

Assessment of Life Skills Among Adolescents



Home Science

KEYWORDS : Adolescents, Life skills and type of institution studies

Dr.K.Anuradha

Associate Professor, Dept. of Home Science, S.V.University, Tirupati

ABSTRACT

Life skills have been defined by WHO (1999), as abilities for positive and adaptive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Adolescence is the transition period from childhood to adulthood and many adolescents experience anxiety, confusion and difficulty in their preparation for adulthood. It is through life skills they will solve their problems, manage situations and cope up with a variety of stressors. Measuring life skills is difficult task and research is scarce in this area. An attempt was made in the present study to assess the life skills among adolescents. The sample were 600 adolescents (300 boys and 300 girls), studying Intermediate course in three different types of colleges (Govt./aided, Private and corporate) across four towns (Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Vizag and Tirupati), and were selected through multi-stage stratified random sampling technique. Life Skills Self Rating Scale (LSSRS) specially developed for this purpose was used for assessment of life skills of adolescents after standardization.

The results revealed that adolescents secured moderately good score on LSSR scale. Significant gender difference was observed in the mean scores of life skills. Boys scored more on skills like decision making, coping with emotions and problems solving, where as girls exceeded boys score in self awareness, critical thinking and empathy skills. Comparatively students from corporate colleges exceeded others in skills such as decision making, effective communication, self awareness, problems solving, critical thinking, and inter-personal relationship skills. With regard to place of residence, when compared with students of other places students from Vijayawada scored better on life skills score in creative thinking, effective communication, problem solving, empathy and coping up with stress. As studies have reported that life skills can be taught a need for life skills based education is emphasized.

INTRODUCTION

'Adolescence' which coincides with 'formal operations stage' of Piaget's cognitive development is the period of transition between childhood and adolescence. It is characterized by rapid physiological changes and psycho-social maturation. Adolescence is also the stage when young people extend their relationships beyond parents and family and are intensely influenced by their peers and the outside world in general. As adolescents mature cognitively, their mental process becomes more analytical. They will be able to think abstractly, creatively, and with a spirit of adventure. But these are also the years of experimentation and risk-taking, of giving into negative peer pressure, of taking uninformed decisions on crucial issues, especially relating to their bodies and their sexuality. Adolescence is thus, a turning point in one's life, a period of increased potential but also one of greater vulnerability.

Life skills have been defined as "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (WHO. 1999). Skills that can be said to be life skills are innumerable and the nature and definition of life skills vary across cultures and settings. The core set of life skills identified by WHO for adolescent health and development concern are

1. Decision – Making
2. Creative thinking
3. Effective communication
4. Self-awareness
5. Coping with emotions
6. Problem-solving
7. Critical thinking
8. Inter-personal relationship skills
9. Empathy and
10. Coping with stress

Measuring life skills is difficult tasks and very little research was reported regarding this aspect. Studies reported on different aspects of life skills are also scarce. Sharma (2003) found that 51 per cent of adolescents had 'high level' of life skills and 49 per cent had 'low level of life skills. Gage (1998) found that cultural values and gender roles influence decision making of adolescents. Vasugi and Padma (2008) reported significant difference between boys and girls in their scores on scientific creativity and significant difference in scientific creativity was also found between matriculation and Government /Aided high School students. Turner et al., (2008), reported that life skills can be taught and life skills education is an educational innova-

tion that can spread in many countries to empower adolescent to protect themselves and to promote health and positive social relation.

In order to identify the presence of life skills among adolescents in Andhra Pradesh the present study was initiated with following objectives

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To assess the life skills among adolescents.
- 2) To study whether the adolescent life skills differ depending on their gender.
- 3) To study the difference in life skills of adolescents depending on the type of institution studied.
- 4) To study whether the adolescent life skills differ depending on the place of residence.

HYPOTHESES

- 1) Adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly in the presence of different life skills.
- 2) Adolescent do not differ in their life skills depending on the type of institution studied.
- 3) Adolescent do not differ in their life skills depending on the place of residence.

METHODOLOGY

Sample : The sample for the study were 600 Intermediate studying adolescent boys and girls from four major towns of Andhra Pradesh viz., Hyderabad, Vizag, Vijayawada and Tirupati. Multi-stage stratified random sample technique was used to select the sample.

In the first stage, three types of colleges (Corporate, Private and Govt/Aided colleges) were selected randomly from each town. In the next stage, 25 boys and 25 girls were selected from each type of college. Table 1 shows the distribution of sample according to gender and place of residence.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample According to Gender and Place of Residence

Sl.No	Place of Residence	Gender				Total	
		Boys		Girls			
		Number	Percent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1	Hyderabad	75	25	75	25	150	25
2	Visakhapatnam	75	25	75	25	150	25

3	Vijayawada	75	25	75	25	150	25
4	Tirupati	75	25	75	25	150	25
	TOTAL	300	100	300	100	600	100

As shown in table 1, one hundred and fifty students from each town were selected giving equal consideration to boys and girls. Thus, 300 boys and 300 girls constituted the sample.

The data collected was pooled and relevant Statistical techniques such as and t-test and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses.

Tools:

The following two tools were used for the study

1. General Information Schedule
2. Life Skills Self Rating Scale (LSSRS)

1. General Information Schedule: The general information schedule consists of socio-demographic information of the sample

2. Life Skills Self Rating Scale (LSSRS): Based on the review of literature, considering components of life skills given by (WHO 1999), ten statements were framed under each head of core set of life skills. Thus, hundred statements were framed. The scale was then subjected to scrutiny by a panel of three experts from Education, Psychology and Human Development field to determine the relevancy and suitability for inclusion under each head of the scale. After expert's scrutiny and after item analysis, the final form of LSSRS had 65 items. Test – Retest reliability for all ten areas and total score was found to be significant. The minimum possible score was 65 and maximum 195. Greater score on LSSRS indicates that adolescents have good life skills and vice versa.

The data was subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis and the results are as follows

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The age group of sample ranged from 15 plus to 18 plus years with a mean of 17years (S.D =1.5).

Table-2 shows the Frequency and Percentages of Life Skills Scores of adolescents measured using life Skills Self rating scale

Table 2: Frequency and Percentages of Life Skills Scores of Adolescents

Sl. No.	Class – Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	< 135	4	0.7
2	136-140	11	1.8
3	140-145	51	8.5
4	146-150	98	16.3
5	151-155	137	22.8
6	156-160	143	23.8
7	161-165	107	17.8
8	166-170	42	7
9	> 170	7	1.2
	TOTAL	600	100

Statistics:

Mean = 155.23 S.D = 7.49 Minimum = 131
 Median = 155 Skewness = + 0.160 Maximum = 174
 Mode = 154

The life skills mean score was 155.23 (S.D= 7.49) and range was 131 to 174. This shows that adolescents were having moderately good life skills. Sharma (2003) in a study at Kathmandu also found that 51% of adolescents have life skills at high level. From table it is evident that the frequency and percentage of life skills scores of adolescents is reasonably good.

To test the first hypothesis that is "Adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly in the presence of different life skills", t-

test was computed and results are presented in table-3.

Table 3. Life Skills of Adolescents According to Gender and t – Values

Sl. No	Life Skills	Gender				t-value
		Boys		Girls		
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
1	Decision Making	16.39	2.1	15.21	2.17	6.79 **
2	Creative Thinking	14.26	1.8	14.63	1.91	2.48*
3	Effective Communication	15.91	2.24	16.32	2.36	2.20*
4	Self – Awareness	15.72	1.62	16.66	1.45	7.52**
5	Coping With Emotions	16.29	1.75	15.48	1.58	5.95**
6	Problem – Solving	16.61	0.98	15.82	1.13	9.22**
7	Critical Thinking	14.72	2.12	15.29	1.93	3.49**
8	Inter-Personal relationship skill	16.58	2.08	16.98	1.93	2.44*
9	Empathy	14.81	2.23	15.97	1.41	7.58**
10	Coping with stress	12.98	2.15	15.18	1.48	14.55**
	Life skills total	154.33	8.03	156.12	6.8	2.95*

@ Not Significant

* P < 0.05

**P<0.01 Same notations are followed throughout the report

From table 3 it is interesting to note that boys and girls differed significantly in the presence of life skills as reported by themselves. The t-value for the total life skills across gender was 2.95 which was significant at 0.05 level.

A diligent view of table 3 shows that in skills such as decision making, coping with emotions and problems solving, boys scored more than girls and the t-values were significant at 0.01 level. In life skills such as self awareness, critical thinking and empathy, the mean scores were more for girls than boys (t-values significant at 0.01 level). Much difference was not observed between boys and girls in skills such as creative thinking, effective communication and interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, the hypothesis that 'adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly in the presence of life skills' was partially rejected and it can be said that boys and girls differed significantly in the presence of life skills.

Table 4 shows mean life skills of adolescents according to type of college studied and results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Table 4. Life Skills of Adolescents According to Type of College Studied and f – Values

Life Skills	Type of college						f-Value
	Govt./ Aided		Private College		Corporate College		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Decision making	15.59	1.94	15.24	2.28	16.57	2.21	21.01**
Creative Thinking	14.64	1.97	14.90	1.89	13.80	1.54	20.33*
Effective communication	15.81	2.54	15.31	1.97	17.21	1.95	40.95**
Self Awareness	15.82	1.83	16.30	1.24	16.46	1.34	8.30**
Coping with Emotion	16.49	1.72	16.59	1.50	14.58	1.03	12.10**
Problem Solving	16.01	1.08	16.15	1.04	16.48	1.22	9.71*

Critical Thinking	14.63	2.10	14.99	1.91	15.39	2.05	7.16 **
Inter personal relationship	16.71	2.04	16.57	1.87	17.08	2.10	3.40*
Empathy	15.70	2.04	15.49	1.84	14.99	1.90	7.17**
Coping With Stress	14.42	2.00	14.26	2.06	13.56	2.28	9.39**
Life Skills Total Score	155.01	8.28	155.02	6.62	155.66	7.49	0.51@

A critical appraisal of table-4 reveals that adolescents differed significantly depending on the type of college studied. The f- values were significant at 0.01 level for majority of the life skills. Comparatively students from corporate colleges exceeded others in skills such as decision making, effective communication, self awareness, problems solving, critical thinking, and inter-personal relationship skills. In area such as coping with emotions students from private college's secured high scores and in skill of empathy

students from Govt. and Aided colleges scored more.

The results showed that adolescents differ significantly depending on the type of institute they study. Therefore the null hypothesis framed regarding this was rejected. Generally the type of college the student studies depends on the socio-economic status of the family. Students from high economic families choose corporate colleges and next to it colleges run by private persons with a view of getting more quality of education than in Govt. Colleges. The students who cannot afford more fees join in govt/aided colleges and the difference in the life skills may be attributed to their living conditions and family background.

To test the third hypothesis that is "Adolescents do not differ significantly in the life skill depending on the place of residence" ANOVA was computed and results are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Life Skills of Adolescents According to Place of Residence and f – Values

Life Skills	Place of Residence								f-Value
	Hyderabad		Visakhapatnam		Vijayawada		Tirupati		
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Decision making	15.64	2.68	15.77	2.27	15.91	1.34	15.87	2.36	0.46@
Creative thinking	14.02	2.05	13.98	1.81	15.64	1.37	14.14	1.65	31.78 **
Effective communication	16.15	2.45	15.85	2.47	16.69	1.72	15.75	2.42	5.12 **
Self awareness	16.31	1.35	16.33	1.57	15.95	1.42	16.17	1.69	2.15*
Coping with Emotions	16.05	1.69	15.57	1.75	16.05	1.69	15.88	1.70	2.63*
Problem Solving	16.08	1.29	16.18	1.11	16.55	.89	16.05	1.14	6.53 **
Critical Thinking	14.85	2.13	15.40	1.73	14.89	2.11	14.88	2.14	2.52 *
Inter personal Relationship	16.88	2.16	17.27	2.03	15.83	1.22	17.15	2.17	17.37 **
Empathy	14.77	2.19	15.75	1.42	16.17	1.46	14.87	2.22	19.83 **
Coping with Stress	13.33	2.33	14.43	1.53	15.11	1.75	13.45	2.36	25.99 **
Life Skills Total Score	153.91	7.25	156.53	6.73	156.31	7.05	154.17	8.49	5.20 **

From table 5, it divulges that place of residence also has impact on adolescents' life skills. Significant difference was observed in skills such as creative thinking, effective communication, problem solving, interpersonal skills, empathy and coping with stress, when place of residence was considered. The f-value was significant at 0.01 level. A close perusal of mean scores indicated that when compared with students of other places, students from Vijayawada scored better on life skills score in creative thinking, effective communication, problem solving, empathy and coping up with stress. Next to it, adolescents of Vizag scored better in critical thinking and interpersonal skills and students of Hyderabad scored high in self-awareness. Comparatively, students of Tirupati scored less on all aspects of life skills self rating scores than those from other places. As the other three places are geographically big and also major cities which might have made adolescents to experience vivid experiences and thus resulting in development of skills.

Life Skills are measures for adolescents to execute behaviour relevant to a specific task or situation, family, the school or col-

lege the students study. Play a significant role in the life skills development. The result of the present study focuses the role of place of residence and type of institution studied in building life skills among students.

CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion, it can be concluded that adolescents scored a reasonably a good score on life skills which showed that adolescents are well equipped with life skills. However, adolescents differed significantly in the life skills score depending on their gender, place of residence and type of institution studied. Studies have reported that life skills can be taught and life skills education is an educational innovation. Hence, parents teachers and educators can improve the life skills among adolescents in the areas where they have poor skills through life skills based education (LSBE).

REFERENCE

1. Gage (1998). Sexual activity and contraceptive use: the components of the decision making process. Studies in Family Planning, 29(2), 233-245.
2. Santrock, J.W., 1993. Children. Third Edition, Bown and Bench mark Publishers, Melbourne, Australia, Oxford, England, 336-337.
3. Sharma, S.S. (2003). Measuring life skills of adolescents in a secondary school of Kathmandu: an experience, Kathmandu University Medical Journal, Vol 1(3), 170-176.
4. Turner, N.E., Mac Donald, J., Somersalt, M. (2008). Life skills, mathematical reasoning and critical thinking: a curriculum for the prevention of problems gambling. Journal of Gambling Studies, Vol 24 (3), 367-380.
5. Vasugi, K and Padma (2008). Scientific creativity among high school students of Dindigal District: survey. Experiments in Education, Vol XXXVI (9), 211-214.