



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor (RJIF): 8.4
IJAR 2024; 10(1): 26-29
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 04-12-2023
Accepted: 07-01-2024

Sudha
M.Sc., M.Ed., (NET-JRF),
Department of Education,
Maharshi Dayanand
University, Rohtak, Haryana,
India

A study of the life skills of higher secondary students in relation to academic achievement

Sudha

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2024.v10.i1a.11473>

Abstract

Life Skills are essential skills that a person should possess to live a successful and productive life in this world. Adolescence is an important stage of one's life. It is the stage in which habits and sentiments are formed, values are learned and the foundation for becoming a self-actualized individual is laid. This study precisely was an attempt to investigate the Life Skills present in the adolescent students of the Higher Secondary class. The study of the Life Skills of the Higher Secondary students in relation to their academic achievement was taken up to find out about the Life Skills of the students.

Keywords: Life skill, problem solving skills, decision making skills, critical thinking skills, goal setting skills

Introduction

The study comprised of a survey conducted in 22 schools in rural and urban areas of Rohtak. A total of 623 students (207 boys and 416 girls) constituted the sample for the study. 402 students were from Government schools and 221 students were from Private Management schools. 99 students belonged to Boys' schools, 407 students belonged to Co-educational schools and 117 students belonged to Girls' schools. 310 students studied in English medium and 313 students studied in Hindi medium.

- There is a significant difference between the Problem-Solving skills of students in terms of the management type of the school. Private management school students have better Problem-Solving skills than the students who are in government schools.
- There is a significant difference between the Decision-Making skills of students in terms of the management type of the school. Private management school students have better Decision-Making skills than the students who are in government schools.
- There is a significant difference between the Decision-Making skills of students in terms of the medium of the schools. English medium students have better Decision-Making skills than the students who are in Hindi medium.
- There is a significant difference between the Critical thinking skills of students in terms of the medium of the schools. English medium students have better Critical thinking skills than the students who are in Hindi medium.
- There is a significant difference between the Critical thinking skills of students in terms of the management type of schools. Private management school students have better Critical thinking skills than the students who are in government schools.
- There is a significant difference between the Stress coping skills of students in terms of the locality of the schools. Urban school students have better stress coping skills than the students who are studying in rural schools.
- There is no significant difference between the Goal setting skills of students in terms of any of the four independent variables.
- There is a positive correlation between Academic Achievement and Life Skills of the students.
- There is a strong relationship between the Life Skills. The Problem-solving skill had the highest positive correlation with Decision Making skill. The Critical thinking skill had the highest positive correlation with Decision Making skill.

Corresponding Author:
Sudha
M.Sc., M.Ed., (NET-JRF),
Department of Education,
Maharshi Dayanand
University, Rohtak, Haryana,
India

- The Goal setting skill had the highest positive correlation with Critical thinking. It is concluded that one skill influences the development of another skill.
- The Socio- economic status of the students has no influence on the Life Skills possessed by the student.
- The students belonging to English medium had a higher level of Life Skills compared to the students belonging to Hindi medium.
- Boys have a significant level of life skill scores with respect to achievement scores when compared with girls.
- By applying regression, it was possible to significantly predict total life skill scores of the students from their achievement scores.

Tools and Variable

The variables were classified as dependent, independent and control.

Independent variables

- **Psychological variable:** (1) Cognitive ability in relation to Life Skills
- **Social variable:** (1) Socio-Economic status (2) Gender
- **Educational variable:** (1) Three types of schools- Boys, Girls or Co-educational (2) Two types of school management- Govt., Private (3) Medium of instruction- English, Hindi (4) Location of school- Urban, Rural

Dependent variable

Achievement score

Controlled variable

(1) Age (16-18 years of age) (2) Level of education (XIth & XIIth Std. only)

Sample and sampling technique

The study comprised of students' population. The study was aimed at the population of Higher Secondary students. The population of students considered for study belonged to the Haryana Govt. Schools or to schools run by Private Management schools. The students from the CBSE or HBSE schools were taken for the study.

In Probability sampling methods, there are two types: The Simple Random Sampling and the Stratified Sampling. The Stratified Sampling in turn can be classified into (i) Stratified Random Sampling, (ii) Systematic Sampling, (iii) Cluster Sampling, (iv) Sequential Sampling. For the present study, the Stratified Random Sampling method was chosen.

Analysis

The results of the Qualitative analysis are in conformity with the findings of the Quantitative analysis. The following conclusions were deduced from the Qualitative study-The importance of Life Skills Education was duly acknowledged by all the teachers who were participants in this study. The participant teachers used words like 'important' (most used), 'essential', 'daily necessity' when they were expressing their views about Life Skills Education. Students' profiles also contribute to their Life Skills. The teachers thought that boys are faster, analytical and make snap decisions when solving problems while girls tend to ponder, think critically and arrive at Decision Making slowly but with greater confidence. They also felt that girls are better at setting goals for themselves when compared with boys. The

teachers were concerned that boys do not show good stress coping skills. They thought that students from urban schools showed greater initiative and drive, confidence, self- esteem, ability to communicate and were more outgoing. According to the teachers, the students from rural schools were disadvantaged. They lacked exposure and opportunities and subsequently showed poor confidence.

Critical thinking skills developed in the Life Skills Education class can help a student to 'identify problems correctly and to find solutions'. It is also useful when one needs to 'apply intellectual skills to make solid decisions'. The participant teachers felt that students can use 'critical thinking' skills to solve problems and make decisions. There is a relationship between the 'cognitive skills.' Life Skills Education can help students 'to process a problem and information in a systematical and logical fashion. Honing these skills enhances students 'cognitive skills', the teachers said. Students who are enabled to set goals for themselves, motivate themselves, manage stress well and move away from failure' and can achieve better academically. The social and cognitive skills developed during Life Skills Education class can help 'knowledge acquisition' and 'cognitive development'.

The Qualitative analysis confirms that there is a relationship between the Life Skills and also a relationship between academic achievement and Life Skills. This supports the result obtained in the quantitative study. Both the studies are in conformity. The present investigation on the whole has brought forth very important and useful information on the Life Skills of adolescents and their relationship with academic achievement.

From the study it is evident that students studying in Private management schools had better Problem Solving, Critical thinking and Decision-Making skills. This might be due to the reason that in private schools there is more exposure of students to capacity building and skills enhancing programs. From the study it was also clear that English medium students had a better score in Life Skills than the Hindi medium students. English medium schools focus on confidence building in students apart from imparting curriculum-based education. Most English medium schools are situated in the heart of the city thus exposing the students to school competitions, awareness - creating rallies, student programs, etc. The study also brought to light the fact that urban students coped with stress in a better manner than their rural counterparts. This might be due to differences in life style between the two groups.

As far as Goal setting skill is concerned, there seemed to be no significant difference in the adolescent's Goal setting skill with respect to gender, locality, type of school, and medium of instruction. Rural school students and Government school students who may be first generation learners have realized the importance of education for a better future. Boys take snap decisions. In spite of vast progress made by women in most fields, they still hesitate to take independent decisions.

It was found that there was a positive correlation between the total life skill scores and the achievement scores of an individual. It is of interest to note that the goal setting skill had a positive correlation with the critical thinking skill. This makes one wonder whether students think critically before fixing their goals.

The Socio-Economic status of the student had little or no impact on the possession of Life Skills. This means that Life

Skills are acquired rather than inherited. By properly educating the adolescent on essential Life Skills, it is possible to prepare him to face life confidently and successfully.

Educational implications of the study

The study is the study which investigated the relationship between the Life Skills and academic achievement of Higher Secondary students. This is a unique element of the research. Earlier studies were done on the acquisition of Life Skills and effect of intervention programs and Life Skills training on Primary school children, first year High school students, Junior Secondary students, Secondary school students, Undergraduate students, Economically backward adolescents of tribal community and Nomadic tribes and even on Juvenile delinquents and Physically challenged individuals. This study has focused on the students studying in the Higher Secondary class.

This study brought out the relationship between the Problem Solving, Decision Making, Critical thinking, Stress coping and Goal setting skills. The uniqueness of the study lies in the fact that the combination of these five skills were not taken in any other research study. The study also established a positive relationship between these Life Skills and academic achievement. This is another unique aspect of the study. Relating Life Skills with academic achievement is a novel concept and that is what exactly the study has done.

The study recommends the various stake-holders in education namely parents, teachers, heads of institutions, government policy makers and curriculum framers to take the findings of this research seriously and make Life Skills a compulsory subject of study in the frame work of the curriculum. Life Skills enhances Academic achievement This is the empirical contribution that this study has made.

Life Skills shape behavior. Life Skills influence Academic Achievement. Development of cognitive skills paves the way for higher academic achievement. This study has exposed the need and urgency of seriously implementing Life Skills programs in schools in order to improve Academic Achievement. This is a major contribution of the research to the educational fraternity.

- Life Skills leads to physical and psychological well-being. So, it is essential that Life Skills be included in the school curriculum as an important subject. From the observations of the teachers, it came to be known "Life Skills Education should be a regular subject like Language or Mathematics and should be part of the regular time-table. This would definitely ensure that students reap the benefits of Life Skills Education."
- The teachers reflected that lack of regular Life Skills Education may be due to their own lack of training and hence they felt training for imparting Life Skills to students is important. In order to have an effective implementation of Life Skill education there is a need for professionally trained and skilled personnel from within the country to train the teachers and to create life skill awareness among students.
- A purposely planned program of study prepared by experts is required to infuse new enthusiasm and understanding about Life Skills. Life Skills should be taught with health and major life issues and not be taught in isolation. Life Skills programs should be developed to integrate them with the non-formal education curriculum. The programs to reach the

adolescents have to be incorporated into the educational system to be feasible, effective, and cost-effective.

- The staff, parents, peer group and community should be involved. The importance of dialogue between different stakeholders, namely the school management, the teachers, the parents and the students about Life Skills education should be emphasized.

Suggestions for further research

The long-term effect of Life Skills Education on an individual in the adolescent stage and early adulthood stage when Life Skills education is incorporated at the elementary level can be undertaken as a longitudinal study. Comparative studies of Life Skills Education programs in India and developed countries can be undertaken. A comparative study of Life Skills Education programs that are implemented in states with in India can be undertaken and the success rate of the programs can be studied.

A cross-sectional study of adolescents who undergo the Life Skills educational programs can be undertaken to discover their change in outlook and attitude towards life. The effectiveness of implementation of the Life Skills education for the physically and mentally challenged, Spastic and Autistic children and planning a Life Skills education program for such children can be taken up for research study. Life Skills education as a part of Inclusive education can also be studied. Parental involvement in imparting Life Skills education to their children can be studied.

Studies that stretch from childhood through adolescence that give us a better picture of the factors that lead to positive outcomes of Life Skills and to understand how social relationships and social skills are related can be undertaken. Development of specific social relationships outside the nuclear family, adolescent relationships with extended family members, and peers can be carried out as a subject of research. Studies can be carried out on the development of skills such as intimacy, pro- social behaviors, and self-control in teens. Research can be done to study the influence of society and culture on the development of quality social relationships and good social skills of adolescent children.

Youth programs could be experimentally evaluated, especially those that target the quality of social relationships among teens and also those that aim to boost social skills. The effectiveness of government implemented programs in schools can be studied and this may offer immense scope for research.

Conclusion

Aptitude, instruction and environment affect the quality of academic performance. The home environment also affects the academic performance of students. Educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for academic success of their children. The students' quality of work can be improved by the school authorities by providing counselling and guidance to parents for creating a positive home environment. It is concluded from the present study that Life Skills development in students is a contributing factor which enhances the quality of academic performance. What learning outcomes are truly relevant for children to succeed in the 21st century, in addition to competencies in reading, mathematics and subject knowledge is the question for which the answer is sought. Learning outcomes in India remain abysmally low. The rate of progress over the years appears to be depressing. Hence student learning is now

beginning to move to the forefront of the government's agenda. The law and policy makers should realize that cognitive achievement and Life Skills are strongly interdependent, with academic achievement relying heavily on abilities like self-discipline and motivation. There are several behavior skills, self-control and self-esteem, attitudes, and strategies beyond content knowledge and academic skill - that are necessary for sustained and significant improvement in achievement.

Life Skills should be given its due place in the school curriculum. It should not be treated as an extra-curricular or passive value education. The school should create multiple learning opportunities and adopt a learner-centric pedagogy. Teachers should develop and integrate Life Skills into their classroom practice and overcome obstacles in implementing Life Skills in schools to build a school culture toward Life-Skills based education.

The teachers interact with the adolescents closely. So, they could be trained to transfer these skills to the adolescents. "While Language teachers could deal with general skills like self-esteem and communication, some skills like team work and co-operation could become a general part of Physical Education class and hence even Physical Education teachers could become participants in Life Skills Education". In this way, the Pedagogical aspect of Engagement with Life Skills Education was brought out by teachers when they shared their opinion on Life Skills. The teachers emphasized that the skills learnt in the classroom can help students to manage 'interpersonal' relations, 'empathize with others' and deal with life's problems with 'greater confidence.' Teachers need to 'build a rapport' with the students. They could maintain a 'healthy friendliness' in the classroom with the students so that students felt free to discuss their issues. These were the teachers' view-points that emerged out of the qualitative study.

Social maturity is the final expected outcome of social development and socialization. This is the objective of Life Skills Education. We see that apart from the main stream of education, students should also be trained in Life Skills Education in order to grow up as confident and self-actualized individuals.

In this research the investigator has made an attempt to discover the incidence and importance of Life Skills and their influence on the academic achievement. The Life Skills attainment of adolescents has to be taken as a matter of immediate concern by the educational authorities. Providing Life Skills Education to students will not only help in the students' academic achievement and self-improvement but also help in nation building, progress and development.

References

1. Aggarwal JC. Educational Research – An Introduction. New Delhi: Arya Book Depot; c1973.
2. World Health Organization (WHO). Life Skills Education in Schools. Geneva: World Health Organization; c1993. WHO/MNH/PSF/93. A. Revi.
3. World Health Organization (WHO). Life skills education in schools. Division of Mental Health; c1997.
4. Fisher A. What Is Critical Thinking and How To Improve It: A Final Definition of Critical Thinking. Critical Thinking: An Introduction; c1997.
5. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Life skills - Definition of terms; c2001.
6. Vijayalakshmi. Creativity and Social Status. Journal of Psychological Researchers. c1980.
7. Roeser RW, Peck SC. An Education in Awareness: Self Motivation, and Self Regulated Learning in Contemplative Perspective; c2009.
8. Yadav P, Iqbal N. Impact of Life Skill Training on Self-esteem, Adjustment and Empathy among Adolescents. Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology; c2009.
9. Yankey T, Biswas UN. Life Skills Training as an Effective Intervention Strategy to Reduce Stress among Adolescents; c2012.
10. Pillai R. The importance of life skills education for children and adolescents. Mind the young minds; c2012.
11. Chhadva D, Kacker P. Effectiveness of Life Skill Education on Adolescents. International Journal of Research in Education Methodology; c2013.
12. Lado R. Development of language skill training programme in English for B.Ed. students; c2013.
13. Agric JK. Impact of intervention on life skill development among adolescent girls; c2014.
14. Akfirat ON, Kezer F. A Program Implementation for the Development of Life Skills of Primary School 4th Grade Students; c2016.
15. Chakra A. Influence of Personal Variables on Core Affective Life Skills of Adolescents. Research Journal of Family, Community and Consumer Sciences; c2016.
16. Albayrak *et al.* Relating the Learned Knowledge and Acquired Skills to Real Life: Function Sample; c2017.
17. Dhingra R, Chauhan KS. Assessment of life-skills of adolescents in relation to selected variables. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications; c2017.
18. Kumar P. Morality and Life skills: The need and importance of life skills education. International Journal of Advanced Education and Research; c2017.
19. Muthulakshmi R, Pamela AJ. Life skills in relation to achievement in genetics among eleventh standard students. International Journal of Applied Research; 2016.
20. Monteiro R, Shetty L. Introduction of Life Skills Education in Curriculum for Creative and Positive Social Functioning among Young Students. International Journal of Engineering Research and Modern Education; c2016.
21. Parvathy V, Renjith RP. Impact of Life Skills Education on Adolescents in Rural School; c2015.
22. Prajapati, *et al.* Significance of Life Skills Education. Contemporary Issues in Education Research; c2017.
23. Gayatri, Channaveer RM, Lakshmana G. Life skills education program among high school children: An intervention study. Journal of Mental Education; c2017.
24. Geetha C. Impact of family factors on academic aspiration of secondary school students. Asia Journal of Multidimensional Research (AJMR). 2017;6(8):5-10.