



An assessment of critical thinking dimension of life skills among high school students in Mysore District

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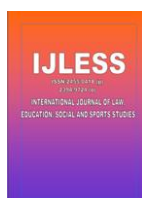
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DOI: [10.33329/ijless.12.S2.256](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijless.12.S2.256)



Abstract

Life skills are the psychosocial competencies and contributes greatly to achieve psychological, social and mental well-being. High School students need a proper guidance and training in Life Skills to handle the challenges of life. The objective of the present study was to examine Coping with emotions dimension of Life skills among High School Students in Mysore District. The present Research consists of 1000 samples (500 Male and 500 Female) High School Students. Descriptive Survey Research design was employed to collect the data. Life Skills Scale developed by Anjum Ahamad and Saba Parveen was used for the study. The scale consists of 40 items divided into 10 dimensions those are Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Creative thinking, Inter personal relationship, Coping with stress, Coping with emotion. The tool has reliability and validity established. Personal information schedule was also included to collect the demographic data. The results revealed that there is significant difference in Coping with emotions dimension of Life Skills scores between male ($M=18.85, SD=3.122$) and female students ($M=19.89, SD=9.502$) an independent sample t test is calculated and the obtained $t(998) = -2.316, p > .021$. The results indicate that female students demonstrated significantly higher Coping with emotions dimension of life skills compared to their male counterparts. This study contributes to the understanding of presence of Coping with emotions dimension of Life Skills among High School Students and helps in developing suitable intervention programmes to inculcate life skills among High School Students. Based on the findings recommendations will be made for educational settings. The study helps to create Life Skills intervention programme that promote psychological well-being of High School Students.

Keywords: Life Skills, Coping with emotions dimension, High School Students, Male and Female students, Life Skills Scale.

Introduction

High School Students are in the stage of puberty. In this stage they face lots of emotional, physical, biological, social and cognitive changes. High school students face lots of problems like inability in handling their emotions, mood swings, making decisions, rational thinking, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking are often found at this age. Hence, these deficits lead to stress, lack of self-esteem, emotional, social and behavioural problems. To overcome these problems life skills are very essential to the High School students.

Life skills are tools to handle and face life successfully. Life skills are needed for developing psychosocial competence. Psychosocial competence is the ability to maintain a state of wellbeing while interacting with others or dealing with oneself in various day to day situations. During this adolescent period crucial, physical, psychological, and biological changes takes place. During this period high school students face lot of peer group pressures, emotional management issues, risky behaviour, academic stress, identity issues. To handle these problems effectively, life skills is most suitable. High school students are generally in adolescent period they are the positive human resource of the country.

Life skills are the group of competence that help high school students for proper goal setting, to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and good interpersonal skills. Life skills are very essential for healthy socialisation process and psychological wellbeing. There are very limited studies conducted on life skills among high school students.

World Health Organization (WHO, 1997) Life skills are "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." **UNICEF (2012)** Life skills are defined as "a behavior change or behavior development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude, and skills."

Jones & Lavallee, (2009) Life skills address the key abilities of communication and self-organization that enable people to consider their further growth. Increased self-confidence contributes to a sense of authority over their own lives—and a capacity to contribute in a multitude of respects to their community's life.

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. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills - those related to thinking termed as "thinking skills"; and skills related to dealing with others termed as "social skills". While thinking skills relate to rejection at a personal level, social skills include interpersonal skills and do not necessarily depend on logical thinking. It is the combination of these two types of skills that are needed for achieving assertive behaviour and negotiating effectively. "Emotional" can be perceived as a skill not only in making rational decisions but also in being able to make others agree to one's point of view. To do that, coming to terms first with oneself is important. Thus, self-management is an important skill including managing with feelings, emotions, stress and resisting peer and family pressure (Dinesh, R., & Belinda, R. (2014).

Research underscores the importance of life skills education in fostering emotional intelligence, improving academic performance, and enhancing mental well-being (UNICEF, 2012). High schools play a critical role in imparting these abilities through structured programs, extracurricular activities, and peer interactions. By integrating life skills into their curriculum, schools help students develop into capable, adaptable, and self-aware individuals.

Modecki et al. (2017) examined the link between emotion regulation, coping, and decision-making in adolescence. These three executive control skills are associated with externalizing behavior problems. Deficits in these areas contribute to difficulties in managing challenges and behavioral issues. Research emphasizes the need to strengthen these capabilities to reduce problem behaviors. Effective interventions targeting these skills lead to significant real-world improvements. Programs addressing multiple skills simultaneously show better outcomes. Successful interventions demonstrate positive behavioral changes in adolescents. The study highlights the importance of comprehensive youth development programs. Future research should focus on integrating these skills into broader interventions. Enhancing these abilities can help adolescents navigate challenges more effectively. In contrast to this the present research study highlights the presence or absence of the different dimensions of Life Skills.

Objective of the Study: To examine gender differences in coping with emotions dimension of life skills.

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between male and female students in coping with emotions dimension of life skills.

Variables:

Independent Variable: High School Students, Gender, Age, Domicile, Family Type.

Dependent Variable: coping with emotions Life Skills

Operational Definitions:

Life Skills: Refers to the set of abilities and competencies essential for dealing effectively with the challenges of life. The life skills scale developed by Anjum Ahamad and Saba Parveen will be used as the reference to measure these skills.

High School Students: Refers to students enrolled in the 8th, 9th, or 10th standard in a high school in Mysore district. This is based on school documents.

Age: The age of the students will be recorded based on the information provided in the personal information schedule designed by the researcher.

Gender: The gender of the students (male or female) will be recorded based on responses in the personal information schedule.

Class: The grade or standard the student belongs to (8th, 9th, or 10th) will be recorded in the personal information schedule.

Research Design:

The research adopted a Descriptive survey research Design. The design will involve:

- **Survey Method:** A structured questionnaire will be used to collect data on the life skills of high school students.
- **Questionnaires:** Standardized life skills scales will be administered to the students to quantify their levels of life skills across various dimensions.

Participants:

The present study involved a total of 1000 high school students from Mysore district, ensuring an equal representation of 500 Male and 500 Female. The students were selected from various high schools across the district to create a representative sample of the student population.

To assess the life skills of these students, the Life Skills Scale (English and Kannada Version) was administered. The Life Skills Scale was initially developed in English and later translated into Kannada by subject expert translators to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance.

The selected schools for data collection included: Morarji Desai Residential School, Varakunda, Morarji Desai Model Residential School, S. Hoskote, Sri Kuvempu High School, Kuvempunagar, Shri Adichunchungiri Central School, Kuvempunagar, Rotary West School, Saraswathipuram, Rotary Midtown Mysore, Karnataka Public School, Kuvempunagar, Mysore Lions School, Bannimantapa, Mysuru, Bharatha Seva Dala High School, Saraswathipuram, Morarji Desai Residential School, Sabbanahalli (Bilikere), Hunsur Taluk, Babu Jagjivan Ram School, Rajivnagar, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Residential School, Yelwala, Shri Nataraj Public School, Mysuru, Sree Nataraja High School, Mysuru.

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the respective Headmasters/Headmistresses/Principals of the selected high schools. Additionally, informed consent was sought from the participating students, ensuring voluntary participation in the study.

Tools

Personal Information Schedule: Personal information schedule was used to collect the general data of the high school students. It consisted of the information like name, age, gender, class, School Name, Domicile (Rural/Urban), Family Type(Joint/Nuclear).

Life Skills Scale: Life skills scale developed by Anjum Ahamad and Saba Parveen was used for the study. The scale consists of 40 items. Divided into 10 dimensions those are Self- awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Creative thinking, Inter personal relationship, Coping with stress, Coping with emotion. The test has reliability and validity established.

Procedure of the Study

The study followed a systematic and structured approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The procedure consisted of the following key steps:

Step 1: Preparation and Design

The researcher designed the Personal Information Schedule and selected the Life Skills Scale for data collection. The Personal Information Schedule was developed to record essential demographic details such as age, gender, class, and domicile. The Life Skills Scale was chosen as the primary tool for assessing various dimensions of life skills among high school students.

Step 2: Translation of Tools

To ensure accessibility and ease of understanding for all students, the Life Skills Scale was translated into Kannada by expert translators. This step was crucial in minimizing language barriers and ensuring that students from different linguistic backgrounds could comprehend and respond to the scale effectively.

Step 3: Pilot Study

Before administering the Life Skills Scale to the full sample, a pilot study was conducted. The pilot study aimed to:

- Test the reliability and clarity of the translated version.
- Identify any ambiguities or difficulties in understanding the questionnaire.
- Assess the time required for completion of the scale.
- Ensure that the scale was appropriate for the target age group.

Based on the findings from the pilot study, necessary modifications were made to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaire.

Step 4: Data Collection

Once the final version of the Life Skills Scale was ready, data collection was initiated in various high schools across Mysore district. The following procedure was followed:

1. Permission was obtained from the respective Headmasters/Headmistresses/Principals of the selected schools.
2. Informed consent was obtained from participating students to ensure voluntary participation.
3. The researcher visited each school and introduced themselves to the students.

The objectives and importance of the study were explained clearly.

4. A rapport was established with the students to create a comfortable environment for participation. Students were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.
5. A total of 1000 students (500 Male and 500 Female) were provided with the Life Skills Scale and detailed instructions on how to complete it.
6. Students were guided on carefully reading and responding to the items on the scale. Any doubts were clarified before they proceeded.
7. Once the students completed the Life Skills Scale, the questionnaires were collected for further processing.

Step 5: Data Analysis

After the completion of data collection, the following steps were carried out for analysis:

- Responses were checked based on the Life Skills Scale Manual.
- Raw scores were calculated for each student.
- The raw scores were converted into Z-scores to standardize the data.
- The level of life skills was classified according to the Life Skills Scale Manual, ensuring consistency in interpretation.
- Appropriate statistical techniques were used to analyze the data, including descriptive and inferential statistics to examine differences and correlations among variables.

This systematic approach ensured that the study was conducted in a scientifically rigorous manner, providing valid and reliable insights into the life skills of high school students in Mysore district.

Statistical Analysis and Interpretation:

The data collected will be analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques will be used to interpret the data:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution will be used to summarize the data.

- **Inferential Statistics:** T-tests, ANOVA, and other relevant statistical tests will be applied to examine differences in life skills between male and female students and across other variables (e.g., class level, age).

This analysis will provide the necessary insights into the life skills possessed by high school students and help in identifying gender-based differences.

The table Shows the N, Mean, Standard Deviation and t ratio on difference on coping with emotions dimension of life skills among male and female high school students

	Group	A total Scores on coping with emotions of Life skills				
		N	Mean	SD	t	p
A total Scores of coping with emotions dimension of Life Skills	Male Students	500	18.85	3.122	-2.316	.021
	Female Students	500	19.89	9.502		
	Total	1000				

A t-test was conducted to compare the coping with emotions dimension of life skills scores between male and female high school students. The results indicated a significant difference in life skills scores between male ($M = 18.85$, $SD = 3.122$) and female students ($M = 19.89$, $SD = 9.502$), $t(998) = -2.316$, $p < .021$. This result suggest that female High School students tend to exhibit significantly higher coping with emotions dimension of life skills compared to their male High School Students counterparts.

The findings of the study align with existing literature that suggests gender differences in life skills development. Prior research has indicated that female students often exhibit stronger interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and decision-making abilities compared to their male counterparts (Gururaj & Rani, 2016; Singh & Kaur, 2018). The present study supports this assertion, as female students demonstrated significantly higher scores in critical thinking, decision-making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, and coping with emotions. These skills are closely associated with emotional awareness and social interactions, which are often more emphasized in female socialization patterns (Eisenberg et al., 2019).

In conclusion, while this study confirms that female students exhibit higher proficiency in coping with emotions dimension of life skills. Future research should explore the underlying causes of these differences, considering factors such as educational interventions, cultural expectations, and individual learning experiences.

Conclusion

This research aims to contribute to the development of a life skills curriculum in schools, which could greatly improve students' ability to handle life challenges effectively. Life skills play an important vital role in the physical and psychological well-being of school students. Life skills abilities enhance the competence of students to face the realities of life more effectively and efficiently. The present study results indicates that female High School students demonstrated significantly higher coping with emotions dimension of life skills compared to their male High School Students counterparts.

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