



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING AS CORRELATES OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

KEY WORDS: problem solving, decision making, interpersonal relationship

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ABSTRACT

Education is an intentionally trained activity focusing on nurturing the harmonious progress of an individual as productive, promising and reasonable individual in the society. A person needs set of skills to deal productively with life situations. Such skills are called life skills which help the person to deal effectively with any condition to get the desired outcomes. The present investigation was designed as a descriptive study and normative survey was the method adopted for the study. Stratified sampling technique has been used to select samples of 60 secondary school students. Problem solving inventory, decision making inventory and inter personal relationship questionnaire were the tools used. The data were analyzed through destructive measures of statistics mainly Mean and Standard Deviation and product moment correlation. From the findings, it can be concluded that there is no significant correlation between problem solving skill and interpersonal relationship, decision making and interpersonal relationship of secondary school students.

INTRODUCTION

Today's children and youth live in a world confronting varied challenges. To thrive in a world afflicted with poverty, conflict, violence, gender and ethnic discrimination, environmental degradation and disease, one requires more than literacy and numeric skills. Life skills foster mental well-being and develop proficiency in children and youth when they encounter the factualities of life situation. Development of essential life skills and its acquisition helps an adolescent to protect himself from the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, promiscuous sex, adolescent pregnancy, AIDS/ HIV /STDs and many other health related problems. "Life Skills are group of psycho-social competence and interpersonal skill that help people to make informed decision, solve problems, think creatively and critically, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner. These abilities help in the promotion of mental and social well being and competence in adolescents to face the hard realities of life." WHO (1996).

Since the world population is evolving at a very fast phase, teachers of the twenty-first century should embrace a new role as designers of learning experiences, processes and environments. It is the need of the hour to approach education in a holistic perspective. Holistic perspective in education focused with the allround development of an individual, development of emotional, intellectual, physical, social, creative, artistic and spiritual potentials. So curriculum should be relevant to students' lives (John Dewey). Life Skills education fortify the ability to meet the wants and demands of the present society. Life Skills education is an important approach to equip youth to negotiate and mediate challenges and risks in their lives, and to facilitate productive participations in society. Life Skills elevate mental well being and develop competency among children and youth as they come across the realities of life. WHO (1996), categorized most important ten Life Skills under three broad categories viz. Thinking Skills: Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Decision making and problem solving. Social Skills: Inter Personal Relationship, Effective communication and Self awareness Emotional Skills: Coping with stress, coping with emotions and empathy.

Problem-solving skills are the capability to identify problems, collect data, analyze data and implement the best solutions. It is the act of identifying the problems, defining the problems,

making hypotheses, testing and selecting most suitable hypotheses, arriving at conclusion and applying the solution. Problem solving skill help us to deal effectively with the problems in our life. Decision making skill help us to deal effectively with life decisions. Decision making skill help people how to actively make wise decisions and includes logical steps in selecting suitable alternatives based on a situation. It is an important skill in all stages of life.

The decision making process involves;

- Sensing a difficulty
- Analyzing the difficulty
- Think alternative solutions
- Decide a course of action

Interpersonal relationship is the ability to make and keep friendly relationships with the people we interact with for the promotion of our social and mental wellbeing. The social skills can be improved by cultivating a positive outlook, acknowledging others expertise, controlling one's own emotions, showing a real interest towards the welfare of colleagues, practicing active listening, and empathy.

Statement of the research problem

The study is entitled as "problem solving and decision making as correlates of interpersonal relationships of secondary school students".

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Problem solving: Is the ability to solve specific problems by means of a set of intellectual operations of thinking that moves from an initial state to a goal state.

Interpersonal Relationship: It is an ability to make and keep friendly relationship with individuals we interact with for promotion of our mental and social wellbeing,

Decision making: Is the ability to deal constructively with situations and make wise decisions. Decision making skill help people, how to actively make decisions about their actions in relation to healthy assessment of different choices.

Objectives of the present study:

- The objectives of the study are;
1. To find out Problem Solving skill of Secondary School students.
 2. To find out Decision Making skill of Secondary School

students.

3. To find out Interpersonal Relationship skill of Secondary School students.
4. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between Problem solving and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary School students.
5. To find out whether there is any significant relationship between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary School students.

Review of Related Studies

Sukhla and Dixit (2016) analyzed the Problem solving ability of 50 students by using convenience sampling. Content analysis of the data was done and the percentage was computed. Results indicate that adolescent girls have higher problem solving ability than adolescent boys and further it has been concluded that most of the boys used planning strategy in their problem solving.

Deniz, M. Engin (2004) conducted research on relationship between self esteem in decision making, decision making and problem solving skills of university students. The analysis of the study was done by using Pearson Moment Multiplication Correlation Coefficient. Results showed that there was a significant relationship between decision making, self esteem, procrastination, vigilance, hyper vigilance, buck passing decision in decision making style and problem solving inventory sub scale and total point.

Genk seven-order and Colakkadiolugu (2013) present a survey on the relation between problem solving and Decision Making. The authors note that some researchers argue that problem-solving and Decision – making processes share similarities Baron and Brown, (1991); Elstein and Schwartz, 2002; Isen, 2001) present a popular opinion that problem-solving and Decision Making are entirely different.

Yurt seven, Ramazan; Akkas Baysal (2021) made a study “Analysis of the Relationship between Decision Making skills and problem solving skills of primary school students”. The sample of research was carried out through rational survey model consisted of 331 primary school students from 3rd and 4th grade. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and the correlation analysis revealed that decision making skills and problem solving skills of primary school children have a positive significant relationship.

Ainiyah, Nur et al. (2022) made a study to find out the effectiveness of group investigation learning model in enhancing students' interpersonal skills. The experimental study was on a sample of 116 students. Control group and the experimental group shows differences with respect to interpersonal skills and can be concluded that the use of the group investigation model is effective in enhancing students' interpersonal skills.

Significance of the study

According to Kapil Sibal (2010), Life Skills should replace academics as the primary objective of schooling. The time has come for schools to take a more comprehensive approach, with life skills training at the forefront of their curricula. Holistic perspective in education is focused with the improvement of each individual's socio emotional, physical, artistic, creative, mental and spiritual potentials. It is essential to find the best ways of Life Skills development with the available resources. The present study aims to find the correlation between problem solving and Decision Making with interpersonal relationship of students at secondary level. Based on the review of literature and prior studies, some revealed that there is significant correlation between the two core skills: problem solving and Decision making, but independent strategies for the development of interpersonal relationships skills. No schematic study can be carried out in this realm too.

Hypotheses of the present study

Hypotheses formulated for the present study are;

- (H₁) There will be significant relation between Problem solving and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students
- (H₂) There will be significant relation between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students

Methodology

The investigation was designed as a descriptive study and normative survey was the method adopted for the study. Stratified sampling technique has been used to select samples of 60 secondary school students of Kollam district, Kerala. Problem solving Inventory, Decision making inventory and Interpersonal Relations Questionnaire (IRQ) for the secondary school students was the tool used for the study. Problem solving components viz; Identify and define the problems, generate possible solutions, evaluate alternatives, make hypothesis, implement the solution, evaluate the outcome was examined with Problem solving Inventory. Components of Decision making viz; identify the decision, collect relevant information, identify suitable alternatives, choose appropriate alternatives, take action and review the decision & its consequences was examined with Decision making inventory. Components of Interpersonal Relationship viz., Adaptability, Negotiation, Team building, Communication, Listening Skill was examined with Interpersonal Relations questionnaire.

Analysis of data

The collected data were analyzed to find out the descriptive measures of statistics mainly mean and standard deviation of the three variables under study namely Problem solving skill, Decision making skill and Interpersonal Relationship skill of Secondary school students. The details of descriptive analyses for the three variables for the total sample are given in table 1.

Table 1

Size of the sample, Mean and Standard Deviation of Problem solving, Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students.

Variables	No. of students	Mean	Standard Deviation
Problem solving	60	59.23	2.56
Decision making	60	46.23	1.85
Interpersonal Relationship	60	51.35	3.54

In the present sample there are 60 students. From Table 1 it is seen that the mean and standard deviation of the variable problem solving are 59.23 and 2.56 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of Decision making are 46.23 and 1.85 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the variable Interpersonal Relationship are 51.35 and 3.54 respectively.

Correlation Analysis of Data

Correlation analysis has been conducted to find out the relationship between Problem solving, Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students. The value of coefficient of correlation between (1) Problem solving skill (2) Decision making skill (3) Interpersonal Relationship skill of Secondary school students for the total sample is analyzed. The results are given in table 2 & 3.

Correlation between Problem solving and Interpersonal Relationship of students at secondary level.

The objective was to find out the relationship between Problem solving and Interpersonal Relationship of secondary school students with respect to total sample. The data

collected were analyzed with the help of Product moment correlation and the results are given in table 2.

Table 2: Correlation coefficient between Problem Solving and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary School Students.

Variables	Value of r	Remark
Problem solving x Interpersonal relationship	0.013	Ns

Table 2 shows that correlation coefficient is 0.013 which is not significant. It indicates that there is no significant correlation between Problem solving and Interpersonal relationship of Secondary School Students. Thus the hypothesis that there exists significant relationship between Problem solving and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students with respect to total sample is rejected.

Coefficient of correlation between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Students of Secondary School.

The objective was to find out the relationship between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students with respect to total sample. The collected data were analyzed with the help of Product moment correlation and the results are given in table 3.

Table 3: Correlation coefficient between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students.

Variables	Value of r	remark
Decision making x Interpersonal relationship	-.14	Ns

Table 3 showed that correlation coefficient is -.14 which is not significant. It indicates that there is no significant correlation between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of Secondary school students. Thus the hypothesis that there exists a significant correlation between Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship of students of secondary level with respect to total sample is rejected.

Findings of research study

The study findings revealed that problem solving skill and Interpersonal skill of Secondary school students have not significantly correlated. Thus the Hypothesis (H1) that there exists a significant relation between Problem solving and Interpersonal relationship of Secondary school students with respect to total sample is rejected. The study also concluded that there is no significant correlation between Decision Making and Interpersonal skill of students at Secondary level. So the Hypothesis (H2), there exists a significant relationship between Decision making and Interpersonal relationship of Secondary school students with respect to total sample is also rejected.

Conclusion

Problem solving skill helps pupils to identify problems and overcome the difficulties they faced with. Decision making skill is the ability to take suitable decisions in the shortest time from different alternatives. Decision is the process of making a choice or finding a solution. In other words, it is the action or process of taking right decisions. Interpersonal relationship skills are essential for making friendships and to become a good and productive member of the society in which he lives. The results of the research work established that there is no significant correlation on Problem solving and Interpersonal Relationship, Decision making and Interpersonal Relationships. It highlights the importance of separate strategies for the development Problem solving, Decision making and Interpersonal Relationship. Life Skill provide children with important tools for development of ability to think independently, communicate effectively, take decisions wisely, socialize and make new friends and develop

fellow feelings. This will require major change in educational system since few of today's teaching community have learned these skills.

Implications of study

Based on the major findings, following are some of the educational implications of the present study.

Teachers:

The present study highlight the importance of separate strategies for the development of the core skills Problem solving, and Decision Making and Interpersonal Relationship. So for teachers faculty development programs should be arranged to enhance their knowledge and skills on different innovative approaches. Along with faculty development program, teachers also need to enhance their skills. Various skill development programs should also be arranged for teaches.

Learners:

Rigid time table, overloaded syllabus, heavy competitiveness fetches the lure of the traditional method, which fails to develop Life skills among students. From the findings of the present study it can be revealed that there exists no significant relation between thinking skills and social skills of secondary school students. Hence suitable steps may be taken to adopt innovative strategies for curriculum transactions at different levels.

Administrators:

Teachers and prospective teachers should be given proper training to Life Skills education and administrators should encourage instructors to implement new strategies to help pupils to enhance their potential and skills.

Policy suggestion of the study:

Curriculum planners who can plan curriculum giving due importance to learning different disciplines using hands on experiences. It is now necessary for the government to provide training programs for school teachers in Life Skills education. The policy makers and administrators should rethink their roles in education and give teachers more support, freedom to enhance and support the educational environment.

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