HOW TO CONSTRUCT THE MEANING OF LIFE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF VILLAGERS

[1]YARMOHAMMAD GHASEMI, [2]NAFIE FATHI

[1] Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran
[2]Faculty of Agriculture, Ilam University, Ilam, Iran
E-mail: [1]ym_ghasemi2004@yahoo.com, [2]Nfathi106@yahoo.com

Abstract - The present research has been conducted on the semantic reconstruction of the meaning of life in rural communities of MishKhas from the area of the Ilam province. Given the interdisciplinary nature if this concept and the lack of a conventional approach in this field, grounded theory method were used. First, 34 villagers were studied through Semi-structure interviews and initial information was obtained by purposive sampling and theoretical sampling methods. Data was analyzed using coding strategy in three steps i.e. open, axial and selective coding. Initial product of the analysis was to achieve 34 concepts and 12 main categories. In the aftermath of the extracted categories, a collocation was conducted that its result was the identification of a central category i.e. "Collective mechanical life". Collective mechanical theory emphasizes that despite the experience of modernity over the past decades, rural communities still demand the preservation of the model of Collective life as a lost model.

Keywords - Construction, Meaning of Life, Grounded Theory, Semantic Reconstruction, Rural Communities.

I. INTRODUCTION

The meaning of life is one of the major human issues and one of the most important contemporary philosophical, literary and sociological issues. In fact, the manner of human involvement in this matter is important, and his/her attempts to respond to it determine the main path of life and the fate of his/ her bliss or misery (Mohammadi, 2004). The question is: is the meaning of life an intrinsic and discoverable matter or something transversal and fabricated? In response, one cannot accept one of two choices, and it depends on how you should look at life. In fact, if we look at life objectively, the meaning of life will be discoverable. And if we look at life subjectively, the meaning of life will be fabricated. (Alavitabar&Mohabati, 2011).

Victor Frankel (2006) believes that human behavior is not based on hedonism of Freud's theory nor based on Adler's hegemonism, but human is life are looking for meaning and concept for their life that is based on the construction and reconstruction of the meaning. This perception of life raises many questions for a person that can be addressed in three directions. 1) Meaning of life means purpose, function, desirability and the end of life. 2) Meaning of life means value, significance and validity of life. 3) Meaning of life means asking about the role, position, value, purpose and necessity of human existence in the world (Ghorbani, 2009).

Given the constructivist approach to life, this meaning in the context of human history is a discourse matter. In the pre- modern era, meaning of life was in the field of moral discourse and ethics, but in the modern age and with the growth of scientism, the manner of human exposure to this problem changed and the discourse of scientism focused its attention on it. There is still a trace of moral philosophy in it. Consequently, thinkers such as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Heidegger and Habermas attempted to theorize in this area.

The introduction of scientism into the realm of meaning of life, which its result was the technology's supply to society and the transformation of its material structure and appearance, changed the view of humans on the meaning of life. In other words, other discourse was formed, and this time in the context of this discourse should look at life and evaluate it. Such a mechanism was initially developed in the west, and later it affected the experience of the modernity of other societies including Iran. The process of this effect first involved the metropolis of Iran and then reached the rural communities.

With the arrival of new discourse elements in the area of meaning of life into rural communities, especially villages in Ilam province, and the existence of research gap in this field, it is now time to ask this question: how do human subjects in the studied rural communities reconstruct the meaning of life in terms of Semantics?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The manner of meaning of life is the eternal question of humanity from eternity until now. The raise of this question is a reaction to the emergence of pervasive complication of impoverishment sense and meaninglessness of life in human societies, especially today's western societies (Cottingham, 2003). Most scholars asking question about the meaning of life regard as the question of way life is, and place it in the realm of philosophy, religion, mysticism and ethics (Alizamani, 2007). The EudaimonismSchool that originates from the ancient Greek philosophy of ethics and the moral schools of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle is the first theoretical background after religion in this field. Thinkers such as Epicurus, Xenon, Hobbes, Jeremy Bentham, Kant and John

Stuart Mill are among the first individuals who talked about Eudaimonism (Baker, 1999, p 43). Socrates considers the Eudaimonism as a pleasure that overcomes pain and torment. He believes that Eudaimonism is equal to the perfection of soul, and is not a material concept (Kapelstone, 1983; Bern, 2004). Plato considers the Eudaimonism as ethics and virtue (Forouqi, 1987, p26), and Aristotle considers the Eudaimonism as thinking and reasoning (Popkin, 1988; Forouqi, 1987). In the east, Al- Kandi, Farabi, Ibn- Sina, Ghazali and Buddha also talked about Eudaimonism and misery. Al- Kandi regards Eudaimonism as soul excellence whose purpose is the perception of God. Farabi knows the Eudaimonism as the great blessing for human beings. Ibn- Sina considers Eudaimonism as nearness to God (Ibn-Sina, 1980). Buddha considers Eudaimonism as having ethical moderation. (RusselHinles, 2010)

With the dominance of scientific discourse in the modern era, the view of the scholars changed to the meaning of life. From the point of view of Hegel, the ultimate meaning of life is the movement of man toward self- awareness. Marx considers the experience of meaning in life and the world dependent on the work and effort of the world dependent on the work and effort of the proletarian in general and its struggle to change the social situation in particular (Mahmmodian, 2009).

Existentialists have two kinds of conflicting responses to life. Some of them have accepted the absurdity and meaninglessness of life, and some also believed in the meaning of life to explain the truth of meaning (Popenheim, 1993). Kierkgaard divides human life into three aesthetic, ethical and religious steps, and considers the religious step as the best kind of life (Evans &Malekian, 2001).

Nietzsche believes in exploring meaning within him (Erickson, 2011). Like Nietzsche, thinkers such as Camus, Sartre and Heidegger have suggested the principle of meaninglessness in life and tried to propose solutions to its troubles.

In the humanities, psychologists consider concepts such as calmness, happiness, pleasure, hope and inner satisfaction related to the meaningfulness sense of life. But in the science of sociology, the meaning of life is subject to a kind of construction of life. This means that based on different fields of life, social classes and the type of using the economic and cultural capitals, the meaning of life finds a different quality. Therefore, this is subject to a kind of relativity in time and coincidence. Consequently, the achievement of a single whole of the meaning of life is impossible in society.

III. METHODOLOGY

The method of research is qualitative in this study, and the grounded theory is used. This theory was introduced by Glazer and Anselm Strauss in 1970. This theory that is sometime called field study or theory growth method is an inductive method, which comes from data that can be collected on a regular basis from social researches (Glazer & Strauss, 1967). Research field includes the villagers of Mish Khas district located on the suburb of Ilam city. 34 people were selected using purposive and theoretical sampling methods. Semi- structured interview was used. Supervisor review method was used to determine the validity of findings. Open, axial and selective coding methods were used to analyze data. In open coding, the obtained data from the interview were categorized in the form of semantic expressions. In the next step, concepts were made. In axial coding, the concepts of Sub- categories and categories were constructed from aggregation and collection. In selective coding, central category or theory was obtained from collocation of categories.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1.The characteristics of participants in the research.

Job situation	Unemployment	15
	Housekeeper	6
	Employed	13
Marital status	Widow	4
	Married	21
	Single	9
Literacy status	Bachelor	4
	Diploma	4
	Illiterate	26
Gender	Female	17
	Male	17
Age	20-90	

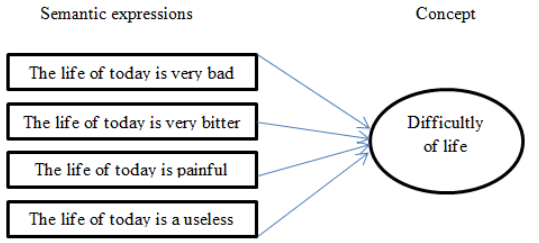


Figure 1.Presents the process of achieving the concepts and how to construct them.

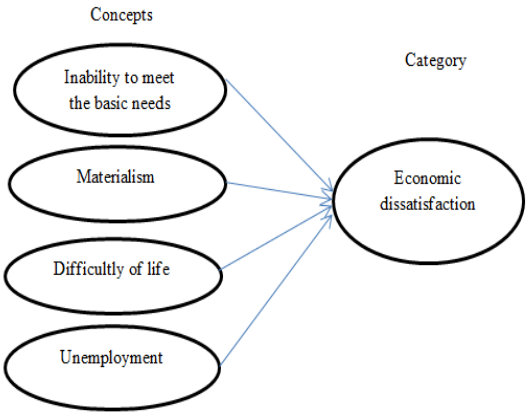


Figure2.Presents the process of achieving the categories and how to construct them.

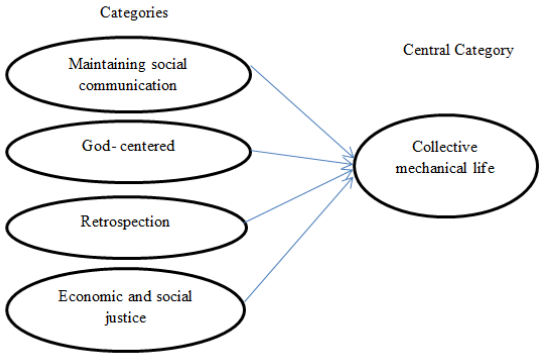


Figure 3.The process of constructing the central category

The following paradigmatic model is based on six components of causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervention conditions, strategies and consequence.

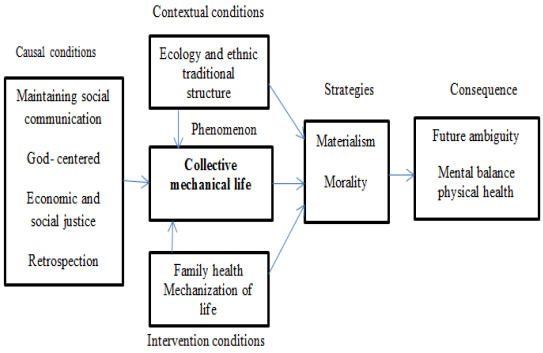


Figure 4. Paradigmatic model of research

As it is seen in the model, central category or discovered theory that is called pluralist mechanical life depends on the conditions such as maintaining social communication, God- centered, economic and social justice and retrospection. Along with these conditions, ecology and ethnic and traditional structure together with family health and mechanization of life as contextual and intervention conditions lead to the formation of strategies such as materialism and morality. The adoption of these two strategies by villagers will lead to two contradictory outcomes i.e. future ambiguity and mental balance and physical health.

CONCLUSIONS

What was noted earlier was a sociological effort to achieve the theory of Collectivemechanical life. In response to the questions raised in the present research, this result was achieved that the components of meaning of life among the studied villagers were maintaining social communication, God- centered, economic and social justice and retrospection, and the components that challenged it were materialism, mechanization of life, future ambiguity, difficulty of subsistence and the lack of institutional support. This means that the studied villagers face a contradiction in life. On the one hand, Collective and traditional factors encourage them to life, but the presence of objective factors challenges this consolation on the other hand. This is due to the experience of modernity, which with its presence in the life of villagers, the elements that are vital to their traditional life is subject to collapse, but on the other hand they cannot escape the modernity.

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