this study that all three factors of the Sense of Purpose Inventory had statistically significant correlations (Table 3) with related constructs and hence exhibited preliminary support for convergent validity.

The Sense of Purpose Inventory is based on the definition on purpose provided by Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) who included desire to make a difference in the world as an
important dimension of purpose. Therefore, the inventory has several items that focus on one’s
desire to make a difference in the world, which requires people to have a spirit of altruism and
feeling of compassion. I chose an instrument that measured the construct compassion to
demonstrate the convergent validity of the inventory’s scale titled Desire to Contribute to Society. A significant correlation between the scores of the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Scale titled Desire to Contribute to Society and the Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale \((r = .53)\) supported the evidence of convergent validity. This also reinforced the findings of the studies
that show that people with strong sense of purpose reported more generosity and empathy than
others (Mariano & Savage, 2009). Furthermore, the correlation between the two instruments is
not too high, which indicates that the Sense of Purpose Inventory scale that measures one’s
desire to contribute to society and the instrument that measures compassion are sufficiently
independent of each other and measure conceptually related but different constructs.

The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awareness of One’s Purpose significantly
correlated with the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Presence of Meaning \((r = .86)\),
which supports the evidence for the inventory’s convergent validity. The reason that this
correlation might be much higher than others is because three out of five items in the Meaning of
Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Presence of Meaning focused on awareness about one’s
purpose such as “My life has a clear sense of purpose”, “I have discovered a satisfying life
purpose”, and “My life has no clear purpose”. However, even if because of similar items the
correlation between these two measurements is high, Awareness of One’s Purpose and Presence
of Meaning are different constructs. According to Reker, Peacock, and Wong (1987), the key
difference between the constructs purpose and meaning is that meaning refers to making sense of
one’s existence but purpose denotes a function to be fulfilled.
Finally, the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scale titled Awakening to One’s Purpose significantly correlated with the Meaning in Life Questionnaire’s dimension of Search for Meaning ($r = .50$), which also supports the evidence for inventory’s convergent validity. According to Damon, Menon and Bronk (2003) purpose is a part of one’s search for meaning. Myers and Sweeney (2008) suggested that meaning-making encompasses goals and personal direction. Perhaps, therefore the constructs awakening to one’s purpose and search for meaning are related and the correlation between their measurements is statistically significant. Another reason for significant correlation might be that two out of five items on the Search for Meaning Scale (‘I am always looking to find my life’s purpose’ and ‘I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life’) were similar to the items on Awakening to One’s Purpose Scale. Also, the correlation is not too high which supports the empirical evidence that the constructs meaning and purpose are conceptually different.

Overall, the above-mentioned pattern of convergent correlations is consistent with the conceptualization of purpose as a far-reaching goal that encompasses the desire to make a difference in the world and contribute to matters larger than the self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). And these correlations supported the evidence for the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s convergent validity, which is an important psychometric requirement in developing a sound instrument.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Discriminant Validity**

The fourth research question of this study concentrated on establishing the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s discriminant validity. According to Campbell and Fiske (1959) discriminant validity can be established through exploring the degree to which an instrument is unrelated with the measures that are not associated with the same construct. To establish
discriminant validity of the Sense of Purpose Inventory, it was important to demonstrate that the self-report scores on the inventory correlated more highly with self-reports on other measures of the same construct purpose than with self-reports on unrelated constructs. In this study, I explored the correlations between the scores on Sense of Purpose Inventory and the measures of two different constructs: religiosity and masculine behavior. These correlations supported the evidence for inventory’s discriminant validity.

The Sense of Purpose Inventory had a small non-significant correlation with the Extrinsic Religious Orientation Sub-Scale (r = .05). The low correlation between sense of purpose and extrinsic religiosity is evidence of discriminant validity, because they both are different constructs. Extrinsic religiosity describes the component of religiousness that is concerned with instrumental and utilitarian values (Allport & Ross, 1967). Whereas, sense of purpose is one of the dimension of intrinsic spiritual values that focus on a personal commitment to a larger goal that encompasses the good of the social order (Speck, 2005). The low correlation between measurements of purpose and extrinsic religiosity confirm the findings of empirical studies that state spirituality with or without religiosity may provide people a path to purpose (Tirri & Quinn, 2010). This study supports the supposition that people with low extrinsic religiosity can also have high sense of purpose. As well as, people’s sense of purpose can vary irrespective of their religious affiliation.

The Sense of Purpose Inventory also had small non-significant correlation with the Masculine Behavior Scale (r = -.09). The low correlation supports the postulation that sense of purpose and masculine behavior are distinct constructs. Masculine behavior is usually defined in terms of the personality attributes, goals, lifestyles, preferences, ambitions, and behavioral tendencies that are stereotypically attributed more often to males than females (Snell, 1989).
Sense of purpose conversely has not been associated more with either males or females. Thus, the low correlation between the measurements of masculine behavior and sense of purpose supports the assumption that people’s sense of purpose can vary irrespective of whether they are males or females. However, in this study 72% of respondents were females, which raise questions about how well masculinity is represented in the sample. In future, more studies to explore the variations in one’s sense of purpose based on their gender may be helpful.

Overall, the above-mentioned correlations were considerably lower than the correlation values between the inventory and other related scales and hence exhibited preliminary support for discriminant validity. Apart from supporting the discriminant validity for the inventory, which is an important psychometric requirement in developing a sound instrument, these correlations also provided the evidence that sense of purpose can vary among people irrespective of their religion and gender.

**Sense of Purpose Inventory’s Relationship with Social Desirability Scale**

The last research question of this study explored if the Sense of Purpose Inventory is sufficiently independent of Strahan and Gerbasi’s (1972) shortened version of Marlow-Crowne (1960) Social Desirability Scale. The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s correlation with Social Desirability Scale was significant but low ($r = .15$).

The correlation is perhaps significant because those who value responding in socially desirable manner might value having high sense of purpose through which not only can they live a meaningful life but also contribute to the matters beyond self. Another reason for significant correlation can be that despite the assurances of anonymity and confidentiality when administering the survey; factors such as setting in which the participant took the survey could
have impacted the honesty of responses and thus, the results may be influenced by biases associated with social desirability.

The low correlation between the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s overall score and the Social Desirability Scale total score as well as between the Sense of Purpose Inventory’s each item score and the Social Desirability Scale total score support the evidence that the Sense of Purpose Inventory is not unjustifiably susceptible to socially desirable responding. The low correlation indicates that Sense of Purpose Inventory’s scores’ are sufficiently independent from the scores on Social Desirability Scale and not associated with impression management. Therefore, it appears that responding to the Sense of Purpose Inventory is not unduly confounded with responses designed to make a socially acceptable and positive impression on others. This result also supports the evidence for Sense of Purpose Inventory’s discriminant validity.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

The present study offers a new measure of the construct *purpose* with a number of strengths. First and foremost, the Sense of Purpose Inventory is the first multidimensional instrument that measures the construct *purpose*. It is based on a comprehensive and clear definition that conceptualizes purpose as a far-reaching goal that is a part of personal search for meaning, is directed at an accomplishment towards which one makes progress, and encompasses the desire to contribute to society (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). The inventory’s items are related to all these dimensions of purpose especially the dimension of altruism which previous measures have not included.

Also, the inventory has items that are time-sensitive and can measure changes in one’s sense of purpose over-time. Thus, the inventory can be used to measure the effectiveness of an intervention by evaluating pre-intervention and post-intervention scores. This makes the
inventory valuable for advancing research and practice related to implementing interventions that can enhance people’s sense of purpose. Dik et al (2011), upon conducting a study to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention; concluded that people’s sense of purpose might develop more gradually than would be detected with current surveys. Thus, implying a need for an instrument that instead of measuring only the absence or presence of purpose in people’s lives, can measure the recent changes in the ways people start awakening to their purpose in life. The Sense of Purpose Inventory has items that are time-sensitive and can potentially measure the post-intervention changes in one’s sense of purpose.

Additionally, the items are independent of any specific religious persuasion and age-group. Though, the inventory’s multicultural validity is not yet evaluated, the items content do not appear to be culturally-biased. The items are also univocal, short, easy to comprehend, and reasonably homogenous.

The results of this study indicate a conceptually and empirically sound factor structure of the inventory and have also supported evidence for inventory’s internal consistency reliability and construct validity. This suggests that the Sense of Purpose Inventory a valuable instrument for further research and practice with persons from different cultural groups.

Nevertheless, the results of this study should be interpreted with consideration of some limitations. First, only self-report measures were used, which could have resulted in bias in responses. Moreover, examining convergent validity with a wider variety of methods such as collecting report-measures from participants’ significant others is considered more helpful.

Second, the sample was relatively homogenous, including predominately European American college students (73%). This means that the generalizability of the current findings to populations representing wider age-group age and racial diversity remains largely unexplored.
Additional limitations are related to disadvantages associated with using online survey. Although, an online survey enabled me to contact a large number of undergraduate students in two universities, the disadvantages to the online survey was large number of incomplete surveys and low response rate (29%).

**Implications for Research and Practice**

The results of this study provide a psychometrically sound instrument to measure the construct *purpose* that has the potential to be used in research and clinical settings. The Sense of Purpose Inventory was developed with the hope of understanding and assessing the construct purpose to reduce literature gap and also implement therapeutic interventions that can strengthen individuals’ sense of purpose.

**Future Research**

There are multiple new areas of research that the development of Sense of Purpose Inventory can aid. First, even if this study supports the evidence that Sense of Purpose Inventory is a psychometrically acceptable measure of the construct *purpose*, further assessments of the inventory’s psychometric properties are needed. Especially, future research is needed to investigate and confirm the factor structure of Sense of Purpose Inventory using Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Additionally, a more diverse sample in terms of gender, age-group and ethnic background is recommended when exploring the item-loadings of each of the factors of the inventory. A more diverse sample will enable further examination of the generalizability of the Sense of Purpose Inventory.

Another important direction for future research is to explore the possibility of gender, socio-economic, education, and ethnic differences in relation to the Sense of Purpose Inventory. Damon (2008) explained that purpose is both an individual as well as social phenomenon. Sense
of Purpose Inventory can assist in identifying the environmental variables that contribute to development of purpose.

From a developmental perspective, it would be interesting to conduct cross-sectional studies to examine the Sense of Purpose Inventory scores across different age groups and what kind of environments support strong purpose in life. Identity development theorists suggest that formation of identity during adolescence and young adulthood can enhance one’s sense of purpose (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009). It would be pertinent to see whether this holds true empirically. Having an instrument that measures sense of purpose comprehensively without confounding with other constructs and has sound psychometric properties allows a more accurate analysis to support such cross-sectional studies.

As of now, research has demonstrated that a strong purpose in life positively affects people’s motivation to learn, commitment to fulfilling one’s goals, contentment, hope, and life satisfaction (e.g. Bronk, 2008; Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib & Finch, 2009; Conner, Daugherty, & Gilmore, 2012; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). The Sense of Purpose Inventory has the potential to be used for conducting longitudinal studies that can demonstrate the long-term role of purpose in people’s lives. Such longitudinal studies may lead to a greater understanding of the links between sense of purpose and other health variables. They can also further examine the criterion-related validity of Sense of Purpose Inventory.

Based on the positive role that purpose plays in people’s wellbeing, it appears useful for counselors and educators to understand the internal and environmental variables that can support development of purpose in life. However, there is minimal research on the interventions that can strengthen individuals’ sense of purpose (Steger, 2009). It will therefore be important to conduct several experimental studies to test the efficacy of interventions that are hypothesized to enhance
people’s sense of purpose. The current instruments that measure the construct purpose either focus on absolute presence or absence of purpose in life. This limits their use in assessing the effectiveness of interventions that might strengthen people’s sense of purpose. The Sense of Purpose Inventory’s third scale labelled Awakening to One’s Purpose has items that focus on the recent increase in someone’s sense of purpose. It can thus be useful in evaluating the efficacy of the interventions by measuring recent changes in one’s sense of purpose. This will further contribute to the literature on interventions that can enhance people’s sense of purpose.

Lastly, the development and validation of the Sense of Purpose Inventory do not answer all questions related to the construct purpose. Future mixed methods research, using the Sense of Purpose Inventory as an index of purpose in life, should endeavor to identify the meaning, role, and development of purpose in people’s life.

Clinical Applications

In clinical settings, the Sense of Purpose Inventory can be used to assess links between clients’ sense of purpose and other aspects of wellness. As of now, there have been several empirical studies to demonstrate the role of purpose in people’s lives. For instance, Wang et al (2007) reported that strong sense of purpose plays a protective role against suicidal ideation. Pinquart, Silbereisen, and Fröhlich (2009) found that higher purpose in life is associated with high importance of social, psychological, and health-related goals among cancer patients. Bronk et al (2009) demonstrated that high sense of purpose contributes to greater life satisfaction, consistent presence of hope, contentment, and motivation. The Sense of Purpose Inventory can be used to conduct more correlational studies in clinical settings to identify the ways in which having a sense of purpose contributes to people’s wellbeing.
Given the important role that purpose plays in people’s lives, it is important for therapists to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions that can enhance clients’ sense of purpose. Due to its focus on recent developments and one’s current status in terms of sense of purpose, the Sense of Purpose Inventory should be useful in evaluations of the efficacy of interventions.

Lastly, few scholars in the profession of counseling have focused on the role of career counseling and psychotherapy in enhancing clients’ sense of purpose (Kosine, Steger, & Duncan, 2008; Savickas, et al., 2009). The Sense of Purpose Inventory can aid in comparing the longitudinal change scores between those undergoing counseling and a control group. This would further help in understanding the efficacy of counseling interventions in supporting people’s sense of purpose.

Overall, the results of the current study support the validation of the Sense of Purpose Inventory as an assessment instrument useful for engaging in a research line related to the construct purpose. The inventory can further encourage scholars, educators, and counselors to implement and evaluate therapeutic interventions that can strengthen people’s sense of purpose. The Sense of Purpose Inventory may hence prove to be a valuable instrument for both researchers and counselors who aspire to understand and promote the development of purpose in people’s lives.
References


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http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09534810410511288

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540260124661.


### Appendix A

### Sense of Purpose Inventory

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree with each statement.

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>My purpose in life is clear.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>I have begun to contemplate what I ultimately wish to achieve.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>I am moving towards fulfillment of my life’s purpose.</td>
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<td>Recent experiences made me aware of my purpose.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>My life’s purpose has nothing to do with common good.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>My current activities have helped me to develop clear aims.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>I do not see any purpose in what I am doing.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>I have become interested in searching for my purpose in life.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>I have started thinking about what I truly want to achieve.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>I feel aimless.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>I am not interested in searching for purpose in life.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>I feel confident about my life’s purpose.</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>I don’t think of purpose in life.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>My current pursuits will help me to contribute to society.</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>I can describe my life’s purpose.</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>I have become concerned about how I can contribute to society.</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>I make efforts to promote other people’s wellbeing.</td>
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Appendix B

Meaning in Life Questionnaire

Please take a moment to think about what makes your life important to you. Please respond to the following statements as truthfully and accurately as you can, and also please remember that these are very subjective questions and there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer according to the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolutely True</th>
<th>Mostly True</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Can’t Say True or False</th>
<th>Somewhat True</th>
<th>Mostly True</th>
<th>Absolutely True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ____ I understand my life’s meaning.

2. ____ I am looking for something that makes my life feel meaningful.

3. ____ I am always looking to find my life’s purpose.

4. ____ My life has a clear sense of purpose.

5. ____ I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.

6. ____ I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.

7. ____ I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.

8. ____ I am seeking a purpose or mission for my life.

9. ____ My life has no clear purpose.

10. ____ I am searching for meaning in my life.

Presence: 1,4,5,6,9-reverse coded
Search: 2,3,7,8,10
Appendix C

Santa Clara Brief Compassion Scale

Please answer the following questions honestly and quickly using the scale below:

1                        2                       3                        4                       5                       6                        7
not at all true of me                                                                                                    very true of me

_____ 1. When I hear about someone (a stranger) going through a difficult time, I feel a great deal of compassion for him or her.

_____ 2. I tend to feel compassion for people, even though I do not know them.

_____ 3. One of the activities that provide me with the most meaning to my life is helping others in the world when they need help.

_____ 4. I would rather engage in actions that help others, even though they are strangers, than engage in actions that would help me.

_____ 5. I often have tender feelings toward people (strangers) when they seem to be in need
Appendix D

Extrinsic Religiosity-Revised Scale

Please respond to the following statements according to the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Tend to Disagree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Tend to Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. _____ I go to church because it helps me to make friends.
2. _____ I pray mainly to gain relief and protection.
3. _____ What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.
4. _____ Prayer is for peace and happiness.
5. _____ I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends.
6. _____ I go to church mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there.
Appendix E

Masculine Behavior Scale

The items listed below inquire about some of your attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. As such, there is no right or wrong answer, only your responses. For each item you will be asked to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement listed in that item. Use the following scale to indicate your degree of agreement/disagreement with each item:

A = Agree.
B = Slightly agree.
C = Neither agree nor disagree.
D = Slightly disagree.
E = Disagree.

1. I spend a great deal of my time pursuing a highly successful career.
2. I don't usually discuss my feelings and emotions with others.
3. I don't devote much time to intimate relationships.
4. I try to be in control of everything in my life.
5. I am very ambitious in the pursuit of a success-oriented career.
6. I am not the type of person to self-disclose about my emotions.
7. I don't involve myself too deeply in loving, tender relationships.
8. I make sure that I "call all the shots" in my life.
9. I devote extensive time and effort to the pursuit of a professional career.
10. I don't often talk to others about my emotional reactions to things.
11. I don't become very close to others in an intimate way.
12. I don't take orders (or advice) from anybody.
13. I do whatever I have to in order to work toward job success.
14. In general, I avoid discussions dealing with my feelings and emotions.
15. I don't often tell others about my feelings of love and affection for them.
16. I don't let others tell me what to do with my life.
17. I work hard at trying to ensure myself of a successful career.
18. I don't often admit that I have emotional feelings.
19. I tend to avoid being in really close, intimate relationships.
20. I don't allow others to have control over my life.
Appendix F

Social Desirability Scale

Please State True or False for following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like to gossip at times.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I always try to practice what I preach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget</td>
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<tr>
<td>At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I never resent being asked to return a favor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.</td>
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Appendix G

Demographic Questionnaire

Please share the following information:

Age:

Sex:

______ Male  ______ Female

College Major:

Ethnic Identification (please check all that apply):

American Indian/Alaskan Native
Asian/Pacific Islander
Black
Hispanic
White
Multiracial
Other
Appendix H

Sense of Purpose Inventory (Revised)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My purpose in life is clear.</td>
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<td>3. I am striving to make a positive difference in society.</td>
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<td>4. I am moving towards fulfillment of my life’s purpose.</td>
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<td>5. I am in the process of formulating my long-term goals.</td>
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<td>6. Through my career I aim to make the world a better place.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. My current aims match with my future aspirations.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>13. My current activities have helped me to develop clear aims.</td>
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<td>15. I do not see any purpose in what I am doing.</td>
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<td>18. My life lacks purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. I have started thinking about what I truly want to achieve.</td>
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<td>22. I am not interested in searching for purpose in life.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I can describe my life’s purpose.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I make efforts to promote other people’s wellbeing.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sense of Purpose Inventory Syntax:
Awareness of One’s Purpose Scale: 1, 4, 7 (reverse coded), 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15 (rev.), 18 (rev.), 21 (rev.), 24, 26
Awareness to One’s Purpose Scale: 2, 5, 16, 19, 22 (rev.)
Desire to Contribute to Wellbeing of Others Scale: 3, 6, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25, 27

Scoring:
After reversing appropriate items, sum scores, transform to z scores, then transform to T scores.
Appendix I

Informed Consent Form

Title of Project:
Sense of Purpose Inventory Validation

Purpose of the Study:
This research is being conducted by Gitima Sharma, a doctoral student at The Pennsylvania State University. The purpose of the study is to validate a scale that was designed to measure sense of purpose.

Procedure:
The online questionnaire contains a series of items that focus on themes such as meaning, purpose, and compassion in life. You will be asked to rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these items. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes.

Potential Risks:
The main risk of participating in this research is that while you are answering questions on the survey, someone may observe your answers. Aside from this, there are no known risks.

Potential Benefits:
This research is not designed to benefit you personally. I hope that the study will produce an improved understanding of sense of purpose that may be used by counselors or psychologists in counseling interventions.

Confidentiality:
Your participation as well as your responses will be confidential, and only the researchers conducting this study will have access to the data. There is no question that asks you to provide any personally identifying information.

Right to Withdraw and Questions:
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this research, or want to stop participating at any time, there will be no negative repercussions. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Gitima Sharma at gzs148@psu.edu.

Participant Rights:
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact:
The 330 Building, Suite 205, University Park, PA 16802
Phone: 814-865-1775 • Fax: 814-863-8699

This research has been reviewed according to The Pennsylvania State University IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.
Appendix J

IRB Approval Letter

Date: March 24, 2014
From: The Office for Research Protections - FWA#: FWA00001534
       Julie A. James, Compliance Coordinator
To: Gitima Sharma
Re: Determination of Exemption

IRB Protocol ID: 45414
Follow-up Date: March 23, 2019
Title of Protocol: Sense of Purpose Inventory Validation

The Office for Research Protections (ORP) has received and reviewed the above referenced eSubmission application. It has been determined that your research is exempt from IRB initial and ongoing review, as currently described in the application. You may begin your research. The category within the federal regulations under which your research is exempt is:

45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Given that the IRB is not involved in the initial and ongoing review of this research, it is the investigator’s responsibility to review IRB Policy III “Exempt Review Process and Determination” which outlines:

- What it means to be exempt and how determinations are made
- What changes to the research protocol are and are not required to be reported to the ORP
- Ongoing actions post-exemption determination including addressing problems and complaints, reporting closed research to the ORP and research audits
- What occurs at the time of follow-up

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office for Research Protections (ORP) if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your continued efforts in protecting human participants in research.

This correspondence should be maintained with your research records.
Gitima Sharma  
Email: gzs148@psu.edu, Tel: 864-508-2139

**EDUCATION**

Ph.D., Counselor Education, The Pennsylvania State University  
2015
M.A., Counseling, Michigan State University  
2009
M.S., Child Development, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, India  
2006
B.S., Home Science, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, India  
2004

**COUNSELING EXPERIENCE**

Mental Health Therapist, Spirit of Woman, California  
Summer and Fall 2014
Career Counselor, Penn State Career Services, Pennsylvania  
Spring 2014
School Counselor, Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Maryland  
Spring 2012
School Counselor, Delhi Public International School, India  
2009-2010
College Counselor, MSU Counseling Center, Michigan State University  
Spring 2009
Community Counselor, Women Center of Greater Lansing, Michigan  
Fall 2008

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Co-Instructor, The Pennsylvania State University, Multicultural Foundations of Counseling  
Fall 2013
Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland, Counseling I: Appraisal  
Spring 2013
Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland, Counseling Theory and Practice  
Fall 2012
Teaching Assistant, University of Maryland, Group Counseling in Schools  
Fall 2012

**SCHOLARSHIP**


Sharma, G. (2012, May). The external forces in our society that have changed the counseling profession significantly in the recent past. *Counseling Today, 54*, 68-69.

**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**


