

Assessment of Life Skills of Secondary School Students

Prerna,
Amrita Katyayni

Abstract

Life skills are psychosocial competencies that help one to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. These skills help people to live harmoniously and function efficiently in different roles of family, community, and workforce. The major objective of the study was to assess the life skills of secondary school students. The study was carried out on a sample of 100 students drawn from two strata of government and private CBSE secondary schools. A descriptive survey method was used in the study. The study revealed that CBSE secondary school students have average life skills and private school students were found to have higher life skills compared to government school students. The study emphasizes the role of socio-economic and educational factors on life skills.

Keywords: life skills, assessment, secondary school students

Introduction

The 21st century is the age of science & technology, globalization, privatization, urbanization, and industrialization, etc. In such an age, there are numerous challenges such as cutthroat competition, unemployment, lack of job security, etc. There is an increasing need to possess various life skills to cope up with these pressures and challenges of modern-day life. Life skills can be termed as the '21st-century skills' or psychosocial competencies that help one to deal effectively in everyday life.

Adolescence is the age of transition where there are lots of physical, social, emotional, and mental changes. Adolescents are the future productive members of society. There is a need to channelize their energy in the right direction for the bright future of the nation. At this age, young minds are vulnerable to various social problems like alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual abuse, smoking, juvenile delinquency, etc. These challenges demand education that makes them competent to deal with life pressures. The right kind of education is needed, which not only imparts theoretical know-how but also equips them with life skills and competencies.

According to UNICEF (2009) "Life Skill refers to a large group of psychosocial and interpersonal skills that can help people to make an informed decision, communicate effectively and develop coping and self-management skills that may help them to lead a healthy and productive life". According to W.H.O. (1997) "Life skills are a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." It is person's ability to maintain a state of mental well-being and to demonstrate an adaptive and positive behavior while interacting with their culture and environment. Life skill encompasses all the dimensions of life whether it is economic, social, and psychological."

WHO suggested 10 core life skills: decision making, problem-solving, creative thinking, effective communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, and coping with stress. Life skills help in

improving the standard of life of an individual, understanding their role with changing social structures and functions. It develops awareness among young people and guides them to imbibe new values. Life skill-based programs are not yet adopted at the policy level through government initiatives, though it is coming up with simple initiatives from the part of CBSE education. CBSE has made life skill education a compulsory element in the curriculum. It is believed that life skill education helps in dealing with the above issues and get desired behavioral outcomes

Literature Review

The ultimate aim of education is to grow children into productive citizens who may use their knowledge, talents, and learned skills to sustain themselves and help others. Life skill-based education imparts competencies that facilitate the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of students. Individual needs these competencies for sustaining and enriching his or her life. There are many studies done on life skills in western countries but only a few studies were found in the Indian situation.

Dhingra, R. Chauhan, k.(2017) assessed the life skills of adolescents of Delhi municipal zone. A sample of 60 students was randomly selected by multi-stage sampling technique in the study and it observed that the life skills of adolescents are affected by various factors such as socioeconomic status and education of parents. The majority of participated respondents have an average level of life skills and a significant correlation between parental education and the level of life skills of adolescents was found.

Vijayrani, J.Geetha, D.(2017) studied the awareness and impact of some personal variables on life skills and value education among B.Ed. trainees of Coimbatore district. The study found that female students have a high level of life skills and value education than male students and students living in the joint family had better life skills and value education than the nuclear family.

Pujjar, L.L. (2014).studied the impact of the intervention on life skill development among Adolescent Girls of Karnataka studying in class VIII and IX and concluded that the intervention on life skill education is helpful for the rural adolescent girls for taking positive actions and improving their stress coping skills and problem-solving ability.

Mohan, S.and Perras, (2012). Studied the need for a 21stCentury Curriculum. The study focused on a survey of teachers regarding reforms in curriculum with 21st-century skills, need to design curriculum that includes thinking and innovative skills, ICT literacy, life, and career skills as core academic subjects. The sample of the study comprised 200 educators randomly drawn from schools of Hyderabad. The survey was developed consisting of 20 questions with scoring on a 5-points scale using statistical tools like mean, SD and variance. In the present study, 95% of the respondents felt that intervention strategies must be included in the curriculum.

Various studies suggest that the development of life skills is very essential. Looking into the importance of life skills, various programs for skill development have given importance in curricular as well as co-curricular activities of CBSE schools. “*Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna*” has also been started by the government of India for life skill development in citizens, making them capable of sustaining life. Looking into the importance of the above-said variable, and few studies carried out in this perspective, the researcher finds that there is vast scope for research in this area. Therefore, the present research is undertaken to assess life skills about gender and socioeconomic status.

Objectives of the Study

The present research was undertaken with the following objectives:

1 To assess the life skills of secondary school students of Varanasi city.

- 2 To compare the life skills of secondary school students on the basis of gender.
- 3 compare the life skills of secondary school students on the basis of government and private schools.

Research Hypotheses

Following research hypotheses were constructed by the researcher:

1. There is a difference in life skills of secondary school students on the basis of gender.
2. There is a difference in life skills of secondary school students on the basis of government and private schools.

Research Method

The present study was undertaken to assess the life skills among secondary school students of Varanasi city. A descriptive survey method was used in the study.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised secondary school students of Varanasi city. The sample of the study was selected by stratified random sampling method. Government and private CBSE secondary schools were the two strata, from where a sample of 100 students was drawn.

Tool of the Study

The life skill scale was constructed by Dr. Raina Tiwari by using the Likert method in which 75 statements were initially included. After necessary modifications, 40 statements were finally selected. The statements were classified as personal skills, social skills, and communication skills. The tool was constructed and standardized by administering on a sample of 850 respondents. Reliability was determined by test - re-test and KR formulae which were 0.79 and 0.82 respectively. The validity of the scale was measured using construct and content validity and which were 0.71 and 0.69 respectively.

Data Collection

Data was collected using a Life skill scale by Dr. Raina Tiwari. The scale was administered to the sample students. All the necessary instructions were given to the sample students and they were asked to make responses as per the given direction.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective 1: To assess the life skills of secondary school students

Data were obtained by the life skill score and the distribution of life skills score for the total sample was studied. For this, the scores were divided into class intervals and frequencies in each class intervals were determined. The data is further presented in tabular form for a description of the sample in terms of a variable. The frequency distribution of life skills score for the total sample is given in Table 1

Table 1: Frequency distribution of life skills score

Class interval	Frequency
1-5	0
6-10	0
11-15	0

16-20	19
21-25	12
26-30	40
30-35	26
35-40	3

Descriptive statistic measures such as mean, median, mode, skewness, kurtosis were further determined to study the nature of the distribution of data and to assess the level of life skills of respondents. The statistical measures are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Basic statistics of life skills score (N=100)

Basic statistics	Value
Mean	27.4
Median	28
Mode	30
SD	4.3
Skewness	-0.6
Kurtosis	-0.4
Min	17
Max	35
Range	18

The basic statistic shows that secondary school students have an average level of life skills score. The mean value was calculated as 27.40 and the standard deviation 4.30. The minimum score was 17 and the maximum score was 35, with the range 18. The distribution had a skewness of -0.6 and kurtosis -0.40. The details were slightly negatively skewed and platykurtic. However, skewness and kurtosis values were near to the normal distribution.

Objective 2: To compare the life skills of secondary school students on the basis of gender

H0: There is no difference in the life skills of the students on the basis of gender.

To find out the difference in life skills of male and female secondary school students, the difference in mean scores was tested with the help of t-test. The findings are summarized in table 3.

Table 3: t- value for difference in life skills score of male and female secondary school students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Significance
Male	55	27.16	4.89	0.51 (df 98)	0.61	Not significant
Female	45	27.6	3.37			

The mean score of female students was found slightly higher than the mean score of male students. However, the mean difference was not significant as the t-value was calculated as 0.51, which is below the t table value of 1.98 (98 df). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in life skills of male and female students.

Objective 3: To compare the life skills of government and private secondary school students

H0: There is no significant difference in the life skills of government and private secondary school students.

To find out the difference in life skills of government and private secondary school students, the t value was determined. The calculated t- value was compared with the t table value. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: t- value for difference in life skills score of government and private secondary school students

School type	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Significance
Government school	50	29.34	9.4	5.00 (df 98)	>0.001	significant
Private school	50	25.46	8.29			

The mean score of government secondary school students was found higher than the mean score of private school students. Further, t-value was calculated as 5.00 (98df) which was above the t table value of 1.98 at df 98. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significant difference in the life skills of government and private secondary school students. Private school students were reported to possess more life skills in comparison to government school students.

Results and Discussion

The findings reveal that secondary school students have average life skills. There is no difference in life skills of male and female secondary school students. The results imply that gender does not have an important role in determining the competencies and skills like decision making, problem-solving, creative thinking, effective communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, and coping with stress. The findings are important in breaking the gender stereotypes of the society which accords superiority to males in patriarchal social structure.

However, a significant difference in life skills scores of government and private secondary school students was observed. Private school students scored significantly better in life skills than government school students. The economic and educational status of the family might be the reason. It may be inferred that students belonging to good educational, social, and economic backgrounds have better life skills over less privileged ones. The observations suggest the need for a conducive socio-economic and educational environment for developing life skills and competencies.

Similar findings were observed by Dhingra, R, and Chauhan, K. (2017) whose study revealed that the life skills of adolescents are affected by various factors and socioeconomic status and education of parents. Vijayrani, J and Geetha, D(2017) observed that female students and students living in the joint family have a higher level of life skills in comparison to male students and students living in the nuclear family. Prajapati and Sharma (2017) suggest that proper implementation of life skill education is needed and it is helpful in the development of life skills among students. Pujjar, L.L. (2014) suggested that life skills can be better developed through skill development programs which may be helpful for the rural adolescent girls to take positive action.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study identifies the importance of life skills among adolescent secondary school students. Private school

students have significantly higher life skills scores than government school students. The findings imply the role of socio-economic and educational background as the key factor in life skills. Life skills are inherent abilities to lead a fulfilling and happy life in harmony with the environment. Adolescence represents the most critical transitions in the life span, marked by a tremendous pace of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial developments. They are often seen in a state of confusion, stress, and uncertainty. In the absence of proper guidance, support, and right skill-based education, adolescents are prone to becoming victims of social and personal problems resulting in various emotional and mental disturbances, manifested in their aggressive and other antisocial behavior. Life skill education can serve as a remedy for many current-day problems as it helps one to learn to resolve conflicts, cope with stress and develop better adjustment and negotiating skills for harmonious personal and social life. CBSE has adopted life skill education as an integral part of the secondary school curriculum as there are possibilities of acquiring and enhancing such abilities with proper training and

guidance. It may be concluded that life skill education is the need of society and there is a need to incorporate life skills training as an integral part of school curriculum.

References

Best, J. W. and Kahn, J.V. (1992). *Research in Education*. Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited. New Delhi.

Dhingra, R. and Chauhan, K. (2017). Assessment of life skills of Adolescents in relation to selected Variable. *International Journal of Scientific and Research*. 7(8), 201-212

Khera, S. and Khosla, S. (2012). A Study of Core Life Skills of adolescents in Relation to their Self- Concept developed through Yuva Schools Life Skill Programme. *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research*. 1(11), 115-125.

NCERT, (1999). *Adolescents Education in Schools*. Package of Basic Materials. New Delhi.

Prajapati, R. Sharma, B. and Sharma, D. (2017). Significance of life skill education. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*. 10(1), 1-5.

Pujjar, L., Hunshal, S. and Bailur, K. (2014). Impact of Intervention on Life Skill Development among Adolescent Girls. *Karnataka Journal of Agricultural Science*. 27 (1), 93-94.

Singh, D. and Sharma, P. (2016). Status of life Skills Education and its Practices in India. *Journal of Education and Applied Research*. 6(1), 67-69

Vijayrani, J. and Geetha, D. (2017). A Study on Life Skills and Value Education among B.Ed. Trainees. *International Journal of Research Granthalaya*. 5(8), 43-50.

Yadav, P. and Iqbal, N. (2009). Impact of life skill Training on Self-esteem, Adjustment and Empathy among Adolescents. *Journal of Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*. 35(special issue), 61-70.

WHO (2001). Skills for Health. *Information Series on School Health*. Document 9. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/school_youth_health/media/en/sch_skills4/

Authors

Perna is a Research Scholar (K) at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi

Dr. Amrita Katyayni is an Assistant Professor at Vasanta College for Women, Varanasi