LIFE SKILLS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE THOUBAL DISTRICT OF MANIPUR
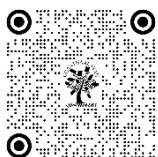
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ABSTRACT

Life skills are essential psychosocial skills, allowing people to transform information, attitudes, and beliefs into informed and healthy behaviors. These abilities assist individuals in achieving their goals and living up to their full potential. The present study aims to determine the level of life skills among high school students in Senapati district, Manipur, taking into account their gender variation, the types of residential areas they live in, such as rural and urban, and the types of residential places they stay in during their studies, such as homes, hostels, and rented places. The study employed both a descriptive method and a simple random sampling method. The investigator used a standardized Life Skills Scale (LSS-KCTA) developed by Chandra Kumari and Ayushi Tripathi to gather data. The scale's reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.99, to measure the academic achievement the researcher used the result of the students in their High School Leaving Certificate Examination (HSLCE) result. Throughout the study, the researcher used percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, and ANOVA to determine the results. The study reveals that the maximum number of students have an average positive level of life skills. It is also found that there is no significant difference between female and male secondary school students, class Xi and Xii, Nuclear and Joint family, rural and urban, government and private, Home and hostel, Academic Achievement of the higher secondary school students.

Keywords: Adolescents, Life Skills, Higher Secondary School, Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Life skills are critical psychosocial talents allowing people to transform information, attitudes, and beliefs into informed and healthy behaviours. These abilities assist individuals in achieving their goals and living up to their full potential. Life skills are generally learned indirectly via experience and practice rather than explicitly taught. They comprise psychosocial competencies and interpersonal abilities that assist individuals in making informed decisions, thinking critically, communicating effectively, developing healthy relationships, and managing their lives healthily and productively (Basak, R., 2022). Life skills are classified into three categories: cognitive skills for evaluating and utilising information, personal skills for establishing personal agency and governing oneself, and interpersonal skills for effectively communicating and interacting with others (WHO, 1993). According to the World Health Organization (1993), life skills can include various abilities that vary depending on culture and environment. Life Skills are essential for the overall wellbeing of an adolescent. Life skills are generally learnt indirectly via experience and practice rather than explicitly taught. They comprise psychosocial competencies and interpersonal abilities that assist individuals in making informed decisions, thinking critically, communicating effectively, developing healthy relationships, and managing their

life healthily and productively. Adolescents are the future of the nation; Life skills empower them to take effective measures to prepare them for effective social relationships and social causes.

2. SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

Secondary school students are at the adolescents' stage of a life. This stage of life is defined as a 'stage of stress and storm' (Hall, G. S. 1904). They face numerous challenges in their day today life. Life skills empower them to take effective measures to prepare them for effective social relationships and social causes (Le, T. et al. 2021). It is a psychosocial skill that enables individuals to translate knowledge, perspectives and values about their interests into well-educated and rational behaviour and also enables to make choices with a sensible "what to do" in mind, why to do it, how to do it and when to do it" (WHO, 1997). Adolescence is a time when intellectual, physical, social, emotional and all abilities are at a very high level (Chingkheinganba, Meitei, L., & Maisnam, P., 2022), but unfortunately, for various reasons, most young people do not reach their full potential. They face many emerging problems such as conflicts, poverty, socio-economic disparities, low self-esteem, social taboos and other issues such as alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual abuse, smoking, juvenile delinquency, antisocial acts, academic problems (Balasundari, K. et al., 2014)., etc., which affect them negatively to a great extent. Their main concerns are high competition, unemployment, lack of job security, poverty, social problems, and socio-economic disparities. Therefore, they find themselves in the heat of competition because it impacts the level of Life Skills of the adolescent (Chakra, A. & Aruna, M., 2017). This new challenge requires an immediate and effective response from a socially responsible education system. "Education" is required, but to transform the knowledge acquired during the course of their studies into skills to live a better life skills training is considered a bridge between basic activities and skills. It strengthens the individual's ability to respond to the needs and demands of today's society and helps to deal with various issues. Introducing Life Skills education will also conduit the gap of today's youths while facing and preparing for real-life situations (Meitei, L. C., & Maisnam, P. 2022). Thus, the researchers feel the need to conduct an investigation on life skills of the secondary school students in Senapati district of Manipur.

2.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To find out the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students in Thoubal district, Manipur.

3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1) To examine whether there is a significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to gender variation.
2) To study whether there exists a significant difference in the level of life skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to class differences.
3) To examine whether there is a significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to the types of family variation.
4) To determine whether there is a significant difference in the level of life skills present between the students from rural and urban areas.
5) To study whether there exist significant differences between the government and private higher secondary school students in the level of life skills.
6) To investigate whether there exists a difference in the level of life skills regarding the nature of residential places during the course of study, i.e., home and hostel.
7) To examine whether there is a significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to the academic achievement.

4. NULL HYPOTHESES

1) There is no significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to gender variation.

2) There exists no significant difference in the level of life skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to class differences.

3) There exists no significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to the types of family variation.

4) There exists no significant difference in the level of life skills present between the students from rural and urban areas.

5) There exists no significant difference between the government and private higher secondary school students in the level of life skills.

6) There exists no significant difference in the level of life skills regarding the nature of residential places during study, i.e., home and hostel.

7) There exists a significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regard to academic achievement.

5. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The sample has been selected from two government and two private higher secondary school students only; the study was confined to the higher secondary school students in Thoubal district only.

6. METHOD AND TOOLS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Descriptive research is the description, recording and interpretation of existing conditions. It involves comparing or contrasting and trying to find relationships between variables. This study compared the life skills of higher secondary school students. Thus, a descriptive method was used.

The investigator used a standardised Life Skills Scale (LSS-KCTA) developed by Chandra Kumari and Ayushi Tripathi to gather data. The scale has 52 items distributed over various dimensions. It also has positive and negative statements. The scale is a Likert-type five-point scale labelled with Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of the scale was 0.847. During the course of the study the researcher employed percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA to determine the results. To determine the level of academic achievement the researcher used the public examination High School Leaving Certificate Examination result.

7. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY AND SAMPLING METHOD

In the present study, the investigator has selected 425 students from four higher secondary schools as a sample of the study by using stratified random sampling methods.

Table 1 Sample of the study.

Sr. No.	School	Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
1	Ananda Purna School of Sciences	78	57	135
2	Chaoyaima Higher Secondary School	102	43	145
3	Heirok Higher Secondary School	69	30	99
4	Khangabok Higher Secondary School	26	20	46
	Total	275	150	425

8. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA
8.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To find out the Life Skills level of secondary school students in Thoubal district, Manipur.

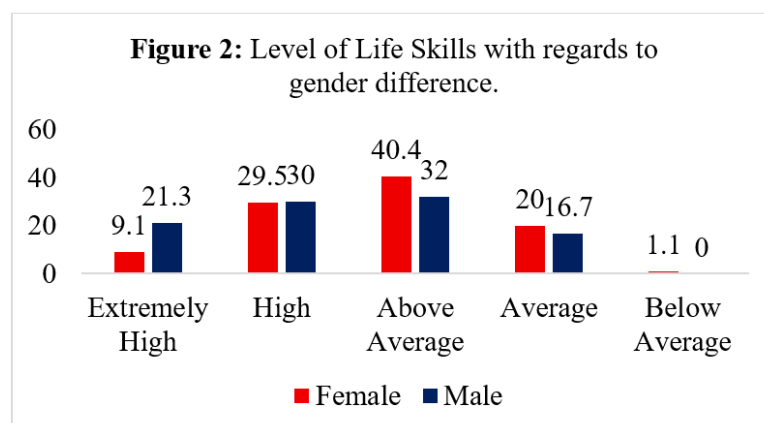**Figure 1:** Level of life skills present in the higher secondary school students.
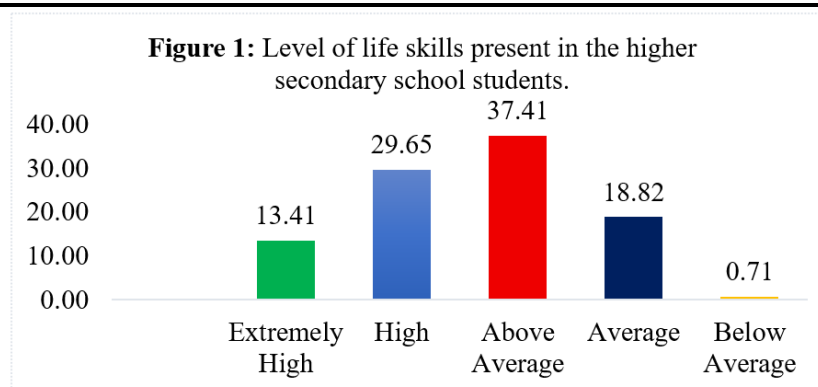
The above figure shows the overall distribution of life skills levels among 425 higher secondary school students in Thoubal district. The highest proportion of students, 37.41% (n = 159), were classified under the Above Average category, followed by 29.65% (n = 126) in the High category and 18.82% (n = 80) in the Average category. Additionally, 13.41% (n = 57) of students fell into the Extremely High life skills group. Only 0.71% (n = 3) were in the Below Average category, while none of the students were reported in the Low or Extremely Low levels. This distribution indicates a predominantly positive trend in the development of life skills among the students, with over 80% performing at or above average levels. The absence of students in the lowest two categories reflects a generally healthy life skills profile across the sample.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to gender variation.

Figure 2: Level of Life Skills with regards to gender difference.

The above figure shows the gender-wise distribution of life skills among 275 female and 150 male higher secondary school students. Among females, the largest percentage fell under the Above Average category (40.4%), followed by High (29.5%), Average (20.0%), Extremely High (9.1%), and Below Average (1.1%). No female students were found in the Low or Extremely Low levels. Among males, the highest percentage was also in the Above Average category (32.0%), followed closely by High (30.0%) and Extremely High (21.3%), while Average was 16.7%. No male students were in the Below Average, Low, or Extremely Low categories. Notably, male students had a significantly higher proportion in the Extremely High category compared to females.

Table 2 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among Female and Male Students.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Female	275	169.12	15.71	423	-2.835	.054
Male	150	173.79	17.16			

Table 2 provides the statistical comparison between the mean life skills scores of female and male students. The mean score for females was 169.12 (SD = 15.71), and for males, it was 173.79 (SD = 17.16). The t-test yielded a value of t = -2.835 with degrees of freedom = 423 and a significance level of p = 0.054.

Although the t-value indicates a notable mean difference, the p-value of 0.054 is slightly above the conventional threshold of 0.05. Therefore, the result is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference in the level of life skills between male and female students, though males appear to have a slightly higher average.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant difference in the level of life skills present in the higher secondary school students with regards to class differences.


Figure 3: Level of Life Skills with regards to class difference.
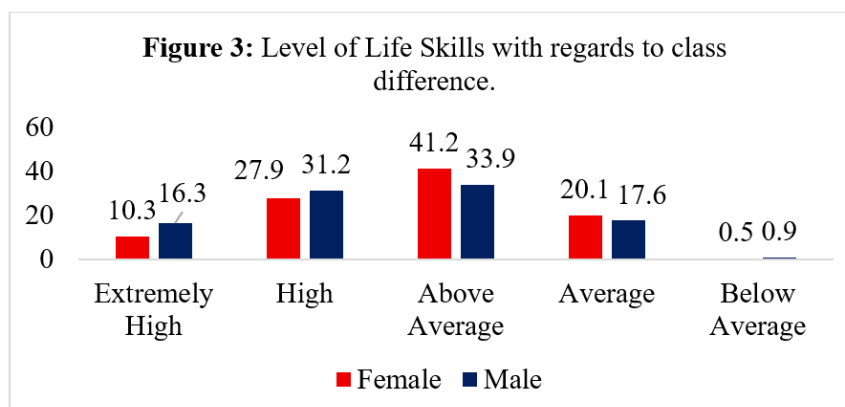
The above figure presents the distribution of life skills levels among Class XI (n = 204) and Class XII (n = 221) students. Among Class XI students, the highest percentage (41.2%) were in the Above Average category, followed by High (27.9%), Average (20.1%), Extremely High (10.3%), and Below Average (0.5%). No students in Class XI were reported in the Low or Extremely Low life skills categories. For Class XII students, the highest percentage (33.9%) also fell in the Above Average category, followed by High (31.2%), Extremely High (16.3%), Average (17.6%), and Below Average (0.9%). Again, Low and Extremely Low levels had no representation. Notably, Class XII students had a higher percentage in the Extremely High category compared to Class XI, indicating a slightly stronger life skills profile.

Table 3 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among Class XI and XII Students.

Class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
XI	204	168.89	14.92	423	-2.28	0.09
XII	221	172.49	17.45			

According to Table 3, the mean life skills score for Class XI students was 168.89 (SD = 14.92), while for Class XII students it was 172.49 (SD = 17.45). The t-test result was t = -2.28 with degrees of freedom = 423 and p = 0.09. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that there is no significant difference in life skills between students of Class XI and Class XII. However, the descriptive statistics suggest that Class XII students may have slightly better-developed life skills on average.

Hypothesis 3: There exists no significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regard to the types of family variation.

Fugure 4: Level of Life Skills with regards to class difference.
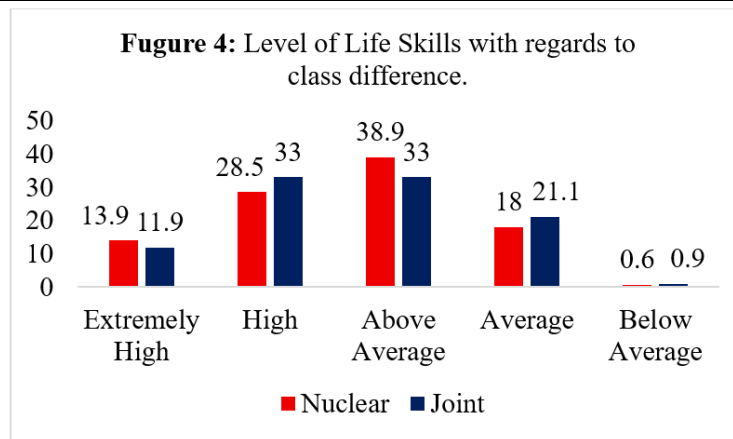
The figure above represents the life skills levels among students from nuclear (n = 316) and joint (n = 109) families. Among nuclear family students, the largest group (38.9%) fell in the Above Average category, followed by High (28.5%), Average (18.0%), Extremely High (13.9%), and Below Average (0.6%). In contrast, joint family students showed High and Above Average levels equally at 33.0% each, followed by Average (21.1%), Extremely High (11.9%), and Below Average (0.9%). No students from either family type were recorded in the Low or Extremely Low life skills levels. Overall, students from both family types showed similar life skill distributions, with a slight edge in Extremely High and Above Average life skills among nuclear family students.

Table 4 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among the Students from Nuclear and Joint Family.

Types of Family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Nuclear	316	171.09	16.52	423	0.69	0.69
Joint	109	169.83	15.96			

Table 4 shows that the mean life skills score for nuclear family students was 171.09 (SD = 16.52), while for joint family students it was 169.83 (SD = 15.96). The independent samples t-test resulted in t = 0.69 with degrees of freedom = 423 and a p-value = 0.69. Since the p-value is much greater than 0.05, the result is not statistically significant, and we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means there is no significant difference in the life skills levels of students based on whether they belong to nuclear or joint families, even though minor descriptive differences exist.

Hypothesis 4: There exists no significant difference in the level of life skills present between the students from rural and urban areas.

Figure 5: Level of Life Skills with regards to residential area.
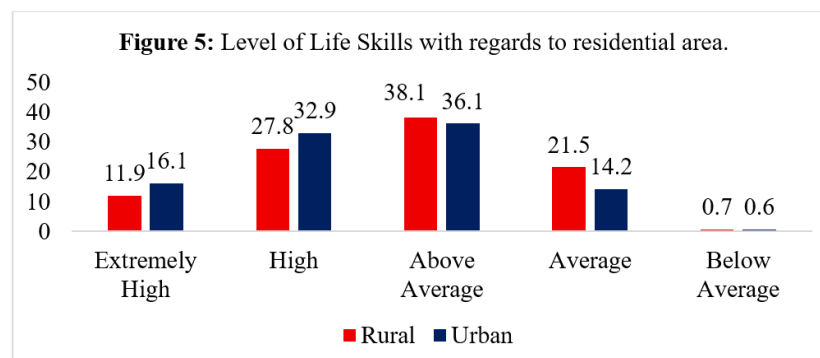
The above figure shows the distribution of life skills among students from rural (n = 270) and urban (n = 155) areas. Among rural students, the highest percentage (38.1%) were in the Above Average category, followed by High (27.8%), Average (21.5%), Extremely High (11.9%), and Below Average (0.7%). Urban students also showed a strong distribution in the higher life skills categories: Above Average (36.1%), High (32.9%), Extremely High (16.1%), Average (14.2%), and

Below Average (0.6%). As with previous results, there were no students in the Low or Extremely Low categories in either group. Although urban students had a slightly higher percentage in the Extremely High and High categories, the overall distribution pattern was similar.

Table 5 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among Rural and Urban Students.

Residential Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Rural	270	170.04	17.13	423	-1.20	0.27
Urban	155	172.02	14.91			

Table 5 presents the comparison of mean life skills scores between rural and urban students. Rural students had a mean score of 170.04 (SD = 17.13), while urban students had a slightly higher mean of 172.02 (SD = 14.91). The independent samples t-test produced t = -1.20 with degrees of freedom = 423 and a p-value = 0.27. Since the p-value exceeds 0.05, the result is not statistically significant, and the null hypothesis is retained. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of life skills between students residing in rural and urban areas, although urban students showed slightly higher average scores descriptively.

Hypothesis 5: There exists no significant difference between the government and private higher secondary school students in the level of life skills.

Figure 6: Level of Life Skills with regards to the management of school.
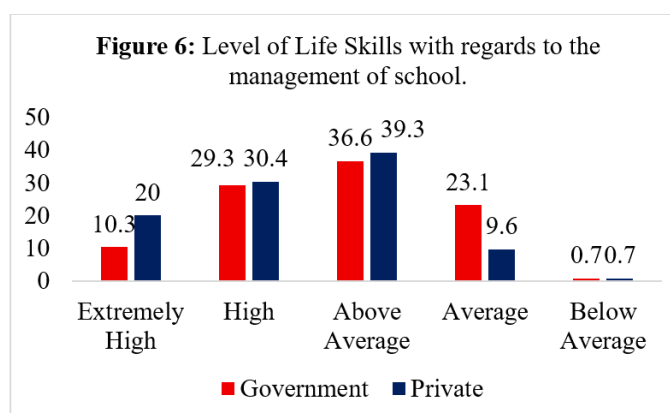
The above figure shows the distribution of life skills levels among Government and Private higher secondary school students in the Thoubal district reveals that the majority of students in both types of schools fall within the Above Average and High life skills categories. Specifically, 36.6% of government school students and 39.3% of private school students were rated Above Average, while 29.3% of government and 30.4% of private school students were in the High category. Interestingly, a higher percentage of private school students (20%) demonstrated Extremely High life skills compared to 10.3% of government school students. Conversely, the Average level category shows a notable difference, with 23.1% of government students falling here compared to only 9.6% of private students. The percentages of students scoring Below Average are very minimal and equal for both groups (0.7%), while no students were recorded in the Low or Extremely Low life skills categories in either school type. This suggests that most students possess moderate to high levels of life skills regardless of the school type, with private school students slightly more represented in the higher skill levels.

Table 6 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among Government and Private School Students.

Management	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Government	290	168.63	15.35	423	-4.00	0.28
Private	135	175.34	17.56			

Based on Table 6, the mean life skills score of government higher secondary school students in Thoubal district is 168.63 with a standard deviation of 15.35, while private school students have a higher mean score of 175.34 and a

standard deviation of 17.56. Although private school students show a higher average life skills score than their government counterparts, the independent samples t-test reveals that this difference is not statistically significant (t = -4.00, p = 0.28 > 0.05). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of life skills between students from government and private higher secondary schools in the district.

Hypothesis 6: There exists no significant difference in the level of life skills regarding the nature of residential places during study, i.e., home and hostel.

**Figure 7:** Level of Life Skills with regards to the nature of residence.
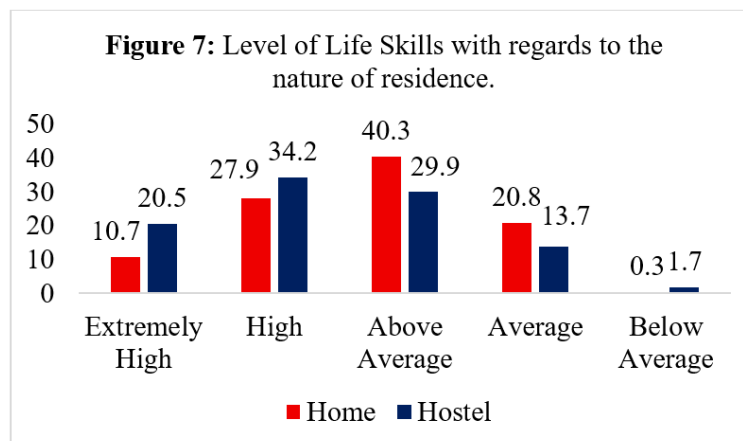
The data on life skills levels among secondary school students in relation to their residential places in figure 7, show distinct patterns. Among students residing at home, the majority fall within the Above Average category (40.3%), followed by High (27.9%) and Average (20.8%) life skills levels. Only a small fraction (0.3%) were rated Below Average, and none fell into the Low or Extremely Low categories. Conversely, hostel-residing students have the highest percentages in the High (34.2%) and Extremely High (20.5%) life skills categories, with fewer students in the Above Average (29.9%) and Average (13.7%) levels. The Below Average category is slightly higher in hostels (1.7%) compared to home residents (0.3%). Notably, no students in either group scored in the Low or Extremely Low categories. This distribution indicates that students living in hostels tend to demonstrate higher life skills levels more frequently than those living at home, who mostly cluster around the above average to average range.

Table 7 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among Government and Private School Students.

Present Address	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Home	308	169.0682	15.19810	423	-3.513	.122
Hostel	117	175.2308	18.43833			

In the table no. 7, the mean life skills score for students residing at home is 169.07 (SD = 15.20), while students living in hostels have a higher mean score of 175.23 (SD = 18.44). Although hostel students appear to have a higher average level of life skills compared to those living at home, the independent samples t-test shows that this difference is not statistically significant (t = -3.513, p = 0.122 > 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in life skills levels between students residing at home and those living in hostels cannot be rejected. This implies that the residential status of students does not have a significant impact on their life skills development among secondary school students in the Thoubal district.

Hypothesis 7: There exists a significant difference in the Level of Life Skills present in the higher secondary school students with regard to academic achievement.

Figure 7: Level of Life Skills with regards to the academic achievement.
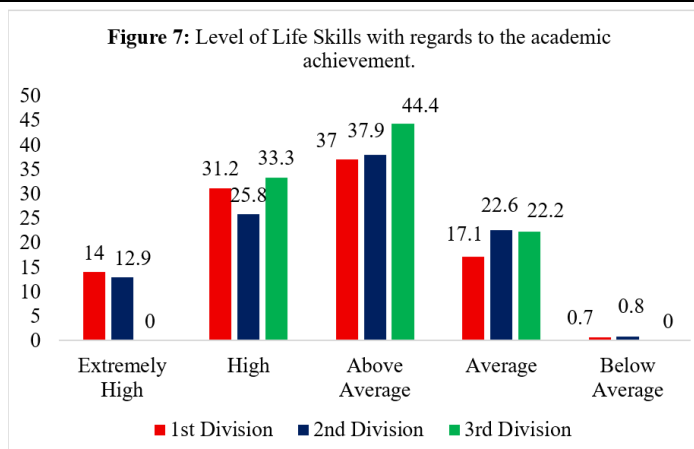
The distribution of life skills levels among secondary school students in relation to their academic achievement in fihure 7 reveals that students in the 1st Division mostly fall into the Above Average (37.0%) and High (31.2%) categories, followed by Average (17.1%) and Extremely High (14.0%) levels. Similarly, students in the 2nd Division also predominantly show Above Average (37.9%) and High (25.8%) life skills levels, with smaller percentages in the Average (22.6%) and Extremely High (12.9%) categories. In contrast, the very few students in the 3rd Division mostly fall in the Above Average (44.4%) and High (33.3%) categories, with no students recorded in the Extremely High or Below Average categories. The Below Average life skills category has insignificant representation across all divisions. Overall, students with higher academic achievement (1st Division) tend to exhibit higher levels of life skills, while students in lower divisions still maintain moderate to high life skills, indicating a generally positive correlation between academic achievement and life skills levels.

Table 8 Difference on the Level of Life Skills Among Students with Regards to Academic Achievement.

Academic Achievement in HSLCE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig.
1st Division	292	171.79	16.74	2	1.92	0.15
2nd Division	124	168.66	15.62			
3rd Division	9	166.44	10.98			
Total	425	170.76	16.37			

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine the difference in life skills levels among secondary school students across academic achievement divisions (1st, 2nd, and 3rd Division) reveals that the mean life skills scores are 171.79 (SD = 16.74) for 1st Division students, 168.66 (SD = 15.62) for 2nd Division students, and 166.44 (SD = 10.98) for those in the 3rd Division. Although the mean scores tend to decrease slightly with lower academic achievement, the ANOVA results show that this difference is not statistically significant (F = 1.92, p = 0.15 > 0.05). This indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of life skills among students with different academic achievement levels in the Higher Secondary Leaving Certificate Examination (HSLCE) in the Thoubal district.

Thus, the hypothesis testing suggests that academic achievement of the students, whether in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Division, does not significantly influence the development of life skills. This stated that life skills are consistent among the students irrespective of their academic performance, this result highlights the importance of life skills education for all students.

9. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The present study focused on the study of Life Skills in Secondary school students in Senapati District, Manipur. The main findings of the study are:

The overall distribution of life skills among 425 higher secondary school students in Thoubal district indicates a predominantly positive trend. The majority of students (37.41%) fall under the Above Average life skills category, followed by High (29.65%) and Average (18.82%) levels. A notable 13.41% of students exhibit Extremely High life skills, while only a minimal 0.71% are categorized as Below Average. No students were reported in the Low or Extremely Low categories, highlighting a generally healthy and well-developed life skills profile across the student population.

Life skills levels among female and male students show a somewhat similar distribution with females mostly in the Above Average (40.4%) and High (29.5%) categories, and males also showing high percentages in Above Average (32%) and High (30%), but with a significantly larger proportion (21.3%) in the Extremely High category compared to females (9.1%). Despite these descriptive differences, statistical analysis showed no significant difference in the mean life skills scores between genders, indicating that gender does not significantly influence life skills levels in this context.

Both Class XI and Class XII students exhibit predominantly Above Average and High life skills levels. Class XII students show a slightly higher percentage in the Extremely High category (16.3%) than Class XI students (10.3%). However, no statistically significant difference was found between the mean life skills scores of students in the two classes, suggesting that class level does not significantly impact life skills development.

Students from both nuclear and joint family backgrounds show comparable life skills levels, primarily concentrated in Above Average and High categories. While nuclear family students have a slightly higher percentage in the Extremely High category, this difference is minimal. The statistical test confirms no significant difference in life skills based on family type, implying that family structure does not strongly affect students' life skills.

Life skills levels among students from rural and urban areas follow a similar pattern, with the majority in Above Average and High categories. Urban students have a slightly higher proportion in the Extremely High and High categories, but the difference is not statistically significant. This suggests that residential background—rural or urban—does not play a significant role in life skills development among these students.

The study found that a majority of both government and private higher secondary school students possess life skills at the Above Average and High levels. Private school students showed a higher percentage in the Extremely High category (20%) compared to government school students (10.3%). Conversely, government school students had a larger proportion in the Average category. However, when comparing the mean life skills scores between the two groups, no statistically significant difference was found (t = -4.00, p = 0.28), indicating that both government and private schools contribute similarly to life skills development among their students.

Students living in hostels demonstrated higher percentages in the Extremely High (20.5%) and High (34.2%) life skills categories compared to students residing at home, who mostly fell under the Above Average (40.3%) and High (27.9%) categories. Despite this trend, the statistical test showed no significant difference in the mean life skills scores between home and hostel students (t = -3.513, p = 0.122), suggesting that the residential environment does not have a significant impact on life skills development among secondary school students.

When analyzed by academic achievement divisions, students in the 1st Division predominantly scored in the Above Average and High life skills categories, while students in the 2nd and 3rd Divisions also demonstrated moderate to high life skills levels, with very few in the Below Average category. The ANOVA test revealed no significant difference in mean life skills scores across the academic divisions (F = 1.92, p = 0.15). This indicates that life skills development among secondary school students is relatively consistent regardless of their academic performance.

10. CONCLUSION

Life skills enable students to lead happy and successful lives. Appropriate and appropriate life skills are necessary for every young person to adapt and participate effectively in society. It helps a person in proper social, emotional, and cognitive development. Learning life skills helps young people promote mental well-being, which helps develop emotional intelligence and self-confidence and improves decision-making, critical thinking, creative thinking, and responsibility (Saravanakumar, A. 2020). The report by Bloomberg Professional Services (2019) predicts that India's GDP will reach $10 trillion by 2030. Skills development will help contribute to structural change and financial growth by improving employability and job efficiency and supporting nations in becoming advanced and competitive. Investing in life skills development can disrupt entrenched cycles of poverty and inequity (World Bank, n.d.). To fulfill the dream of a self-reliant India, i.e., Atmanirbhar Bharat, youth are needed to empower themselves to various extents. Helping them improve their life skills through a variety of interventions will eventually help the nation's development. The present

study found that average or moderate levels of life skills exist among the students. Therefore, it denotes a dire need for life-skills education for secondary school students in the state or at the national level at large.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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