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The Meaning and Purpose in Life Among Diverse LGBTQ+ Sexual Minorities in Japan: The Revised Japanese Version of Purpose in Life Test Part A, B, and C in Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract

In a 2019 online survey (10,769 valid responses), the rate of injuring oneself intentionally with a knife was 14.2% among sexual minorities, which means L(22.8%), G(8.7%), B(35.2%), T(57.5%), X-gender 1)(47.6%), and others(20.4%)(Hidaka, 2024). In a 2022 online survey of 10,449 people, 71.5% of sexual minorities reported having seen or heard discriminatory remarks about LGBTQ+ people on social media in the previous year. This equated to 85.5% of those in their teens, 79.2% of those in their twenties, 74.8% of those in their thirties, 64.2% of those in their forties, and 58.2% of those aged fifty and over. This included L(93.4%), G(65.0%), B(12.3%), T(3.1%), X-gender(6.7%), non-binary(3.4%), and others(20.4%). These surveys suggested that almost all sexual minorities are exposed to discriminatory remarks, particularly teenagers. This might make it difficult for sexual minorities, especially teenagers, to find meaning and purpose in life (PIL).

2. Purpose In Life Test

Regarding the meaning and PIL, the PIL test developed by J.C. Crumbaugh and L.T. Maholick (1964, 1969) enables quantitative analysis of Part A (20-item 7-point scale questionnaire) but not Part B (13-item sentence completion) and C(one-item free-form response), whereas the revised Japanese version of PIL test allows quantitative analysis across Part A–C, with established reliability and validity (Okado, 2008 ; Sato et al, 2008).

However, studies that have quantitatively evaluated all sections of the instrument in sexual minority populations remain limited (Shimohashiba, 2016a, 2017b). The available evidence is based on a small sample of 23 individuals with gender identity disorder, which is insufficient for robust quantitative analysis. Furthermore, no studies have evaluated meaning and PIL among diverse LGBTQ+ individuals in Japan, and no studies have quantitatively analyzed all three parts of PIL test in global populations. Therefore, conducting a study from this



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quantitative perspective will be the first to reveal their thoughts empirically and provide psychological support, contributing to alleviating the difficulties they face in their daily lives.

II Purpose

The following collaborative surveys (Study1 and Study2) were conducted using the PIL test (Okado, 2008 ; Sato et al., 2008).

1. Study1

Study1 used participants' attributes (10 items) and PIL test Part A (20-item 7-point scale questionnaire) only to assess how LGBTQ+ individuals aged ≥ 12 years in Japan have experienced in meaning and PIL.

2. Study 2

Study2 used PIL test Part B (13-item sentence completion) and C (one-item free-form response) to evaluate the extent to which LGBTQ+ adolescents aged 12–22 years in Japan have identified state in meaning and PIL, following Study1.

The Survey was divided into two stages, in order to clarify quantitatively the meaning and PIL just only in their adolescence in the end.

III Significant Study for LGBTQ+ Individuals

Study1 and Study2 provided clinical and psychological support for LGBTQ+ individuals from the perspective of living a meaningful life in a mentally healthy state. Even if adolescents were unable to identify aims, ambitions, and goals in life, Study2 helped them find the meaning and PIL from the perspective of logotherapy proposed by V.E. Frankl.

IV Methods and Ethics

Study1 and Study2 were conducted as face-to-face surveys from March 21st, 2025 until March 31st, 2026.

1. Study1

298 out of 301 participants (mean age 37.17 ± 13.81 years) who did not achieve a perfect score and did not provide invalid responses were included in the statistical analyses ($r=0.755$). The measures included PIL test Part A (20-item 7-point scale questionnaire) and participants' attributes (10 items such as age, final academic background). A multiple regression analysis was performed with Part A scores as dependent variable.

2. Study2

15 adolescents (mean age 17.47 ± 2.80 years) who provided sufficient descriptions for Part B and C were included in the statistical analyses ($r=0.831$). The measures included PIL test Part B (13-item sentence completion) and C (one-item free-response). A paired t-test was performed comparing Part A scores of the 15 adolescent participants from Study 1 with their Part B and C scores. Furthermore, correlation analyses were performed between Part A scores and Part B and C scores.



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3. Ethics of Study1 and Study2

The study protocol was approved by the ethics review committee for medical research involving human subjects at Naruto University of Education, Tokushima, Japan, on March 21, 2025. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

V Results

1. Study1

Multiple regression analysis demonstrated statistically significant associations at the 1% level for age, lifestyle, and whether sex at birth had been changed ($R^2 = 0.15$; age: $b=0.30$, $SE=0.10$, $\beta=0.19$, $t(287)=2.90$, $p=0.004$; lifestyle: $b=2.97$, $SE=1.07$, $\beta=0.16$, $t(287)=2.79$, $p=0.006$; and sex at birth changed: $b=-8.73$, $SE=3.02$, $\beta=-0.17$, $t(287)=-2.89$, $p=0.004$).

2. Study2

A paired t-test indicated a statistically significant difference at the 0.1% level between Part A scores and Part B and C scores ($t(14) = 10.65$, $p < 0.001$). A significant positive correlation was observed between these measures ($r(13) = 0.802$, $p < 0.001$).

VI Conclusions

1. Study1

Study1 suggested that increasing age and an enriched lifestyle were associated with higher levels of meaning and PIL, and reduced feelings of existential emptiness. Conversely, having changed sex at birth was associated with lower levels of perceived meaning and PIL, and increased existential emptiness.

2. Study2

Study2 demonstrated that higher scores on Part A were associated with higher scores on Part B and C among LGBTQ+ adolescents, suggesting that greater perceived meaning and PIL is accompanied by clearer aims, ambitions, and goals, as well as greater progress toward their attainment.

Annotation

1)X-gender refers to sexual minorities who identify not as female and male, but as X in Japan.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ in Japan, Revised Japanese Version of PIL Test, The Meaning and Purpose in Life, Quantitative Analysis, Adolescence