

Student's Need About Life Skills at Secondary Level An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Life skills are crucial for individuals as they equip them with problem-solving behaviors and the ability to manage various personal affairs and life situations. The research questions focused on understanding the need for life skills-based education at the secondary level. The significance of the study lay in the importance of life skills education in preparing young students to effectively navigate challenges, participate productively in society, and handle daily life problems. Life skills enable individuals to translate knowledge, attitudes, and values into actual abilities, facilitating critical thinking and logical problem-solving. This study particularly analyzed the relevance of life skills in the context of Pakistani culture, with a focus on identifying the demanding and relevant life skills in the province of Punjab. The results of this study would be beneficial for teachers and students by providing insights into students' needs and the appropriate content for life skills education. The research employed a descriptive research design using a survey technique, and the population consisted of teachers and male students in the 9th grade in District Chakwal. Random sampling was used to select the sample, and data were collected through questionnaires. The Life Skills Development Scale-Adolescent Form B (LSDS-B) was used to assess students' needs, and a separate questionnaire was formulated to identify the current practices used in teaching life skills at the secondary level. Data analysis involved tabulation, analysis, and discussion of the findings using the chi-square statistic.

Keywords: Life skills, School level

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To assess student's need about life skills at secondary level.

RESESRCH QUESTION

1. What is the need of life skills-based education at secondary level?

PROBLEM OF THE STATEMENT

The research problem addressed in the proposed study revolves around the lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific needs of students, the connection between students' involvement in life skills education and their inspiration to learn, and the current teaching practices in the context of life skills education at the secondary level. Despite the recognized importance of life skills in students' personal and academic development, there is a gap in knowledge regarding the specific needs of students at this level (Cebrián & Junyent, 2015). This gap hinders the development of targeted and effective life skills programs that address the challenges faced by secondary level students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The proposed study holds significant value in the field of education. Firstly, understanding students' needs regarding life skills at the secondary level is crucial for designing effective educational programs. Liu (2018) argues that life skills education enhances students' problem-solving skills and self-efficacy, which are vital for their personal and academic success. By assessing the specific needs of students, this study can contribute to the development of tailored life skills programs that address the challenges faced by secondary level students.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Boys' public secondary schools of District Chakwal
2. Grade IX Boys' students of District Chakwal
3. Pakistan studies teachers of IX classes in boy's schools of District Chakwal.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**Need Assessment**

Need assessment is a systematic exploration of the life skills-based education for the students at secondary level.

Life Skills

Life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. These skills can be classified as psycho-social skills that are related to valued behavior, reflective skills as problem solving and critical thinking, personal skills as self-awareness, and interpersonal skills.

LITERATUER REVIEW

Life skills education plays a crucial role in equipping students with the necessary knowledge and abilities to navigate the complexities of the

modern world effectively Lamb, (2017). At the secondary level, students are at a critical juncture in their academic journey and personal development, making it imperative to provide them with the life skills that will empower them to meet the challenges and opportunities they encounter. This research proposal seeks to address the gaps in understanding the specific needs of secondary-level students, the relationship between engagement and motivation in the context of life skills education, and the current teaching practices being employed in this domain. By delving into these key areas, we aim to develop targeted and effective life skills programs for secondary-level students (Jonyo, D. O. 2019).

Life skills education can be defined as a comprehensive approach to teaching and nurturing essential abilities and competencies that enable individuals to effectively deal with the challenges of everyday life. These skills encompass a wide array of personal, social, and cognitive skills, including self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, and problem-solving, which are integral for students as they progress through their academic careers and into adulthood. At the secondary level, the importance of life skills education cannot be overstated, as it empowers students to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and adapt to changing circumstances (Blandford, S. 2012).

As the world evolves rapidly, young people face a multitude of challenges and opportunities. These include making decisions about their future education and career paths, understanding their role in society, and addressing personal issues such as mental health and interpersonal relationships. Life skills education is instrumental in helping students develop the competencies and self-awareness necessary to confront these challenges (Nilson, L. B., 2013). The acquisition of life skills is not only beneficial for personal growth but also plays a pivotal role in enhancing academic performance, reducing dropout rates, and fostering holistic development.

The lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific needs of secondary-level students represents a critical problem. Despite the recognized importance of life skills in students' personal and academic development, there is a notable gap in knowledge regarding the specific needs of students at this level (Wang, 2017). This gap hinders the development of targeted and effective life skills programs that address the challenges faced by secondary-level students. Research has shown that understanding and meeting students' specific needs are fundamental to the success of life skills education programs.

Instrument for Research

The current study employed three instruments for data collection. The detail of each instrument is mentioned as under:

Life Skills Development Scale - B (LSDS-B)

The Life Skills Development Scale - B (LSDS-B) was used as a data collection instrument for Research Question 1. This instrument was a self-report questionnaire that assessed students' perceptions and needs regarding life skills at the secondary level. The LSDS-B consisted of a series of statements related to various life skills domains, such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. Participants rated their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using a Likert-type scale.

Item 1: Importance of Learning Skills for personal development

Item	f	%	M	SD
I believe that learning life skills are important for my personal development.				
Strongly Disagree	8	1.8	3.87	.98
Disagree	12	3.5		
Neutral	35	9.6		
Agree	209	57.0		
Strongly Agree	103	28.1		

The table illustrates participants' responses to the question regarding the perceived importance of learning life skills for personal development. Notably, 1.8% strongly disagree with the statement, assigning a mean score of 3.87 with a standard deviation of 0.98. A smaller percentage, 3.5%, disagree with the assertion, while 9.6% remain neutral. A substantial majority, comprising 57.0%, agree that learning life skills is crucial for personal development. Furthermore, 28.1% express a strong affirmation of the statement. The mean and standard deviation values for the agree and strongly agree categories are not provided in the data but would contribute additional insights into the participants' perspectives on the significance of acquiring life skills for their personal growth.

Item 2: Importance of Problem solving for future

Item	f	%	M	SD
I believe that problem-solving can help me in my future career.				
Strongly Disagree	4	0.9	3.87	.98
Disagree	10	2.6		
Neutral	29	7.9		
Agree	205	56.1		
Strongly Agree	119	32.5		

The table outlines participants' responses to the question concerning the perceived importance of problem-solving skills for future career development. A minimal percentage, 0.9%, strongly disagrees with the

statement, assigning a mean score of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.98. A slightly larger fraction, 2.6%, expresses disagreement, while 7.9% remain neutral on the matter. A significant majority, comprising 56.1%, agrees that problem-solving skills can be beneficial for their future careers. Additionally, 32.5% strongly agree with the assertion.

Item 3: Importance of Life skills for handling challenging situations.

Item	f	%	M	SD
Learning life skills can improve my ability to handle challenging situations.				
Strongly Disagree	13	3.5	3.87	.98
Disagree	10	2.6		
Neutral	28	7.9		
Agree	190	51.8		
Strongly Agree	126	34.2		

The table delineates participants' responses to the question addressing the perceived importance of life skills in enhancing the ability to handle challenging situations. A small fraction, 3.5%, strongly disagrees with the statement, assigning a mean score of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.98. An additional 2.6% express disagreement, while 7.9% remain neutral on the matter. A substantial majority, constituting 51.8%, agrees that learning life skills can improve their capability to navigate challenging situations. Furthermore, 34.2% strongly agree with the assertion.

Item 4: Opportunities to develop life skills

Item	f	%	M	SD
I feel that my current education should include more opportunities to develop life skills.				
Strongly Disagree	13	3.5	3.87	.98
Disagree	23	6.1		
Neutral	32	8.8		
Agree	209	57.0		
Strongly Agree	87	23.7		

The table outlines participants' responses to the question regarding the perceived availability of opportunities in their current education to develop life skills. A small fraction, 3.5%, strongly disagrees with the statement, assigning a mean score of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.98. An additional 6.1% express disagreement, while 8.8% remain neutral on the matter. A significant majority, comprising 57.0%, agrees that there should be more opportunities within their education to foster life skills. Furthermore, 23.7% strongly agree with the assertion.

Item 5: Role of Life skills in decision making

Item	f	%	M	SD
Life skills-based education can enhance my decision-making ability.				
Strongly Disagree	13	3.5	3.87	.98
Disagree	10	2.6		
Neutral	29	7.9		
Agree	187	50.9		
Strongly Agree	122	33.3		

The data reflects what participants think about how learning life skills can help them make better decisions. A small group, 3.5%, strongly disagrees with this idea, giving it a score of 3.87 with a standard deviation of 0.98. Another 2.6% disagree, while 7.9% aren't sure. A majority, 50.9%, believes that life skills education can enhance their decision-making abilities. Additionally, 33.3% strongly agree with this statement.

Key Findings

1. The study highlighted the most often used strategies and methods by teachers, highlighting both successful practices and opportunities for development.
1. Student perceptions of life skills education revealed a generally favorable attitude, with an understanding of its value to both their personal and academic development.
2. Teacher preparedness identified as an important element, with gaps in training programs demanding attention to improve the capacity of teachers to effectively integrate life skills into their teaching.
3. While technology has been recognized as an effective instrument, more research and modification are required for fully exploiting its potential in the delivery of life skills education.
4. Implementation barriers, including issues faced by teachers, were identified, indicating the need for specific measures to overcome these difficulties.

Recommendations.

Professional Development for Teachers.

Implement targeted professional development programs to enhance teachers' preparedness and competence in integrating life skills into their teaching practices. To transact the curriculum successfully, teachers must be trained continuously. Only professionally trained teachers can develop the life skills in the students properly.

Optimizing Technology Integration

Explore innovative ways to optimize technology in the delivery of life skills education, catering to students' preferences and enhancing engagement.

Techniques to Improve Life Skills.

Through experimentation, research, collaboration, and presentations,

students are taught the importance of self-regulation, self-confidence, and self-motivation.

Twenty First Century Expectations and Life Skills.

Twenty first century societal expectations require students to procure both academic and life skills that will ensure their success as citizens in a global economy. Students need life skills that help them navigate the digital landscape, make ethical decisions in a globalized world, and adapt to rapidly changing environments. By assessing these evolving needs, educators can ensure that life skills programs remain relevant and responsive to the demands of the 21st century.

Integration of Life Skills Education in Curriculum.

The results show that very few students have high level of life skill and majority of the students have average or low level of life skills. Thus, there is a dire need of integrating life skills in the curriculum of schools. By gathering input from students, teachers and other stakeholders, planners should make necessary adjustments to curriculum content and instructional strategies for life skills.

Enhancement of Social and Interpersonal Skills of Students.

Institutions should enhance the social and interpersonal skills of students for an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to collaborate, negotiate, and work effectively in diverse teams. Life skills education develop these competencies, making them better prepared for the complexities of modern society.

Provision of Conducive Environment by Institutions.

The Institutions should enhance students' ability to analyze information critically, make sound academic decisions, and excel in problem-based learning by providing them a conducive academic environment.

Lesson Planning of Life Skills for Students

For effective curriculum delivery the teachers/institutions should plan and conduct lessons that focus on various life skills, such as decision-making, communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Mock Ventures By teachers to Develop Life Skills in Students.

Teachers should provide the students to participate in a mock venture to develop entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills. Such experiences help students develop a deep understanding of how life skills can be applied in practical settings, enhancing their ability to use these skills effectively in real life.

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