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A Study on Life Skills among Higher Secondary School Students of Kerala

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Abstract:

The abilities that help to promote mental wellbeing and competence in individuals as they face the realities of life are known as life skills. Effective acquisition and application of life skills can influence the way one feels about ourselves and others and equally influence the way we are perceived by others. It contributes to the perception of self-confidence and self-esteem. The present study analyses the life skills of higher secondary school students. The study concluded that the higher secondary school students possess moderate level of life skills and girls have better life skills than boys.

Key words: Life Skills, Higher secondary school students

1. Introduction

Education is the process of all round development of an individual. Education enables individuals to lead his life efficiently and fruitfully. Each and every individual has their own goals to achieve in his life. They try to achieve their goals in different ways. During this process an individual has to face various challenges in various situations. The ability which helps the individual to face these challenges successfully is known as life skills.

Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

The World Health Organization (1994) defined life skills as the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The World Health Organization identified ten life skills namely, Self-Awareness, Decision Making, Interpersonal Relationship, Coping with Stress, Coping with Emotions, Empathy, Problem Solving, Effective Communication, Creative Thinking, and Critical Thinking.

Many literature have proved that students who possess greater life skills have high skills to cope with stress. In the present society every individual should possess life skills to live his life optimistically. Life skills education helps an individual to explore various alternatives to attain the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. The present study analyses the life skills of higher secondary school students of Kerala.

2. Need and Significance of the Study

Adolescence is the most critical phase of an individual. It denotes the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood marked by conspicuous physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes. The inbuilt buffers existing in the society in the form of control and support from the near and dear ones guide the adolescents to grow into a mature adult.

In the recent years great changes have taken place in our traditional society owing to industrialization and globalization. The impact is evident in the entire society, with no exception to adolescents. The family ties have weakened. The moral, social, religious and cultural controls rarely exist and a new life style emerged among the adolescents. The highly competitive world today and the absence of traditional norms and support have heightened the stress among adolescents resulting in multiple health issues such as depression, anxiety, loneliness etc. The criminal behavior among the adolescents too is not uncommon in the present days. These maladaptive behaviors of the adolescent children occur due to the absence of life skills in them. These skills include self awareness skills, coping with stress skills, coping with emotions skills, Creative thinking, Empathy, Decision Making skills, Interpersonal skills, Critical thinking skills etc which helps the individual to live his life worthwhile. The life skills will help them to resist peer pressure as they learn how to accept themselves for whom they are.

These basic skills will help the young people in coping with difficulties they face in their personal, emotional and social development. Life skills are essentially those abilities that promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. With life skills one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decision in solving each problem or issues as it arises.

Adolescence is a stage of great stress and anxieties. Life skills include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help the adolescents to think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, to cope with stress and managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner. Life skills education helps in understanding one’s own role with changing societal structure and functions. It aims at a comprehensive behaviour change approach; which will enable the individual to develop the skills which are needed to face the complex world. In this context, it will be highly significant to study the life skills of higher secondary school students, who are in the adolescence stage so that the school can guide the life skill development of the students.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To study the extent of life skills among higher secondary school students in the total sample.
- To compare the life skills of higher secondary school students in the sub samples based on gender and domicile.

4. Methodology

In the present investigation, normative survey method was adopted to study the life skills of higher secondary school students. The tool used for collection of data is life skills scale prepared by the investigator herself. The sample selected for the present study consisted of 600 higher secondary school students of Thiruvananthapuram, Alappuzha, Ernakulam, Kottayam, Palakkad and Kozhikode districts selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. The test results were analyzed using suitable statistical techniques like arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and critical ratio.

5. Analysis

5.1. Extent of Life Skills among Higher Secondary School Students in the Total Sample

To study the life skills present among the higher secondary school students, the investigator made the students to answer the life skills scale on the basis of option-Always /often /sometimes /occasionally / never. The mean, standard deviation, mean percentage score and critical ratio of life skills scores of higher secondary school students in the total sample were calculated. Table1 shows the statistical representation of life skills scores of the total sample.

Sl. No.	N	Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean % Score
1.	600	Life skill	241.48	25.43	69.00%

Table 1: Statistical representation of life skill scores of the total sample

The table 1 shows the statistical representation of life skills scores in the total sample. It shows the mean and standard deviation scores of 600 students. The mean is 241.48 and standard deviation is 25.43. The mean percentage score of the level of life skills score among the higher secondary school students is 69 % which shows that level of life skills among the higher secondary school students is only medium. In other words the higher secondary school students have moderate level of life skills.

The graphical representation of the distribution of life skills present among higher secondary school students among the total sample is given in figure 1.

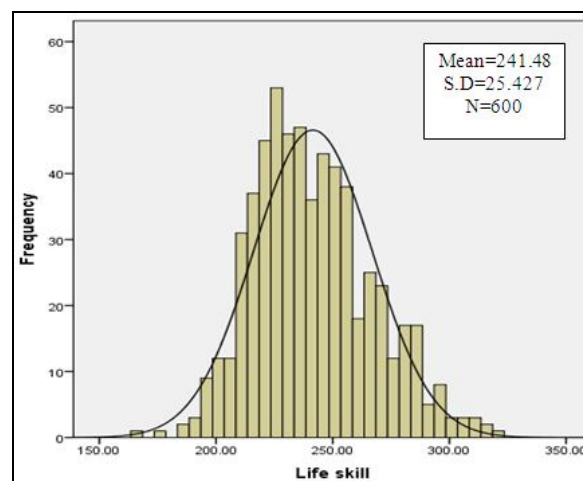


Figure 1: The frequency distribution of life skill scores of higher secondary school students in the total sample

5.2. Comparison of the Life Skills of Higher Secondary School Students Based on Gender

Table 2 shows the data and the results of the test of the significance of the difference between the means of the life skills scores of male and female higher secondary school students.

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	't' value
Male	270	238.79	23.24	2.327 P <.05
Female	330	243.65	26.90	

Table 2: Results showing the test of significance of the difference between life skills scores of the male and female higher secondary school students

Table 2 shows that the arithmetic mean of male and female higher secondary school students are 238.79 and 243.65 and standard deviation of male and female school students are 23.24 and 26.90 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 2.327 which is significant at .05 level. Hence it can be interpreted that there is significant difference between life skill of male and female higher secondary school students.

A graphical representation using box plot is done to compare the life skills of higher secondary school students in the sub sample based on gender in figure 2.

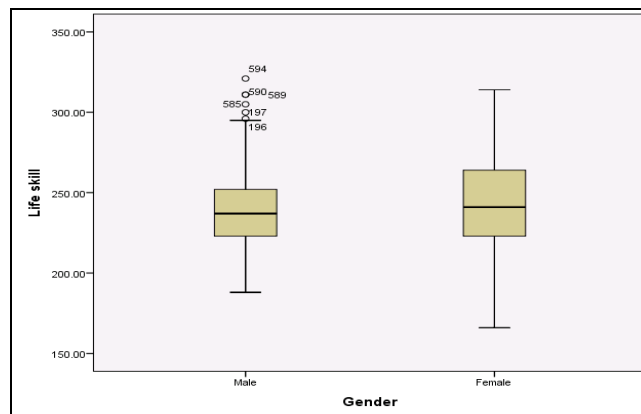


Figure 2: Box plot showing the comparison of the life skills scores of the male and female higher secondary school students

5.3 Comparison of the Life Skills of Higher Secondary School Students Based on Domicile

Table 3 shows the data and the results of the test of the significance of the difference between the means of the life skills scores of rural and urban higher secondary school students.

Domicile	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	't' value
Rural	400	240.43	22.99	0.713 P >.05
Urban	200	242.01	26.57	

Table 3: Results showing the test of significance of the difference between life skills scores of the urban and rural higher secondary school students

Table 3 shows that the arithmetic mean of rural and urban higher secondary school students are 240.43 and 242.01 and standard deviation of rural and urban school students are 22.99 and 26.57 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 0.713 which is less than the table value. Hence it is interpreted that there is no significant difference between life skill of rural and urban higher secondary school students.

A graphical representation using box plot is done to compare the life skills of higher secondary school students in the sub samples based on domicile is done in figure 3.

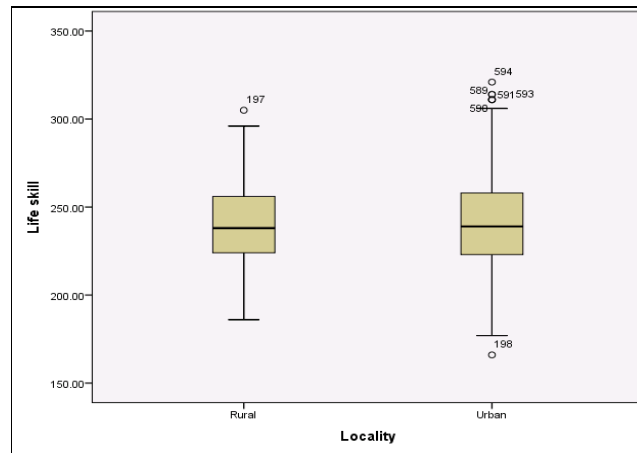


Figure 3: Box plot showing the comparison of the life skills in rural and urban higher secondary school students

6. Conclusions Based on Findings of the Study

The present study was under taken to study the life skills of higher secondary school students. The conclusions arrived by analysis of the data are stated below.

- The higher secondary school students possess moderate level of life skills.
- There is significant difference between life skills of male and female higher secondary school students; female students possess better life skills than male students.
- There is no significant difference between life skills of rural and urban higher secondary school students. That is domicile of students does not have any influence on their life skills.

7. Educational Implications

In the present investigation it is concluded that the higher secondary school students in Kerala possess moderate level of life skills. And there is significant difference between the life skills of male and female higher secondary school students.

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are forwarded. Investigation revealed that in the present day situation, teachers and parents should play important role in helping the adolescents to overcome the “stress and storms” which is the general characteristic of this period. Proper guidance and counseling should be rendered to the students whenever needed. Establishment of an information guidance center is necessary. Individual worth and differences should be recognized and educational programmes should be made to suit the needs and conditions of individuals. Teachers and parents should teach cut throat era of competition, success and failure are part of life, so that; child doesn’t crumble with failure when it strikes. The students of these ages should be trained in stress management techniques like yoga, meditation, aerobics etc. The Life Skill Education (LSE) can be provided to the students to develop skills which help them to lead a good life, by overcoming the challenges. The teachers should be competent enough to recognize the hidden talents and skills of the students and should develop the potentialities to its maximum so as to enable to lead his life effectively, efficiently and successfully. Teachers and parents should give due weightage to the activities, which help the children to develop their life skills.

8. References

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