



Influence of socio-economic status on the development of life skills in secondary school students

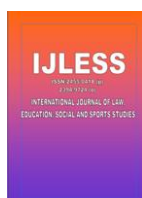
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Abstract

The relationship between life skills and socio-economic status plays a crucial role in shaping the overall development of secondary school students. Understanding how various aspects of socio-economic status impact students' life skills can provide valuable insights for enhancing educational practices. This study investigates this relationship to determine how variations in socio-economic status influence students' life skills. The study focused on secondary school students in the Mandya district of Karnataka. Using a descriptive survey method, data were collected from 150 students across ten schools. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, correlation, and independent *t*-tests, with significance levels set at 0.05 and 0.01. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between life skills and socio-economic status. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds demonstrated stronger life skills compared to those from moderate and lower socio-economic backgrounds. These findings suggest that improving socio-economic conditions may be critical for fostering students' life skill development. Expanding the research to include a larger, state-wide sample could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how changes in socio-economic status over time influence the development of life skills. Such an approach would offer broader insights into the effectiveness of various factors and their impact on life skills across diverse educational settings.

Keywords: Influence, Life Skills, Socio Economic Status, Secondary School Students.

1. Introduction:

Parental socio-economic status is a well-documented factor influencing various aspects of educational attainment (Sirin, 2005). Students hailing from diverse socio-economic backgrounds may encounter distinct opportunities and challenges that can shape their life skills development. Through this

exploration, we aspire to contribute valuable knowledge that can inform educational practices, support systems, and policy interventions, ultimately nurturing the holistic development of our future generations.

2. Life Skill:

Life skills are essential abilities that enable individuals to navigate everyday challenges, make informed decisions, and achieve their goals. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 1999), life skills are “the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.” These skills are crucial for students at the secondary education level, as they prepare to transition into adulthood and face various challenges in their personal and professional lives.

In addition to academic benefits, life skills play a vital role in career development and employability. Employers seek individuals who possess strong communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, among others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). By developing these skills, students can increase their chances of success in the workforce. Furthermore, life skills such as time management, self-awareness, and self-regulation are essential for independent living and overall well-being (Kumar, 2017).

However, life skills are vital for students at the secondary education level. They enhance academic performance, promote social and emotional learning, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, foster effective communication and collaboration, support career development and employability, encourage healthy habits and well-being, and prepare students for independent living. By prioritizing life skills education, educators can empower students to succeed in all aspects of life.

3. Concept of Socio-Economic Status:

Meaning of Socio-Economic Status (SES):

Socio-economic status (SES) is a concept used to describe an individual's or a family's social and economic position within a society. It is a multidimensional construct that takes into account various factors, including income, education, occupation, and wealth. SES is used to categorize individuals or families into different socio-economic strata, often in order to analyze disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes across different social groups.

Definition of Socio-Economic Status:

Socio-economic status (SES) is a socio-demographic measure that combines elements of an individual's or family's income, education level, occupational status, and wealth to assess their relative position within a society. It is a way of categorizing people into different groups based on their social and economic resources, which can influence their access to education, healthcare, housing, employment opportunities, and overall quality of life.

Importance of Socio-Economic Status:

Access to Resources: SES often determines an individual's or family's access to critical resources such as quality education, healthcare, and housing. Higher SES individuals and families typically have greater access to these resources, leading to improved life opportunities and outcomes.

- ◆ SES strongly influences educational attainment. Individuals from higher SES backgrounds tend to have better access to educational opportunities, leading to higher levels of education and potentially more fulfilling careers.
- ◆ SES is closely linked to health outcomes. Lower SES is associated with a higher risk of chronic illnesses, limited access to healthcare, and shorter life expectancy. Understanding these disparities is crucial for public health interventions.

- ◆ SES often determines job opportunities and income levels. Higher SES individuals may have access to better-paying jobs and career advancement, leading to increased economic stability.

In summary, socio-economic status is a multifaceted construct that encompasses economic, educational, and occupational dimensions. It plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' life opportunities, influencing their access to resources, their health outcomes, and their overall well-being. Understanding SES is crucial for addressing social disparities and designing policies and interventions aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Role of Socio-Economic Status on Life Skills of students

Socio-economic status (SES) can have a significant impact on the development of life skills among students. Life skills encompass a range of abilities, including communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills, which are essential for personal growth and success in various life domains. Here's how SES can influence the acquisition and development of life skills among students:

- **Educational Attainment:** SES can influence the level of education that students attain. Higher SES students may have greater access to higher education, which can provide them with a broader skill set, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills.
- **Parental Involvement:** SES often correlates with parental involvement in a child's education. Parents with higher SES are more likely to engage in activities that promote their child's cognitive and social development, such as reading, educational outings, and participation in extracurricular activities.
- **Peer Influence:** Students from different socio-economic backgrounds may interact with peers who have varying life experiences and values. Peer influence can shape the development of social and communication skills, as students learn to navigate different social contexts.
- **Access to Role Models:** Higher SES students may have access to positive role models who exemplify successful life skills in their careers and personal lives. These role models can inspire and mentor students, providing guidance in developing important life skills.
- **Extracurricular Opportunities:** Socio-economic status can affect a student's participation in extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts, and community service. These activities offer valuable opportunities to develop leadership, teamwork, and time management skills.
- **Access to Technology:** SES can impact a student's access to technology and the internet. Proficiency in using technology is becoming increasingly important in the modern world, and students with limited access may face challenges in acquiring digital literacy skills.

In summary, socio-economic status can influence the development of life skills among students through its impact on educational opportunities, family dynamics, access to resources, and social interactions. Recognizing these influences is important for educators, policymakers, and parents, as it underscores the need to provide support and opportunities for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, to develop essential life skills.

Relationship between Life Skills and Socio-Economic Status:

Socio-economic status (SES) is a significant determinant of students' life skills development, as it influences access to resources, quality of education, parental support, and exposure to diverse learning experiences. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds often have greater access to quality education, extracurricular activities, and parental guidance, which contribute to the development of essential life skills. Conversely, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds face challenges such

as financial stress, lack of educational resources, and the need to contribute to household income, which may hinder their ability to develop strong life skills.

A study conducted by Gayatri et al. (2017) examined the efficacy of a life skills education program among high school students from low-income communities in Karnataka. The study found that these students, many of whom faced academic difficulties, exhibited behavioral issues and a lack of motivation in their studies. The intervention program focused on developing self-awareness, interpersonal communication, and coping skills. The results showed significant improvements in students' problem-solving abilities and emotional resilience, demonstrating that life skills training can help mitigate some of the disadvantages associated with low SES.

Despite these improvements, socio-economic barriers remain a challenge in life skills development. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often have limited access to well-trained teachers, extracurricular programs, and digital learning resources, all of which contribute to skill-building. Additionally, financial constraints may force students to prioritize work over education, reducing the time available for skill development. Addressing these challenges requires targeted policy interventions, such as providing financial aid, expanding access to skill-based education, and ensuring that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have equal opportunities to develop life skills.

In Karnataka's secondary schools, the development of life skills is influenced socio-economic disparities pose challenges in life skills acquisition, with students from lower-income families facing greater obstacles in accessing quality education and resources.

2. Need for the study

The need for the study on the relationship between life skills and Socio-economic status of secondary school students arises from the growing recognition of the importance of life skills in achieving academic success and overall well-being. In India, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 emphasizes the need to develop life skills among students to prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century (NCERT, 2005). Moreover, research has shown that Socio-economic status plays a significant role in shaping students' life skills. The importance of the study lies in its potential to provide insights into the relationship between life skills and Socio-economic status, which can inform educational policies and practices aimed at promoting students' overall development.

4. Literature cited

Tagat, Balaji and Kapoor (February, 2025) investigated the impact of life skills education on socio-emotional development and school-related outcomes among adolescents in India. The study employed harmonized data across various projects, analyzing a sample of 1,898 students for short-term outcomes and 5,582 students for long-term outcomes.

Bala et al. (2024) assessed the levels of life skills and academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Sonepat District and examined the relationship between the two variables. The study adopted a descriptive survey method and was conducted on a sample of 100 students. A significant positive relationship was found between life skills and academic achievement. Boys exhibited higher levels of life skills compared to girls, while girls outperformed boys in terms of academic achievement.

Ubale et al. (2023) explored the significance of life skills education and its impact on attitudes among management students. The study focused on understanding how life skills contribute to the holistic development of postgraduates by fostering positive attitudes. Data were collected from 184 respondents. The findings highlighted that life skills education effectively integrates interpersonal, emotional and cognitive development, making it a vital component of modern education.

Wahlang, Humtsoe and Kapoor (2022) conducted a study to assess the level of life skills among adolescents residing in Child Care Institutions (CCIs) in Meghalaya

Overview of Studies and Research Gap:

The reviewed studies highlight the significance of life skills among adolescents and secondary school students in India. While some studies focused on the level of life skills, others examined the impact of interventions or demographic factors on life skills. However, there is a research gap in understanding the relationship between life skills and socio economic status of parents. In this study, SES is evaluated to understand how it influences students' capacity to develop adaptive and social competencies, particularly in the areas of emotional regulation, interpersonal communication and coping mechanisms. Analyzing SES helps in identifying educational inequities and formulating inclusive policies to promote life skills education across diverse economic backgrounds.

4.Statement of the problem

The research dilemma identified for the current investigation is: "Relationship between Life Skills and parental socio economic status of Secondary School Students."

5.Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the relationship between Life Skills and *parental socio economic status* among secondary school students.
2. To examine the differences in the Life Skills between secondary school boys and girls.

6.RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Following are the research hypotheses for the present study:

There is no significant relationship between Life Skills and *parental socio economic status* of secondary school students.

There is no significant difference in the Life Skills between secondary school boys and girls.

7. Method used

Population: The population is consists of secondary school students studying in Mandya District, Karnataka, India.

Sample Size: A sample of 150 students across ten schools followed by Karnataka State Syllabus would be drawn using simple random sampling technique. Data representation would be given to secondary school boys and girls. Giving representation of all type of schools, a sample of 150 secondary school students were randomly selected from 10 schools in Mandya district of Karnataka.

Tools of the Study: To study about the Life Skills and Socio Economic Status of the secondary school students the researcher has used two Indexes namely, Life Skill Assessment Scale developed by A. Radhakrishnan Nair (2011) and The socio-economic status of students' families was measured using the Modified Kuppuswamy Scale (2022), which considers education, occupation and income. Additionally, a personal information schedule was used to collect background information of the participants.

Collection of Data: The data was collected by the researcher herself by personally visiting the schools and administered the selected tools for secondary school students under normal conditions. The researcher has been told to respond to the items freely and frankly.

8. Analysis and interpretation of data:

Table-1: Correlation between Life Skills and Socio Economic status among Secondary School Students.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Obtained 'r' value	Level. of Sig.
Life Skills	279.777	58.309	0.356	**
Socio Economic status	250.824	71.083		

**Significant at 0.01 level is 0.254 [N=108; df=106]

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficient ('r' value) for Life Skills and Socio Economic status scores among secondary school students. The results show a significant positive correlation between Life Skills and Socio Economic status ($r = 0.356$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that students with better school environments tend to have higher life skills, and vice versa.

The obtained 'r' value (0.356) exceeds the table value (0.254) at the 0.01 level of significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Instead, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, stating that there is a significant positive relationship between Life Skills and Socio Economic status among secondary school students.

In summary, the study finds a statistically significant positive correlation between Life Skills and Socio Economic status, suggesting that a supportive school environment is associated with higher life skills among secondary school students.

Table 2: Independent't' Test Results Comparing Life Skills Scores of Secondary School Students with Different Levels of Socio Economic status.

School Environment	Sample	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' Value	Sig. level
Low	15	237.933	31.963	3.69	**
Moderate	75	277.200	58.333		
Moderate	75	277.200	58.333	3.87	**
High	18	325.388	44.379		
Low	15	237.933	31.963	6.56	**
High	18	325.388	44.379		

**Significant at 0.01 level is 2.63 [N=108; df=106]

Table-2 presents the results of the independent t-test comparing the Life Skills scores of secondary school students with different levels of Socio Economic status. The analysis reveals significant differences in Life Skills scores between students with low, moderate, and high levels of Socio Economic status.

1. the t-value of 3.69 indicates a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in Life Skills scores between students with low ($M=237.933$) and moderate ($M=277.200$) levels of Socio Economic status, with moderate levels showing higher Life Skills scores.
2. the t-value of 3.87 indicates a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in Life Skills scores between students with moderate ($M=277.200$) and high ($M=325.388$) levels of Socio Economic status, with high levels showing higher Life Skills scores.

3. the t-value of 6.56 indicates a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in Life Skills scores between students with low ($M=237.933$) and high ($M=325.388$) levels of school environment, with high levels showing higher Life Skills scores.

These findings suggest that students with higher levels of Socio Economic status to have more developed Life Skills compared to those with moderate and low levels of Socio Economic status.

Graph 1: Comparison of mean Life Skills scores between secondary school students with regard to Socio Economic status.

Table-3: Independent 't' Test Results Comparing Life Skills Scores of Secondary School Boys and Girls.

Gender	Sample	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' Value	Sig. level
Boys	54	251.925	50.409	5.63	**
Girls	54	307.629	52.366		

**Significant at 0.01 level is 2.63 [N=108; df=106]

Table 3 presents the results of the independent t-test comparing the Life Skills scores of secondary school boys and girls. The analysis reveals a significant difference in Life Skills scores between the two genders. Specifically, the t-value of 5.63 indicates a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) in Life Skills scores between boys ($M=251.925$) and girls ($M=307.629$), with girls showing higher Life Skills scores. This suggests that, on average, secondary school girls tend to have more developed Life Skills compared to boys. This finding is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

9.Results

1. There was a significant and positive relationship between Life Skills and Socio Economic status of secondary school students ($r' = 0.356$ at 0.01 level).
2. There was a significant difference in the Life Skills between secondary school students having low and moderate levels of Socio-Economic status ($t' = 3.69$ at 0.01 level).
3. There was a significant difference in the Life Skills between secondary school students having moderate and high levels of Socio-Economic status ($t' = 3.87$ at 0.01 level).
4. There was a significant difference in the Life Skills between secondary school students having low and high levels of Socio Economic status ($t' = 6.56$ at 0.01 level).
5. There was a significant difference in the Life Skills between secondary school boys and girls ($t' = 5.63$ at 0.01 level).

10.Discussion of results

The findings of the present study reveal a significant and positive relationship between life skills and Socio Economic status among secondary school students. The significant differences in life skills between students with low, moderate, and high levels of Socio Economic status suggest that a supportive Socio Economic status can foster the development of life skills. The significant difference in life skills between boys and girls is consistent with Meenu & Rani's (2021) study, which observed gender differences in cognitive and interpersonal dimensions of life skills. However, the present study's findings contradict Raju and Rao's (2022) study, which found no significant gender differences in life skills.

11.Conclusion

The present study highlights the significance of Socio Economic status in developing life skills among secondary school students. The findings suggest that a Socio Economic status can foster the development of life skills, which are essential for students' academic and personal success.

12.Educational Implications.

1. Teachers and educators should be trained to integrate life skills into the curriculum and teaching practices.
2. Schools should provide opportunities for students to practice life skills through extracurricular activities and project-based learning.
3. Parents and community members should be involved in promoting life skills among students.
4. Educational policies should emphasize the importance of life skills and school environment in promoting students' overall development.

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