CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS GHANA

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ABSTRACT

Character strengths are positive traits that are critical in many positive life outcomes. This study examined the distribution of character strengths and their relationship with life satisfaction among teachers in selected schools in the Builsa District of the Upper East Region in Ghana. Data from a sample of 104 basic and senior high school teachers revealed that the top 7 character strengths of the teachers were gratitude, kindness, fairness, love of learning, honesty, perspective(wisdom) and open mindedness (judgment). There was a strong positive relationship between overall character strengths and satisfaction with life. Creativity, perspective, love, teamwork, prudence, and gratitude were each significantly correlated with life satisfaction. Prudence, humour, modesty/humility, self-regulation and capacity to love and be loved each made unique and significant contribution in explaining life satisfaction with prudence making the largest unique contribution. Implications of the study and directions for future research are discussed.

Contribution/ Originality

This study is one of very few studies which have investigated Peterson and Seligman (2004) character strengths in Ghana and it identified unique distribution of the strengths among teachers. The top 7 strengths indicate teachers scoring high on wisdom and knowledge strengths which is unique from studies using general samples.

1. INTRODUCTION

Character strengths are positive human qualities that have been demonstrated empirically to be associated with a number of positive outcomes including life satisfaction (Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Linley and Harrington, 2006; Park and Peterson, 2006). Unlike the traditional

focus o psychology in the past on pathology and the negative aspects of the individual, the study of character strengths is a major initiative of the positive psychology movement that focuses on human positives, potentials, striving, achievements, and quality of life (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2003). The study of character strengths focuses on the strengths and natural capacities within individuals that are potentially helpful in achieving optimal functioning and performance (Chan, 2013). In their classic Value in Action Inventory of strengths (VIA), Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified 24 character strengths and classified them into 6 virtues based on literature and common sense and later developed questionnaires to measure them. Peterson and Seligman (2004) classified the strengths into the 6 virtues of wisdom and knowledge (creativity, curiosity, perspective, love of learning, judgment); courage (bravery, industry, integrity, zest); humanity(Love, kindness, social intelligence); justice (citizenship, fairness, leadership); temperance(forgiveness, modesty, prudence, self control) and transcendence (appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope humor, spirituality). These strengths have been proposed to be cross-culturally and universally endorsed and are rooted in the philosophical traditions of the major religions of the world including Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism, Athenian philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and Islam (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005). Subsequently, several studies have been conducted on these character strengths mainly focusing on their measurement, structure, distribution, and relationship with various subjective wellbeing dimensions such as life satisfaction and happiness (e.g., (Park and Peterson, 2006; Park et al., 2006; Toner et al., 2012))

There is some evidence on the distribution of character strengths among adults in the United States of America, Japan and several other countries. The studies of Shimai et al. (2006) and Park et al. (2006) are popular in this regard. The findings of these studies reveal that the distribution of the character strengths is generally similar in many countries. However, these studies focused on adult internet samples mainly from the USA and developed countries. In addition, these samples are of a general nature consisting of people of mixed professions. It is possible that the distribution of character strengths may be based on professional affiliation. In other words professions may have influence on the distribution of these strengths. Some character strengths may be more relevant to and valued by some professions and thus are more likely to be prevalent in them. There are limited studies on character strengths among teachers. Notable among them are the studies of Chan (2009; 2013) in Hong Kong and Gradišek (2012) in Slovenia. The present study acknowledges the contribution of these studies. In a sample of Chinese teachers in Hong Kong, Chan (2009) revealed that the top 7 strengths consist of love, gratitude, teamwork, spirituality, hope, integrity, and kindness and the least endorsed were self regulation, creativity and bravery. Chan (2013) focused on only the strengths of gratitude and forgiveness in relation to satisfaction and found that gratitude, and forgiveness correlated substantially with subjective wellbeing (satisfaction with life) and at the same time predicted wellbeing above orientations to happiness. Gradišek (2012) found fairness, kindness, integrity and love as the highest reported

strengths among both pre-service and in-service teachers in Slovania. The findings of the study also show that the strengths of hope, zest, love, gratitude, and curiosity correlated the highest with subjective wellbeing in both samples.

To date, there is no study on character strengths among teachers in Ghana (to the best of our knowledge). The present study thus sought as part of its aims to examine the distribution of the character strengths among teachers in Ghana, which is a developing African country with distinctively unique demographic features. Although Ghana has been heavily influenced by western countries, it maintains cultural features that distinguish it from both western and Asian countries. For example unlike both the west and Asia, it still endorses African Traditional Religion and the philosophical traditions of this religion may be different from that of western and Asian religions. Thus, it may influence the endorsements of the character strengths. There is also some evidence to suggest that Africans and African Americans are generally more spiritual oriented (e.g., (Utsey *et al.*, 2007)). If we are to go by this evidence, one may wonder whether the tendency to be more spiritual or religious also has the tendency to influence the prevalence of the character strengths. Based on the forgoing reasoning, it is anticipated that the distribution of the 24 character strengths among teachers in Ghana will differ from that found by previous studies in western and developed countries. Instead of using the 240 item VIA-IS developed by Peterson and Seligman (2004) to assess the character strengths, the present study used the Character Strengths Rating Form(CSRF) which is a 24 item scale developed by Ruch *et al.* (2014) based on the VIA-IS for measuring the 24 character strengths. This is because of the lengthy nature of the VIA-IS which could result in fatigue and low return rate. The CSRF achieved convergence with the VIA-IS among German speaking adults (Ruch *et al.*, 2014).

An examination of the distribution of character strengths in teachers is very relevant for several reasons. First, it helps us identify the "signature strengths" (best and most likely expressed strengths) (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) of teachers and thus help us emphasise the development of critical ones among them as well as train the teachers to work on their less developed   ones
in order to enhance their effectiveness. Majid *et al.* (2014) argue that teachers should possess good character since they do not only just teach students to acquire information but are responsible for their holistic development in the physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual domains. Moreover, since teachers are supposed to or are actually role models for students, students are directly or indirectly influenced by them. The actions and inactions of teachers may influence their students and thus knowledge of teachers' character strengths that can influence their thinking, feeling, and behaving (Majid *et al.*, 2014) and by extension that of their students are important. It is therefore anticipated that the findings of the present study will be an initial step towards knowing the prevalence of the character strengths in teachers in the study area. The findings could therefore be a basis for a recommendation for the development of critical strengths in both pre-service and in-service teachers.

In this study, we also examined the relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction among the teachers. Life satisfaction is an overall measure of the quality of life of an individual (Diener *et al.*, 1985) and is important in teachers as it could influence their work as teachers. Evidence from several studies suggests a relationship between certain character strengths and various aspects of subjective wellbeing including life satisfaction in many countries across the globe. Notable among these studies include the studies of Park *et al.* (2004); Linley *et al.* (2007); Peterson *et al.* (2007); Shimai *et al.* (2006); Brdar and Kashdan (2010); Chan (2009) and Gradišek (2012) in the USA, UK, Switzerland, Japan, Croatia, Hong Kong and Slovania respectively. However, there is paucity of such evidence of the relation between the 24 character strengths and life satisfaction in Ghana and elsewhere in the African continent. Most previous studies concentrated in western and developed countries. Further, as stated earlier, such a study on the 24 character strengths has not been conducted specifically among teachers in Ghana. The present study thus bridges that research gap. Based on evidence of previous studies, it is anticipated that overall as well as individual character strengths will relate significantly with life satisfaction. Character strengths are also expected to contribute significantly to the variance in life satisfaction.

The present study also explored the influence of age on character strengths. Few previous studies have examined this. For example, the study of Neto *et al.* (2014) revealed that age significantly (negatively) predicted Temperance strengths among young participants in Portugal. Linley *et al.* (2007) study also revealed positive associations between character strengths and age, with the strongest effects showing for curiosity and love of learning, fairness, forgiveness, and self-regulation. In the present study, we anticipated that age would significantly predict overall character strengths.

A final aim of the study was to examine the relationship between income and life satisfaction. This aim was informed by the fact that life satisfaction among teachers in the study area has been perceived to be influenced mainly by economic factors. Previous studies such as that of Diener and Seligman (2004) revealed that economic factors alone do not correlate with life satisfaction in developed western countries.

Generally, based on the forgoing considerations and reasoning, we addressed four main questions: (1) what is the distribution of character strengths among teachers in selected schools in the Builsa District of the upper East Region of Ghana? (2) What is the relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction among teachers in the selected schools? (3) Does Age predict overall character strengths among the teachers? (4) What is the relationship between income and life satisfaction?

2. METHOD

The study was a survey one and explored the distribution of character strengths and their relationship with life satisfaction among teachers.

2.1. Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted among teachers in one basic school and two senior high schools in the Builsa District of the upper East Region of Ghana. The basic school consists of primary and junior high school divisions and was located in Wiaga and the senior high schools were located in Sandema and Fumbisi of the Builsa District.

The sample comprised 104 teachers from the three schools who voluntarily participated in the study. Of this sample, 62 (59.6%) were males with age ranging from 24 to 57 years (M = 34.99,   SD = 5.68680). With regards to educational level, most participants had a Bachelor degree (63%), while a few had Postgraduate qualification (15.2%) and Post secondary education (15.2%). Majority of the participants were married (64.8%) while the rest were either single (28.6%) or divorced (5.7%). Participants' income ranged from 400 to 1500 Ghana Cedis (i.e. 105 to 395 USD), (M = 985.99 (260 USD), with an average tenure of 10 years (SD = 4.78964). Teachers in the basic school generally posses lower educational qualifications (post secondary education) and taught general courses while those in the senior high school possessed Bachelor's Degree or Postgraduate/ masters and mainly taught elective courses.

2.2. Procedure

Before data collection, permission was sought from the headmaster of each school and permission was granted for the study to be conducted. Participation was voluntary. Once permission was obtained, the first author administered the questionnaires to teachers in their teachers' common halls at their free times. Teachers completed questionnaires immediately within an average period of 15 minutes and returned them to the first author or an assistant who was usually a teacher from the respective school.

2.3. Measures

Two main instruments were used to collect data. These include the Character Strength Rating Form (CSRF) developed by Ruch *et al.* (2014) and Satisfaction with life scale developed by Diener *et al.* (1985). We pilot tested these scales among 20 teachers in the study area and they were found to be understandable. An open question was added that asked teachers to comment on the difficulty level of the questionnaires and their ability to understand them.

2.4. The Character Strengths Rating Form (CSRF)

The CSRF is based on the VIA-IS (Peterson and Seligman, 2004) and consist of 24 character strengths with each strength briefly described and participants are expected to indicate the extent to which each statement (character strength) describes what they are like. Response options ranged from 1= very much unlike me to 9 = very much like me. An example of the items is Kindness: *"Kind and generous people like doing favors and good deeds for others. They appreciate being*

generous and nice to others". The CSRF yielded good convergence with the VIA-IS among German speaking adults (Ruch *et al*., 2014).

2.5. The Satisfaction with Life Scale

The satisfaction with life scale consists of 5 items indicating how satisfied people are with their lives. Using a response category ranging from 1-7, that is 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree, respondents indicated how satisfied they were with their lives. An example of the items includes, "In most ways my life is close to my ideal". The satisfaction with life scale has demonstrated good psychometric properties (Cronbach alpha reliability = .87) in previous studies (Diener *et al*., 1985; Lucas *et al*., 1986). In the present study, a cronbach alpha reliability of .67 was obtained. This borderline cronbach alpha reliability coefficient indicates that the life satisfaction scale will benefit from adaptation in the Ghanaian context.

3. RESULTS

Presented in Table 1 is the means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the study variables. Subsequent results are reported based on the order of the research questions of the study. The first to be presented are results on the distribution of character strengths followed by those of the relationship of character strengths and life satisfaction and finally those of age as a predictor of overall character strengths.

3.1. Distribution of Character Strengths among Teachers

In order to examine the distribution of character strengths among the teachers we computed the means and standard deviations for all character strengths. The means and standard deviations were then rank ordered (see Table 2). The results show that the top 7 strengths include Gratitude, Kindness, Fairness, Love of Learning, Integrity/Honesty, Perspective and Judgment (Open mindedness). It implies that collectively, the teachers are more likely to express or exhibit these strengths. The bottom three strengths are Perseverance, bravery and spirituality.

Table-1. Means, SDs and correlations among variables

Variable	Mean	SDs	Income	OCS	LSAT	Age
Income	985.99	253.86735				
OCS	181.26	22.24968	.115			
LSAT	18.42	6.17495	.078	.271**		
Age	34.9904	5.68680	.209*	.214*	.048	
Tenure	9.6731	4.78964	.297*	.072	–.027	.609**

Note: OCS = Overall character strengths, LSAT = Life satisfaction

*p < 0.05., **p < .01

3.2. Correlation of Variables

As shown in Table 2, the Pearson correlation results revealed some significant relationship between some variables. For example there was a positive correlation between overall character strength and life satisfaction, r (104) = .271, P < .01 and overall character strengths and age, r (104) = .214, P < .05. There was also a significant positive relationship between income and age, r (104) = .209, P < .05 and income and tenure, r (104) = .297, P < .05; and finally a strong positive correlation between tenure and age, r (104) = .297, P < .05. It was quite surprising that there was no significant relationship between income and life satisfaction.

From the results, the hypothesis that there would be a significant relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction has been confirmed.

Table-2. Means and Standard Deviations (SDs) of character strengths in rank order

Character Strength	Mean	SDs
1.Gratitude: aware of and thankful for the good things that happen	8.20	1.44
2.Kindness : like doing favors and good deeds for others, being generous and nice	8.02	1.26
3.Fairness : Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice	7.91	1.66
4.Love of Learning: mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge	7.85	1.64
5.Honesty: speaking the truth, sincere, genuine, without pretense	7.84	1.70
6.Perspective: providing wise counsel to others	7.77	1.76
7.Judgment: thinking things through and examining them from all sides	7.69	2.06
8.Hope : expecting the best and working to achieve it	7.69	1.89
9. Social intelligence: being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself, knowing what to do to fit into different social situations.	7.67	1.55
10. Leadership: ability to encourage a group to get things done, maintaining good relations within the group and treating everyone equally.	7.59	1.89
11.Forgiveness : ability to forgive easily, being merciful	7.58	1.70
12.Teamwork: work well as a member of a group or team, loyal to the group	7.56	1.91
13. Love: valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated.	7.54	1.89
14. Prudence: being careful about one's choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted	7.49	1.67
15. Self- Regulation: ability to regulate what one feel and do, to control different areas of one's life, very disciplined.	7.42	1.66
16. Zest: pursuing one's goals with energy and enthusiasm. Doing things whole heartedly, loving what one do, living life as an adventure	7.42	1.67
17.Appreciation of Beauty : noticing and appreciating things, interested in beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life	7.40	1.78
18.Humor: Liking to laugh, tease and bring smiles to other people	7.32	1.86
19.Curiosity : taking an interest in all of ongoing experience	7.31	2.03
20.Creativity: thinking of novel and productive ways to solve problems	7.27	2.06
21.Modesty/Humility: not seeking the spotlight and not regarding oneself as more special than one is, letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves	7.24	1.89
22.Perseverance: finish what one starts, even in spite of obstacles	7.20	1.74
23.Bravery : not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty or pain	7.16	2.12
24.Spirituality : having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life	6.92	2.15

Note: Definitions of character strengths adapted from Ruch *et al.* (2014)

The study also examined how each of the strengths correlated with life satisfaction. The results are as shown in Table 3. The results reveal that 7 strengths were significantly (positively) related to life satisfaction. These strengths include creativity, $r(104) = .27$, $P < .01$; wisdom, $r(104) = .27$, $P < .01$ love, $r(104) = .26$, $P < .01$, teamwork, $r(104) = .27$, $P < .01$, prudence, $r(104) = .33$, $P < .01$ and gratitude, $r(104) = .22$, $P < .01$.

Table-3. Correlation between Character strengths and Life satisfaction

	CR	CU	JU	LE	WI	BR	PE	HO	ZE	LO	KI	SO	TE	FA	LD	FO	MO	PR	SC	AB	GR	HO	HU	RE
LSAT	.27**	.06	.04	.13	.27**	.05	.10	.02	.10	.26**	.11	.06	.41**	.027	.18	.01	.27**	.33**	.03	.09	.22*	.15	-.01	.16

Note: *P < .05, ** P < .01

LSAT= Life Satisfaction, CR=creativity, CU=curiousity, JU=Judgment, LE=Learning, WI=Wisdom, BR=Bravery, PE= Perseverance, HO= Honesty, ZE= Zest, LO =Love, KI=Kindness, SO=Social Intelligence, TE=Teamwork, FA=Fairness, LD=Leadership, FO=forgiveness, MO=Modesty, PR=Prudence, SC= Self – control, AB= Appreciation of beauty, GR=Gratitude, HO=Hope, HU=Humor, RE= Religiousness

3.3. The Predictive Power of Character Strengths on Life Satisfaction

The study also examined the predictive power of individual strengths on satisfaction with life. In order to do this, we conducted standard multiple regression analysis. The results are as presented in Table 4. A significant model emerged when the dependent variable of satisfaction with life was regressed on the various character strengths, $F(24, 79) = 2.806$, $p < .001$. All the predictors (24 character strengths) together explained 46% ($R^2 = .460$) of the variance in satisfaction with life.

Table-4. Regression Results of strengths and satisfaction with life

Character Strengths	B	Beta	t	p
Creativity	.695	.232	1.567	.121
Curiosity	.309	.101	.738	.463
Judgment	-.693	-.231	-1.571	.120
Love of Learning	.000	.000	.001	.999
Perspective	.582	.164	1.254	.214
Bravery	-.746	-.256	-1.772	.080
Perseverance	-.047	-.014	-.112	.911
Honesty	-.251	-.069	-.502	.617
Zest	.105	.029	.212	.833
Love	.834	.259	1.964	.043
Kindness	.657	.134	1.023	.310
Social intelligence	-.799	-.201	-1.307	.195
Teamwork	.444	.138	.829	.410
Fairness	-.759	-.204	-1.241	.218
Leadership	.510	.156	1.352	.180
Forgiveness	.103	.034	.293	.771
Modesty/Humility	1.213	.371	3.117	.003
Prudence	1.463	.395	2.907	.005
Self-regulation	-1.194	-.322	-2.012	.048
Beauty	.047	.014	.093	.926
Gratitude	-.696	-.163	-1.041	.301
Hope	.351	.108	.811	.420
Humour	-1.266	-.381	-2.935	.004
Spirituality	.371	.129	1.029	.307

Note: Statistical significance is at the .05 level

Out of all the 24 character strengths, 5 character strengths significantly predicted life satisfaction. These strengths include Prudence, Humour, Modesty, self- control and Love. Prudence made the largest unique contribution (β = .395, P = .005). This was followed by Humour (β = -.381, p =. 004), Modesty (β = .371, P =. 003), Self control (β =.-322, p =. 048), and Love (β = .259, p =. 043) in that order. All these strengths made statistically significant contributions in explaining the variance in satisfaction with life. This implies that only these strengths of Prudence, Humour, Modesty, Self-regulation and Love have significant impact on satisfaction with life. Out of the 5 strengths, humour and self-regulation contributes negatively to satisfaction with life.

3.4. Age as a Predictor of Character Strengths

In examining whether age was a predictor of overall character strengths, we regressed the dependent variable of overall character strengths on age. A significant model emerged F (1, 102) = 4.900, p = .029. Age explained 4.6% (.046) of the variance in overall character strengths. This implies that age has a significant effect on the development of the character strengths of the teachers.

3.5. Income and Life Satisfaction

The final objective examined by the present study the relationship between income and life satisfaction, the findings revealed a non significant relationship between income and life satisfaction, r (104) = .078, P >.05 (see Table 1) and this is worthy of comment and examination. This is because it has always been erroneously assumed that wellbeing (Life satisfaction) of teachers is linked to economic factors, most specifically income. Thus it was anticipated that levels of income of teachers would influence their satisfaction with life. However, surprisingly, no significant relationship was found between level of income and life satisfaction. However, as noted earlier, there was a significant relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction, signifying that non-economic factors may even be more important indicators of satisfaction with life than economic ones.

4. DISCUSSION

Given the role of teachers as role models to students, their character is of great importance as they are more likely to pass it on to the students they teach. In addition, character strengths have been proposed to be functional in optimal human development and various subjective wellbeing dimensions and hence may play important roles in the life and work of teachers. This study examined the distribution of the 24 character strengths identified by Peterson and Seligman (2004) among school teachers and their relationship with life satisfaction in Ghana, a relatively virgin place for the conduct of studies on character strengths. In addition, the present study complements and extend previous research by examining both the relationship between

individual character strengths and life satisfaction as well as overall character strength and satisfaction with life. Most previous studies focused on the relationship between specific character strengths and satisfaction with life but not overall character strengths and satisfaction with life.

Findings on the distribution of character strengths among the teachers in the present study revealed that the top 7 character strengths were gratitude, kindness, fairness, love of learning, honesty, wisdom/perspective, and judgment(open mindedness) whiles the bottom three consist of perseverance, bravery and spirituality. This pattern of distribution seem to be similar to that of Park *et al.* (2006) in terms of the top 7 strengths since 5 strengths are common in the top 7 strengths of both studies. These five strengths are the strengths of gratitude, kindness, fairness, honesty and judgment. The present finding is also somewhat similar to that of Chan (2009) and Gradišek (2012). The studies of Chan (2009) and Gradišek (2012) among teachers revealed that the three strengths of gratitude, kindness and honesty were among the top 7 strengths. In the study of Gradišek (2012) all three strengths was in the top 7 for pre-service teachers and only kindness and honesty was in the top 7 for in-service teachers. These three strengths may therefore constitute important strengths that are universally endorsed by teachers and others. Contrary to perceptions and empirical evidence that Africans are generally more spiritual (Utsey *et al.*, 2007) the present findings revealed the opposite in our sample as spirituality was ranked the least among the 24 character strengths while in that of Chan (2009) it was ranked 4th. It is also interesting to note that in the present study the teachers reported more Wisdom and Knowledge strengths, also referred to as intellectual or cognitive ones (love of learning, perspective, judgment) than the other strengths - Transcendence (gratitude), Humanity (kindness), Justice (fairness) and Courage (honesty). This is in sharp contrast to Chan (2009) who found no single Wisdom and Knowledge strength among the top seven strengths in both pre-service and in-service teachers in Hong Kong. Park *et al.* (2006) also found only one Wisdom and Knowledge strength (Judgment) among the top seven in the general population in the 50 states of the US and several other countries across the globe. In the present study we anticipated that teachers would score high on Wisdom and Knowledge strengths since by definition they are cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge (Peterson and Seligman, 2004; Ruch *et al.*, 2014) which defines the teacher's line of duty. The present study's findings thus imply that teachers in our study seek to acquire and use knowledge which is a good thing as these strengths are highly esteemed in the educational sector (Park *et al.*, 2004). Teachers may thus transmit these characteristics to their students. It also implies that the distribution of character strengths may be related to one's profession.

Our results generally seem to support previous findings on the relationship between character strengths and life satisfaction. The fact that overall character strengths correlated with life satisfaction is consistent with the general conceptualization of strengths and the fact that character strengths are generally fulfilling (Park *et al.*, 2004; Peterson *et al.*, 2007). The finding is also in line with the fact that Park *et al.* (2004) found all character strengths to generally correlate

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positively with life satisfaction. However, the findings of the present study differ from that of previous studies (e.g., (Park *et al.*, 2004; Peterson *et al.*, 2007)) with regards to the relationship between specific strengths and life satisfaction. In the present study even though all strengths except humour positively correlated with life satisfaction, only the strengths of Creativity, Wisdom, Love, Teamwork, Prudence, and Gratitude, significantly positively correlated with it, with teamwork and prudence being more strongly associated. The study of Chan (2009) among teachers revealed that 16 of the 24 strengths significantly positively correlated with life satisfaction, with creativity, curiosity, open mindedness (Judgment), perspective, modesty, prudence, homour and spirituality not being significantly correlated which is generally inconsistent with the present finding. Other previous studies (e.g., (Park *et al.*, 2004; Peterson *et al.*, 2007)) revealed that all the 24 character strengths correlate significantly positively with life satisfaction. Park *et al.* (2004) found that this was the case with hope, zest, love and gratitude being more associated while modesty, creativity, judgment, appreciation of beauty and excellence, love of learning, and prudence being weakly associated. Similarly, Peterson *et al.* (2007) found significant positive correlations of all character strengths in their US and Swiss samples with zest, hope, love, gratitude and curiosity being strongly correlated with life satisfaction in the US and that of zest, hope, love, curiosity and perseverance being strongly correlated with life satisfaction among the Swiss sample.

One finding that seems unique in the present study is that of the significant positive relationship between modesty and life satisfaction. This finding is different from that of Chan (2009); Shimai *et al.* (2006); Park *et al.* (2004) and Ruch *et al.* (2010); Shimai *et al.* (2006) found a negative correlation between modesty and happiness among both American and Japanese samples whiles Park *et al.* (2004) found among their three samples that modesty contribute less to life satisfaction. Similarly, Ruch *et al.* (2010) found that modesty was negatively associated with life satisfaction and weakly associated with subjective and authentic happiness. Since the present study made use of teachers as opposed to the general samples used by previous studies, it is important for further studies to examine why modesty positively relate to life satisfaction among teachers and not the general samples.

The fact that prudence, humour, modesty, self-regulation and love are predictive of life satisfaction (as revealed by the further regression analysis) seems not to be clearly supported by any found study as most of the previous studies did not examine the predictive power of the individual strengths but the strength dimensions in relation to life satisfaction (e.g., (Chan, 2009; Neto *et al.*, 2014)). However, it was surprising that humour and modesty made negative contributions to life satisfaction and that prudence made the largest unique contributions to life satisfaction. It was also surprising that even though teamwork was strongly correlated with life satisfaction (in the partial correlation analysis), it failed to predict it when further regression analysis was done.

In the present study age significantly positively predicted overall character strengths. This finding is similar to that of Linley *et al.* (2007) but inconsistent with Neto *et al.* (2014) even though the analytical approaches were different. Whereas the present study examined the predictive power of age in relation to overall character strengths, Neto *et al.* (2014) examined it in relation to the strength dimensions and found that age negatively predicted temperance strengths. Linley *et al.* (2007) also examined age in relation to the individual strengths and found that age strongly predicts curiosity and love of learning, fairness, forgiveness, and self-regulation. Taken together, the findings imply that the development of character strengths seems to be related to age.

The finding of the present study that income was not related to satisfaction with life is consistent with previous findings (e.g., (Diener and Seligman, 2004)). Rather, character strengths were seen to be more important in life satisfaction. Diener and Seligman (2004) showed that economic indicators alone do not predict wellbeing but rather important non-economic factors including social capital, democratic governance and human rights. In the present study the character strengths are related to social capital. If economic indicators alone were to predict happiness and life satisfaction, then the happiest people would come from the wealthiest nations but as Diener and Seligman (2004) proves, this is not the case.

With regards to contributions to knowledge, the present study is the first in Ghana on Peterson and Seligman (2004) character strengths and to identify unique distribution among teachers. The top 7 character strengths indicate teachers scoring high on wisdom and knowledge strengths which is unique from previous studies using general samples. Another unique contribution is that modesty/humility was found to correlate positively with life satisfaction which is inconsistent with previous studies using general samples and even teachers. Overall, the findings reveal that the distribution of character strengths may be influenced by one's profession. The study contributes to knowledge by being one of the very few on character strengths among teachers globally and the first in Ghana as well as one of the first to measure character strengths using (Ruch *et al.*, 2014) Character Strengths Rating Form(CSRF).

Despite its contributions, the present study has a number of limitations. First, even though taken from different schools and backgrounds making it diverse, the small sample size is an obvious limitation to the generalisability of the findings. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the study implies that causal inferences cannot be made. Future studies might focus on addressing these weaknesses by for example using larger samples from several schools across the country. It is also interesting to examine perceived importance of character strengths of teachers versus that of parents and lastly strength use and wellbeing versus strength possession and wellbeing since strength possession might be different from its use.

5. CONCLUSION

In the present study it was seen that only two of the top 7 strengths (gratitude and perspective) correlated with life satisfaction. This implies that not all strengths that are highly esteemed in a certain circle contribute to life satisfaction. The fact that love of learning and judgment (open mindedness) did not correlate with life satisfaction confirms previous findings that intellectual strengths are less associated with life satisfaction.

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