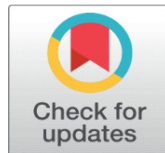


IMPACTING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH ACTIVITIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In the context of secondary school pupils, the purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of life skills training that is being delivered via activities. Communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and greater self-awareness were some of the essential life skills that were emphasized throughout the training program. There was a total of ninety students that took part in this research. Using an approach that included both a pre-test and a post-test, the data was evaluated in order to discover fluctuations in the students' capabilities. Activity-based learning has been shown to be an effective method for enhancing students' life skills, as seen by the results, which demonstrate a considerable increase in a number of different life skill areas.

Keywords: Students, Education, Life Skills, School, Social

1. INTRODUCTION

Students are often not adequately prepared for the difficulties of adult life by the standard school curriculum in today's society, which is characterized by fast economic and social change. The cultivation of life skills has become just as important for the overall development of secondary school children, despite the undeniable fact that academic knowledge in topics such as mathematics, physics, and literature is definitely crucial. The term "life skills" refers to a broad range of competencies that enable people to successfully handle the difficult situations that they encounter in their everyday lives. The following are some examples of talents that fall under this category: communication, problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration, time management, emotional regulation, and critical thinking respectively. The mastery of these abilities not only improves students' personal and social competences as they move from adolescence to adulthood, but it also has a substantial influence on students' academic achievement and their future employment possibilities. There is no possible way to overestimate the significance of life skills included in the educational system. Young people are confronted with a growing number of pressures as a result of the changing global scene. These pressures include the influence of peers, academic expectations, social media, and the difficulties of joining the labor. Students who have a solid foundation in life skills are more equipped to deal with stress, cultivate good relationships, and make choices based on well-informed information, which ultimately contributes to their overall well-being and

success. In addition, research has shown that students who have a good set of life skills are more likely to demonstrate attributes such as resilience, flexibility, and leadership. These are characteristics that are essential in both the personal and professional arenas of life. As a result, educational institutions have a responsibility to make the incorporation of life skills training into their curriculum a top priority in order to adequately prepare students for the myriad of demands that contemporary life presents. Activity-based learning, which places an emphasis on active involvement and hands-on experiences, is one method that has shown to be beneficial in the provision of life skills. Creating a dynamic learning environment that stimulates cooperation, creativity, and critical thinking among students may be accomplished by motivating them to participate in practical tasks. Activities such as role-playing, group conversations, exercises designed to foster teamwork, and creative arts projects are all examples of the many different shapes that these activities might take. Students are able to practice and improve their life skills in an environment that is both safe and helpful when they are immersed in situations that are based on the real world. As an example, students may improve their ability to explain their ideas and feelings via the use of role-playing exercises in communication, and group problem-solving activities can help students improve their ability to collaborate and their critical thinking skills. Due to the experiential character of these activities, not only is learning made more pleasurable, but it also helps enable a better grasp of vital life skills and helps individuals remember them.

Furthermore, the application of life skills training via activities has the potential to have a significant influence on the students' personal confidence and sense of self-worth. Students gain the ability to identify their areas of strength and areas in which they may develop as they participate in a variety of activities and challenges. The cultivation of a growth mindset and the development of a good self-image both need a significant amount of self-awareness. It is possible for students to build a feeling of agency that goes beyond the confines of the classroom when they are given the opportunity to take chances and venture outside of their comfort zones. As a result of this newly discovered self-assurance, students are more likely to be eager to join in conversations, seek assistance when it is required, and see problems as chances for personal development. This may lead to an improvement in academic achievement. In addition, children are encouraged to work together, which is an essential ability in today's linked society, as they participate in activities that teach life skills. Students are able to build their interpersonal skills and empathy for others via the process of teamwork, which helps them feel like they belong and gives them a feeling of community. Students get an appreciation for the importance of collaborative work, the ability to traverse varied viewpoints, and the ability to manage problems while they are in group situations. During these encounters, not only do they improve their social skills, but they also prepare them for future working conditions, which are places in which cooperation and teamwork are vital for having success. The capacity to collaborate well with others has emerged as a highly desired quality in the labor market as a result of the growing need among employers for individuals who are able to flourish in environments that emphasize teamwork. Students who get instruction in life skills may also see good effects on their academic performance, in addition to the social and emotional advantages that they receive. A significant body of research suggests that kids who participate in activities that are intended to promote life skills often have enhanced levels of concentration, motivation, and organizational skills. Workshops on time management, for instance, may offer students efficient ways for prioritizing chores and striking a balance between academic duties and extracurricular activities. Students who develop these abilities are better able to handle the amount of work they have to do and experience less stress, which ultimately leads to improved academic performance. Furthermore, the development of critical thinking skills helps students to approach their studies with a more analytical mentality, developing a better grasp of complicated topics and enhanced problem-solving ability. Additionally, the value of life skills goes beyond the bounds of academic achievement; they play a significant part in defining the personal lives of students as well as the undertakings they will pursue in the future. Young people are transitioning into adulthood, and as they do so, the capacity to handle relationships, manage money, and make choices based on accurate information becomes more important. Education that focuses on life skills instills a feeling of responsibility and accountability in students, giving them the capacity to take control of their lives and make decisions that are in line with their beliefs and aspirations. For example, kids who get instruction in financial literacy are equipped with critical information about budgeting, saving, and investing, which helps them prepare for the inevitable financial issues they will face as adults.

Activity-based learning is an essential component of secondary education because it allows students to develop skills that are applicable in real-world situations. As students struggle to live up to the expectations of contemporary life, it is becoming more necessary for them to be able to effectively communicate, find solutions to issues, work together with others, and successfully control their emotions. In order to guarantee that students are adequately prepared for the obstacles they will confront in their personal and professional lives, educational institutions need to acknowledge the

significance of including training in life skills within their curriculum. Educators are able to create a dynamic learning environment that encourages development, resilience, and success by encouraging students to participate in meaningful activities that cultivate these critical abilities. In the end, providing kids with life skills not only helps them realize their full potential as individuals, but it also contributes to the formation of responsible and effective citizens who are able to succeed in a world that is always changing.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dey, Sanjay et al., (2022) The development of students' mental health and their capacity to have fulfilling lives are two of the most important goals of life skill education programs. Coping with important social circumstances is something that adolescents are required to accomplish. The term "life skills education" describes programs that teach teenagers the basics of coping with real-world situations. Possessing life skills enables one to acquire new knowledge, gain mastery over one's actions, and make well-informed choices. Through life skills education, children may learn how to take care of themselves and gain a comprehensive grasp of the many factors—social, psychological, and biological—that impact their growth and development. Examining the current state of life skill education and determining which skills are most important for teenagers to overcome educational deficiencies are the primary goals of this research. Participants included secondary school students from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar. A t-test, one-way ANOVA, and chi-square test were used to examine the data that was acquired from a pretested questionnaire. The age range of the participants in the research was 14–18 years old, with an average age of 16.46 ± 1.04 . With regard to life skills, almost half of the teenagers (52%) are at a medium level. The percentage of people with strong life skills is 25.7%, whereas the percentage with poor life skills is 22.0%. Students are better equipped to make informed judgments as adults when they get life skill education. It helps people cope with different situations and improves their capacity to achieve societal expectations and aspirations. Adolescents will be better equipped to handle life's inevitable obstacles if they get instruction in these areas via life skill education.

Maqsood, Fatima et al., (2022) Students in secondary school may benefit greatly from life skills education since it helps them to think critically in stressful circumstances and to respond rationally when faced with challenges (Mulyadi, Suryadi, & Aliyyah, 2020; Life Skills-Based Education, 2014). The purpose of this research was to find out how many life skills secondary school students have and to see whether there are any disparities in this area between male and female students and between public and private school students. This research project used a quantitative approach based on the explanatory research technique. The research used a proportional sampling approach to choose a sample of 220 secondary school pupils. We used a structured questionnaire to gather data. According to the results, the majority of the participants (both sexes) saw possessing basic life skills in a good light. The perspective of female students on the acquisition of life skills differed significantly from that of male students. It was also determined that, in comparison to their public school counterparts, private school pupils had a more robust belief in their own ability to acquire fundamental life skills. Therefore, in order to foster important life skills among young students, it is advised that private and public schools provide equal learning opportunities for male and female students.

Raju, Sharon & Panapana, Divakara. (2022). If a person wants to grow socially and morally, they need to acquire the life skills that education offers. The right of students to an education includes the right to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Learning may be a wonderful experience when the heart, brain, and hands are in harmony. Creativity thrives in an upbeat spirit. Instructing students to play the role of facilitator, entertainer, and motivator while making learning enjoyable is a great idea. For kids to cultivate this character trait, life skills are crucial. Personality allows them to examine their demeanor, skills, interests, aptitudes, and capacities, among other things. Students' social conduct, adaptability, and comprehension are all positively impacted by the acquisition of life skills. Fifty students selected at random from the Visakha Patnam District of Andhra Pradesh's secondary schools. According to the findings It seems from tables 1 and 2 that the sample of high school students has an average level of life skills. Life skills are lacking for 18% of secondary school students. Among secondary school students, 33% demonstrate an average proficiency in life skills. Highly developed life skills are possessed by just 16% of secondary school students. In terms of students' Life Skills, gender is not a major factor in secondary school. In terms of students' Life Skills, the variable area is insignificant in secondary school.

Rani, Sonu & Neeraj, Mr. (2020). Any collection of abilities that let us deal with the kinds of problems we're likely to face in the course of our everyday lives is called a life skill. Education and real-world experience are the primary means by which a learner gains these abilities. A student's ability to: Think creatively and solve problems in novel ways is an

essential life skill. The development of new learning strategies, self-regulation abilities, and the ability to make well-informed decisions that promote good values are all benefits that adolescents may reap from acquiring life skills. The purpose of this research was to examine the life skills (in all its facets) of high school seniors. One hundred children from Sonapat district's public and private schools served as the study's sample. The data for this research came from the Life Skill Scale, which was created by M.N. Vranda (2009). We used the t-test, standard deviation, and mean to examine the data. This study's data analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the degree of life skills possessed by male and female pupils. In every area of life skill—decision making, problem solving, empathy, self-awareness, communication, interpersonal relationships, emotional regulation, stress management, creativity, and critical thinking—female students outperform their male counterparts.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the life skills of secondary school pupils, this research was carried out utilizing a quasi-experimental methodology, which included a pre-test and a post-test model.

1) Sample Size

The research was carried out on ninety pupils from secondary schools who were chosen using a random selection process. Over the course of eight weeks, these children were organized into groups and given the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities that focused on life skills.

2) Tools and Techniques

Pre-test and Post-test: A standardized life skills questionnaire was administered before and after the intervention.

Activities: The activities designed focused on enhancing specific life skills, such as:

Communication: Role-playing and public speaking activities.

Problem-solving: Group discussions and case study analysis.

Decision-making: Decision-tree exercises.

Self-awareness: Reflective journaling and self-assessment tasks.

3) Data Analysis

For the purpose of determining whether or not the development in life skills had statistical significance, a paired t-test was used. In order to have a comprehensive picture of the pre-test and post-test outcomes, descriptive statistics were used.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Gender of the respondents

Particular	Frequency	Percentage%
Boys	48	53.33%
Girls	42	46.66%
Total	90	100

There were a total of 90 participants, and the table offers data on the gender distribution of respondents. The table reveals that 48 of the participants were male, which accounts for 53.33 percent of the total respondents. On the other hand, 42 of the responders were female, which accounts for 46.66 percent of the total. The distribution of the respondents suggests that there is a small majority of males being surveyed.

Table 2 Pre-Test and Post-Test Mean Scores of Life Skills through activities among secondary school student

Life Skill	Pre-test Mean Score	Post-test Mean Score	Improvement (%)
Communication Skills	56.2	75.4	34.2%
Problem-Solving Skills	60.1	80.8	34.4%
Decision-Making Skills	58.7	78.5	33.7%
Self-awareness	52.9	73.6	39.1%
Total Life Skills Score	57.0	77.0	35.1%

The following table presents a comparison of the mean scores of secondary school pupils with respect to a variety of life skills both before and after they participated in certain activities. Students earned an average of 56.2 on the communication skills portion of the pre-test, but they improved to 75.4 on the post-test, which is a 34.2% improvement over their pre-test results. In a similar vein, problem-solving abilities showed a mean score of 60.1, which increased to 80.8 after the test, indicating a corresponding improvement of 34.4%.

The individual's ability to make decisions improved by 33.7%, going from a score of 58.7 on the pre-test to a score of 78.5 on the post-test. The biggest percentage improvement was seen in self-awareness, which had a mean score of 52.9 before the exam and increased to 73.6 after the test.

This is the highest percentage increase of 39.1%. As a whole, the total score on life skills increased from 57.0 on the pre-test to 77.0 on the post-test, which indicates a strong overall improvement of 35.1% during the whole process. As a consequence of these findings, it seems that the activities were successful in strengthening the students' life skills.

Table 3 Paired T-Test Analysis of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Life Skills through activities among secondary school students

Life Skill	t-value	p-value
Communication Skills	9.62	0.001**
Problem-Solving Skills	10.21	0.001**
Decision-Making Skills	8.87	0.001**
Self-awareness	11.35	0.001**

For the purpose of determining whether or not activities designed to improve life skills among secondary school students are beneficial, the paired t-test analysis that is shown in Table 3 compares the students' scores from the pre-test to those from the post-test. The t-values for each life skill show that they are statistically significant. The t-value for communication skills was 9.62, and the p-value was 0.001, which indicates that it is extremely significant. In a similar vein, the t-value for problem-solving abilities was 10.21, and the p-value was 0.001. On the other hand, the t-value for decision-making skills was 8.87, and the p-value was 0.001. Not only did self-awareness have the greatest t-value, which was 11.35, but it also had the highest p-value, which was 0.001. The fact that the p-values for all of the life skills were consistently low lends credence to the notion that the observed changes in scores are statistically significant. This lends further support to the conclusion that the activities were successful in enhancing these most important life skills among the students.

5. CONCLUSION

It is critical for the general development and success of secondary school pupils to cultivate life skills as part of their education throughout this stage. Through the process of preparing to traverse the complexity of adulthood, it is becoming more vital for students to acquire abilities such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and collaboration. In addition to improving their academic achievement, these skills also help children become more prepared for the obstacles they will face in the real world.

The provision of students with hands-on experiences that build engagement and deeper knowledge is made possible via the use of activity-based learning, which plays a significant part in this process. Through the incorporation of life skills training into the educational curriculum, schools have the ability to encourage kids to develop into persons who are more self-assured, resilient, and socially comfortable.

In the end, making an investment in life skills education provides young people with the tools they need to succeed in a world that is always changing. This ensures that they are well-prepared to tackle future problems with the competence and confidence they need to triumph over them.

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