AN EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVE DESCRIBING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' IDEAS ABOUT MEANING IN WORK: A Q-METHOD STUDY

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PREFACE

For Tolstoy, even after the publication of *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karinina* (1877), life was meaningless because he could not answer the questions of "Why?" and "What next?" Although these questions had haunted Tolstoy for several years, despair crept up on him at around the age of 50 (Tolstoy, 1884/1983). According to Carl Jung (1933), these existential questions become a major developmental focus in mid-life. Others have proposed that mid-life is a time to focus upon regeneration, transition, or establishment, while tasks for the adolescent and young adult, on the other hand, relate to identity achievement, development of intimate relationships, and career decisions (Erikson,1968; Super, 1970; Levinson, 1978; and Vaillant, 1977). As issues which provide the structure of meaning-making activities at this stage of the life span one asks, what is that meaning? How do individuals in late adolescence and early adulthood construct and describe meaning especially related to work?

From an existential perspective, meaning, which is personal and unique to the individual, is a crucial motivator of humanity (Frankl, 1959/1984). Through established values and life choices, individuals construct lives of purpose and meaning; in adulthood many choices relate to love and work (Erikson, 1950/1963). How meaning is constructed in those tasks is unique to the individual. Work can be meaningful as primarily instrumental, i.e., financial, or work may be meaningful as a mode for service to God and/or humanity.

Combining these philosophical and psychological perspectives leads to the question, can a more holistic (physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual) sense of meaning in life develop earlier than either Jung (1933) or Erikson (1968) suggest? In what way do undergraduate students, at the beginning of a life of love and work, perceive of the meaning in work? Do they understand the meaning in work as the paved way to wealth, or as a mode for making a contribution to society? Do they believe that work offers them an opportunity to join the halls of fame or does it offer meaning as spiritual connection? Do they dread the thought of work, or is it seen as an opportunity to meet a challenge, to be creative, and productive? Or do they see work as providing access to wealth that enables them to do the things they really want to do? This study was designed to access undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work.

In my doctoral studies at Oklahoma State University, the critical issue for me has been to enlarge my understanding of the nature of human nature, especially related to meaning, purpose, and motivation. What is the underlying meaning or motive, which projects the human being into the future? In my profession as a teacher and adviser in higher education, I am keenly interested in persons within the traditional age of undergraduate education. I have pondered over their choices of a major, and then, ultimately, their choices within the greater world of work. In what ways do these choices result from meaning or add to meaning in their lives? How are they constructing meaning through their choices?

A part of this interest in the work choices of undergraduate students relates to changes and transitions throughout the life span. What might precede the transitions of the thirties (Levinson, 1978) or possible disillusionment in the forties? What are the

forces, thoughts, ideas, and reasons at work in young adults, which motivate their choices in work? Reflecting over this, I have returned often to the contention that we are meaning-making creatures at every stage of our lives. This led to the focus upon the construction of meaning for undergraduate students in this society and at this time. I want to gain insight into their personal and subjective experience and their ideas about how work provides meaning for their lives.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing focus upon social responsibility and college students' goals related to work. Headlines in the March 1999, APA Monitor (Murray), suggested that socially responsible jobs have become more of a focus in colleges and universities. Green ribbons are being worn at Manchester College's graduation to indicate a commitment to an ideal of social consciousness above job consciousness. California's Humboldt State University, Goshen College in Indiana, Olivet College in Michigan, Denison University in Ohio, and Notre Dame University were a few of the institutions mentioned as being involved in this thrust toward more socially responsible choices in work.

In a recent study, Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks (1996) looked at the lives of individuals who are committed to the common good. With shifting boundaries and the common areas of society changing, there is a need for "some new set of connections, some more adequate way to make sense of a world gone boundaryless" (p. 3). A focus upon the responsibility and privilege to contribute to a global community was emphasized. Work is the primary avenue for participation and contribution to the larger society.

According to Erikson (1950/1963), Freud believed that a normal person must be able to "Lieben und arbeiten" to love and to work (p. 265). Erikson continued with the suggestion that for Freud, work meant a general productivity that would still permit a

person to be a "genital and loving being" (p. 265). Productivity, then, was the meaning in work proposed by Freud. Ideas about the meaning in work vary, however, and one would ask about the nature of those meanings. This raises questions about an individual's meaning in work and connectedness to co-workers, to family, to the micro-community, and to a macro, or global community. The value placed upon work by individuals ultimately relates to the individual's sense of selfhood, one's values and goals. The ways that society's meanings in work influence productivity, economy, and stability in the work force and in the social and political climate can profoundly affect the health of a society.

The role of work in an individual's life could be a means to an end or an end itself. Work as the "sweat of the brow" might be viewed as a punishment, or the purpose of human existence. Perhaps meaning in work is to learn about oneself or to lose oneself in work. Work may be the creative expression of the self or may only serve to feed the appetite, the physiological needs of the body, and the emotional and personal needs of the psyche. Other values in work might include food on the table, a house in the country, a recreational vehicle, or worldwide travels. The meaning in work might be related to a vocation and calling or primarily monetary income. Work can be dreaded drudgery or it can be joyful activity.

Theoretical Framework

Existential Meaning

The theoretical frame of this study is existential meaning rather than developmental issues of career choice or theoretical postulates related to career development, although,

these topics are acknowledged and discussed briefly. Meaning *in* work, looked at from an existential perspective and studied phenomenologically, i.e., through personal ideas and beliefs about work is the primary purpose. It is important therefore, to differentiate between meaning *of* work and meaning *in* work.

The meaning in work is unique to the individual and is influenced by many factors. Meaning *in* work and meaning *of* work differ. Meaning *in* work refers to inherent meaning in the work itself, i.e., the work is meaningful. Meaning *of* work, on the other hand, is explained as meaning that is derived from the product of work, or work instrumental to meaning. The focus of this study is upon meaning *in* work from an existential perspective. Existentialists view meaning as a primary motivating force in the life of the individual (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Frankl, 1959/1984; Kierkegaard,1949; Morin, 1995; Nietzsche, 1961/1969).

In a study of meaningful work among mid-life executive men, Robin (1998) suggested that the idea of meaning of work has been addressed in multiple ways indicated by a large collection of literature. Contributions related to themes of work centrality, work norms, and expected outcomes from work primarily define what *work* is, not what the *meaning* in work might be. It was suggested that meaning in work needs to be researched from phenomenological and existential perspectives.

Meaning related to work issues is influenced by need motivation according to Maslow (1968). He argued that there is a difference between survival values and growth values. Survival values refer to the basic human needs for food, water, shelter, and safety. Growth values refer to the need for belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. He believed that it is vital for an individual to listen to their inner voice to determine a

personal sense of value and meaning. In contrast, a person who does not have the ability to know one's self, i.e., one's values or meanings, is led by external guides such as "clocks, rules, calendars, schedules, agenda, and by hints and cues from other people" (p. 32).

Meaning as related to the spiritual is thought to be the primary focus of mid-life by some developmental theorists (Jung, 1933; Erikson, 1968). From an existential perspective, however, the human being from birth, is drawn by that which makes life meaningful throughout the life span (Frankl, 1959/1984). Kegan (1982) suggested developmental processes related to meaning-making. This would imply that the construction of meaning is a life-issue. Existential psychologists such as May (1969), Frankl (1959/1984), Fingarette (1963), and Yalom (1980) focus upon the experience of meaning and its psychological importance, although not necessarily in a work context.

Values and meaning must be considered in a discussion of work motivations. Although work is a daily activity, the purpose and meaning in work, for many, reside mainly in the unconscious (Moore, 1997). In a study focused upon career certainty, grade level, and gender, Schulenberg, Vondracek, and Kim (1993) cited literature which indicates that clarity about work values facilitates more meaningful career decisions. When work values are not understood nor clarified, career or work choices become confused and difficult.

Bugental (Bracke & Bugental, 1995), and Antonovsky (1987) offered limited discussions about the meaning in work primarily from the perspective of the workplace (Robin, 1998). Others (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1985; Haughey, 1989; Keen, 1994; Maccoby, 1988; McMakin & Dyer, 1993; Palmer, 1990; Raines &

Day-Lower, 1986; Schumacher, 1979; Singer, 1992; Terkel, 1972/1974) have discussed meaning and work from diverse perspectives, many of them related to organizational principles. Existential meaning and meaning related to work are further discussed in the next chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work from an existential perspective. The research questions for this study are:

1. What are undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work?
2. From an existential perspective, what do these data reveal about undergraduate students' construction of meaning related to work issues?

Although almost limitless definitions of work are available and acknowledged, work, in the context of this study, is adapted from the definition of Moraglia (1997), work is

> that set of purposive activities, socially validated and [whether economically rewarded or not], which are directly or indirectly concerned with the reproduction of the material, social and cultural conditions of human existence. (p. 106)

Meaning was determined by Q-Method, a phenomenological approach to the scientific study of human subjectivity, a method initiated by William Stephenson (1953). A Q-sort was conducted utilizing a naturalistic Q-sample of 42 statements taken from in-depth interviews with college students. The participants (P-sample) were 62 undergraduate students from two universities, a small parochial university (SPU) and a large land grant university (LGU). Factor analysis indicated three patterns of meaning.

Ideas about meaning in work are influenced by many aspects of life. In a pilot study, Gillespie and Allport (1955) looked at the attitudes of college students in 10 different nations, and concluded that, in spite of similarities, attitudes, values, and the worldviews of youth are influenced by culture and social situations.

Developmental stage, diversity of race, ethnicity, and gender, and the sociohistorical and religious context are vital issues that interact with personal interests and abilities in an individual's ideas about the meaning in work.

Influences on Meaning in Work

Developmental Issues

Developmentalists have suggested that a child's play is her work. In play the child masters anxieties (Erikson, 1968) and advances cognitive development (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky; 1926/1997). In play, innate curiosity and desire for new information are satisfied (Berlyne, 1960). This is to suggest that in the process of play, the child is relating to its environment and the objects within the environment in a manner that nurtures cognitive and social growth through creativity, exploration, discovery, and social interaction.

In his book, *Identity: Youth in Crisis*, Erikson (1968) contended that with the development of a sense of autonomy or "I am what I can will freely," young children attempt to find out who they want to become and what roles they fill or desire to fill (p. 114). During this time of play fantasy, children can imagine themselves in many roles. Later, however, children begin to imitate people who work in occupations that are

meaningful for the child. Through the process of education, children are exposed to a great variety of occupational possibilities. They need to develop a "sense of industry" which is the confidence that they can "make things and make them well, even perfectly" (p. 123).

Adolescents, in a period of increased independence seek to decide freely upon paths of service and involvement (Erikson, 1968). The knowledge that "I am what I can learn to make work" is critical to a cohesive sense of self or identity achievement (p. 127). They think idealistically and have a strong desire to find their place in the world (Erikson, 1950/1963). Building upon the previous stages of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry, the adolescent now searches for an occupation or for work that enhances a sense of competency.

Many developmental changes occur in an individual's concept of self during adolescence, especially in relationship to vocational identity (Super, 1970). During this period of time, from about 14 years of age until about 35, individuals move through a process of career selection that relates to a global self-concept. Career exploration during adolescence is critical to a career self-concept, according to Super. Researchers have suggested that vocational commitment should be delayed until self-concepts are cohesive and understood, at least in the areas of sex roles, values, and interests (Erikson, 1968; Hershenson, 1968; O'Hara & Tiedeman, 1959; Tierney & Herman, 1973; Tierney, Herman, Putnam, & Hansen, 1972; Super, 1970).

Ginzberg and others (1951) theorized that individuals imagine themselves in work roles according to developmental stages. Children are in a fantasy stage until about the age of 11. In early childhood, girls often want to be nurses or actresses and boys want to

be policemen, firemen, or a superhero. As they mature their ideas what they want to be or their images of a life's work changes (Erikson, 1968; Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Axelrod, & Herman, 1951; Super, 1970). They grasp a picture of self in the future. It is one way to develop a cohesive self, which bounds and projects the self into the future. To have an image of the self in a role, or a self-in-the-future is to invest work with value, i.e., to assume a meaning in work. From the fantasy stage children move into, what Ginzberg, et al., labeled the tentative stage, a time when adolescents evaluate their interests, capacities, and values. Individuals in their twenties are more realistic and actively explore possible careers before finally focusing upon one specific career.

Meaning construction and ideas about work differ according to age and developmental stage in life. Meaning and issues specifically related to adolescence and young adulthood are more fully addressed in the next chapter.

Race and Ethnicity

From the Gillespie and Allport study (1955), similarities among the students in the cross-national survey tended to relate to parent-child relationships, the importance of family, interest in science and technology, desired occupations, the desire to travel and cultural aspirations, racial equality, and an outlook on international relations. Differences, addressed in a lengthy description for each national sample, focused primarily upon nationalistic issues, such as government control, racial views, and personal achievement for the benefit of one's country. Data from the American sample, however diverse, revealed that values often thought to be important to Americans, such as competitiveness, desire for success, and personal ambition, were not as important as the desire for a rich

full life. This contrasted with students from other nations who focused upon aspirations for achievement and the desire to develop character. Another defining characteristic of the American students was "low interest in social problems" (p. 15). These two qualities led the authors to label this value as "privatism" (p. 16).

Individuals develop a philosophy of life in their effort to construct sensible lives. Vontress (1996), after a focus upon cross-cultural counseling for the past forty years, believed that people all over the world attempt to see life as cohesive and meaningful. Commonalities exist among all human beings, yet within each culture and subculture there are differences. Even though there are commonalities among all human beings and commonalities within one cultural group, there are, nevertheless, many ethnic groups within a culture so that the possibility of a stated general meaning is not possible.

Asante (1997), in a look at development within diverse societies, and especially in the developing world, proposed that development is different for each society. He acknowledged differences among societies, as well as common meanings, in the belief that national development revolves around the use of human and material resources for a standard of living that nurtures the human rights of happiness and freedom.

Labeled as the emic-etic dichotomy, research indicates differences among cultures and a sameness in all human beings (Draguns, 1981). One must acknowledge that the personal world of the individual is influenced by culture. There is the tendency to have a "pseudoetic orientation: the assumption that the observer's own culturally bound experience is an adequate guide to what is humanly universal" (p. 5). As pioneers in cross-national research, Gillespie and Allport (1955) argued that it is important for the social sciences to guard against a focus upon one culture as the pattern for others.

In *Visions for Black Men* (1991), Akbar contended that slavery caused a hate for work, yet all of life is work. In his view, men are institution builders not just workers. They want to leave a legacy, to "be able to point to things that stand as concepts that regenerated long after the person has passed" (p. 38). His own personal meaning is evident in the statement,

> I want my children to stand up in a reality that I helped to build. I want them to be able to be identified with an Afro-centric reality that I have worked my entire life to build and establish. (p. 38)

For each individual in different communities, urban or rural, and in different geographical locations, ideas about the meaning in work vary (Axelson, 1999). This is true of different ethnic groups. It is recognized that Asian Americans value learning and achievement. To generalize however, is to risk oversimplification and stereotyping. One characteristic readily distinguishable between different ethnic groups is individualism, i.e., an emphasis upon the rights and achievements of the individual, an independence versus the interdependence characterized by collectivism. For the individual in a collectivist society, obedience, harmony, and the good of the whole group are most significant. Meaning in work reflects these cultural influences.

Gender

Gender influences understandings of meaning in work. Although career issues are important to both genders (Bilsker, Schiedel, & Marcia, 1988), women view their position in society differently than men. In Piaget's (1960) gender-specific language, the child (referred to as "he") is most concerned about moral obligations and rules. In contrast, recent studies indicate that relationship, connection, and caring offer meaning to girls and

women (Bilsker, Schiedel, & Marcia, 1988; Chodorow, 1995; Gilligan, 1982/1993). Gender subjectivity, constructed through cultural, linguistic, political, and personal influences, is based upon a sense of personal meaning (Chodorow, 1995).

Gilligan (1982/1993) argued that women find meaning in the context of human relationships. A quote from Virginia Woolf, "It is obvious...that the values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex," emphasized Gilligan's (1982/1993) view that women have been socialized to "question the normality of their feelings and to alter their judgments in deference to the opinion of others" (p. 16). Gilligan, after an interview with one woman, noted that for this woman, work meant survival. It was "where I derive the meaning of what I am" (p. 89). She contended that there is a need within research to "delineate *in women's own terms*" (p. 173). Meaning, although personal and unique, is, nevertheless, influenced by gender.

Out of more than one hundred interviews with workers across America, Terkel (1972/1974) remarked that work is a search

> for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. (p. xi)

In an interview with a "streetwalker," meaning in work, at first, was the "feeling of intimacy, feeling close, feeling warm . . . It was a way of feeling somebody cared about me, at least for a moment" (p. 59). Later, the meaning in her work shifted to large sums of quick, easy money and the continuation of a drug addiction. Her interview concluded with the statement, "Most women are taught to become what they act. All I did was act out the reality of American womanhood" (p. 65). Social and political issues inform an

individual's sense of meaning in work, which, related to gender, has varied throughout history.

The industrial era played a significant role in how women perceived of meaning in work according to Madonna Kolbenschlag (1981). She believed that women's work was severed from

> significant human activity. Shopping replaced growing and making. In addition, native peoples were often thrown into unemployment on their reservations. Sentimentalism of both women and native peoples set in, and such a mythologizing of the mother/homemaker role took place that women often failed "to see work as a necessary component of identity and autonomy." (p. 72)

Women developed new aspirations regarding work after the Second World War (Bernstein, 1997). Women comprised only 29% of the workforce in the 1950s while by 1990 they made up 46% of the workforce. Work values had changed so much that not only were women accepted in the work world, they were often expected to help earn the living. For single women with children, additional pressures shaped the meaning in work. An interesting development in the meaning in work for women is the change in attitude toward their jobs. In a survey published in 1993, when women were asked if they would quit their jobs if they did not need the money, 38% said yes in 1989, while 56% of the women said yes in 1991. For the 20 years previous to that time, only 30% had indicated that they would leave their jobs if it were not for the need of money (Bernstein, 1997). When asked to respond to life expectation essays, 272 undergraduates described a day in their lives at 25 and at 50 years of age (Affleck, Morgan, & Hayes, 1989). Results indicated both similarities and differences. Students were realistic in their perceptions regarding work, yet the women still reflected traditional views about their roles as

homemakers. Responses to questions about students' views on the division of labor in the home were not realistic for either males or females. The authors noted that those with mothers who worked exhibited greater awareness of the complications in a dual-role lifestyle. Women, overall, were more liberal on a gender role attitude scale than men. Issues of meaning in work, whether outside or inside the home, is influenced by gender and the role and needs of the family.

Fox (1994) believed that because women were excluded from mainline work, they include a perspective of play in their work and are not so caught up in the traditional male issues of style and work identity. For women, work is both internal and external. He stated,

> Many women . . . stay closer to their own biological realities – which are indeed cosmic realities – than do many men, and so women may look more to nature, including their own, for lessons and less to anthropocentric agendas. (p. 29)

In reference to feminist philosophies, Fox (1994) argued that interdependence is a valued aspect of work, which both indicates and facilitates compassion. Dualisms are rejected in favor of a more integrated and wholistic view of work.

In Gilligan's (1982/1993) quest to understand how men and women perceive of reality and truth differently, she concluded that men and women spoke differently about relationships and human nature. In *Letter to Readers* (1993), she stated,

> The differences between women and men which I describe center on a tendency for women and men to make different relational errors – for men to think that if they know themselves, following Socrates'dictum, they will also know women, and for women to think that if only they know others, they will come to know themselves. (p. xx)

Gender influences meaning-making, especially within cultural and political contexts. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970/1993) referred to themes found only in humanity that either nurture or thwart the development of persons. These themes interact dialectically with opposites. In a powerful statement, Freire highlighted differences in meanings:

> It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. We must realize that their view of the world, manifested variously in their action, reflects their *situation* in the world. (p. 77)

An aspect of each situation is not only the culture and gender of the individual, but the specific sociohistorical context.

Sociohistorical Context

Meaning construction occurs within social contexts. In the course of history, patterns of attitudes and behavior characterize specific generations. That which prompted citizens of the United States to offer their lives for the cause of freedom and patriotism in the 1940s may not be meaningful at other times.

With an insightful and challenging perspective on generational changes in society, Strauss and Howe (1997) painted a picture of the patterns within a "*saeculum,*" a time period of approximately eighty to one hundred years. They suggested that there are four turnings in that time span, which include changes in patterns of social experience. The "*Third Turning*," an "*Unraveling*," is a time of "strengthening individualism and weakening institutions," while the "*Fourth Turning*" is a "*Crisis*, a decisive era of secular upheaval, when the values regime propels the replacement of old civic order with a new

one" (p. 3). It is their view that the mood of the present time resembles that of the early 1900s when Americans, according to Walter Lippmann,

> felt unsettled to the very roots of our being. There isn't a human relation, whether of parent or child, husband and wife, worker and employer, that doesn't move in a strange situation. We are not used to a complicated civilization, we don't know how to behave when personal contact and eternal authority have disappeared. There are no precedents to guide us, no wisdom that was not meant for a simpler age. (Strauss & Howe, 1997, p. 4)

The authors believed that America is now in a Third Turning, as young adults are serving institutions and testing values.

Other aspects of change in society are reflected in a study conducted by Hall and Mirvis, (1995), related to workers in middle and later career life changes. They argued that with changes in industry in the United States, there is a demand for another view of career development, which would address identity and adaptability issues. Workers have focused upon a career for life while the job market is changing and fluctuating. With changes in the manufacturing segment of the work force, individuals need to focus on personal direction and satisfaction in work.

Rumblings of a shift from an individualistic to collectivistic perspective on work are beginning to be heard. It has been suggested that the primary focus in organizational behavior has indicated a calculative and hedonistic model of motivation (Shamir, 1990). This model presents the individual as highly self-centered, yet there are indications of prosocial tendencies such as concern for the welfare of others. Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Parks (1996) also asked questions regarding prosocial motivations or meanings in work in their study of over one hundred people committed to serving the common good of humanity.

Students' goals for undergraduate education have changed in recent years (Santrock, 1995). Data collected by the Higher Education Research Institute showed a drop in the percentage of students whose life goal was to develop a meaningful philosophy of life, from circa 83 per cent in 1968 to approximately 42 per cent in 1990. On the other hand, there was a sharp rise in the percentage of students focused upon being very well-off financially, from about 43 per cent in 1968 to approximately 75 per cent in 1990. Is this the key meaning in work to students in the 90s, to be well-off financially, or are there other meanings?

Brady (1997) told the story of a Mary Wolfe, an NBC news producer, who, after serving 19 years as a producer and reporter, left her lucrative job for a more rewarding life, one which brought more meaning. She cited Gerald Celente, director of Trends Reseach Institute in Rhinebeck, New York as saying,

> One of the more powerful trends in America today is people chucking corporate and professional careers to seek spiritual growth in their families and communities . . . Many are unhappy with what they are doing and are searching for truer *meaning* in their lives. (p. 35)

An increasing involvement in a religious life is indicated in the article, "Modern Monks Search for the Meaning of Life" (1999). One individual left a job as a computer programmer when he realized that his life was unfulfilling. Work as a vocation or divine calling provided meaning in the past. Work as an act of obedience and a mission or vocation holds spiritual meaning from a Christian perspective (Hill, 1999). It was during the Industrial Revolution that vocation as a connection with a divine calling began to lose significance (Dollarhide, 1997). Because of an emphasis upon a job instead of work, individuals have become alienated from the deeper meaning of life (Fox, 1994). Fox

believed that work needs to be an expression of the uniqueness and creativity of the individual, the soul of the person. Work that nurtures the inner person, the being of the individual, is seen as spiritual from many perspectives (Drogin, 1997; Fox, 1994; Moore, 1997). Drogin contended that even if work does offer a certain sense of fulfillment, it can stifle the soul in the process.

The contention of this study is that at the core of the person, in an ontological sense, meaning motivates human choice and behavior. This study focuses specifically upon the undergraduate student. Students may perceive of work as tool by which to provide opportunities or privileges that are meaningful, a meaning *of* work focus. They may see work as inherently meaningful, as meaning *in* work.

The Succeeding Chapters

The focus of Chapter II is upon a review of literature on the construction of meaning from existential and developmental perspectives. Beginning with a brief history of work and the differentiation between meaning of work and meaning in work, the perspectives of primarily Western existential philosophers and psychologists is discussed. Although the experience of meaning and its role in the human predicament was important, meaning in the specific context of work is not a focus. Issues of development, especially in terms of identity, although not necessarily from an existential perspective nor related to a specific work context, are mentioned. Development and meaning-making is noted and the relationship between vocation and development is included. Phenomenology as a philosophical perspective and in relationship to Q Methodology is addressed.

The use of Q Methodology as a phenomenological approach is explained in Chapter III. Each step of this study is explicitly reported with the rationale and explanation of each process. Included are the demographic data regarding the participants along with other relevant information. The collection and analysis of data are described.

In Chapter IV, results are reported. Emergent patterns of beliefs about the meaning in work are described, then explained from phenomenological and existential perspectives.

Chapter V includes a discussion of the findings along with suggested limitations and implications for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to describe undergraduate students' ideas of the meaning in work from an existential perspective. Beginning with a review of the history of work, literature within three general areas is reviewed in this chapter. The first body of literature is a brief history of work followed by a clarification of the difference between the terms, meaning of work and meaning in work. With the establishment of the difference in these two, the next section is a review of the literature related to meaning-construction from an existential viewpoint. Developmental theories related to meaning are subsequently reviewed. Phenomenology as represented by Q-Methodology is the final topic to be addressed in this chapter.

A Brief History of Perspectives on Work

Work as an activity of human kind is not only influenced by general philosophic and political ideas, but also by developments within a specific society at a specific time. Technology, sociopolitical issues such as class, age, gender, race, and international exchange policies influence the organization of work.

Hannah Arendt (1958) postulated three key activities critical to the predicament of humankind, labor, work, and action. Labor corresponds to the spontaneous biological

processes of the body, such as growth and decay. Work, on the other hand, refers to that which is not natural in the life cycle. Action is differentiated from labor and work in its meaning as a process occurring between human beings and corresponds to the plurality of humankind (Arendt, 1958).

The ecologist, Ernest Callenbach (1994) maintained that before the disobedience in the Garden of Eden, all work had meaning in its significance for livelihood. Whether this was meant metaphorically or historically, the advent of agriculture and the eventuality of surplus, changed work patterns. Much of the meaning originally present in the story of the Garden was lost. Buddhism explained work from a spiritual perspective and in a non-hierarchical manner (Drogin, 1997, p. 11). "In work, do what you enjoy" is the admonition of the *Tao Te Ching*, and in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the way to perfection is to "find joy in . . . work" (Fox, 1994, p. 91). It was in the West that hierarchical structures in work were established.

For the Greeks, work was considered to be a curse, an activity for slaves and women only, "work had no redeeming values and not working was considered not only a blessing, but a prerequisite for the good life" (Drogin, 1997, p. 11). In the effort to distinguish between humanity and animals, the Greeks saw work as a tool for survival, a work the animals performed. Work was relegated to those vegetative souls, the lowest class in Plato's hierarchy. Life was beautiful at the price of oppression to the many.

Those who attained immortality were those who could perform the work of great deeds either in politics or in battle. The greatest work, however, was the work of contemplation and leisure, a work for men (Keen, 1994). Knowledge was the most valued

jewel of the human soul (Hardy, 1990). Hierarchical structures provided the elite time for reflection and contemplation (Drogin, 1997).

According to Arendt (1958), a Greek understanding of man suggested that

> The task and potential greatness of mortals lie in their ability to produce things – works and deeds and words – which would deserve to be and, at least to a degree, are at home in everlastingness, so that through them mortals could find their place in a cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves, and, thereby, attain an immortality of their own and prove themselves to be of a "divine" nature. (p. 19)

During the middle ages, the Christian church maintained the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular with work clearly defined as secular (Fox, 1994). The mystics, whom Fox called the poets of the soul, spoke of work in more spiritual terms. Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth-century mystic, declared that when humans do good work, they become a flowering orchard permeating the universe and making the cosmic wheel go round" (p. 2). Thomas Aquinas stated that "To live well is to work well, or display a good activity" (p. 1).

Protestantism instilled new values into work. Work became a calling or vocation and was promoted by Luther and Calvin as admirable and for the glory of God. Wealth was permitted only as a product of hard work and good sense; never, however, for pleasure (Bernstein, 1997). The riches could be reinvested or donated but never used for personal enhancement. Work was a way to please God. The theological context for work, however, had begun to disintegrate by the early 1800s.

During the Renaissance, work became the activity of creating (Hardy, 1990). Work enabled the human being to conceive of ideas, bring them to form, and to develop and control nature. Work was now the expression of the essence of being human. For

Hardy, Marxian ideas of multi-directional human productivity were aligned with Renaissance thought. Marx's ideal of free productivity resulted, however, in increased oppression of the worker (Drogin, 1997).

By the 1730s, profit had become a way of life and a world of opportunity which resulted in alienation of the worker and undermined work values. By the middle of the nineteenth century, work had been "denuded of meaning, and pride in product was replaced by the controls of scientific management" (Bernstein, 1997, p. 235).

From the age of antiquity to and including the age of modernity, there have been reversals of concepts, philosophies, and emphases. After the agricultural revolution, when people moved to the city, the Newtonian perspective of mechanization brought the industrialization of work. With this change, humans operated machines and became consumers rather than producers (Fox, 1994).

Job security, progress, and opportunity became the critical focus of work throughout the next one hundred years. In more recent years, work centered upon career aspirations and often caused conflict related to family needs. Increased spending became the pattern for the American society (Bernstein, 1997). This indicates that work meanings have varied greatly since the Greeks placed the yoke of work upon society's lower class.

From the Greek perspective of work to the present time, ideas about work have been influenced by various factors within history. Arendt (1958) argued that the

> last stage of the laboring society, the society of jobholders, demands of its members a sheer automatic functioning, as though individual life had actually been submerged in the over-all life process of the species and the only active decision still required of the individual were to let go, so to speak, to abandon his individuality, the still individually sensed pain and trouble of living, and acquiesce in a dazed, 'tranquilized,' functional type of behavior. (p. 322)

Bernstein (1997) reiterated these changes in ideas about work in his book, American Work Values, when he contended that from the theological context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the meaning of work passed through a chain of continuities and discontinuities. Hard work and opportunity were key continuities across the five centuries after the Reformation and the belief in hard work remained constant in spite of the transition from agriculture to industry. As with the belief in hard work, job security, and opportunity were other important continuities in American work values, especially for immigrants from Northern Europe. With the onslaught of industry, other values such as discipline, orderliness, and punctuality were inculcated.

Discontinuities in work values or meaning of work resulted from changes within the continuities of work (Bernstein, 1997). From Luther and Calvin's emphasis upon work as salvation, to work as the road to advancement, meaning was stripped from work and opportunity was heralded. Alienation, welfare capitalism, and, ultimately, in the sixties, a last discontinuity became apparent, self-fulfillment and autonomy.

Bernstein (1997) argued that

> In today's age of self-fulfillment workers seem to be looking for meaning in work within themselves rather than in their employment. They almost see the face in the mirror as a "sacred object" whose personal values are paramount. (p. 270)

He concluded with the statement, "the world of work requires people that look to employment as more than an instrumental process" (p. 280).

Historically, work in the Western world, has been structured in a hierarchy of superiors and subordinates (Drogin, 1997). The meaning of work shifted from the menial labor of survival, when many were slaves, to a means of salvation, when God and the

church were the superiors. The industrial age placed people in an employer/employee relationship, and ultimately led to the role of self-fulfillment in the twentieth century. The meaning of work has revolved around either the way to a good life or that which prevents the good life. To understand the focus of this study, a distinction must be made between meaning *of* work and meaning *in* work, which is addressed in the next section.

Meaning of Work Versus Meaning in Work

The experience of work is unique to the individual and varies from day to day. It may be challenging or boring, fulfilling or difficult. Work may even be fun. Meaning is in the motivation for staying with a work, whether that meaning is solely for material benefits or is inherent in work. Although to discriminate between meaning *of* work and meaning *in* work is somewhat complex, it is a necessary differentiation to make in the understanding of this study. The meaning of work has been researched extensively, with the term, meaning of work, denoting an objective and distant view of work. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between the meaning gained from work, and the meaning inherent in work. Work may and must provide meaningful benefits. Work has been described from a variety of perspectives. Existential and phenomenological perspectives, however, focus upon meaning as inherent in work.

Some researchers emphasized work centrality, work norms, and expected outcomes of work (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Brief & Nord, 1990; Harpaz, & Fu, 1997; MOW International Research Team, 1987), while work, as a form of symbolic representation, was the focus of Ochberg (1987). This literature

explained primarily what work *is* within the context of work settings, rather than the meaning in the work.

Robin (1998) argued that even in the context of the work setting, the experience of meaning is not well-researched because of a lack of existential and phenomenological perspectives. The researchers who have linked existentialism and work, Pauchant and Associates (1995) have found that although most adults work hard and long hours, they are often without any deep sense of fulfillment or satisfaction. Spending the greatest part of their waking hours at work, adults rarely reflect upon its meaning in their lives (Hardy, 1990). Whereas, research on the meaning of work refers to the benefits of work, research on meaning in work focuses upon what meaning is found within the work, for that will influence the experience itself.

> Terkel (1974), from his interview with workers across America, stated, Work is about a search, too, for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. (p. xi)

It is argued that many workers express this sort of dying in their work experience (Antonovsky, 1987). Work appears to be void of inherent meaning for these individuals.

In a study conducted by the MOW (Meaning of Working) International Research Project (1987), psychological meanings – the significance, beliefs, definitions, and values individuals assigned work – were examined. Fourteen thousand, seven hundred participants within 8 industrialized nations were surveyed regarding their perceptions of the meaning of work. The researchers identified the following categories: the major patterns of meanings; differences in descriptions of work meanings; proportions of each country's labor force that identified each major pattern of meaning of work; and a work

antecedent and work consequence comparison. Emerging concepts of meaning of work were identified as work centrality, societal norms about working, and valued working outcomes/preferences.

The MOW team (1987) concluded that 2 out of every 3 persons indicated work centrality, the degree of importance and value of working in one's life, as the most important concept. Eighty percent indicated that they would continue to work even if they had enough money to retire. A multivariate analysis for that population sample showed that in general, older people (this study defined these as over 50) have higher work centrality than younger people.

Societal norms related to work vary from culture to culture, and reveal much about the beliefs and expectations related to the duties and rights of working. The MOW team data (1987) showed that there are basic equitable exchange rules concerning working rights and duties across cultures. An interesting finding was that in the United States societal norms indicate "higher levels of endorsement of duties than of rights, i.e., the Americans believe that working is more a duty, than a right" (p. 106).

Findings from the MOW (1987) study indicated that the most important outcome or opportunity people seek from working is interesting work. This was also true in the Gillespie and Allport (1955) study of youth in ten nations. When asked "*What are the two worst things that could conceivably happen to you during your lifetime?*" 13 % of the Americans, 20 % of the New Zealand group, 8 % and 6 % of the groups from Mexico and Italy, respectively, responded that the worst thing would be to lead lives of "monotony, boredom, . . . having a dull, routine existence" (p. 14). Second in importance, in the MOW

study, out of the 11 choices, was *good pay*. Learning, interpersonal relations, opportunity, working conditions, and job security were other choices.

Much of this research was conducted through the use of surveys. A concern in the use of a survey is that survey questions are preconceived by the researchers and the opportunity for participants to suggest other issues is limited. The data are restricted to a framework designed before the data collection, which may leave gaps in a big-picture view of the participants' own conceptions about the meaning of work. In the MOW (1987) project, although some open-ended questions were included, the survey was primarily multiple-choice and highly-structured. Questionnaires and autobiographical essays were used in the Gillespie and Allport (1955) study; the focus, however, was upon a general examination of values rather than specifically related to work meanings.

Harpaz and Fu (1997) conducted a study based upon the MOW (1987) findings within the labor force of four countries, Germany, Israel, Japan, and the United States. Through individual interviews, meaning of work variables that influenced work centrality were examined. The researchers acknowledged that although there were differences among the countries and varying characteristics for age and gender interaction, "a majority of individuals in industrial societies derive a substantial part of their instrumental well-being from the income and benefits generated through their work activities." Other identified benefits related to "sociopsychological functions such as achieving and maintaining personal identity, self-esteem, status, and a sense of accomplishment" (p. 171).

In a differently structured study conducted by Ochberg (1987), open-ended in-depth interviews of seven middle-class men revealed that work commitments relate to

identity issues. For these men, careers provided the public arena for the presentation of self. In work, men could express ability and competence.

A synthesis of four research studies explored the manner in which people are either prepared for a public life by their private life or only find meaning in the private arena. The data collected through multiple interviews and the observations of 200 middle-class Americans over a five-year span revealed that

> the demand to "make something of yourself" through work is one that Americans coming of age hear as often from themselves as from others. It encompasses several different notions of work and how it bears on who we are . . . In any case, however we define work, it is very close to our sense of self. What we "do" often translates to what we "are." (Bellah, et al., 1985, p. 66)

It was concluded from this study that meaning of work for these participants related to: job (work for pay); calling (personal obligation, duty, or destiny); and career (desire for success and recognition). Each of these categories provides a meaning of work, yet one must note that in each, the work provides a means to an end. A job is an instrumental activity that results in pay; a career focus is instrumental in providing feedback to the self; and a calling enables connection to others and the larger community. Hidden underneath these meanings of work, is the deeper issue of meaning in work, i.e., meaning in a sociopsychological sense as in the Harpaz and Fu (1997) study, or in the existential perspective of purpose in being.

To clarify further the difference between the terms, meaning *of* work and meaning *in* work, much of the work literature suggested that the meaning of work refers to a job, the process of working at a job, and the product or outcome of that job. Yet, beliefs and values regarding work interact with a person's whole belief system which is "culturally,

institutionally, and experientially conditioned" (Robin, 1998, p. 22). Work as an instrumental activity, a means to an end process, is explained as meaning *of* work, in this study, versus meaning *in* work. Meaning *in* work is described as a life invested, or the activity of asserting oneself, extending oneself into the bigger picture and finding concrete meaning inherent in that work. Benefits *of* work may be meaningful, but benefits *in* work refers to meaning in the work itself.

Arendt (1958) argued that work can either be meaningful or utilitarian, which is determined by the terms, "in order to" and "for the sake of" (p. 154). Work as an in order to has become for the sake of, which she argues is the endless cycle of means and end. At some point, one must decide which is the means and which is the end. She continued her argument with the following words,

> For an end, once it is attained ceases to be an end and loses its capacity to guide and justify the choice of means, to organize and produce them. It has now become an object among objects, that is, it has been added to the huge arsenal of the given from which *homo faber* selects freely his means to pursue his ends. Meaning, on the contrary, must be permanent and lose nothing of its character, whether it is achieved or, rather, found by man or fails man and is missed by him. (p. 155)

The meaning in work for some relates to identity (Halper, 1988; Riley, Kahn, & Foner, 1994). Through work, a person extends and strengthens a sense of who he or she is. But for others, work provides the opportunity to excel and develop in the world (Raines & Day-Lower, 1986). Work may be a channel through which one can contribute to the world (Richards, 1995). Work can be a place for "intellectual stimulation, personal growth, social contact or simply a source of income" (Robin, 1998, p. 22). Success, in terms of wealth and prestige, professional and social membership are the meaning in work

for some (Bernstein, 1997), although, success in work, according to Thomas Moore (1997), does not always indicate equally fulfilling work.

In all of the various meanings related to work, there are nuances of difference between the meaning of work and the meaning in work. Stated poignantly by Dostoyevsky, (1950), in *The Brothers Karamazov* "The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive but in finding something to live for" (p. 306). Meaning in work may refer to "that something to live for," meaning attached to lived experience. The next body of literature focuses upon the existential concept of meaning.

Meaning from an Existential Viewpoint

With roots in classical philosophy, existential thought focuses upon interior experience. Harper (1972) believed that the issue of existence is embedded in this quote from St. Augustine,

> Give me one that longs, give me one that hungers, give me one that is wandering in this wilderness and thirsting and panting for the fountain of his eternal home; give me such an one, and he will know what I would say. (p. xi)

In response to St. Augustine, a forerunner of later and more systematic existential thought, Harper remarked,

> The world of the seeker and lover is filled with passion and commitment, and he not only sees everything with new eyes, he understands himself with immediacy and intense clarity. He knows who he is and what he wants; he knows also the limitations of both freedom and desire. So the existentialist, once awakened to the claims of his existence, will never be satisfied until he is liberated from the fears and nightmares of rejection and allowed to live in a world where he knows what it is to live in the present. (p. xi)

It was not until Soren Kierkegaard, the melancholic Danish theologian and philosopher, proposed that man is essentially alone that existentialism as a philosophy became a stated and studied worldview (Harper, 1972). Kierkegaard (1949) believed the individual is consigned to a life drawn taut between birth and death, a predicament of desperate loneliness. With that loneliness came freedom and responsibility, which involved isolation and choice of the self. It was in choice that the individual had significance as a person. Harper (1972) stated that for Kierkegaard, "existence has to be understood in terms of choice, the most fundamental choice of what to do with one's life, what kind of being to make of yourself" (p. 25). Existential freedom, therefore, referred not so much to choice as the freedom to choose oneself.

Not only was Kierkegaard (1949) concerned with choice, he was specific in the dilemma of doing and being. As an isolated man, he was obsessed with what he was to do in this life. Kierkegaard was unclear about what to do. He pursued that truth that was personal, one for which he would be willing to live and die. For Kierkegaard, this answer resided in God. (Harper, 1972). Since inward experience is unique to the individual, Kierkegaard acknowledged that existential reality is highly incommunicable, yet philosophical writing became his existential reality or personal truth.

Nietzsche (1961/1969), the German philosopher, took the idea of freedom and responsibility, and argued that in order to be, one must step out of the masses, exert one's will to power, and overcome the self in order to become all that is potential. The will to power instills meaning into existence and makes man significant in the face of conformity, anonymity, loneliness, and despair. Stating that God is dead (the philosophers and scientists had killed him), Nietzsche proposed an ultimate freedom and responsibility to

live life passionately. The Dionysian aspect in human nature was to be heeded, and the personal experience of feelings and emotions were to be included in the momentum of becoming an "overman."

With Nietzsche's suggestion that God is dead, Harper (1972) argued that the existential void became even more profound and anxiety intensified. If there were no God, what was the ultimate meaning in life? For the existentialist, it was what man chose to make it. Sartre (1999) argued that "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. It is also what is called subjectivity . . . " (p. 15). Responsibility was inherent in choice for Sartre, through which a person created "a certain image of man of my own choosing" (p. 18).

In what he labeled a "coherent atheistic position," Sartre (1999) believed that man is nothing more than his choices, "nothing else than a series of undertakings . . . he is the sum, the organization, the ensemble of the relationships which make up those undertakings" (p. 33). Man must create his own meaning, "life has no meaning *a priori* . . . it's up to you to give it a meaning" (p. 49). Although not in agreement with the view of Kierkegaard or other existentialists (Jaspers, 1970; Marcel, 1948; May, 1969; Tillich, 1952; Harper, 1972), Sartre acknowledged the existential nature of meaning construction. Harper (1972) believed that man could choose, or create himself in two ways. He could

> choose a style of life, make a personality for himself, that radically distinguishes the man of tomorrow from the man of yesterday. Second, anyone can refuse to consider a style of life that is already approved by others because they like it or because it is convenient, and can insist upon a life that he has worked out by himself and that he can justify on the basis of his own reasons. (p. 25)

Viktor Frankl (1959/1984) postulated his perspectives on existential meaning within the context of a profoundly meaningless and despairing world event. Through his experience within the fences of Auschwitz, the seeds of a system of existential analysis known as "Logotherapy" were sown. Described by Allport in the preface to Frankl's book, *Man's Search for Meaning*, the essence of logotherapy is "To weave these slender threads of a broken life into a firm pattern of meaning and responsibility" (p. 7). This was both the object and the challenge of this new therapeutic method, and for Frankl, it was the task of life.

As Frankl (1959/1984) observed individual differences in response to the cruelties and suffering in the concentration camp, he concluded that

> What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life . . . it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us . . . Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual. (p. 85)

For Frankl, the meaning of life was not a given. The question of meaning must be answered by each person. Meaning resides in a real and concrete life made up of real and concrete tasks, according to Frankl.

So out of the human predicament of loneliness, suffering, and despair, Frankl (1959/1984) asked the question, "can life retain its potential meaning in spite of its tragic aspects?" To say yes was to assume that there is in humanity a "capacity to creatively turn life's negative aspects into something positive or constructive" (p. 139). He continued by suggesting that there are three avenues to meaning, the first, the focus of this study, is by "creating a work or by doing a deed." The second avenue he suggested is "by experiencing something or encountering someone; in other words, meaning can be found

not only in work but also in love." The third avenue, and for Frankl, the most important, is that in the face of a fate which cannot be changed, man "may rise above himself, may grow beyond himself, and by so doing change himself" (p. 147).

Rollo May(1969), a prominent psychologist, existential philosopher, and writer of the twentieth century, reacted to the tendency of modernism to mechanize the human being and to study humanity from that perspective. The existentialist issue, rather, reaches to the center of an individual's being with challenges of responsibility, choice and meaning.

Arguing that William James was an existentialist, May (1969) quoted James, "'My first act of free will is to believe in free will'" (p. 5). Having experienced despair, James, through that act of the will, found purpose and direction for his life. He, according to May, continued to emphasize the "knowing by doing," and the "passionate immediacy of experience." Decision and commitment were considered prerequisites to the discovery of truth. May believed that, in William James, philosophy and psychology joined forces in a truly existential psychology. Issues such as experience, will, and anxiety were emphasized, yet the critical concern was an understanding of the individual at the deeper level of ontological being.

Existentialism, for May (1969) focused upon the "existing" person and emphasized the human process of becoming. Tillich (1952), the existential philosopher and theologian believed that the power to create oneself was uniquely human. In this freedom and responsibility to create oneself, Buhler (1967) argued that the emphasis of existential psychology is upon being as indicated in consciousness and the responsibility for one's existence. Influenced by May (1969) and Tillich (1952) Buhler stated , "The 'never-lost kernel' of man's existence is . . . his power to take some stand" (p. 87). She believed, that

there is the moment of decision, the point when an individual becomes truly human, when will is expressed. If the choice is made toward meaningful goals, it represents a person's intentionality, and thereby, an individual creates a meaningful life. Buhler made clear her belief in the role of responsibility and choice in meaning-making.

According to Morin (1995) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) meaning refers to purpose or significance, to intentionality, and/or to a sense of organization or order which clarifies and facilitates understanding. Although other disciplines focus on one aspect or another of these three, existentialism, as a philosophical perspective, emphasizes purpose, significance, and commitment. For the existentialists, the ultimate meaning of life is a meaningful life willed and created out of the void of aloneness and despair.

To construct meaning is a highly subjective and personal experience. It is unique to the individual who is not only ultimately free to choose, but also responsible for his choice. Heidegger (1962), it must be noted, modified the ultimate freedom somewhat when he suggested that there is a thrownness to our being. We are thrown into this particular situation with these particular parents in this particular environment. Freedom, although existential, is modified by the thrownness, according to Heidegger.

Framed within an existential perspective, this study focuses upon the human predicament as one of personal freedom and responsibility with the primary concern of man to find and fulfill purpose and meaning in life (Frankl, 1959/1984). Meaning-making is the fundamental activity of all human behavior. Man responds through the use of signs, symbols, and concepts, and although concepts report experience, they also constitute experience. Fingarette (1963) argued that "meaning-structure is not only constitutive of the experience-content, it is efficacious with regard to the course of that content's

transformations" (p. 22). Experience and reflection interact in the process of meaning construction. Together, they guide the individual into continued choice and action. A search for meaning is not synonymous with the search or pursuit of pleasure, although pleasure may be magnified by meaning (Fingarette, 1963). May (1969) argued that Nietzsche described man as a being that valued, among other things, power and love above pleasure and even survival. Man strives for some significance in the world. The individual, at the very core of being, desires to be understood. As a passionate being, man defines his existence through choice (Harper, 1972).

Harper (1972) continued:

> As soon as a person, no matter how young, realizes that he is going to have to die, and that what he will be depends entirely on what he makes of himself and his opportunities, his real motive for passion and self-discipline is discovered. He will never be satisfied with anything less than the self that he will shape; and his dissatisfaction with anything less than that ideal, built on what he has been so mysteriously given, will motivate his seeking, his breathless wandering through his own wastes and the confusions of the world, in order to find his time, his place, and his identity. (p. 38)

This passion, as an emotional response and motivator, influences choices related to every area of life. As the emotional investments of an individual's life are understood, meaning schemes are made evident. One can also say that it is meaning which makes events worthy of emotional energy and commitment. Meaning schemes weave experience into a web that unifies and integrates the personal and subjective (Fingarette, 1963). In a similar vein, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) described life themes and Sartre (1999) proposed goal-directed actions as indicative of significance and meaning.

Meaning, from an existential perspective, is the particular choices and commitments of an individual within the context of freedom and responsibility. It is a

process of creating the self, and extending oneself into the future. For Yalom (1980), "meaning is created by a person who is supraordinate to all his parts" (p. 23). The existentialist does not view the person as "a subject who can, under the proper circumstances, perceive external reality but as a consciousness who participates in the construction of reality" (p. 24).

The importance of meaning as a pivotal concept within the existential school is evident. Whether that meaning is immanent or transcendent is a question that divides existential advocates. Haughey (1989), professor of Christian ethics, proposed that most work meanings are primarily immanent rather than transcendent. Immanent work has to do with the everyday, while transcendent meaning suggests a meaning inherent in work as a benefit to others or as a connection to one's faith. This is to submit that potentially, both immanent meaning, i.e., constructed meaning, and transcendent meaning, or sacred meaning, are at work in the universe.

As a metaphor for this process, the implicate and explicate order of physics, proposed by David Bohm (1985) facilitates an understanding of the paradox of immanent and transcendent meaning.

> The movement of enfolding and unfolding is ultimately the primary reality . . . there is a continual enfoldment of the whole into each region, along with the unfoldment of each region into the whole again. (p. 12)

This is perhaps an unorthodox explanation for meaning, yet it is not a great distance from the existential sense, for in the process, each part is unique in the unfolding and enfolding process.

This study, a description of undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work, focuses upon *meaning* assigned to ideas of work. Whether students define meaning

as transcendent or immanent is an aspect of phenomenological subjectivity. From the perspective of existential philosophy, meaning may be studied, evaluated, critiqued, and either rejected or accepted, or both, although considered complex by some.

The study of meaning has been somewhat problematic, according to Creelman (1966). In a critical review of the body of literature that addressed experimental processes for the study of meaning, Creelman admitted the complexity of the concept, meaning.

> The search for the meaning of meaning has been pursued for hundreds of years by philosophers and theologians, but until recently only sporadic forays into this misty territory have been attempted by psychologists. (p. 3)

Even to define meaning is difficult without using the word meaning, or a close synonym in the definition. She was of the opinion that experimental strategies have been inadequate for the study of meaning.

Creelman (1966) acknowledged, however, the importance of the study of meaning by the very nature of her critical review of literature regarding this issue. "I came to my interest in meaning through many years of working with troubled, confused, or disorganized people." She concluded that their behavior could not be understood "simply in terms of the 'actual' events . . . but only in terms of what those events *meant* to them" (p. vii). Meaning, she contended, plays an important role in human development and behavior.

Despite the complexities involved in a study of meaning, undergraduate students' perception of the meaning in work is the current focus. Participants in this study are primarily in late adolescence or early adulthood. Age and stage in the life-process influence meaning-making according to some developmentalists. Although the structure of this study is not framed within a developmental paradigm, relevant literature is

discussed in the next section. Other factors related to career and work are mentioned briefly.

Development, Meaning, and Work

If meaning is the impetus, the push and pull of life, the question of this study is what meaning do students, on the verge of making life work choices, assign to work? What are the developmental issues in this process? Combining developmentalism (organic systems evolve through eras) and constructivism (people construct their own reality), Robert Kegan (1982) postulated a metapsychology which integrates neo-psychoanalytic and cognitive-developmental ideas and contentions within an existential (being/becoming) focus on the construction of meaning. Kegan suggested that a constructive-developmental framework, would facilitate the study of the "phenomenon in nature I call the evolution of meaning" (p. 15).

Kegan's (1982) central tenet is that through the activity of being a person, meaning is made. All that is a part of human life is meaning-making. He believed that humans "are the meaning-making context" (p. 11). Meaning-making is the foundational movement of personality. The process is continual, beginning as a "physical activity (grasping, seeing), a social activity (it requires another), a survival activity (in doing it, we live)" (p. 19). As the fundamental activity of the individual, Kegan asserted that through the developmental process of meaning-making the sense of self attains cohesiveness and identity.

From an existential perspective, meaning and identity form a partnership. In the dialectic of being and non-being, the critical issue of the individual is to choose to be oneself. For Sartre and Heidegger, it was not a question of whether to be or not to be, but

whether to be oneself or not be oneself (Harper, 1972). From classical philosophy the instruction is to know thyself. What is the process for knowing oneself? For Socartes, it was to examine one's inmost being. For the existentialists, also, the true path to authentic living is to live by one's own thinking.

In the preface to his book, *The Evolving Self* (1982), Kegan referred to Erikson's psychosocial ego psychology. Kegan believed that Erikson searched for the special quality that makes the human spirit unique and significant. For Kegan, that quality is the ability of the individual to achieve coherence in meaning-making activity. He believed that this process occurs within a zone of mediation, labeled as the ego, self or person by many.

St. Augustine's question, "What is nearer to me than myself?" is precisely the question least understood by many (Harper, 1972). "Yet who would deny the metaphor of an inner space, with its intentions, thoughts, feelings, crises, rhythms, order, surprises, events, and situations?" (p. 10). Identity is an underlying focus and preoccupation for all men. They want to know that they are distinctive in human kind, an awareness forged in the heat of experience and social interaction. For Harper, "The ultimate insult is to be passed by" (p. 60).

Moustakas (1967), another existential voice, stated:

> Every face of the universe, each man, woman, child, each plant and animal, the clouds and heavenly bodies, the wind and the sand and stars, each object, each space, even bits of gravel and broken stone, each item of nature, contains its own particular identity, its own unique form, its own special existence. (p. 26)

He continued by asserting that the individual emerges and takes his stand, i.e., "He brings his identity into being through authentic encounters, through genuine meetings" (p. 26). It is through the lived experience that one creates oneself, through "ingestion of meaning,

feeling, belief, value, within a unique self--this is the challenging responsibility and essential creativity in all life" (p. 27).

The question is then, in what way do students in higher education confront life and express genuine authenticity, especially in the context of goals related to meaning in work? Although Aristotle argued that youth cannot be philosophers, the young man or woman, nevertheless, constructs meaning from some source. This source of meaning is found either in the authentic self, or meaning is derived vicariously from other significant persons or group. Identity evolves within this meaning-making process as each individual, through trial and error, actualizes innate potential (Moustakas, 1967).

Erikson (1968), alluded to the mysterious nature of the term, identity, in his book entitled, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, when he stated that the more he writes about the subject, "the more the word becomes a term for something as unfathomable as it is all-pervasive" (p. 9). In an attempt to clarify an understanding of the term, identity, Erikson quoted William James,

> A man's character is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it came upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moments there is a voice inside which speaks and says: "This is the *real* me!" (p. 19)

Located within the individual and within the community, identity evolves in the complexity of both worlds.

Erikson (1968) defined identity in its subjective aspect, as

> the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods, the *style of one's individuality*, and that this style coincides with the sameness and continuity of one's *meaning for significant others* in the immediate community. (p. 50)

In this style of one's individuality, there is a hint of Kegan's (1982) meaning-making process. Identity and meaning-making interact dynamically.

Merleau-Ponty (1968) offered insight into the imperceptibility of identity with these words,

> Meaning is invisible, but the invisible is not contradictory of the visible: the visible itself has an invisible inner framework, and the in-visible is the secret counterpart of the visible. (p. 215)

In this idea, meaning and identity are joined as partners in the process of authentic living. Identity formation, viewed as a normative crisis in adolescence is always changing and developing (Marcia, 1966). The lived life of the individual, the visible, differentiated and expressed as a cohesive identity, is the counterpart of the in-visible, the underlying meaning.

Marcia (1966) researched Erikson's premise that the task of adolescence is identity vs. role confusion. He proposed four identity statuses through which one moves toward the effective resolution of identity: diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity achieved. Some researchers have suggested that individuals cycle through these four stages throughout life (Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, & Orlofsky, 1993). Meaning and identity development profoundly influence choices for life commitments.

Ultimately, the sense of identity is experienced as a sense of at-homeness both in one's own body, and in the world, a confidence that enables an individual to decide upon life issues. Although not necessarily inclusive of work, for many, work and identity issues are interrelated (Bellah, et al., 1985; Erikson, 1968; Fierman, 1984; Marcia, 1966; Pascarell & Terrazin, 1991; Raines & Day-Lower, 1986; Wiljanen, 1995).

Adults often explain or describe work as the indicator of adulthood. It is how they define who they are (Coles, 1978). The adults in Coles' study confirmed love and work as the normal tasks of adulthood. Work appears to be at the core understanding of an identity for those in adulthood, whether in terms of caring and connection (Gilligan, 1982/1993) or achievement and success.

For Super (1970), the self-concept at the time of career choice influences decisions about work. People progress through a series of stages in the refinements of the self-concept. Super proposed two major stages in vocational development: the Exploratory stage, subdivided into Tentative, Transition, and Trial substages, and the Establishment stage which involves two substages, Trial and Advancement. During the Tentative substage adolescents crystallize a vocation preference, based upon their sense of identity. In the Transition substage, however, individuals make a specific vocational choice. As young adults, this is a time of acting upon a commitment, of fulfilling goals and dreams, and the time to enter the adult world of work.

In a dissertation entitled, "Ego-Identity Status, Sex Role, and Career Self-Efficacy among Male and Female High School Students," Wiljanen (1995) focused upon the developmental stage of adolescent females and adolescent males and self-efficacy in traditionally male occupations and female occupations. Results from her study revealed that career planning and exploration were highly related to ego-identity status.

Across the span of the college years, students experience diverse ideas, philosophies, and issues which confront their sense of self, their beliefs, values, goals, and meaning in life. In their seminal work, *How College Affects Students*, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) began a chapter entitled "Attitudes and Values" with the following

statement, "There can be little doubt that American colleges and universities are and have been deeply concerned with shaping the attitudes, values, and beliefs of their students" (p. 269). A value foremost in the minds of college students relates to their role in the work world, and in society in general.

According to a classic study conducted by Perry (1981), adolescents exhibit dualistic cognition as they enter the world of higher education. Described as black-and-white thinking, the college student progresses through stages of cognitive abilities. From the extreme dualism of the freshman year, students begin to question dualism, and move into what Perry called multiplicity, where all viewpoints appear to be equally valid. The fourth stage is expressed in contextual relativism, the idea that truth is relative to the context in which it is defined. A final stage, dialecticism (King & Kitchener, 1994), or self-authorization (Kegan, 1982) refers to that point at which individuals can tolerate ambiguity and are developmentally ready to define and defend answers related to work and meaning-making.

Developmentalists such as Erickson (1968), Levinson (1978), and Vaillant (1977) have proposed theoretical systems for growth and change within the life span and specifically related to work and career foci. Others (Ginzberg, et al., 1951; Holland, 1973; Super, 1970), suggest processes or personality factors related to career choices. Allport, (1961), Erikson, (1964), Miller, Galanter, and Pribram, (1960), & Murphy, (1960) focused upon the role of plan and purpose in the process of choosing a work. Chickering (1969) suggested three major elements in formulating a plan of action:

> Development of purpose requires formulating plans for action and a set of priorities that integrate three major elements: (1) avocational and recreational interests, (2) pursuit of vocation, and (3) life-style issues

> including concerns for marriage and family. Increasing integration gives shape to experience, meaning to existence, and releases energy for coordinated action. (p. 108)

Chickering (1969) suggested that although development of purpose is different for boys and girls, plans with personal meaning extend the individual's interests and values into the future. Values are based upon an individual's own sense of self including interests and a desired life-style. Integrity is developed through a critical evaluation of beliefs and values, which for many, according to Chickering, relates to a religious belief.

Work values, which refer to an individual's specific desired qualities or outcomes, are considered salient in the development of a vocational identity (Schulenberg, Vondracek, & Kim, 1993). The authors referred to a study that suggested money, altruism, and security as examples of rewards one expects from work. Clarity of work values promotes career decisions. The relationship between work values and a career focus emphasizes the need for both a developmental and an individual perspective within career theory and practice.

As noted, developmentalists have suggested that education and preparation for the world of work are paramount in the critical years of transition from adolescence into young adulthood. Value clarification is one of the processes through which an individual must make choices about work. In an exploration of value, meaning of work, and personality factors in Technology and Liberal Arts students, Diehr (1978) argued that attitudes are based upon values. Attitudes toward work are determined by a person's value system. Whether meaning is derived from values, or values are based upon the meaning in one's life is a question that could be asked. The purpose of this study, however, is to describe the ideas about meaning in work held by individuals primarily at a

certain developmental stage, young adulthood. Choice related to work is influenced by personal meaning, developmental issues, and personality.

Ginzberg, et al., (1951) proposed that individuals progress through three stages of career choice: the fantasy stage, which extends from early childhood to about the age of 11, a time when children imagine themselves as a doctor, superhero, or nurse. During the tentative stage, which extends from early adolescence to about the age of 17, individuals are in transition from fantasy to becoming more realistic about their ideas about career choices. Adolescents move through phases during this time, from evaluating personal interests and capacities, to evaluating their values. During the twenties, individuals enter the realistic stage and make career choices.

Personality is related to personal interests and vocational preferences, (Holland, 1966). Holland theorized that an individual can be characterized by his/her resemblance to one or more personality types. Six personality types were proposed: Realistic, Intellectual, Social, Conventional, Enterprising, and Artistic. Type referred to both a characteristic of an occupational group, and a theoretical type, and was a model with which to measure the real person. The type was a product of characteristic interaction within an individual's environment.

In parallel with six personality types, Holland (1966) suggested six kinds of environments: Realistic, Intellectual, Social, Conventional, Enterprising, and Artistic. He believed that the interaction of personality and environment explains an individual's behavior.

One could suggest at this point that the focus upon meaning in this study has been left far behind. It is important to note, however, that although these theorists may

indirectly infer meaning-construction of the individual in their identity development and vocational choices, frameworks based upon theory place the individual in a mechanistic and static predicament. The contention of this study is that within the meaning-making activity, which is dynamic and personal, the interior life of the individual must be studied in order to understand that person's unique meaning in work.

In recognition of Kierkegaard's (1949) contention that existential reality is incommunicable, and Creelman's (1966) review related to difficulties in the study of meaning, the critical nature of an appropriate and effective methodology for the study of meaning is acknowledged. According to Polanyi (1958/1962), science comes forth from the human being's own personal passions and interests. Meaning is ascertained by combining parts into a whole and "the most pregnant carriers of meaning are of course the words of a language" (p. 57). In an attempt to explore ideas about the meaning in work, the manner in which ideas, the words, the parts, are significant in the context of work, implies an existential meaning. To quote Polanyi, "We pour ourselves out into them [words] and assimilate them as parts of our own existence. We accept them existentially by dwelling in them" (p. 59).

Maslow (1968) believed that values, including "intrinsic values of human beings," can be explored within science (p. 20). Csikszentmihalyi (1993) argued that theories of motivation have neglected phenomenology and focused upon outcomes rather than processes. Phenomenology, a combination of philosophy and psychology, seems to be the most effective perspective in the attempt to describe individual's ideas about the meaning in work. A brief review of the appropriateness of Q Method as it represents phenomenology is addressed in the next section.

Phenomenology in Relationship to Q Method

Q Method, the research design for this study, is based upon the principles of phenomenology. Phenomenology is a study of the interaction of experience and reflection. For Husserl (1977), the acknowledged founder of the phenomenological method, the world for each individual is only the world as existing for and being accepted in consciousness. Phenomenology focuses upon the lived experience of the person. It opens up the possibility for an exploration of the existential concerns of death, freedom, isolation, and meaning, concerns that cannot be adequately addressed through the empirical research methods of the positivist tradition.

> Since meaning is internal and meaning or
>
> > the signification which develops in objects is viscous . . . adheres to their fortuitous distribution and is a signification only for a body engaged at a given moment in a given task. (Merleau-Ponty, 1973, p. 104),

the effort of this study is to explore the signification of a concourse, or conversation related to a topic, work, in this context. According to Merleau-Ponty, "Science is not devoted to another world but to our own" (p. 15). It is in this recognition that empirical approaches typically do not access the internal meaning of each individual (May, 1969; Yalom, 1980). In an attempt to probe the subjective opinions, beliefs, and meanings held by individuals, Q Method utilizes a phenomenological methodology.

An existential focus probes beneath the layers of subject-object dichotomies to the internal world of an individual who is active in a personal construction of reality. It is a method which penetrates to the lived experience of another and "encounters the other without 'standardized' instruments and presuppositions" (Yalom, 1980, p. 25).

Phenomenology is an inspection of all human experience (Ricoeur, 1967). For Husserl, the interaction of experience and reflection is the world. Ricoeur, who wrote from his own translations of Husserl's works, explained Husserl's phenomenology,

> In refraining (mich enthalten) from positing the world as absolute, I conquer it as world-perceived-in-the-reflective-life; in short, I gain it as phenomenon . . . the world is for me absolutely nothing else but the world existing for and being accepted by me in such a conscious cogito. (p. 190)

Phenomenology focuses upon the lived experience of the individual. It allows the existentialists to "be" in the moment and to experience the other as "being" in the moment.

Phenomenology interweaves meaning and experience with the application of logos, language and thoughtfulness, to the phenomenon, lived experience, through what shows itself (Van Manen, 1990). Since meaning, from an existential perspective, emerges "in that it is detected, discovered, or found through acts of commitment as opposed to being invented or simply attached to things" (Morin, 1995, p. 45), phenomenological methods allow an exploration of that meaning-making process.

In speaking of scientific analysis and theoretical analyses, Henri Bergson (1949) acknowledged that the gathering and application of facts and the reflection upon the resulting concept is nothing more than "manipulating the concept profitably" (p. 34). Something more is needed, the " . . . very painful effort to place ourselves directly at the heart of the subject, and to seek as deeply as possible an impulse" (p. 35). Phenomenological methods pursue the heart of the subject, the impulse, and are the basis for the use of Q Methodology in this study.

The objective of this study is to describe undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work from an existential perspective. It is not to measure, evaluate, or

establish cause and effect relationships, but to listen to thoughts, to access internal subjective experience. This is best accomplished through a phenomenological study in which the attempt is made to experience the phenomena in the reality of the student as he/she presents him/herself rather than seeing the student through the eyes of dogma. The intent is to enter that underlying structure of meaning by which a person organizes his or her world, in other words, to enter into the subjective world of another.

Ellis and Flaherty (1992) defined subjectivity as human lived experience. They explained that a subjective sense of self is primary in lived experience.

> The process of subjectivity has an existence sui generis—an existence that cannot be reduced to "more basic" forces in the mechanics of physiology or the dynamics of interpersonal relations. (p. 6)

Subjectivity refers to the intertwining of cognition and emotion as individuals "define and interpret the meaning of their experience" (p. 9).

Humans intend toward that which holds personal meaning, yet subjectivity is not frequently researched (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992). The authors reasoned that there are several factors which might influence a reticence to research subjectivity: subjectivity is not controllable; it can be highly emotional and step out of the social realm of what is polite and rational; and researchers avoid the discomfort associated with this process. Subjectivity is, therefore, often left quietly hidden in the inner spaces of the other.

Researchers who are willing to study subjectivity, rather than seeing lived experience as quantifiable and predictable, probe Keats' (1814-1821) "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992, p. 5). The goal in a study of subjectivity is to "arrive at an understanding of lived experience that is both rigorous - based on systematic observation - and imaginative -

based on expressive insight" (p. 5). Descriptions and interpretations are the fruits of this labor, rather than numerical values and scales of comparison.

Based upon an understanding of the subjectivity of human experience as described by the individuals studied, phenomenology focuses upon whole intact meaningful experience without any attempt at reduction into component parts. What is important is to describe rather than explain or analyze (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). Descriptions rather than considerations of origins or causes of an experience are explored. The goal is to describe the processes by which an individual interacts inwardly with outward objects, experiences or events (Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1977; Sartre, 1999).

In an effort to enter undergraduate students' subjective understanding about the meaning in work, this study was constructed to utilize methods of phenomenology. Q-Method is a research design appropriate for a phenomenological study. As a technique for the study of intraindividual ideas about the meaning in work, Q-Method is a distinctive process aimed at the systematic study of human subjectivity (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). The concepts and principles of Q-methodology are addressed in the next section.

Q-Methodology

Developed as a method for the scientific study of human subjectivity, Q-methodology was a reaction to reductionism. William Stephenson (1953), the initiator of Q Method, argued that the use of proper methods provides the structure for accurate data collection and problem solutions. He believed that psychology had neglected methods, resulting in much "fumbling about among facts, with no rhyme and little reason," whereas, Q-methodology, a set of statistical, philosophy-of-science, and psychological principles,

addressed that issue (p. 1). Considered to be a logical analysis, Q-method is not concerned about physiological matters, but rather with concrete behavior in a naturalistic but scientific format. The inner experience and the actions of the individual are considered behavior, and are, therefore, "matters for objective, operational, definition and study" (p. 4).

Whereas traditional research explored individual differences using large samples, Q-method is constructed based on the phenomenological goal to study an individual case or small samples. An individual's or groups' abilities, personality, and attitudes are studied through the use of factor analysis, an analysis of people rather than items. Q Method is based upon sound theories and techniques for the study of individuals in their concrete behavior. The purpose of the Q-technique, therefore, is to study an individual's attitudes, thinking, personality, social interaction, psychological process, i.e., all that is subjective to the person. This can be done scientifically without the use of formal scales or other such measuring instruments familiar to psychology (Stephenson, 1953).

Q-methodology stirred a controversy in the research world. There were those who criticized Stephenson for attacking noted intellectuals such as Godfrey Thomson and Cyril Burt. He was seen as showy and careless, contentious, and repetitive. There was also considerable skepticism regarding the use of single-case studies. On the other hand, there were those who believed that Q-Method was a dependable frame of reference for the study of subjectivity (Brown, 1998).

Q-method is a systematic process for the study of an individual's particular point of view, indicated through a Q-sort. This is done as an individual systematically rank-orders

> a purposively sampled set of stimuli, namely, a Q-sample, according to a specific condition of instruction (e.g., from those that are "most characteristic of my viewpoint" to those that are 'most uncharacteristic of my viewpoint'). The nature of the stimuli making up the Q-sample is constrained only by the domain of subjectivity in which the researcher is interested (which Stephenson termed "a communication concourse"). (McKeown and Thomas,1988, p. 12)

The Q-sample, or collection of stimulus items, can be developed in any of three ways. A naturalistic Q-sample is drawn from opinions of respondents, either oral or written. Naturalistic Q-samples facilitate attributions of meaning, according to McKeown and Thomas (1988). Interviewing is the method suggested to be most effective, yet written narratives and other sources such as newspaper editorials and television talk shows may also be used as a source for a naturalistic Q-sample.

Ready-made Q-samples are constructed from sources outside the personal communications of the respondents. Taken from projects external to the study, conventional rating scales, and standardized Q-sorts, ready-made Q-samples are usually based in theory. The third process for generating a Q-sample is by combining both personal statements of respondents and statements from the ready-made samples. This is known as a hybrid Q-sample (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In this way, a concourse or a specific domain of subjectivity is studied. The methods and procedures used in this study are described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to describe undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work from an existential perspective. Q-Method as a phenomenological process aimed at accessing and addressing the beliefs of individuals is the specific method chosen to conduct this study. The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase included the development of the instrument or Q-sort. The second phase consisted of the recruitment of participants, the collection of data, and the data analysis procedure. The description of both phases is explained.

The First Phase

Concourse

A concourse refers to all subjective communication about a topic (McKeown & Thomas, 1988) and may be generated through a variety of procedures. Because interviews offer insight into participants' points of view and probe into personal experience previous to analysis and explanation (Kvale, 1996), in-depth interviews were conducted to provide the rich text of the concourse in this study, undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work. Although the researcher's ontological assumption shapes the perspective, in phenomenological studies, data are first collected, analyzed, and

interpreted. The qualitative approach, considered constructivist, naturalistic, interpretive, or postpostivist in approach, formed the basis for accessing the concourse in this study (Creswell,1994). Participants' personal opinions about meaning in work, stated in the interview process, was the first step in the development of an instrument for this study.

Participants in this first phase of the study were undergraduate students at a small parochial liberal arts university (SPU) and graduate students at a large land-grant university (LGU). Approval was granted for both phases of this study by Institutional Review Boards (Appendix A). Students enrolled in an upper-division capstone course were recruited to participate in the interview process. The project was explained to the class and signatures were obtained from students who were willing to participate. Each individual was contacted, either by telephone or personally, to further inform about the process and to schedule the appointment for the interview. It was made clear that no negative consequences would result if they chose not to participate. In-depth interviews were conducted with fifteen traditional age (18-22 year-olds), either fourth or fifth year seniors. Included in the group were six females and nine males. Three Hispanics, one African American, and one Caucasian, who had grown up in Zimbabwe, were among the participants. Participants represented various fields of study: two Sociology, two Human Relations, and two Computer Network Systems majors, as well as one major from each of the following disciplines: American Studies, Political Science, Chemistry, Business Administration, Finance, Marketing, Psychology, and History.

The interviews were conducted in a small warmly decorated office with a window. After a brief visit, each individual read and signed a consent form. Each interview lasted

for approximately an hour and a half. The data were analyzed according to emerging themes and patterns, characteristic of qualitative research.

Instrument Development

A list of approximately 100 statements indicating a variety of meanings in work was extracted from the interview data. In order to provide some underlying structure to the selection of statements, statements were categorized according to personal, social, and religious themes within the content of the statement. The statements were then arranged into categories relevant to Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs: Physiological needs (N), Safety needs (S), Belongingness and Love needs (B), Esteem needs (E), and Self-Actualization needs (SA). To facilitate an adequate representation of these categories, and to avoid redundancy, statements representative of each category were selected. This was not intended to serve as a template for interpretation, but as a tool to ensure variety and range. A list of 55 statements, which reflected undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work, formed the naturalistic Q-sample used in the pilot study.

A Q-sort requires the use of a formboard to help participants in structuring the Q-sort. A participant reveals his or her point of view by rank-order Q-sample statements along a continuum of significance as directed in the condition of instruction. The condition of instruction serves as a guide to the Q-sorting process (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The condition of instruction for this study was stated in the form of a question, "What is your belief about the meaning in work?" Demographic data was requested on the formboard. This form was used and refined throughout the pilot study.

A practice Q-sort was conducted with adult students in a doctoral seminar that included learning Q Method. The sorting instructions were designed to guide the process of rank-ordering the 55 statements. Feedback from this administration and initial analysis revealed a redundancy of statements. The statements were re-evaluated and reduced in number. A Q-sample consisting of 42 statements was developed, the condition of instruction was refined, and a post-sort question was included on the revised formboard. The shape of the formboard is inconsequential, according to McKeown and Thomas, (1988). The subject is free to place any item at any point within the distribution, thereby subjectively determining the meaning of the statements. It is suggested that fewer items at the extremes indicates greater significance.

Another practice Q-sort, which utilized the condensed Q-sample on the new formboard, was conducted in an upper-division psychology course at the parochial liberal arts university. From the experience and data gathered in the pilot study, the research instrument included a naturalistic Q-sample of 42 statements related to ideas about the meaning in work. After a final revision according to the doctoral committee's suggestions, the instrument for this study was refined to include items from the original interviews reflecting greater diversity. A Q-sample consisting of forty-two items was considered an adequate representation of the naturalistic concourse while also being limited to a size that facilitated the sorting process, D. Montgomery (Personal communication, April 14, 1999). Institutional Review Board permission was sought with the research instrument and determined appropriate for the study (Appendix A).

The Second Phase

Study Participants

The participants, designated as a P-sample, were selected based upon both theoretical and pragmatic considerations (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The focus of this study is upon individuals who are students, primarily between 18 and 22 years of age, in the process of earning an undergraduate degree at a university. The universities were selected pragmatically. Undergraduate students at a small parochial university (SPU) and a large land-grant university (LGU) were invited to participate.

In the summer of 1999, permission was requested to recruit students in upper-division courses at the land-grant institution. After many attempts to make connections, permission was granted to conduct the study in one upper-division general education course, Human Development. There were 37 students enrolled with 10 males and 27 females.

The researcher was introduced and allowed to announce the focus of the study, the times available for the Q-sort, and the assigned room for the study. Letters of invitation that explained the research topic and procedure were given to the students (Appendix B). Twenty-five students indicated their willingness to participate by signing the form circulated in the classroom. Sixteen students accompanied the researcher to the assigned room, consent forms were presented and signed, and the Q-sort conducted. At another appointed time, the same procedure was conducted with 2 more students, which brought the total from that class to 18 participants, 16 females and 2 males.

Early in the fall semester, at the same university, permission was granted to recruit participants in an upper-division special education course. There were 80 students enrolled in this course, 31 males and 49 females. The professor introduced both the researcher and the study and students were invited to participate. At the end of the class, the researcher asked for volunteers, and two female students accompanied her to the assigned room. In an attempt to achieve a better gender balance, an instructor for that course later invited male students to participate in the study, but they refused.

Participants were recruited at the parochial university in the fall of 1999. After permission was granted by professors, students in upper-division courses were invited to participate. The chair of the business department granted permission to present the study and recruit participants within the business department's student advisory board.

From the social psychology course, which consisted of 37 students, 17 students participated in the study. There were 12 males and 25 females enrolled in the course, 6 males and 11 females performed the Q-sort. The linear algebra course included 15 students, 7 males and 8 females. Although the researcher requested two females and two males, only 1 male and 1 female participated. From the history course with 17 students, 15 students, performed the Q-sort. Of the 8 males and 9 females, only 7 males and 8 females participated in the study. All 8 students on the student business advisory board, 5 females and 3 males, performed the Q-sort.

A total of sixty-two undergraduate students participated in this study: 20 students, 18 females and 2 males, from the large land-grant university (LGU), and 42 students, 25 females and 17 males, from the small parochial university (SPU). Four (4) Asian, 2

Hispanic, 1 Native American, and 2 International students were among the total pool of participants. See Table I for demographic data.

TABLE I

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic Category		LGU	SPU
Gender			
Male		2	17
Female		18	25
	Total	20	42
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian		2	2
International		1	1
Hispanic		1	1
Native American		0	1
	Total	4	5
Age		Male	Female
19		1	6
20		7	12
21		6	13
22		3	6
24		0	2
32		0	1
36		1	0
42		0	1
NR		1	2
	Total	19	43

Note: NR = No Response

Procedures

Participants were given letters of invitation to explain the research topic and procedure (Appendix B). Consent forms (Appendix B) were given to students who indicated willingness to participate, and were collected after being signed. The Q-sort formboards and packets of statements were disseminated, and instructions were given for the process (Appendix B). Students were asked to respond to the questions on the formboard related to demographic data, information about gender, age, level of classification, and major field of study.

The sorting instructions (Appendix B) asked participants to sort or rank-order the 42 statements of the Q-sample. The distribution of statements is shown in Figure 1.

Most unlike								Most like
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Column -4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Figure 1. Distribution of Q Sort Statements

Through the sorting of the Q-sample, an individual's viewpoint is revealed (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In the effort to gather data which discloses the individual's subjective beliefs about the meaning in work and to assist in the interpretation of factors,

the participants were asked to respond to a post-sort question on the reverse side of the formboard, "What else would you like to say about the meaning in work?"

Upon the completion of the Q-sort, the data were entered into PQMethod (Schmolck, 1998), software designed specifically for the analysis of Q-Method data. Principle components factor analysis and VARIMAX rotation were utilized. Since persons (N Q-sorts) and not traits or items are correlated, a factor analysis of the N X N correlation resulted in factors that represent points of view (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The association of each individual was indicated by the magnitude of her/his loading on that factor. Factor scores were calculated using z-scores with each statement scored for each factor. This facilitated the task of understanding and interpreting the meanings of factors, first by the construction of a theoretical factor array, and second, through the statistical difference in statement rank for any pair of given factors. Attention was given to emergent patterns, in terms of consensual and divergent subjectivity. The emergent patterns from this study have been interpreted and described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to describe, from an existential perspective, undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work. The research questions answered in this chapter are:

1. What are undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work?
2. From an existential perspective, what does this data reveal about undergraduate students' construction of meaning related to work issues?

Q-Method was used to determine the predominant view of work held by a sample of young adults attending a large comprehensive land grant university (LGU) and a small private parochial university (SPU). This chapter discusses the results of the analysis, a description of the participants, and an interpretation of each of the factors as revealed in the data. Interpretation of the factors is based on the factor structure with the Q-sort loadings that signify a defining factor (Table IV, p. 67), factor arrays (Appendix C, Table C-I, Figure C-I), normalized factor scores for each factor (Appendix C, Table C-II, Table C-III, and Table C-IV), and responses to an open-ended post-sort survey question. The demographic data are presented as relevant to the revealed factors.

Description of Participants

The P-sample included sixty-two (62) individuals, undergraduate students at one of two universities, a small parochial, liberal arts university (SPU), and a large, comprehensive, land-grant university (LGU). Ages ranged from nineteen to forty-two years. Of the sixty-two (62) participants, fifty-one (51) were between the ages of twenty and twenty-two, the traditional age for undergraduate students in upper-division classes. Seven (7) participants were nineteen years of age, two (2) participants were twenty-four years of age, one (1) thirty-two, one (1) thirty-six, and one (1) participant was forty-two years of age.

Of the sixty-two (62) participants, there were forty-three (43) female students and nineteen (19) male students. This ratio was roughly indicative of the enrollment of most of the courses within which participants were recruited as indicated in Table II.

TABLE II

GENDER ENROLLMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Course	Male	Female	Total Enrolled	Male	Female	Study Total
Psy 3133	10	27	37	2	16	18
Sped 3202	31	49	80	0	2	2
Psy 3113	12	25	37	6	11	17
Math 3133	7	8	15	1	1	2
Hist 3353	8	9	17	7	8	15
Bus. S.A.C.	3	5	8	3	5	8

Participants indicated a variety of majors with the largest number, seventeen (17) in psychology. Business, education, sociology, including human relations, and family studies are also represented. Table III portrays the major areas of interest and number of students for each.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH MAJOR AREA OF INTEREST

Major		Number
Psychology		17
Human Relations		6
Sociology		6
Family Studies	1	
Education		8
Math	1	
History	5	
Elementary	1	
Physical	1	
Business		10
Accounting	2	
Administration	2	
Management	2	
Aviation	1	
International Relations/Fin.	1	
Marketing	2	
History	2	6
History/Philosophy	1	
History/English	3	
Political Science		2
Pre-Medicine		2
Computer Science/Physics		1
Biology/Chemistry		1
Speech Communication		1
Architectural Design		1
Undecided		1
Total P-sample		62

There were seven (7) participants classified at the sophomore level, twenty-four (24) junior level, thirty (30) at the senior level and one (1) graduate level student. Nine participants represented the following ethnic groups: four (4) Asian, two (2) Hispanic, one (1) Native American, and two (2) International students.

Description of Revealed Factors

The intent of this research was to answer the question, what are undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work? Through the Q-sort, statements were rank-ordered by the participants. Significance of factors may either be determined from a theoretical or statistical basis (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). In this study, a three factor solution was chosen both theoretically and statistically as having the greatest strength. Theoretically, the solution accounted for the greatest number of student Q-sorts without a factor with too few significant loadings of Q sorts. Significant factor loadings were program generated (PQ Method, 2.06 for MS-DOS) and are indicated by an X (Table IV). Significant loadings were flagged by the program default using "pure" calculation "according to the rules: Flag loading a if (1) . . . (factor 'explains' more than half of the common variance) and (2) . . . (loading 'significant at p>,05')" (Schmolch, 1998, p.7).

TABLE IV

FACTOR MATRIX WITH AN X INDICATING A DEFINING FACTOR

	Q-Sort	1	2	3
1	OPF1	.4899X	.3465	.2953
2	O2PM	.1246	.6935X	.4380
3	03FP1	.5110	.5945X	-.1658
4	04MAD	.5846X	.3562	-.0355
5	05FP3	.2097	.2433	.3967X
6	06FBM	.3244	.1729X	.1075X
7	07FS	-.1223	.6781X	.1851X
8	08FAM	-.1488	.7614X	.1755X
9	09FP4	.2524	.4833X	.0077
10	010FO5	-.4236	.1238	.6400X
11	011FPM2	.6908X	.5374	-.1681
12	012FP6	.3110	.7211X	-.0974
13	013FP7	-.0717	.2908	.4530X
14	014FP8	.8533X	.2550	-.2806
15	015FP9	-.0269	.5540X	.5306
16	016FPR	.2109	.6879X	-.1366
17	017FP10	.4965	.6481X	-.0081
18	018FP11	.3908	.2217	-.3530
19	019FPE	.3964	.6536X	.0412
20	020FEE	.7239X	.1722	.2289
21	S21MP12	.870	-.2104	.5658X
22	S22MP13	-.2122	.0794	.2748
23	S23FS2	.7135X	.3607	-.0908
24	S24MP14	.6774X	.3776	-.2811
25	S25FHR	.5012X	.3308	.0636
26	S26FP15	-.0188	-.1077	-.0238
27	S27MH	-.0536	.3132X	.2492
28	S28FS3	.3903	.5016X	.0521
29	S29FFS	.7912X	.2492	-.2380
30	S30MBM	.4441	.5907X	.0514
31	S31MHR2	.7161X	.2795	.0011
32	S32FHR3	.6956X	.0310	-.1528
33	S33FP16	.2663	.5570X	-.4165
34	S34FP17	.1868	.6570X	.2303
35	S35FHR4	.7255X	.3859	-.1705
36	S36FHR5	.3628	.2951	.4130
37	S37FHR6	-.4234X	-.0991	.3523
38	S38FIRF	.7263X	.3045	.1610
39	S39MAB	.7448X	.2710	.1674
40	S40MBAL	.7600X	.0293	.3852
41	S41MA	.7227X	.1930	.1178
42	S42FM	.7691X	.0364	-.2513
43	S43FM	.6103X	.4906	-.0655
44	S44FA	.4418	.5600X	.3291
45	S45FM	.6286X	.1557	.2305
46	S46MCS	.2833	..5529X	.2617
47	S47FMEd	.7252X	.3953	-.0842
48	S48MHEd	.4216	.5851X	.0904
49	S49MHEd	.6853X	.3264	.0866
50	S50MHEd	.2748	.5051	.5823X
51	S51FHs	.5506X	.5149	-.0286
52	S52MHEd	.2209	.4692	.5508X
53	S53FUd	-.2389	-.0340	.7168X
54	S54FB	.6613X	.3577	.2406
55	S55FS	.6709X	-.0933	-.0395
56	S56MH / P	-.4536X	.0701	.1612
57	S57EEn	.3636	.5163X	.2212
58	S58FHs	.0696	.7898X	-.2562
59	S59FSpC	.5243	.5372	.1263
60	S60MPS	.6649X	.4383	-.0191
61	S61MPS	.5320X	-.0691	.5108
62	S62FE / H	.7687X	.1047	-.0094
	% expl. Var.	26	19	8

Note: X is determined at a .05 level of significance.

Interpretations of Factors

The three emergent factors were interpreted using z scores, consensus and discriminate items, and interview information, which led to the identification of the following groups of workers, Social Influence Workers, Personal Fulfillment Workers, and Economic Reality Workers.

Factor One, Social Influence Workers

Of the twenty-nine (29) participants who loaded on factor one, nineteen (19) were female, ten (10) were male, with two (2) Hispanic students, one (1) Asian, and one (1) International student. These individuals are designated the Social Influence Workers. The emerging pattern of belief held by these persons indicates a belief that work is a calling. W2ork is about helping people and is for "my Creator." Work means to give back to society. Through work, one is able to "make a difference." They believe that work gives one a sense of accomplishment and enables one to "plug-in and make a contribution." In the sense that work is service to God and humanity, work has a spiritual meaning.

Inferences about the commonalities of beliefs held by the individuals who loaded on factor one were drawn from the rank statement totals (See Appendix C, Table C-II), which include the normalized factor (Z) scores along with the rank and the distinguishing statements for factor one. The statements that were most like their ideas about the meaning in work were placed in the + 4 column on the Q-sort formboard (Appendix C, Figure C-2). The following table (Table V) lists factor one statements based on the five statements with the highest positive valence (most like), the five statement with the lowest

negative valence (or most unlike), and the most distinguishing statements (those statements indicating absolute difference as determined in the Factor Arrays (Appendix C, Table C-1).

These positively ranked statements further validate the description of this group as the social influence workers:

3. #22 Work is to make the world a better place (+ 2).

4. #8 Work is to give back to society (+ 2).

Agreement on the following statements also lend support to the description:

5. #30 Work is love of life or rewards (-2).

6. #26 Work is just economic support (-2).

The individuals who loaded on this factor indicate that work holds meaning as a calling. In response to the post-sort question, an SPU male human relations major wrote "I think of work as a ministry opportunity," while an SPU female human relations major responded, "I feel like work is something God calls us to. I believe I can make a difference in people's lives through God." An SPU male history education major remarked, "If a person is happy and feels like he is doing what God is calling him/her to do that is all the meaning a person needs."

TABLE V

FACTOR ONE, SOCIAL INFLUENCE WORKERS: FIVE HIGHEST (MOST LIKE), FIVE LOWEST (MOST UNLIKE) RANKED STATEMENTS, AND DISTINGUISHING STATEMENTS

Statement Number	Statement	(z) Score
Five	Highest Ranked Statements	
1	Work is to help people.	1.501
16	Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	1.477
38	Work is for my Creator.	1.399
29	Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	1.310
31	Work is a sense of accomplishment.	1.050
Five	Lowest Ranked Statements	
28	Work is drudgery.	-2.325
15	Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, . . . "	-2.033
21	Work is frustration.	-2.014
13	Work has a negative connotation.	-1.771
4	Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	-1.486
Most	Distinguishing Statements	
16	Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	1.477
38	Work is for my Creator.	1.399
29	Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	1.310
32	Work is to survive.	-.872

Note: Based on normalized factor (z) scores

Indicating another aspect of the Social Influence Workers belief, an LGU female psychology major remarked,

> Work gives me a sense of purpose. This drives me to be the best I can through accomplishing goals at work. By doing this I feel that I have helped others which is my goal in life.

An LGU female pre-med. student stated,

> Work means to find something worthwhile and meaningful to do. Also to find your way to make a difference in your own life and the lives of others.

For an LGU female elementary education major, the response was more explicit,

> I feel that everybody should pray about what God wants for him/her in life and to choose a work field based on what he/she feels God has called him/her to do.

Another LGU female student, a psychology major acknowledged that the meaning in work for her is "a great feeling of independence when I don't have to rely on my parents and can maybe give back to them . . ." The noted responses further clarify and explain the ideas about the meaning in work of the Social Influence Workers.

These individuals believe that work is meaningful, purposeful, and an opportunity to serve society. They believe that work is about helping people, and is for "my Creator." It is one's duty to "work" for God. They could be called the doers. There is a strong focus upon the self doing. These individuals perceive of work as also having a spiritual meaning. In helping others and in service to the Creator, work for these folk nourishes the spirit. Meaning in work is constructed in terms of service to humanity and in connection to the Divine.

The Social Influence workers have a strong sense of giving back to society. An SPU male political science major responded clearly to the post-sort question, "Work is to find your purpose of your life and to give back to the community with those gifts." To help people, and thereby, "glorify God" nourishes the spirit and is the experience of life for these workers. An SPU female family studies major stated, "For me it won't be simply a job, but something that I do to glorify God and bless the society while doing it." Another student, a female SPU human relations major, responded,

> Most people work to survive, I on the other hand want my life work to be inspired by God. I want to make a difference in the world.

A female SPU international student, pursuing a degree in international finance responded,

> Working is a way to interact with people, trying to do good in the world we live in and it makes our days fuller. Work also helps us grow in ourselves and with others, but most of all in the relationship we have with our creator.

A female SPU business major contended,

> I feel it is our calling by God to excel in and enjoy ourselves (by doing everything for His glory) in our work, no matter what the task. God created us with minds and bodies that aren't to be wasted.

Focused upon vocation or calling, these individuals perceive of the meaning in work as being connected both to a divine being and humanity. They have a sense of divine responsibility to serve society. There is acknowledgment of personal benefits such as a sense of accomplishment and identity. Although there is no admission of meaning in work as related to necessities such as finances, economy, or the provision of products and services, the Social Influence Workers recognize a secondary meaning to work relates to providing for the family, the chance to learn, and the opportunity to use knowledge and skills. Aspects of work such as cultural experiences, fulfillment, and stability appear to be insignificant by-products for this group. They are neither positive nor negative in their response to these possibilities.

The Social Influence Workers see work as challenging and an opportunity to experience life. They have an optimistic perspective about the world of work and the meaning that can be derived from that effort. They do not believe that work is drudgery, has a negative connotation, or is boring. Meaning for them is not about personal hope

and power, maturity, and happiness. Meaning in work is constructed around service to God and humanity.

In a polar opposite view of work, sometimes interpreted as an entirely different factor, two participants, a male and a female student, loaded on this factor with a negative score. For them, work was seen as drudgery, boring, negative, and just financial support with no sense of the spiritual or service aspect. Work is not about service to society and is not related to a Divine Being. It is not about calling; work is about necessity. One of the two, an SPU female human relations major, stated,

> Although "work" may have several connotations, it has a negative one for me because my dad forced me to have jobs as soon as I turned sixteen.

Another, an SPU male history/philosophy major responded, "Work is something that one has to do in order to survive. The world I live in is that kind of place." These individuals do not see work as meaningful on the level of service. For them work is basic survival and has a negative connotation.

The demographic data comparisons vary somewhat among the factors. For those who loaded on the Social Influence Workers factor, there was a ratio of two (2) females to (1) male and an age range from nineteen years (two individuals) to twenty-one years of age. Of these, there were two (2) Hispanic students, one (1) Asian, and one (1) International student. There was a ratio of five (5) SPU students to one (1) LGU student. The students who loaded on this factor represented a variety of majors, including 8 business, 5 human relations, 3 psychology, 3 sociology, 3 history, 3 education, 2 political science, 1 pre-med., and 1 architectural design (Appendix D, Table D-I).

Factor Two, Personal Fulfillment Workers

Twenty-one (21) participants, sixteen (16) female and five (5) male, loaded on the second factor, including two (2) older participants (a 36 year old and a 42 year old). (See Appendix D, Table D-II for further demographic data and the statement array for this factor.) The emerging pattern of belief for these individuals is designated as Personal Fulfillment Workers. They believe that work is about a sense of accomplishment, the use of knowledge and skills, and a sense of identity. They are focused on individual achievement and fulfillment through the use of personal abilities and a sense of being productive. Unlike the beliefs held by those who loaded on factor one, this group of individuals does not perceive of the meaning of work related to a divine being or to spiritual issues.

The inferences about the beliefs of the individuals who loaded on factor two were derived from the same statistical sources as factor one, normalized factor z- scores and distinguishing statements, (See Appendix C, Table C-III) for factor two. Some of the distinguishing statements were:

- #9 Work is to use knowledge and skills (+4).
- #36 We are created to work (-4).

The following table (Table VI) lists factor two statements based on the five statements with the highest positive valence (most like), the five statements with the lowest negative valence (or most unlike), and the most distinguishing statements.

Agreement on the positive valence of other statements emphasizes the description of these individuals as personal fulfillment workers:

- #19 Fulfillment is a big one in work (+3).
- #3 Work is challenging (+2).

TABLE VI

FACTOR TWO, PERSONAL FULFILLMENT WORKERS: FIVE HIGHEST (MOST LIKE) FIVE LOWEST (MOST UNLIKE)RANKED STATEMENTS, AND DISTINGUISHING STATEMENTS

Statement Number	Statement	(z) Score
Five	Highest Ranked Statements	
31	Work is a sense of accomplishment.	1.784
9	Work is to use knowledge and skills.	1.462
10	Work gives one a sense of identity.	1.393
37	Work is to feel useful or productive.	1.336
35	Work is to find out about your abilities.	1.210
Five	Lowest Ranked Statements	
36	We are created to work.	-1.943
15	Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, . . . "	-1.753
28	Work is drudgery.	-1.641
26	Work is just economic support.	-1.451
5	Work has a spiritual meaning.	-1.448
Most	Distinguishing Statements	
9	Work is to use knowledge and skills.	1.461
35	Work is to find out about your abilities.	1.210
36	We are created to work.	-1.943
16	Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	-.325

Note: Based on normalized factor (z) scores

Agreement on the following statements further validates the above description:

- #21 Work is frustration (-2).

- #42 Work prevents a lack of resources (-2).

In affirmation of the statement, "Work is a sense of accomplishment," one participant, an LGU female psychology major, commented in answer to the post-sort question, "Work shows that there are many opportunities and many accomplishments to be made." Another student, an SPU female psychology major, placed the meaning in work within the context of something gained, "whether it is money or honor." An LGU female advertising/marketing major responded,

> When you are using your mind to contribute positively to society you get a greater sense of identity and reward from your job. The economic or financial rewards become secondary when you are doing a job that fulfills you as a person.

The Personal Fulfillment Workers believe that meaning in work is derived from a sense of fulfillment and the sense of being useful or productive. A female LGU psychology major noted, "Work has to be fulfilling and a joy if you are going to be productive at it." Another participant, a female LGU psychology major, stated, "To work should be to find fulfillment in a job." A male business management major (SPU) commented, "Your career should reflect some aspect of joy and fulfillment in your life." A female LGU public relations major responded with the idea that

> the meaning in work is to have fun, and enjoy something you're good at. It involves growing throughout the process of climbing the ladder. It's self-accomplishing and the whole-hearted feeling that soothes your inner peace.

Through these comments, made in response to the post-sort question, the pattern of belief related to personal accomplishment, fulfillment, and sense of identity emerges. This pattern describes individuals who perceive of the meaning in work as primarily individually focused. They find meaning in the use of their knowledge, skills, and the

feeling of being productive and useful. There is challenge in work for these people. One student, a female LGU business management major, noted, "I don't believe that life itself is work. I believe that work is challenging." For another, an LGU female psychology major, work is meaningful if it is "Something you want to do."

Work offers the Personal Fulfillment Workers meaning in the opportunity to learn more about their abilities and about the world. A female SPU accounting major, in response to the post-sort question, said, "Work to me is an area where I can be productive and challenged yet offers support and insight to this world and its meaning." A male computer science/physics major (SPU) responded, "Work is the best way to learn how to do particular tasks." A sense of "self-esteem and confidence" was the idea about the meaning in work of an SPU male history education major.

The Personal Fulfillment Workers acknowledge that work is instrumental; it is financial; it offers stability; and it provides for the family. There is meaning in work as a means to make the world a better place, yet not defined in terms of a means by which to give back to society. They are concerned about helping people and making a difference, yet the primary focus in the meaning in work for these individuals relates to personal accomplishment. Insignificant to these workers, but perhaps as a by-product, work is maturity and economy.

The Personal Fulfillment Workers do not find meaning in work related to an inherent purpose of humanity, "We are created to work," nor in a religious sense of meaning, such as "Work is for my Creator." They are not negative about work, for they do not believe that work is drudgery or just economic support. Work for them is not

boring and does not mean frustration. Work, however, holds no inherent spiritual meaning. It is self-expression and self-fulfillment.

The beliefs of the Personal Fulfillment Workers are similar to the beliefs of the Social Influence Workers about the meaning in work as a sense of accomplishment. For the Personal Fulfillment Workers, the statement, "Work is a sense of accomplishment" was placed in the + 4 position on the formboard, while the Social Influence Workers placed that statement in a position with a lower positive valence, +2. The meaning in work is seen by both groups as positive, challenging, and for a Personal Fulfillment Worker (an SPU female psychology student), "another factor is the contentment we feel after we've completed a task."

The Personal Fulfillment Workers also agree with the Social Influence Workers that an aspect of the meaning in work is related to a social contribution and a positive benefit in the world. They believe that work is to provide for family; it is to make the world a better place, and is one way to leave a legacy. They differ most in their ideas about social influence related to a vocation or calling, and the meaning in work as a service to God and humanity rather than as personal development, accomplishment, and fulfillment.

The Personal Fulfillment Workers consisted of a three (3) to one (1) female, male ratio. Ages ranged from nineteen years (one) to forty-two (one thirty-six year old and one forty-two year old student). Eleven (11) LGU students and (10) SPU students loaded on this factor, a ratio of almost one (1) to one (1). The major areas of study represented by the students loading on this factor were: 7 psychology, 4 business, 4 history, 2 sociology,

1 pre-med., 1 computer science/physics, 1 public relations, and 1 education (Appendix D, Table D-II).

Factor Three: Economic Reality Workers

Seven (7) participants loaded on factor three, four (4) female and three (3) male students with one (1) Asian and one (1) international student. (See Appendix D, Table D-III for further demographic data and the statement array for this factor.) These are designated the Economic Reality Workers. Statements such as the following define the pattern of beliefs about the meaning in work for these individuals.

- #32 Work is to survive.
- #18 Work is economy . . . it is necessary to live.

Survival is a primary focus for these people, and, for them, the meaning in work is about money, stability, and economy, which are necessary for survival. They want the stability that work can offer. Work is also meaningful as a way to provide for the family. In that context, work is a sense of accomplishment and gives one a sense of identity. This does not mean that work has a negative connotation for these folk. It is not about religion or a good work ethic. It is about money, provisions, and survival.

Again, inferences about this group's beliefs about the meaning in work are derived from the rank statement totals and the distinguishing statements for factor three (Appendix C, Table C-IV). The five statements with the highest agreement, the five statements with the lowest agreement and distinguishing statements are in Table VII.

TABLE VII

FACTOR THREE, ECONOMIC REALITY WORKERS: FIVE HIGHEST (MOST LIKE), FIVE LOWEST (MOST UNLIKE) RANKED STATEMENTS, AND DISTINGUISHING STATEMENTS

Statement Number	Statement	(z) Score
Five	Highest Ranked Statements	
32	Work is to survive.	2.270
14	Work is financial.	2.219
17	Work is to provide for family.	2.214
18	Work is economy . . . it is necessary to live.	1.950
24	Work is stability.	1.661
Five	Lowest Ranked Statements	
2	Work is happiness.	-1.818
13	Work has a negative connotation.	-1.730
5	Work has a spiritual meaning.	-1.654
30	Work is love of life or rewards.	-1.533
33	Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	-1.410
Most	Distinguishing Statements	
32	Work is to survive.	2.270
14	Work is financial.	2.219
2	Work is happiness.	-1.818
29	Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	-.525

Note: Based on normalized factor (z) scores

These individuals are not interested in social issues or intrinsic meaning in work. They find meaning in work as it serves the purpose of assisting in the task of surviving. Although they acknowledge some positive agreement with the statement, "Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do," the strength of statements about financial and survival meaning places the sense of being called in the context of the role of provision.

Other statements which lend support to the revealed pattern are:

- #26 Work is just economic support (+2).
- #34 Work is to provide products and services (+2).

The Economic Reality Workers did not agree with the following statements:

- #29 Work is seeing that I could make a difference (-2).
- #22 Work is to make the world a better place (-1).

One participant, an SPU female undecided in major, responded strongly to the post-sort question,

> My view of work is strictly a "job" a means to survive in our country since everything revolves around money and our economy. When talking about work is helping people, I don't call that work.

Another, a female SPU psychology major believes that "Work is subjective to your income level." One LGU female Asian psychology student stated, "People need to work hard in entire lives." For one male SPU psychology major, work is required. He stated, "God calls us, no, requires us to work." Another, an SPU male history education major, said,

> First, and foremost, I see work as a way to provide for me and the things I want to do. Once I start a family, that will change, but for now, work allows me to provide for myself.

The Economic Reality Workers acknowledge the meaning in work related to benefits other than just financial and survival. They agree that work offers the personal benefits of a sense of accomplishment, identity, and fulfillment. These aspects, however, are not most like their ideas about the meaning in work. They also agree that work is to help people, but place that in a position of less significance. Of neutral significance to the Economic Reality Workers, or as by-products, work is seen as a potential means to give back to society or to find out about one's own abilities. Maturity, hope and power for the

self, and the opportunity to live with each other as people were also of neutral significance to these individuals.

The Economic Reality Workers construct meaning in work through the products of work, such as money and goods with which to survive. Work is the source of those necessities. Work provides for the family and offers stability. These individuals get a sense of accomplishment from work that offers such benefits. They find meaning in work through the feeling of having done that which they were called to do, to provide products and service. Although these workers agree that a good work ethic is of value, and to help people is good, work is basically about survival.

Meaning in work is not about happiness, spiritual meaning, divine injunctions, love of life, or rewards. These individuals do not think that work has meaning in making the world a better place, neither does it provide meaning as a way of leaving a legacy. Work does not, however, have a negative connotation for the Economic Reality Workers; it is not necessarily boring nor drudgery. They are economic realists.

The Economic Reality Workers are similar to the Social Influence Workers in agreement upon the statement, "Work is challenging." They, along with both other groups give some positive valence to the meaning in work related to feeling useful and productive, to identity, and a sense of accomplishment. Meaning in work as providing for the family was an aspect of work acknowledged positively by all groups. All three groups were similar in disagreement with the following statements:

- #42 Work prevents a lack of resources.
- #13 Work has a negative connotation.
- # 4 Work is something you do 'til the day you die.

- #15 Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, gripe about it."

The difference in the emerging patterns revealed that the Social Influence Workers agreed most with meaning in work related to a sense of calling and service to God and humanity. The Personal Fulfillment Workers focused upon the meaning in work as a personal accomplishment, sense of identity, and fulfillment. The Economic Reality Workers agreed most with the meaning in work as financial, economic, and a means to survival.

There are fewer Economic Reality Workers; there were four (4) females and three (3) males, a ratio of nearly one (1) to one (1), with one (1) International student, one (1) Asian student among the group. There were three (3) LGU students and four (4) SPU students who loaded on this factor, including four (4) psychology majors, two (2) education majors and one (1) student who is undecided about a major (Appendix D, Table D-III).

Four (4) participants did not load on any factor: one (1) LGU Asian female, a 24 year old psychology student, one (1) male SPU 20 year old history major, one (1) SPU 32 year old Native American female psychology major, and one (1) female, 19 year old SPU human relations major. Comments of the 32 year old Native American student were helpful in understanding her ideas about the meaning in work: "My ideas of work are in the midst of changing, from drudgery and time consuming to helping others or reaching others."

One (1) participant, an SPU 19 year old female speech communication major, indicated a split between factors one and two. She responded to the post-sort question with, "Work is to find your purpose of your life and to give back to the community with

that gift." This individual split between the belief of the Social Influence Workers and the Personal Fulfillment Workers' belief.

Summary

Q Methodology provided access to the subjective view of the meaning of work held by these participants. Based upon a distinct set of psychometric and operational principles, and utilizing statistical applications of correlation, factor-analysis, and the computation of factor scores, Q-Method provided a methodical and rigorous process for investigating human subjectivity. Through factor analysis, subjects were statistically grouped, or grouped themselves through the process of Q-sorting (McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

The data provided by sixty-two (62) students enrolled at two universities have been described and interpreted in this chapter. Data was in the form of a rank order of statements about meaning in work. The data was then subjected to statistical analysis. The resulting factors, because they are the personal ideas or beliefs of the participants, indicate divisions of subjectivity that exist. The interest is in the nature of the divisions and what way they are similar and dissimilar.

Three distinct factors emerged from the factor analysis. These represent groupings of agreement. The Social Influence Workers represent the idea that the meaning in work is to serve society and God. The Personal Fulfillment Workers share the idea that the meaning in work is a sense of personal accomplishment and fulfillment. The Economic Realist Workers see the meaning in work as primarily financial, economic, and a means of survival. The factors provided insight into undergraduate students' ideas about the

meaning in work. Although they share some agreement, they do not all perceive of meaning in work in the same manner.

The demographic data comparisons among factors indicate that 72% of those individuals who are Social Influence Workers attend a small parochial liberal arts university. There was a stronger representation (although minimal) of cultural diversity on this factor than either of the other two. The Personal Fulfillment Workers were almost evenly divided between both universities. Females outnumbered males on this belief in a greater ratio, three to one, than on either of the other beliefs. There were fewer participants who indicated the belief in work of the Economic Reality Workers. There were slight differences between the number of female and male students and the number of students from the universities (one more student from the SPU university than from the LGU university). The study is summarized with conclusions and implications for theory, practice, and further research in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to describe undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work from an existential perspective. This chapter summarizes the study and discusses implications of the findings for theory, practice, and further research. Concluding remarks are included.

Summary of the Study

This study investigated the nature of the patterns of beliefs about the meaning in work expressed by a sample of undergraduate students. The participants, a P-sample of 62, were recruited in upper-division courses in five departments, psychology, education, business, math, and history, at two universities. The participants were primarily traditional age (19-22 years old) sophomore, junior, and senior level students, enrolled in a small parochial university (SPU) or a large land grant university (LGU). Ages ranged from nineteen to forty-two years of age, with 47of the 62 students in the twenty to twenty-two age span. Forty-three (43) females and nineteen (19) males performed the Q-sort. Nine students represented Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and other International cultures.

The research instrument, a naturalistic Q-sample, was developed for this study from in-depth interviews with fifteen undergraduate students. Approximately 100

statements about the meaning in work were extracted from the interviews. Statements were structured using Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs and through practice sorts. Statements were reduced to 42 statements, a naturalistic Q-sample, about the meaning in work. A post-sort question provided the participants an opportunity to express in their own words any other ideas about the meaning in work they might hold.

Sixty-two undergraduate students answered the demographic questions, completed the Q-sort, and responded to a post-sort question designed to answer the research questions:

1. What are undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work?
2. From an existential perspective, what do these data reveal about undergraduate students' construction of meaning related to work issues?

Four processes were used in the analysis: correlation, factor analysis, the calculation of factor scores, and factor interpretation. The factors in this study represent the different ideas about the meaning in work expressed by undergraduate students. The three factors were named and interpreted as emerging patterns of undergraduate students' ideas of the meaning in work. The interpretation revealed the following sketch of three beliefs:

Factor One: Social Influence Workers – These individuals believe that meaning in work is derived from service to humanity and to the Creator. Work is about a calling or vocation and offers spiritual meaning. The purpose in work is to help people, to make the world a better place and to glorify God. They believe that work enables one to make a difference in the world and gives one a sense of accomplishment. The meaning in work

for these folk is not about finances or survival. Work does not have a negative connotation to this group.

Factor Two: Personal Fulfillment Workers – The pattern of belief for these individuals is more individually and personally focused. Meaning in work for them is derived from a sense of accomplishment, the use of knowledge and skills, and a sense of identity. These people do not agree with the idea that the meaning in work is spiritual or for "My Creator." They disagree with the idea that work is drudgery and boring. For them work is challenging and fulfilling.

Factor Three: Economic Reality Workers – These individuals focus upon the meaning of work as a means to survival. Work is about money, provisions, and stability. In acknowledgment of other benefits of work such as a sense of accomplishment, identity, and fulfillment, the primary meaning is related to production. They are not interested in social issues or any intrinsic meaning in work. Work for these people is about survival.

Implications of these findings are presented and discussed in the next section followed by concluding remarks.

Implications

> A person becomes a flowering orchard. The person that does good work is indeed this orchard bearing good fruit...Whatever humanity does with its deed in the right or left hand permeates the universe – Hildegard of Bingen. (Fox, 1994, p. 1)

Students' goals related to work and social responsibility are of concern at this time in history (Murray, 1999; Daloz, et al., 1996). This concern is related to recent

indications of a loss of meaning globally (Pauchant & Associates, 1995). Pauchant, et al., contend that this is an existential crisis. They believe that this crisis must be addressed from an existential viewpoint, i.e., in terms of despair, anxiety, love, freedom, choice, and responsibility. These are aspects of the human condition that are lived out in human experience. The arena of work is a stage for either loss of meaning or meaning-making.

Existentialism, the theoretical frame for this study, focuses upon the construction of meaning. Undergraduate students' ideas about meaning in relationship to issues of work provided the research question for this study. The conceptual frame for the construction of the naturalistic Q-sample came from Maslow's (1968) hierachy of needs. Although not intended as a template for interpretation, his categories offered a representation of a variety of meanings. The implications of this study are set in the context of literature cited in chapters one and two.

As a research methodology, phenomenology and the study of subjectivity is defined, described, and proposed by many (Creelman, 1966; Creswell, 1994; Ellis & Flaherty, 1992; Husserl, 1977; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McKeown & Thomas, 1988; Moustakas, 1990; Ricoeur, 1967; Stephenson, 1953; Van Manen, 1990). Through the use of a phenomenological approach, Q-Methodology, subjectivity was explored in this study. The students, through sorting a naturalistic Q-sample, had the opportunity to reveal their personal and subjective ideas about the meaning in work. Through comments made in response to the post-sort question, individual interpretations of meaning in work were further explored. This allowed for a greater sense of the uniqueness of each subjectivity. Their comments shed light on the nature of undergraduate students' meaning-making processes.

The emerging patterns of undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work revealed a variety of understandings. In comparison to the Gillespie and Allport study conducted internationally in 1955, this small localized study revealed that rather than framing meaning around a rich full life, these students perceive of meaning in work related to social responsibility and a spiritual calling, personal sense of accomplishment, and the realities of survival. One could argue that these meanings define a rich full life for these individuals. It is of value, however, to note that even in the post-sort comments, the students did not apparently see the meaning in work described as a rich full life.

Implications for Theory

Discussion of Social Influence Workers

> But we are only in a world through a community of men. And we can discover our souls only through the mirror of those who look at us. There is no depth of life without the depth of the common life. (Tillich, 1948, p. 57)

For some, meaning resides in the inherent nature of work, the spiritual meaning. Many of these individuals have a keen sense of a divine calling or vocation, and for them work is meaningful as a lived response to the call of God upon their lives. This implies that even though the meaning in work as a vocation or divine calling changed with the Industrial Revolution (Dollarhide, 1997; Fox, 1994; Hill, 1999), the undergraduate students in this group believe that work as a divine call or vocation provides meaning for life. They indicate that this call refers to the responsibility to help people, to give back to society, to make the world a better place.

This finding indicates that these students have chosen to place significance upon social responsibility related to meaning in work. They reveal their meaning in relationship to goals that they have set for life. They have projected themselves into the future and found meaning related to a mission in life and/or a divine calling. According to Morin (1995) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990), the significance and intentionality reveal an individual's meaning. In their choice to prepare themselves for work in a socially responsible context, these individuals indicate a sense of self constructed around service to society and the Creator.

In interviews conducted in four countries, Harpaz and Fu (1997) identified two categories of meaning related to work, 1) an instrumental value derived from income and benefits, and 2) other benefits related to sociopsychological functions, such as personal identity, self-esteem, status, and sense of accomplishment. For the participants who loaded on factor one, the Social Influence Workers, personal identity appears to be related to care and concern for other human beings, whether in a personal or a global context (Halper, 1988; Riley, Kahn, & Foner, 1994) and might be categorized as a sociopsychological function.

Vela-McConnell, in a work that addressed social affinity, just off the press in September, 1999, argued that individuals who have no concern for humanity beyond their own family and nation have not become all that is intended for a human being to become. He believed that few really are concerned about the suffering of those who are not visibly present. Social responsibility is an aspect of meaning in work, one of the issues within this study.

The Social Influence Workers, through the ranking of statements, indicated that work for them is meaningful in the category, "for the sake of," rather than the utilitarian category, "in order to," as identified by Arendt (1958). They perceive of the meaning in work as an opportunity to contribute to society (Richards, 1995). These individuals define their purpose in life or reason to live and work in Dostoyevsky's (1950) sense of the mystery of human existence, "finding something to live for" (p. 306).

The Social Influence Workers may indicate meaning at a level of being-needs (Maslow, 1968), a possible focus of further research. The meaning in work suggested by the Social Influence Workers contrasts with the suggestion of C. G. Jung (1933) that meaning related to spirituality becomes an issue in mid-life. These students, in young adulthood, indicate an awareness and sensitivity to matters of spiritual meaning, especially in relationship to work issues. Meaning related to the divine or spiritual is transcendent and provides the opportunity to develop both spiritually and personally according to Drogin, 1997 and Haughey, 1989. Meaning in work for these individuals appears to be a transcendent meaning. For most of these participants, the reality of economics is either secondary or has not yet been experienced.

More females loaded on factor one, the Social Influence Workers, than on any other factor. This supports the idea that care and connection are meaningful for females as suggested by Affleck, Morgan, & Hayes, 1989; Chodorow, 1995; Fox, 1994; and Gilligan, 1982/1993. The ratio of female to male, two to one, matched the ratio in the P-sample. Representation of male and female participants on the other factors were different, with a ratio of three females to one male on factor two, and almost a one to one ratio of female to male on factor three.

Four students from diverse ethnic groups also held beliefs about meaning in work in the context of social responsibility and calling. This would support evidence about the values of collectivism in some other ethnic groups as suggested by Asante, 1997; Akbar, 1991; Axelson, 1999; Freire, 1970/1993; Gillespie & Allport, 1955; Vontress, 1996. The size of this sample, however, limits any extensive discussion of cultural differences.

Discussion of Personal Fulfillment Workers

> Work is an integral part of being alive. Your work is your identity. It tells you who you are....There's such joy in doing work well - Stepkin. (Terkel, 1972/1974, p. 470)

The pattern of belief for these individuals indicates that meaning in work is personal fulfillment. These individuals find meaning in a personal sense of accomplishment as a result of using their own knowledge and skill. Work, for them, is about developing abilities and gaining a sense of identity from their work. Career meanings, referred to in the Bellah, et al., (1985) study, is the term that identifies the beliefs held by this group. This is an instrumental meaning, i.e., meaning derived from or as a result of work. This is work that provides feedback to the self, a meaning of sociopsychological significance, according to Harpaz and Fu (1997).

One might suggest that this instrumental meaning could be defined by the term, meaning *of* work, in that it is an instrumental activity and is a means to an end process. These workers find meaning in the sense of "in order to," suggested by Arendt (1958). The meaning in work for them is "in order to" utilize personal knowledge and skills, to develop a sense of identity, and to experience a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. Their work extends and strengthens their sense of self and offers the opportunity to excel

and develop in the world (Halper, 1988; Riley, Kahn, & Foner, 1994; Raines & Day-Lower, 1986).

The Personal Fulfillment Workers do indicate a social concern. They acknowledge that work is to help people, provide for family, and to make a difference in the world. Their focus, nonetheless, is upon meaning in work as personal fulfillment related to issues of a sense of accomplishment, use of knowledge and skills, and a sense of identity, not as a divine calling or in the sense of spiritual meaning. Their meaning tends toward a meaning *of* work in that it is the personal benefit derived from their work that is of the greatest significance. This distinction is a fine line between inherent meaning in the work and derived or constructed meaning as personal benefit from the work (Robin, 1998), and immanent meaning of work according to Drogin (1997) and Haughey (1989).

Discussion of Economic Reality Workers

> Both money and work are valuable sources for the soulful life, but they are each deceptive as well, and so they call for every effort of reflection and imagination, lest in our unconsciousness about them we lose our souls. (Moore, 1996, p. 225)

The third pattern of belief that emerged from this study indicates that meaning in work for some is derived from the financial and economic needs of survival. These individuals find meaning as work provides for themselves and their families. They find meaning in the stability that work offers. Within this context, these students suggest that a sense of accomplishment and having done what they are called to do is also meaningful.

The Economic Reality Workers also have a sense of social responsibility. They believe that work is to help people and to provide products and services. Personal

fulfillment and a sense of identity are somewhat significant in their ideas about the meaning in work. These issues, however, are secondary in their focus upon meaning in work.

As noted in the Gilligan study (1982/1993), the interview with one woman revealed that the meaning in work for her was survival. The MOW (1987) project revealed that second in the importance of choices about outcomes for work was good pay. Harpaz and Fu (1997) found that the benefits of income provided the greatest significance for a majority of their participants in all four of the countries they studied, which included the United States. This characteristic was labeled as instrumental meaning. The Bellah, et al., (1985) study found that work for pay rated at the top in work significance. They, too, suggest this is work as an instrumental activity, i.e., it provides a means to an end.

One can safely say that the meaning related to work for the Economic Reality Workers is work "in order to" as suggested by Arendt (1958). Work holds meaning as a source of income (Robin, 1998), a method of "staying alive" proposed by Dostoyevsky (1950). This is the constructed, or immanent meaning suggested by Drogin (1997), and Haughey (1989), and refers to a meaning *of* work, i.e., meaning derived from the benefits of the work. It differs from the meaning *in* work of the Social Influence Workers, because that group finds inherent meaning *in* their work. The meaning related to work for the Economic Realists is different than the meaning of the Personal Fulfillment Workers, although both can be termed as instrumental, immanent meanings *of* work. The Personal Fulfillment Workers' meaning relates to sociopsychological issues of fulfillment and identity.

Perhaps the Economic Realists gain a sense of identity from the benefits of their work. At the least, one can say that what is important to the development of a sense of

identity is the provisions necessary to survive. This finding could offer opportunity for a more in-depth study of these individuals related to identity achievement.

A significant aspect of this study is in the connection between a developmental stage of life, primarily between the ages of 19 to 22 years, ideas about work, and meaning-construction. Work as the vehicle of meaning changes throughout life stages according to many (Erikson, 1968; Ginzberg, et.al., 1951; Piaget, 1962; Super, 1970; Vygotsky, 1926/1997). Developmental influence, especially related to identity status, is acknowledged in this study, although the purpose of the study was not to explore the relationship between identity status and ideas about the meaning in work.

The assumption is that individuals perceive of meaning in work related to the values of an individualistic society (Gillespie & Allport, 1955; Santrock, 1995; MOW, 1987; Bernstein, 1997) and that work for many holds little meaning (Drogin, 1997; Fox, 1994; Moore, 1997; Robin, 1998). From the patterns that emerged in this study, social contribution, religious and spiritual significance, personal development, and survival through economic stability are meaningful to individuals in this age span. Wealth, fame, nor fun, appear to hold the greatest meaning for these students. Positive rather than negative attitudes toward work have been indicated.

The predominant beliefs about meaning in work held by the undergraduate students in this study reveal patterns of underlying values and motivations. Meaning as an underlying motivation is extensively explained and promoted in existential perspectives (Arendt, 1958; Bergson, 1949; Bohm, 1985; Bracke & Bugental, 1995; Buhler, 1967; Dostoyevsky, 1950; Frankl, 1959/1984; Fingarette, 1963; Harper, 1972; Heidegger, 1962; Jaspers, 1970; Jung, 1933; Kierkegaard, 1949; Marcel, 1954; Maslow, 1968; Merleau-

Ponty, 1964; Moustakas, 1967; Nietzsche, 1961/1969; Sartre, 1957; Singer, 1992; Tillich, 1952; Yalom, 1980). These individuals believe that through choices made related to goals in life, personal meaning and purpose in living is made evident. They validate the construct of meaning and its significance in human nature. For Kegan (1982), the very activity of living and preparation for the future is meaning-making and is a developmentally viable construct for study.

This raises many questions for a further exploration of individual, developmental, educational, social, and cultural influences upon these emerging patterns of meaning. There are implications for curriculum development, student development programs, and vocational and career counseling.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study support a focus upon meaning-construction related to work. Curriculum development, pedagogy, student development programs, and vocational and career counseling could benefit from the implications of these findings. The students who participated in this Q-sort indicated that meaning in work for them is described, primarily, in three patterns: 1) work is meaningful as offering the opportunity to help people, to influence society; 2) work is meaningful as an opportunity to fulfill personal goals of a sense of accomplishment, identity, and growth; and 3) work is meaningful as an economic reality or finances.

These patterns of meaning suggest that the construction of personal meaning could be addressed as an aspect of curriculum development and pedagogy. To integrate issues of the work world to specific domains of study could facilitate meaning-making.

Presenting questions related to social issues in the context of each curriculum could stimulate a more intense interest in personal meaning related to work and social involvement. A recent faculty survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute of the University of California at Los Angeles, (Magner, 1999) indicated that "only 38 percent of the faculty surveyed felt that influencing social values should be a key goal" (p. A19). A decade ago 47 per cent indicated that influencing social values was important. Discussion of this report could nurture greater awareness of meaning related to work issues among faculty. Departments within the college could promote commitment to socially responsible careers (Murray, 1999).

Reflective education as a process for increased awareness of personal meaning needs to be pursued. Students need time to integrate knowledge and experience within the context of each course studied. An opportunity for exploration of personal and social meaning related to the topic or topics of the day/week could be provided. A time of silence, journaling, or art expression might allow students to connect with their own sense of purpose in the light of what has been learned.

Opportunities for service-oriented projects within higher education would also encourage students to identify their purpose within the context of society. Programs for service in diverse cultural and geographic areas would provide for opportunities to explore issues of personal meaning related to work.

The journey through the halls of higher education is a time for the exploration of talents, strengths, and preferences. Student development programs could incorporate programs to assist students in determining personal meaning related to work. Clifton and Nelson (1992) argued that an individual's strengths are first evident in the mind of the

person. The yearnings are written into the wisdom of the body and presented to subjectivity as a pull or interest in one activity over another. Opportunities to identify personal preferences, yearnings, and strengths need to be offered.

Career programs with an existential focus could stimulate students to explore issues of mission, calling, or personal meaning (Dollarhide, 1997). Dollarhide argued that individuals need to be assisted in the process of confronting fears and ambiguity in choices about the world of work. Undergraduate students are cognitively in transition. Studies indicate that adults move through four (Perry, 1981) or five stages of thought, from dualism to contextual relativism and into another stage, dialecticism (King & Kitchener, 1994) or self-authorization (Kegan, 1982). In this final stage adults have incorporated the previous stages and developed a tolerance for ambiguity. They are better able to define personal meaning in work. Career counseling, framed in an existential focus on meaning, would provide students the opportunity for support as they move through these cognitive stages. Existentially focused counseling could help students make personally meaningful choices for the future.

Implications for Further Research

This study revealed what a particular segment of a specific population believes about the meaning in work. Through the emergent patterns of belief about the meaning in work, support for an existential focus upon the meaning-making process among undergraduate students is evident. Although this is a small sample that does not allow generalizations, support for further research is implicated. An exploration of developmental changes related to meaning in work is recommended. This study did not

explore the relationship between identity status and meaning in work. Through the use of an identity status interview (Marcia, 1966) with the participants of this study, identity status and meaning in work could be studied. The lack of acknowledgment of economic realities in the Social Influence Workers suggests a level of idealism (Erikson, 1968) that could be investigated through an in-depth interview process. Questions of identity status and meaning in work could be posited and researched utilizing identity status instruments.

The construction of meaning in work related to Maslow's (1968) deficiency and being needs might be more clearly defined and researched. Which of the present patterns of belief move into higher categories of meaning in the context of Maslow's hierarchy? Individual case studies might provide greater insight about possible progress toward self-actualization. Definitions and explanations of self-actualization, as a need in the hierarchy, could possibly be enhanced through a longitudinal case study. The relationship of gender, culture, and societal characteristics and meaning-making related to work could also be explored in individual case studies from this P-sample.

Another interesting question to explore from the findings of this study concerns the focus upon social responsibility and service to God. It would be helpful to interview students who have suggested that work is for their Creator. Issues of duty, obligation, and religious mandates could be investigated. How do students perceive inherent spiritual meaning?

The statements for this Q-sort, a naturalistic Q-sample, were taken from interviews with students in a small, parochial university, a possible limitation in the concourse. A hybrid Q-sample from interviews, personal opinions, and theory could be developed and another Q-sort conducted. This study could be repeated with a larger P-sample from a

larger population of university students. An increased number of universities could offer an expanded view of undergraduate students' ideas about the meaning in work with an analysis by university type.

A larger sample of students from culturally diverse populations needs to be studied. Single case studies taken from this P-sample could offer a wealth of information related to developmental and environmental issues and meaning-making. In his belief in an existential approach to cross-cultural counseling, Vontress (1979) called for counselors who could understand clients from the perspective of Binswanger's (1962) triadic view of existence. The triad refers to: 1) Umwelt, the surrounding environment or natural world; 2) Mitwelt, the world in relationship to others; and, 3) Eigenwelt, the personal or private world. A case study taken from the participants in this study could offer increased understanding of issues of meaning in work related to specific cultural and gender concerns.

Other recommendations include a longitudinal study of this P-sample, which could provide information related to changes in perceptions of the meaning in work in five, ten, or twenty years. Issues of transition in mid-life could be explored (Erikson, 1950/1963; Jung, 1933; Levinson, 1978). How might the views about the meaning in work for the Social Influence Workers begin to change in regard to financial issues? Would work as spiritually meaningful become more an issue to the Personal Fulfillment Workers and the Economic Reality Workers? Would those findings support the theorists views about age/stage related changes? This study could be repeated at the same universities in five years to determine changes in social perceptions of the meaning in work. University student development programs and students' meaning construction could be explored.

Concluding Comments

It has been suggested that there is an existential crisis of loss of meaning, and that youth in this time and in this society have no "heroic plan of action" (Pauchant, et al., 1995). The findings of this study respond to that suggestion. Although the pattern of belief of the Personal Fulfillment Workers agrees with the suggested prominent pattern for American workers in the twentieth century, self-fulfillment (Bernstein, 1997; Drogin, 1997), this belief was not predominant among the students who participated in this study. There are indications that the students in this study see meaning in work in a larger perspective than suggested.

Neither can one contend that the primary meaning for these participants was interesting work, a value of prime importance in the Gillespie and Allport study of college age students in 1955. The value of work as interesting work, along with work as important in the meaning of a rich full life, and an indication of low interest in social problems, led Gillespie and Allport to label these characteristics of the American students, privatism. The beliefs about the meaning in work of the students in this study suggested important differences in the values of students in 1999. According to information cited by Santrock (1995), the life goal of undergraduate students had shifted in recent years from the development of a philosophy of life to being well-off financially. The findings of this study did not support that focus.

Emergent patterns of beliefs of the undergraduate students in this study suggests a different sense of their expectations regarding a plan of action for their future. They are optimistic, challenged, and motivated to pursue goals that provide social, spiritual,

personal, and economic meaning. They believe that the world of work offers them the opportunity to express their knowledge, skills, and abilities in a manner that can make a difference in the world. They are aware of social and personal responsibility. Many of them have a sense of mission in their future work. Some find meaning in a connection to the Divine. One might suggest that for some, economic reality has not been experienced and idealism runs high. For others, economic realities seem to loom large on the horizon.

In all cases and in every setting, these students exhibited sensitivity to the issue of meaning in work. They were reflective and deliberate in their ranking of the statements. After the interviews in the instrument development phase, many students stated that they had benefited from the process as they explored their own understanding of their personal meanings in work. Schumacher (1979) spoke profoundly about work and the meaning in work for youth:

> How do we prepare young people for the future world of work? . . . We should prepare them to be able to distinguish between good work and bad work and encourage them not to accept the latter. That is to say, they should be encouraged to reject meaningless, boring, stultifying, or nerve-racking work in which a {person} is made the servant of a machine or a system. They should be taught that work is the joy of life and is needed for our development, but that meaningless work is an abomination. (p. 119)

Writing during a time of great suffering in the world, World War II, Simone Weil (1947/1957) spoke poignantly and consistently against the oppression of people. She suggested a spirituality of work which transcended the dualities of

> work in order to eat...[or] eat in order to work . . . If we regard one of the two as an end, or the one and the other taken separately, we are lost. (p. xxvii)

For Weil, spirituality is inherent in the cycle of both. To strive out of necessity rather than to be drawn to good meant slavery. She believed that poetry is a vital necessity for

workers. "They need that their life should be a poem. They need some light from eternity" (p. 159). To be deprived of this poetry results in demoralization.

It is hoped that the students who have participated in this study, will find that good work within a personal meaning which will make life creative, fruitful, and beneficial to ALL life.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD LETTERS

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 03-01-99 **IRB #: ED-99-088**

Proposal Title: ADULT STUDENTS' IDEAS OF THE MEANING IN WORK. A Q-STUDY

Principal Investigator(s): Diane Montgomery, Vera Hance

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: Carol Olson (cc) Date: March 5, 1999

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Vera Hance

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date: June 22, 1999 IRB #: ED-99-088

Proposal Title: "ADULT STUDENTS' IDEAS OF THE MEANING IN WORK. A Q-STUDY"

Principal Investigator(s): Diane Montgomery
Vera Hance

Reviewed and Processed as: Modification

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Modifying statements to avoid multiple parts within one statement in the Q- sample, Statements about Work.

Signature:

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

June 22, 1999
Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

Southern Nazarene University

CHARACTER | CULTURE | CHRIST

March 30, 1999

Vera Hance
SNU Campus Mail

RE: Research Submission #99-3-2

Dear Ms. Hance,

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your research request on March 30, 1999. The IRB has approved your research submission. Your submission is approved as presented to the IRB. Any changes made to this project must again be presented to the IRB for approval prior to performing research.

Please note that the IRB must be notified in writing once the research is complete. You may contact the IRB at (405) 491-6360 with any questions or visit our web site at www.snu.edu. Good luck with your research project.

Sincerely,

Marcy H. Hamiter

Marcy H. Hamiter
IRB Member

MARKING 100 YEARS 1899-1999

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
6729 Northwest 39th Expressway Bethany, Oklahoma 73008 405-491-6360 Fax: 405-491-6375
www.snu.edu

Southern Nazarene University

CHARACTER | CULTURE | CHRIST

June 29, 1999

Vera Hance
SNU Campus Mail

RE: Research Submission #99-3-2

Dear Ms. Hance,

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the changes you submitted for your research on June 28, 1999. The IRB has approved these changes in your research submission.

Please note that the IRB must be notified in writing once the research is complete. You may contact the IRB at (405) 491-6360 with any questions or visit our web site at www.snu.edu. Good luck with your research project.

Sincerely,

Marcy H. Hamiter

Marcy H. Hamiter
IRB Member

MARKING 100 YEARS 1899-1999

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
6729 Northwest 39th Expressway Bethany, Oklahoma 73008 405-491-6360 Fax: 405-491-6375
www.snu.edu

APPENDIX B

Q-SORT PACKET

July, 1999

There have been many studies about the role of work and the choice of careers which people make in their lives. My focus in this study relates to how individuals perceive of work as the infusion of meaning and purpose into their lives. You are invited to participate in this study entitled, "Adult Students' Ideas of the Meaning in Work" and to explore meaning and purpose as it relates to your ideas of work.

From an existential perspective, meaning is an issue of primary importance to human nature. The meaning inherent in any activity has an impact upon the level of motivation. Times can change those perceptions of meaning-making activities. That which motivates people during one period of time may be different at another. It is anticipated that the data collected in this research will inform career counseling, curriculum development, pedagogy, and issues related to student development.

This process should take about one-half hour of your time as you reflect over your understanding of the meaning in work. You will be asked to rank-order statements about work in the order of importance to you. These responses will be factor analyzed and, therefore, will not indicate individual viewpoints but significant categories of responses. Unfortunately, I cannot compensate you financially for your time and energy. I do hope that this project will increase your self-knowledge and perhaps provide direction for your future in the world of work.

If you are interest in learning more about this study, please contact me at 405-491-6373 or by email at vhance@SNU.edu.

Thank you for your time,
Vera Hance

CONSENT FORM
Q-Study, Meaning in Work: Spring 1999

"I, _____, hereby authorize or direct

Vera Hance, to perform the following treatment or procedure."

1. Respond to demographic data questions.
2. Sort statements related to work according to personal perceptions, as instructed.
3. Grouped (aggregate) results from this study may be given in reports or publications. My individual information from this study will be kept confidential. (The only exception to this will be for the research coordinator).
4. I am free to discontinue my participation in this study at any time without it affecting my relationship with this college in any way.
5. This process could help researchers and educators better address the issues of career decisions and social responsibility.

"This is done as part of an investigation entitled, "Adult Students' Ideas of the Meaning in Work." I may contact Vera Hance at 405-491-6373 or 405-495-3940. I may also contact the Gay Clarkson, IRB Executive Secretary, 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; telephone number 405-744-5700.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____
Signature of Subject

"I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it."

Signed: _____, Project Director

CONSENT FORM
Q-Study, Meaning in Work: Spring 1999

"I, _____, hereby authorize or direct

Vera Hance _____, to perform the following treatment or procedure."

1. Respond to demographic data questions.
2. Sort statements related to work according to personal perceptions, as instructed.
3. Grouped (aggregate) results from this study may be given in reports or publications. My individual information from this study will be kept confidential. (The only exception to this will be for the research coordinator).
4. I am free to discontinue my participation in this study at any time without it affecting my relationship with this college in any way.
5. This process could help researchers and educators better address the issues of career decisions and social responsibility.
6. There are no discomforts or risks inherent in this process.

"This is done as part of an investigation entitled, "Adult Students' Ideas of the Meaning in Work." I may contact Vera Hance at 405-491-6373 or 405-495-3940. I may also contact the IRB Executive Secretary, Southern Nazarene University, 6729 NW 39th Expwy, Bethany, OK 73008; telephone number 405-491-6360.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily.

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____
Signature of Subject

"I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it."

Signed: _____, Project Director

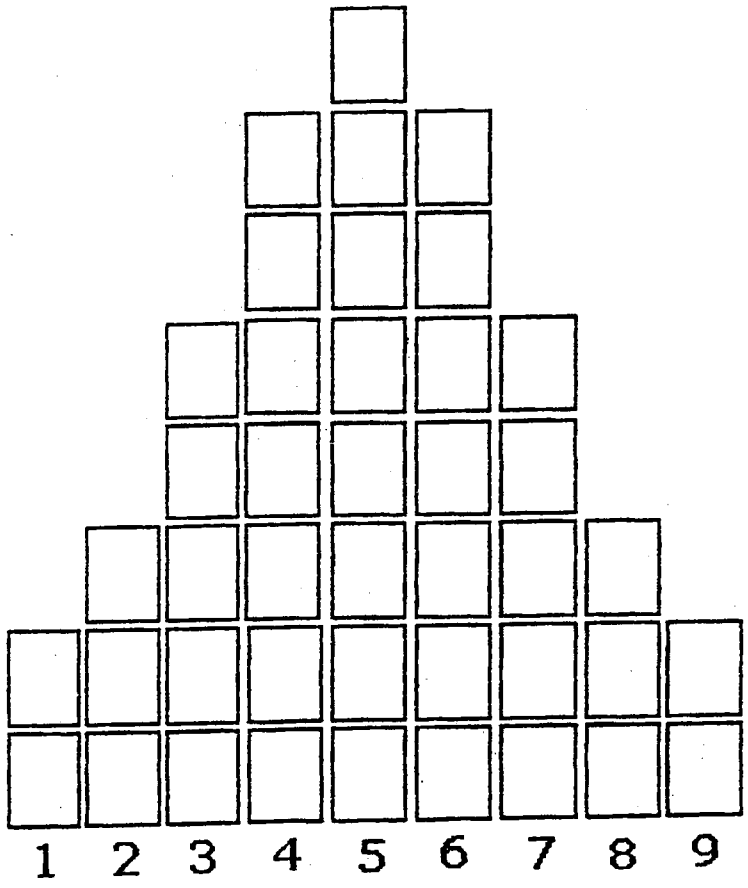
Q-study conducted by Vera Hance
Spring 99
Please respond to the following:

Name _____ Male _____ Female _____

Age _____ Freshman _____ Sophomore _____ Junior _____ Senior _____

Major _____

Condition of instruction: What is your belief about the meaning in work?



Condition of instruction: What is your belief about the meaning in work?

Instructions:

Please take the items from the envelope and separate them into three stacks. The stack on the right will be those statements, which are **most like** your ideas about the meaning in work. The stack on the left will be those statements which are **most unlike** your ideas about the meaning in work. The stack in the middle will include those statements which have **neutral significance** to you. Now write the number of the statement which you feel is **most like** your idea of work in the box in column 9, then write the number of the statement about work which is most unlike your idea of work in the box in column 1. Return to the right side of your board and write the numbers of the two items, which are most like your ideas about the meaning in work in the two boxes in column 8. Write the numbers of the two statements which are **most unlike** your ideas about the meaning in work in the two boxes in column 2. Continue working back and forth from the right side to the left side until you have used all of the items once. When you have finished with the sort, please respond to the question on the back of this form.

APPENDIX C

DATA TABLES

Table C-I
Factor Arrays

PQMethod2.06 Adult students' ideas about the meaning in work.

Factor Q-Sort Values for Each Statement

No.	Statement	No.	Factor Arrays 1	2	3
1	1. Work is to help people.	1	4	2	1
2	2. Work is happiness.	2	-1	-1	-4
3	3. Work is challenging.	3	1	2	1
4	4. Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	4	-3	-1	-1
5	5. Work has a spiritual meaning.	5	2	-3	-3
6	6. Work is to have a good work ethic.	6	0	0	1
7	7. Work is long hours away from the family.	7	-2	-2	1
8	8. Work is to give back to society.	8	2	0	0
9	9. Work is to use knowledge and skills.	9	1	4	1
10	10. Work gives one a sense of identity.	10	1	3	2
11	11. Work is to learn from other people.	11	1	1	-2
12	12. Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	12	2	0	-1
13	13. Work has a negative connotation.	13	-3	-2	-4
14	14. Work is financial.	14	-1	1	4
15	15. Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, grip	15	-4	-4	-2
16	16. Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	16	4	-1	2
17	17. Work is to provide for family.	17	1	2	3
18	18. Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	18	-1	0	3
19	19. Fulfillment is a big one in work.	19	0	2	1
20	20. Work is seeing people develop.	20	0	0	-1
21	21. Work is frustration.	21	-3	-2	0
22	22. Work is to make the world a better place.	22	2	1	-1
23	23. Work is one way of leaving a legacy.	23	0	1	-1
24	24. Work is stability.	24	0	1	3
25	25. Work is to gain cultural experiences.	25	0	-1	-2
26	26. Work is just economic support.	26	-2	-3	2
27	27. Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself	27	-1	0	0
28	28. Work is drudgery.	28	-4	-3	0
29	29. Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	29	3	2	-2
30	30. Work is love of life or rewards.	30	-2	0	-3
31	31. Work is a sense of accomplishment.	31	3	4	2
32	32. Work is to survive.	32	-2	-1	4
33	33. Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	33	0	-1	-3
34	34. Work is to provide products and services.	34	-1	1	2
35	35. Work is to find out about your abilities.	35	1	3	0
36	36. We are created to work.	36	0	-4	0
37	37. Work is to feel useful or productive.	37	1	3	1
38	38. Work is for my Creator.	38	3	-2	-2
39	39. Work is to live with each other as people.	39	-1	-1	0
40	40. Work is more maturity.	40	-1	0	0
41	41. Work is experiencing life.	41	2	1	-1
42	42. Work prevents a lack of resources.	42	-2	-2	-1

Figure C-I
STATEMENT FREQUENCY
AND ARRAY

Statement Frequency	2	3	5	7	8	7	5	3	2
Array	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4

Table C-II
Normalized Factor Scores
for Factor 1

PQMethod2.06 Adult students' ideas about the meaning in work.

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor 1

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
1	1. Work is to help people.	1	1.501
16	16. Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	16	1.477
38	38. Work is for my Creator.	38	1.399
29	29. Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	29	1.310
31	31. Work is a sense of accomplishment.	31	1.050
12	12. Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	12	.980
5	5. Work has a spiritual meaning.	5	.954
22	22. Work is to make the world a better place.	22	.907
8	8. Work is to give back to society.	8	.846
41	41. Work is experiencing life.	41	.689
10	10. Work gives one a sense of identity.	10	.658
17	17. Work is to provide for family.	17	.645
9	9. Work is to use knowledge and skills.	9	.603
11	11. Work is to learn from other people.	11	.593
35	35. Work is to find out about your abilities.	35	.554
3	3. Work is challenging.	3	.527
37	37. Work is to feel useful or productive.	37	.506
20	20. Work is seeing people develop.	20	.375
23	23. Work is one way of leaving a legacy.	23	.218
6	6. Work is to have a good work ethic.	6	.210
33	33. Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	33	.187
36	36. We are created to work.	36	.165
24	24. Work is stability.	24	.069
19	19. Fulfillment is a big one in work.	19	.026
25	25. Work is to gain cultural experiences.	25	.010
18	18. Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	18	-.108
2	2. Work is happiness.	2	-.152
39	39. Work is to live with each other as people.	39	-.172
27	27. Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself	27	-.191
40	40. Work is more maturity.	40	-.372
14	14. Work is financial.	14	-.411
34	34. Work is to provide products and services.	34	-.417
30	30. Work is love of life or rewards.	30	-.442
42	42. Work prevents a lack of resources.	42	-.872
32	32. Work is to survive.	32	-.879
7	7. Work is long hours away from the family.	7	-1.372
26	26. Work is just economic support.	26	-1.438
4	4. Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	4	-1.486
13	13. Work has a negative connotation.	13	-1.771
21	21. Work is frustration.	21	-2.014
15	15. Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, grip	15	-2.033
28	28. Work is drudgery.	28	-2.325

Table C-III
Normalized Factor Scores for Factor 2

PQMethod2.06 Adult students' ideas about the meaning in work.

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor 2

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
31	31. Work is a sense of accomplishment.	31	1.784
9	9. Work is to use knowledge and skills.	9	1.462
10	10. Work gives one a sense of identity.	10	1.393
37	37. Work is to feel useful or productive.	37	1.336
35	35. Work is to find out about your abilities.	35	1.210
1	1. Work is to help people.	1	1.167
29	29. Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	29	1.135
19	19. Fulfillment is a big one in work.	19	.987
3	3. Work is challenging.	3	.914
17	17. Work is to provide for family.	17	.699
22	22. Work is to make the world a better place.	22	.696
41	41. Work is experiencing life.	41	.668
14	14. Work is financial.	14	.604
24	24. Work is stability.	24	.541
11	11. Work is to learn from other people.	11	.494
23	23. Work is one way of leaving a legacy.	23	.438
34	34. Work is to provide products and services.	34	.434
12	12. Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	12	.418
6	6. Work is to have a good work ethic.	6	.374
27	27. Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself	27	.355
8	8. Work is to give back to society.	8	.203
18	18. Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	18	.162
30	30. Work is love of life or rewards.	30	.131
40	40. Work is more maturity.	40	.041
20	20. Work is seeing people develop.	20	-.051
25	25. Work is to gain cultural experiences.	25	-.253
2	2. Work is happiness.	2	-.311
16	16. Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	16	-.325
32	32. Work is to survive.	32	-.501
33	33. Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	33	-.562
39	39. Work is to live with each other as people.	39	-.582
4	4. Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	4	-.932
13	13. Work has a negative connotation.	13	-1.041
7	7. Work is long hours away from the family.	7	-1.051
42	42. Work prevents a lack of resources.	42	-1.174
21	21. Work is frustration.	21	-1.262
38	38. Work is for my Creator.	38	-1.365
5	5. Work has a spiritual meaning.	5	-1.448
26	26. Work is just economic support.	26	-1.451
28	28. Work is drudgery.	28	-1.641
15	15. Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, grip	15	-1.753
36	36. We are created to work.	36	-1.943

Table C-IV
Normalized Factor Scores
for Factor 3

PQMethod2.06 Adult students' ideas about the meaning in work.

Normalized Factor Scores -- For Factor 3

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
32	32. Work is to survive.	32	2.270
14	14. Work is financial.	14	2.219
17	17. Work is to provide for family.	17	2.214
18	18. Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	18	1.950
24	24. Work is stability.	24	1.661
31	31. Work is a sense of accomplishment.	31	.836
26	26. Work is just economic support.	26	.653
10	10. Work gives one a sense of identity.	10	.618
34	34. Work is to provide products and services.	34	.588
16	16. Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	16	.478
9	9. Work is to use knowledge and skills.	9	.474
7	7. Work is long hours away from the family.	7	.326
19	19. Fulfillment is a big one in work.	19	.306
37	37. Work is to feel useful or productive.	37	.277
3	3. Work is challenging.	3	.111
6	6. Work is to have a good work ethic.	6	.061
1	1. Work is to help people.	1	.029
27	27. Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself	27	-.047
36	36. We are created to work.	36	-.072
40	40. Work is more maturity.	40	-.084
28	28. Work is drudgery.	28	-.095
35	35. Work is to find out about your abilities.	35	-.111
21	21. Work is frustration.	21	-.177
8	8. Work is to give back to society.	8	-.231
39	39. Work is to live with each other as people.	39	-.250
20	20. Work is seeing people develop.	20	-.282
4	4. Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	4	-.289
12	12. Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	12	-.308
23	23. Work is one way of leaving a legacy.	23	-.319
42	42. Work prevents a lack of resources.	42	-.364
41	41. Work is experiencing life.	41	-.405
22	22. Work is to make the world a better place.	22	-.507
29	29. Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	29	-.525
15	15. Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, grip	15	-.541
11	11. Work is to learn from other people.	11	-.653
38	38. Work is for my Creator.	38	-.751
25	25. Work is to gain cultural experiences.	25	-.913
33	33. Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	33	-1.410
30	30. Work is love of life or rewards.	30	-1.533
5	5. Work has a spiritual meaning.	5	-1.654
13	13. Work has a negative connotation.	13	-1.730
2	2. Work is happiness.	2	-1.818

APPENDIX D

FACTOR ARRAYS WITH DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

TABLE D-I - Factor 1 Array- Social Influence Workers with Demographic Data

Demographics	
Total	29
Gender	
19 f	(1-)
10 m	(1-)
University	
24 SPU	
5 LGU	
Age	
2 - 19 years	
15 - 20 years	
9 - 21 years	
3 - 22 years	
Race/Ethnicity	
1 Asian	
1 Hispanic	
1 International	
Major	
7 Bus.	
1 Intl Fin.	
3 Psyche.	
1 Arch. Des.	
1 Pre.Med.	
3 Soc.	
5 Hum. Rel.	
3 Ed.	
2 Poli.Sci.	
3 Hist.	

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
				25 Work is to gain Cultural experiences.				
			34 Work is to provide products and services.	19 Fulfillment is a big one in work.	37 Work is to feel useful or productive.			
			14 Work is financial.	24 Work is stability.	3 Work is challenging.			
		26 Work is just economic support.	40 Work is more maturity.	36 We are created to work.	35 Work is to find out about your abilities.	41 Work is experiencing life.		
		7 Work is long hours away from the family.	27 Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself.	33 Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	11 Work is to learn from other people.	8 Work is to give back to society.		
	21 Work is frustration.	32 Work is to survive.	39 Work is to live with each other as people.	6 Work is to have a good work ethic.	9 Work is to use knowledge and skills.	22 Work is to make the world a better place.	31 Work is a sense of accomplishment	
28 Work is drudgery.	13 Work has a negative connotation.	42 Work prevents a lack of resources.	2 Work is happiness.	23 Work is one way of leaving a legacy.	17 Work is to provide for family.	5 Work has a spiritual meaning.	29 Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	16 Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.
15 Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, gripe about it, get paid."	4 Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	30 Work is love of life or rewards.	18 Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	20 Work is seeing people develop.	10 Work gives one a sense of identity.	12 Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	38 Work is for my creator.	1 Work is to help people.

TABLE D-II - Factor 2 Array- Personal Fulfillment Workers

Demographics									
Total 21					20 Work is seeing people develop.				
Gender				4 Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	40 Work is more maturity.	34 Work is to provide products and services.			
16 f				39 Work is to live with each other as people.	30 Work is love of life or rewards.	23 Work is one way of leaving a legacy.			
5 m			38 Work is for my creator.	33 Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	18 Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	11 Work is to learn from other people.	17 Work is to provide for family.		
University			21 Work is frustration.	32 Work is to survive.	8 Work is to give back to society.	24 Work is stability.	3 Work is challenging.		
10 SP		28 Work is drudgery.	42 Work prevents a lack of resources.	16 Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.	27 Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself.	14 Work is financial.	19 Fulfillment is a big one in work.	35 Work is to find out about your abilities.	
11 LG	36 We are created for work.	26 Work is just economic support.	7 Work is long hours away from the family.	2 Work is happiness.	6 Work is to have a good work ethic.	41 Work is experiencing life.	29 Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	37 Work is to feel useful or productive.	9 Work is to use knowledge and skills.
Age	15 Work is boring, "work eight hours a day, come home, gripe about it, get paid."	5 Work has a spiritual meaning.	13 Work has a negative connotation.	25 Work is to gain Cultural experiences.	12 Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	22 Work is to make the world a better place.	1 Work is to help people.	10 Work gives one a sense of identity.	31 Work is a sense of accomplishment.
2 - 19 years	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
3 - 20 years									
8 - 21 years									
4 - 22 years									
1 - 36 years									
1 - 42 years									
2 - ?									
Race/Ethnicity									
1 Asian									
Major									
1 Pre.Med.									
7 Psyche.									
2 Bus. Mgmt.									
2 Soc.									
1 Adv./Mkt.									
1 Acct.									
1 Cp.Sci/Physics									
1 Pub. Rel.									
1 P.E.									
4 Hist.									

TABLE D-III - Factor 3 Array- Economic Reality Workers

Demographics

Total 7

Gender

4 f

3 m

University

4 SP

3 LG

Age

2 - 20 years

3 - 22 years

1 - 24 years

1 - ?

Race/Ethnicity

1 Asian

1 International

Major

4 Hist.

2 Hist. Ed.

1 Undecided.

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
				39 Work is to live with each other as people.				
			22 Work is to make the world a better place.	8 Work is to give back to society.	1 Work is to help people			
			41 Work is experiencing life.	21 Work is frustration.	6 Work is to have a good work ethic.			
		25 Work is to gain Cultural experiences.	42 Work prevents a lack of resources.	35 Work is to find out about your abilities.	3 Work is challenging	16 Work is to feel that I've done what I was called to do.		
		38 Work is for my Creator.	23 Work is one way of leaving a legacy.	28 Work is drudgery.	37 Work is to feel useful or productive.	34 Work is to provide products and services.		
	5 Work has a spiritual meaning.	11 Work is to learn from other people.	12 Work is being able to plug-in and make a contribution.	40 Work is more maturity.	19 Fulfillment is a big one in work.	10 Work gives one a sense of identity	24 Work is stability.	
2 Work is happiness.	30 Work is love of life or rewards.	15 Work is boring. "work eight hours a day, come home, gripe about it, get paid."	4 Work is something you do 'til the day you die.	36 We are created to work.	7 Work is long hours away from the family.	26 Work is just economic support.	18 Work is economy...it is necessary to live.	14 Work is financial.
13 Work has a negative connotation.	33 Work is to live as lovingly as possible.	29 Work is seeing that I could make a difference.	20 Work is seeing people develop.	27 Work is the sense of hope and power you get for yourself.	9 Work is to use knowledge and skills.	31 Work is a sense of accomplishment	17 Work is to provide for family.	32 Work is to survive.

VITA

Vera M. Hance

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: AN EXISTENTIAL PERSPECTIVE DESCRIBING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' IDEAS ABOUT THE MEANING IN WORK: A Q-METHOD STUDY

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Elk City, Oklahoma, January 4, 1942 to Glen and Della Mae Jones. Married to Ray L. Hance, December 16, 1960. Have two children, a son, Dr. Stephen Hance, an orthopedic equine surgeon, and a daughter, Lori Hance, an early childhood specialist, and four grandchildren.

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