



LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, which enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life Skills are categories in to following two major groups: (a) Affective Life Skills: affective life skills consisting of four core life skills such as: Coping with stress, Empathy, Interpersonal relationship and Coping with emotions. (B) Cognitive Life Skills: cognitive life skills consisting of six core life skills such as: Self-awareness, Critical thinking, Decision making, Effective communication, Creative thinking and Problem solving. The main objective of this investigation is to find out the level of Life Skills among undergraduate students; and also to find out whether there is any difference in Life Skills among undergraduate students based on few personal and demographic variables. Sample for this study consists of 100 UG students (both [50] male and female [50]) from government, government aided and private colleges in and around Chennai constitution. The tool used in this investigation “Life Skills Assessment Scale” was developed by the investigator (N.R. Prakash, S. Nirmala Devi, 2014). Collected data was analyzed using SPSS package. The investigator found that the level of Life Skills among undergraduate students is moderate in nature. The researcher also found that there is significant difference in their Life skills with respect to Stream of study, Medium of instruction, Place of living, whether attended any life/soft skill course and no significant difference in their Life skills with respect to Gender and Type of Management.

Keywords: *Life Skills, Life Skills Education, Undergraduate Students, Assessment*

INTRODUCTION:

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, which enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents (WHO, 1997). These are listed below:

- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Coping with emotions
- Coping with stress

Life skills are categorized into following two types: (1) Core Affective Life Skills: Core affective life skills consisting of four core life skills such as: Coping with stress, Empathy, Interpersonal relationship and Coping with emotions. (2) Core Cognitive Life Skills: Core cognitive life skills consisting of six core life skills such as: Self-awareness, Critical thinking, Decision making, Effective communication, Creative thinking and Problem solving (Sandhya Khera and Shivani Khosla, 2012).

Life skills for psychosocial competence need to be distinguished from other important skills that we hope young people will acquire as they grow up, such as reading, numeracy, technical and practical "livelihood" skills. These and other skills are usually recognized as abilities that young people should learn, either in schools, at home or in their communities. Life skills are being promoted so that they can gain recognition as essential skills that should be included in the education of young people. Life skills ranged from simplistic skills to more complicated emotional and behavioural tasks that called for services of more experienced persons (Tumuti, 2001; Wango and Mungai, 2007). By emphasizing adaptation and positive

orientation, this commonly used definition is considered with the skills-based, positive approach to youth development (Benson, 2007). The Pan-American Health Organization has defined life skills in terms of social, interpersonal, cognitive and emotional coping skills (Mangrulkar *et al.*, 2001).

LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

The methods used in the teaching of life skills builds upon what is known of how young people learn from their own experiences and from the people around them, from observing how others behave and what consequences arises from behaviour. This is described in the Social Learning Theory developed by Bandura (1977). In Social Learning Theory, learning is considered to be an active acquisition, processing and structuring of experiences. In life skills education, children are actively involved in a dynamic teaching and learning process. The methods used to facilitate this active involvement include working in small groups and pairs, brainstorming, role play, games and debates. A life skills lesson may start with a teacher exploring with the students what their ideas or knowledge are about a particular situation in which a life skill can be used (WHO, 1997).

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Life skills are the skills that mainly necessary for successful living in the society. Life skills are helpful for adaptive and positive behavior that enables individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday living. Essential life skills include such things as being able to recognize and describe one's feeling, giving and receiving feedback, recognizing assumptions, setting realistic and attainable goals, and employing problem-solving strategies. Life skills are abilities that facilitate physical, mental and emotional well-being of students to face the realities of life. So the study is more important for the undergraduate students to understand and develop such a basic skill for their meaningful performance in education, personal life and profession.

OBJECTIVEs OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were formulated for the present investigation:

1. To find out the level of life skills among undergraduate students.

2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in their Life Skills based on the following personal and demographic variables:

- Gender
- Stream of study
- Medium of instruction
- Place of living
- Attended any life skills/soft skills course
- Type of management

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

There is no significant difference in their Life skills based on the following personal and demographic variables:

- Gender
- Stream of study
- Medium of instruction
- Place of living
- Attended any life skills/soft skills course
- Type of management

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

In the present investigation survey method was adopted.

TOOL USED IN THE STUDY

A three-point attitude scale with 70 items of Life Skills Assessment Scale was developed by the researcher (N.R. Prakash and S. Nirmala Devi, 2014). The tool consists of 56 positive and 14 negative statements.

SAMPLE

Hundred undergraduate students (Male 50 and Female 50) studying in Arts and Science Colleges in and around Chennai constitute the sample for this study. Sample includes

32 Government, 47 Govt. Aided and 21 Private under graduate students from Arts and Science Colleges.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The investigator personally visited all the institutes for collecting the data. The students were given the copies of the tool and requested to respond to all parts of the questionnaire without omitting any single question.

SCORING PROCEDURE

The investigator used Likert's type of scale on a three-point scale and the items has been scored by giving weights 2, 1 and 0 in the case of positive items in the tool; and 0, 1, 2 for the negative items respectively. The grand total to each individual on the entire scale was obtained by adding the weights on all the statements. The information provided by the respondents in the personal data sheet was numerically coded to suit the computer analysis.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

In the present study the investigator used the following statistical techniques:

1. Descriptive Analysis (Mean, Standard Deviation)
2. Differential Analysis (t-value, F-ratio)

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis and it is analyzed using SPSS package. The mean and standard deviation for the variable Life Skills scores were computed for the entire sample.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

There is no significant difference in their Life skills based on the following personal and demographic variables:

- Gender
- Stream of study

- Medium of instruction
- Place of living
- Attended any life skills/soft skills course
- Type of management

Table 1
Level of Life Skills

Variable	Level	Range	No. of Student	Percentage
Life Skills	Low	39-59	12	12
	Moderate	60-98	82	82
	High	99-117	6	6

From Table 1 inferred that the overall nature of Life skills among undergraduate students is moderate in nature.

Figure 1
Level of Life Skills

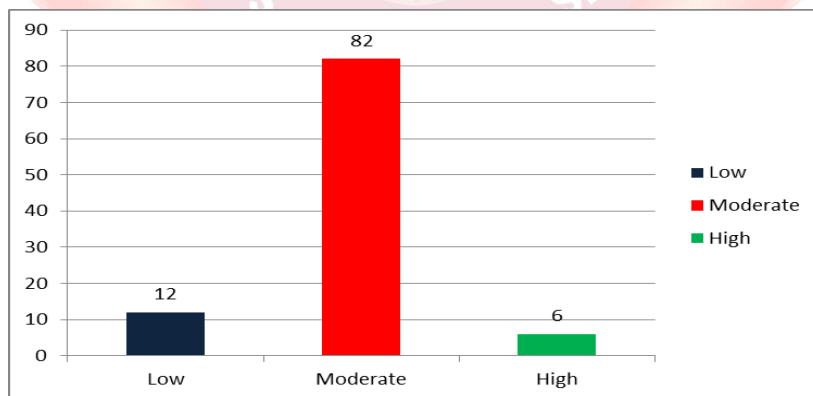


Table 2

Showing the 't' - value on Life skills with respect to Gender

Variable	Background Variables	Category	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
Life Skills	Gender	Male	50	92.36	16.54	1.5300	NS
		Female	50	97.13	14.37		
		Total	100				

Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference found between male and female students in their life skills with respect to gender.

Table 3

Showing the 't' - value on Life skills with respect to Stream of study

Variable	Background Variables	Category	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
	Stream of study	Arts	39	83.23	14.00	3.0364*	S
		Science	61	92.92	16.48		
		Total	100				

*denotes significant at 0.1 level.

Table 3 shows that there is significant difference found between arts and science students in their life skills with respect to stream of study. Calculated 't' value is 3.0364 and it is significant at 0.1 level.

Table 4

Showing the 't' - value on Life skills with respect to Medium of instruction

	Background Variables		N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
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Variable		Category					
Life skills	Medium of instruction	Tamil	45	79.8300	15.6700	4.1226*	S
		English	55	94.8400	15.1500		
		Total	100				

*denotes significant at 0.1 level.

Table 4 shows that there is significant difference found between Tamil and English medium students in their life skills with respect to medium of instruction. Calculated 't' value is 4.1226 and it is significant at 0.1 level.

Table 5

Showing the 't' - value on Life skills with respect to Place of living

Variable	Background Variables	Category	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
Life skills	Place of living	Rural	49	84.5100	17.5700	3.8763*	S
		Urban	51	96.6100	13.4500		
		Total	100				

*denotes significant at 0.1 level.

Table 5 shows that there is significant difference found between rural and urban students in their life skills with respect to place of living. The calculated 't' value is 3.8763 and it is significant at 0.1 level.

Table 6

Showing the 't' - value on Life skills with respect to Whether Attended any Life Skills/Soft Skills Course

Variable	Background Variables	Category	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value	Level of Significance
Life skills	Whether attended any life skills/soft skill course	Attended	66	96.6700	14.0200	4.8153*	S
		Not attended	34	80.6700	18.6700		
		Total	100				

*denotes significant at 0.1 level.

Table 6 shows that there is significant difference found in their life skills with respect to whether attended any life skills/soft skill. Calculated 't' value is 4.8153 and it is significant at 0.1 level.

Table 7

Group difference on Life skills with respect to Type of management

Variable	Background Variables	Sources of Variation	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F- ratio	Level of Significance
Life skills	Type of management	Between Group	2	2.3874	13.49	0.8379	NS
		Within Group	97	2.4286	250.1		
		Total	99	4.816			

Table 7 shows that there is no significant difference their life skills with respect to type of management. The calculated 'F' value is 0.8379 and it is not statistically significant.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The study revealed that the level of Life skills among undergraduate students is moderate in nature (82 percent).
2. The researcher found that there is significant difference in their life skills with respect to the following personal and demographical variables:
 - i. **Stream of study:** The calculated mean value shows that the science students have high mean value than the arts students; the calculated t- value is significant at 0.01 level.
 - ii. **Medium of instruction:** The English medium students have high mean value than the Tamil medium students; the calculated t- value is significant at 0.01 level.
 - iii. **Place of living:** The urban students have high mean value than the rural students; the calculated t- value is significant at 0.01 level.
 - iv. **Whether attended any life/soft skills course:** The calculated mean value shows that the life skills course attended students have high mean value than the students those who not attended.
3. The researcher found that there is no significant difference in their life skills with respect to gender and type of management.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Life skills are ability for adaptive and positive behavior that individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The findings may useful for the students to understand the basic skills for life and its useful role in education as well as in day to day life. The skills are more helpful for the students to face difficult situation and make them to find a solution. The skills are having more educational value as they develop students' personality and make theme emotionally well fit in nature. Teachers and parents should understand the value of the skills and develop, organize and conduct life skill oriented programs and courses to make the students as intelligent. Thus, the skills are helpful for the college students to promote mental health and competence.

CONCLUSION

These findings implied that the level of life skills among undergraduate students is moderate in nature. Researcher found significant difference with respect to few personal and demographical variables. Implementation of life skills based curriculum and education may develop students' basic skills. The study is more useful for the administrators, teachers, curriculum framers and other responsibilities in society to enhance students teaching-learning and personality development.

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