

Life Skills Of Higher Secondary Students In Alappuzha District

Jyothish John Kizhakkethalackal^{1*}, Dr. H. Deepa²

^{1*}Reg. No. 22214011041001, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: jyothishjohn92@gmail.com

²Associate Professor, Department of Education, DD & CE, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627012, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: deepa@msuniv.ac.in

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to develop and validate the Life Skill Inventory for higher secondary students in Alappuzha district, Kerala and to determine the level of life skills and their dimensions in relation to gender and locality. It also determines whether there is any significant difference in the life skills of higher secondary students based on gender and locality. In this survey study, the investigator used stratified random sampling technique for selecting the sample from the population. The sample consists of 300 higher secondary students of Alappuzha district. The tool used for the present study was Life Skill Inventory. The statistical technique used for analyzing the data was t test. The finding shows that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school students of Alappuzha district in the dimensions of effective communication, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking, decision making, coping with emotions and life skills in total. But there is significant difference found in the dimension of coping with stress. Also, there is no significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary students in the dimensions of effective communication, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking, decision making, coping with stress and coping with emotions.

Keywords: Life skills, Higher secondary students

Introduction

Life skills can be defined as “the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables the individual to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO). Life Skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable the individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of one’s life. Considering the importance of life skills, the 164 nations committed to “Education for all” have included life skills as a basic learning need for all young people around the world, with life skills-based education being adopted to develop attitudes and skills which support healthy behaviours. Life skills contribute to our perception of self-efficacy, self-confidence, self-esteem and self-concept. Life skills are playing an important role in the promotion of mental well-being.

Related studies on life skills

Kumari (2022) studied the level of life skills among tribal adolescents and investigated gender differences in life skills. A total of 315 tribal adolescents of the age group (12 to 15 years) and 325 tribal adolescents of the age group 16 to 18 years from different high schools situated in tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh were selected by adopting incidental sampling technique. From the study, it was concluded that the tribal adolescents, i.e., both boys as well as girls, possessed low level of thinking skills and average level of social skills as well as emotional skills.

Siby, S. (2022) studied the level of life skills and the relationship between life skills and social adjustment of Upper Primary school students in Kerala. To collect data, the researcher selected 312 upper primary school students from Kottayam, Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha districts. The study revealed that the majority of the Upper Primary students had an average level of life skills, and there was a significant relationship between life skills and social adjustment of Upper Primary school students.

Haug (2018) investigated the efficacy of mobile phone-based life skill training to prevent substance use among

adolescents within a controlled trial. Study participants were 1312 students between the ages of 14 and 16 years from 100 secondary school classes. Primary outcome criteria were problem drinking according to the short form of the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test and cigarette smoking within the last 30 days preceding the follow-up assessment at month 18. Given that this intervention approach proves to be effective, it could be easily implemented in various settings and would reach large numbers of young people in a cost-effective.

Chiang (2017) studied the extent to which life skill training was offered to middle and high school students with autism and life skill training needs after high school. This study found that the majority of the middle and high school students with autism (77.4%) had received life skill training in school. Receipt of life skill training differed across students' gender, age, diagnosis of intellectual disability, and functional mental skills. Students received life skill training in general education classrooms, special education classrooms, individual instruction, and community settings. Life skill training was needed for the majority of the high school leavers with autism (78%).

Need and significance

The children of today, the youth of tomorrow and future citizens of the country. Proper development and growth of children should be ensured from the earliest stage. The wealth of the nation is not so much in its economic and natural resources, but it lies more decidedly in the kind and quality of the wealth of its children and youth. It is they who will be creators and shapers of the nation's tomorrow. Life skill is a term used to describe a set of basic skills acquired through learning and/or direct life experience that enable individuals and groups to effectively handle issues and problems commonly encountered in daily life.

There is a core set of skills that are at the heart of skills-based initiatives for the promotion of the health and well-being of children and adolescents. These are effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions, and coping with stress. Life skill education focuses on the development of adolescents' knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that are expected to positively influence a person's ability to adapt effectively to different life situations. It makes a difference in the lives of people in making adjustments and overcoming difficulties in the achievement of goals. Life skill education promotes positive thinking and goes against a negative attitude towards self and others.

Definitions of the key terms Life skills

"Life Skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviours that enable humans to deal with demands and challenges of life." (WHO, 1993). In the present study, life skill helps higher secondary students to develop a positive attitude and to function well in life.

Higher secondary students

Higher secondary students are pursuing their XI and XII classes and are aged between 16 and 18 years. In the present study, higher secondary students are the XI and XII class students of government, aided and unaided schools in the Alappuzha district, Kerala.

Objectives

1. To develop and validate the Life Skill Inventory for higher secondary students in Alappuzha district.
2. To find out the level of life skills and its dimensions of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with regard to
 - i) Gender
 - ii) Locality
3. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with regard to gender
4. To find out whether there is any significant difference between the life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with regard to locality

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with regard to gender
2. There is no significant difference between the life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with regard to locality

Methodology

Methodology is the main body of the research report in the science of proper modes and order of procedure. According to Mouly (2000), "Methodology is the aspect of revealing the procedure of technique involved in the study and analysis of the problem". This study is intended to collect data regarding the life skills among higher secondary students in Alappuzha district, Kerala. The present study is quantitative research, and the

method selected for the study is the normative survey method, since it is the most appropriate method for collecting data. The study was conducted in various higher secondary schools in Alappuzha district. The population of the present study was the higher secondary students in Alappuzha district. A sample of 300 higher secondary students were selected for the study by using stratified sampling technique. According to Best and Kahn (2017), "It is advisable to subdivide the population into similar homogenous groups to get more accurate representation". This method results in a stratified random sample, and the variable used was life skills.

The following standardized tool was used for measuring the variable,

(i) Life Skill Inventory (2023) was developed by the investigator with the help of the supervisor.

The data required for the investigation were collected from the students in a group situation. Data were consolidated and basic calculations made for analysis. The statistical technique used in the study is t test.

Table 1.1 Level of life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district

Dimensions	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Effective communication	60	20	173	57.66	67	22.34
Interpersonal relationship	58	19.33	190	63.33	52	17.34
Creative thinking	60	20	194	64.66	46	15.34
Decision making	69	23	176	58.66	55	18.34
Coping with stress	63	21	185	61.66	52	17.34
Coping with emotions	51	17	184	61.33	65	21.67

It is inferred from table 1.1, that 20% of higher secondary students have low, 57.66% of them have moderate and 23.34% have high level of effective communication. 19.33% of higher secondary students have low, 63.33% of them have moderate and 17.34% have high level of interpersonal relationship. 20% of higher secondary students have low, 64.66% of them have moderate and 15.34% have high level of creative thinking. 23% of higher secondary students have low, 58.66% of them have moderate and 18.34% have high level of decision making. 23% of higher secondary students have low, 58.66% of them have moderate and 18.34% have high level of decision making. 21% of higher secondary students have low, 61.66% of them have moderate and 17.34% have high level of coping with stress. 17% of higher secondary students have low, 61.33% of them have moderate and 21.67 % have high level of coping with emotions.

Table 1.2 Level of life skills of higher secondary students with respect to gender

Dimensions	Gender	Low		Moderate		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Effective communication	Male	34	24.47	74	53.23	31	22.30
	Female	26	16.14	99	61.49	36	22.37
Interpersonal relationship	Male	30	21.58	76	54.67	33	23.75
	Female	28	17.39	98	60.87	35	21.74
Creative thinking	Male	25	17.98	92	66.19	22	15.83
	Female	34	21.11	103	63.97	24	14.92
Decision making	Male	23	16.54	94	67.62	22	15.84
	Female	32	19.87	107	66.45	22	13.68
Coping with stress	Male	25	17.98	81	58.28	33	23.74
	Female	27	16.77	101	62.74	33	20.49
Coping with emotions	Male	26	18.70	86	61.87	27	19.43
	Female	44	27.33	79	49.07	38	23.60
Life skills in total	Male	16	11.52	105	75.54	18	12.94
	Female	30	18.63	104	64.59	27	16.78

It is inferred from the table 1.2, that 24.47% of male higher secondary students have low, 53.23% of them have moderate and 22.30% have high level of effective communication. Regarding female higher secondary students of them have 16.14% have low, 61.49% of them have moderate and 22.37% have high level of effective communication.

21.58% of male higher secondary students have low, 54.67% of them have moderate and 23.75% have high level of interpersonal relationship. Regarding female higher secondary students 17.39% of them have low, 60.87% of them have moderate and 21.74% have high level of interpersonal relationship.

17.98% of male higher secondary students have low, 66.19% of them have moderate and 15.83% have high level of creative thinking. Regarding female higher secondary students 21.11% of them have low, 63.97% of

them have moderate and 14.92% have high level of creative thinking.

16.54% of male higher secondary students have low, 67.62% of them have moderate and 15.84% have high level of decision making. Regarding female higher secondary students 19.87% of them have low, 66.45% of them have moderate and 13.68% have high level of decision making.

17.98% of male higher secondary students have low, 58.28% of them have moderate and 23.74% have high level of coping with stress. Regarding female higher secondary students 16.77% of them have low, 62.74% of them have moderate and 20.49% have high level of coping with stress.

18.70% of male higher secondary students have low, 61.87% of them have moderate and 19.43% have high level of coping with emotions. Regarding female higher secondary students 27.33% of them have low, 49.07% of them have moderate and 23.60% have high level of coping with emotions.

11.52% of male higher secondary students have low, 75.54% of them have moderate and 12.94% have high level of life skills in total. Regarding female higher secondary students 18.63% of them have low, 64.59% of them have moderate and 16.78% have high level of life skills in total.

Table 1.3 Level of life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with respect to locality.

Dimensions	Locality	Low		Moderate		High	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Effective communication	Rural	38	21.59	98	55.68	40	22.73
	Urban	22	17.74	75	60.48	27	21.78
Interpersonal relationship	Rural	39	22.15	103	58.52	34	19.33
	Urban	19	15.32	87	70.16	18	14.52
Creative thinking	Rural	30	17.04	120	68.18	26	14.78
	Urban	30	24.19	74	59.68	20	16.13
Decision making	Rural	39	22.15	101	57.39	36	20.46
	Urban	19	15.32	86	69.35	19	15.33
Coping with stress	Rural	33	18.75	108	61.36	35	19.89
	Urban	30	24.19	68	54.83	26	20.98
Coping with emotions	Rural	28	15.90	112	63.64	36	20.46
	Urban	23	18.54	72	58.07	29	23.39
Life skills in total	Rural	27	15.34	121	68.75	28	15.91
	Urban	20	16.13	84	67.74	20	16.13

It is inferred from the table 1.3, that 21.59% of rural higher secondary students have low, 55.68% of them have moderate and 22.73% have high level of effective communication. Regarding urban higher secondary students of them have 17.74% have low, 60.48% of them have moderate and 21.78% have high level of effective communication.

22.15% of rural higher secondary students have low, 58.52% of them have moderate and 19.32% have high level of interpersonal relationship. Regarding urban higher secondary students of them have 15.32% have low, 70.16% of them have moderate and 14.52% have high level of interpersonal relationship.

17.04% of rural higher secondary students have low, 68.18% of them have moderate and 14.78% have high level of creative thinking. Regarding urban higher secondary students of them have 24.19% have low, 59.68% of them have moderate and 16.13% have high level of creative thinking.

22.15% of rural higher secondary students have low, 57.39% of them have moderate and 20.46% have high level of decision making. Regarding urban higher secondary students of them have 15.32% have low, 69.35% of them have moderate and 15.33% have high level of decision making.

18.75% of rural higher secondary students have low, 61.36% of them have moderate and 19.389% have high level of coping with stress. Regarding urban higher secondary students of them have 24.19% have low, 54.83% of them have moderate and 20.98% have high level of coping with stress.

15.90% of rural higher secondary students have low, 63.64% of them have moderate and 20.46% have high level of coping with emotions. Regarding urban higher secondary students of them have 18.54% have low, 58.07% of them have moderate and 23.39% have high level of coping with emotions.

15.34% of rural higher secondary students have low, 68.75% of them have moderate and 15.91% have high level of life skills in total. Regarding urban higher secondary students 16.13% of them have low, 67.74% of them have moderate and 16.13% have high level of life skills in total.

1. Null hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district with regard to gender.

Table 1.4 Difference between male and female higher secondary students in their life skills

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' value	Remarks at 5%
Effective communication	Male	139	12.89	3.07	0.84	NS
	Female	161	13.18	2.95		
Interpersonal relationship	Male	139	11.2	2.97	1.66	NS
	Female	161	10.68	2.38		
Creative thinking	Male	139	10.95	2.89	0.74	NS
	Female	161	10.70	2.85		
Decision making	Male	139	11.57	3.21	1.75	NS
	Female	161	12.24	3.31		
Coping with stress	Male	139	11.26	3.01	2.16	S
	Female	161	12.03	3.05		
Coping with emotions	Male	139	12.17	3.06	0.64	NS
	Female	161	12.39	2.79		
Life skills in total	Male	139	70.07	10.86	0.92	NS
	Female	161	71.26	11.22		

(The table value of 't' is 1.96, S-Significant, NS-Not Significant)

It is inferred from table 1.4, that there is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school students of Alappuzha district in the dimensions of effective communication, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking, decision making, coping with emotions and life skills in total. But there is significant difference found in the dimension of coping with stress.

While comparing the mean scores of male (Mean=12.89, 11.57, 11.26, 12.17) and female (Mean=13.18, 12.24, 12.03, 12.39). It is inferred that female higher secondary school students are better in effective communication, decision making, coping with stress and coping with emotions than the male higher secondary students in Alappuzha district.

2. Null hypothesis

There is no significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary students in Alappuzha district their life skills and its dimensions.

Table 1.5 Difference between rural and urban higher secondary students in their life skills

Dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' value	Remarks at 5%
Effective communication	Rural	176	13.06	3.11	0.08	NS
	Urban	124	13.03	2.86		
Interpersonal relationship	Rural	176	10.90	2.79	0.20	NS
	Urban	124	10.96	2.53		
Creative thinking	Rural	176	10.98	2.76	1.16	NS
	Urban	124	10.58	3.02		
Decision making	Rural	176	12.15	3.31	1.38	NS
	Urban	124	11.62	3.21		
Coping with stress	Rural	176	11.89	3.22	1.44	NS
	Urban	124	11.37	2.75		
Coping with emotions	Rural	176	12.25	2.83	0.32	NS
	Urban	124	12.36	3.03		
Life skills in total	Rural	176	71.25	11.21	1.00	NS
	Urban	124	69.95	10.78		

(The table value of 't' is 1.96, S-Significant, NS-Not Significant)

It is inferred from the table 1.5, that there is no significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary students in the dimensions of effective communication, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking, decision making, coping with stress and coping with emotions. While comparing the mean scores of the rural area (Mean=10.90, 12.25) and urban area (Mean=10.96, 12.36), it is inferred that the urban higher secondary school students are better in the dimensions of interpersonal relationship and coping with emotions than the rural higher secondary students in Alappuzha district.

Findings

The following are the findings of the study.

Level of life skills of higher secondary students in Alappuzha district

- a) 22.34% of higher secondary students have high level of effective communication.

- b) 17.34% of higher secondary students have high level of interpersonal relationship.
- c) 15.34% of higher secondary students have high level of creative thinking.
- d) 18.34% of higher secondary students have high level of decision making.
- e) 17.34% of higher secondary students have high level of coping with stress.
- f) 21.67% of higher secondary students have high level of coping with emotions.

Level of life skills of higher secondary students with respect to gender

- a) 22.30% of male and 22.37% of female higher secondary students have high level of effective communication.
- b) 22.75% of male and 21.74% female higher secondary students have high level of interpersonal relationship.
- c) 15.83% of male and 14.92% female higher secondary students have high level of creative thinking.
- d) 15.84% of male and 13.68% of female higher secondary students have high level of decision making.
- e) 23.74% of male and 20.49% of female higher secondary students have high level of coping with stress.
- f) 19.43% of male and 23.60% of female higher secondary students have high level of coping with emotions.

Level of life skills of higher secondary students with respect to locality

- a) 22.73% of rural and 21.78% of urban higher secondary students have high level of effective communication.
- b) 19.33% of rural and 14.52% urban higher secondary students have high level of interpersonal relationship.
- c) 14.78% of rural and 16.13% urban higher secondary students have high level of creative thinking.
- d) 20.46% of rural and 15.33% of urban higher secondary students have high level of decision making.
- e) 19.89% of rural and 20.98% of urban higher secondary students have high level of coping with stress.
- f) 20.46% of rural and 23.39% of urban higher secondary students have high level of coping with emotions.

There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school students of Alappuzha district in the dimensions of effective communication, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking, decision making, coping with emotions and life skills in total. But there is significant difference found in the dimension of coping with stress. While comparing the mean scores of female higher secondary school students are better in effective communication, decision making, coping with stress and coping with emotions than the male higher secondary students in Alappuzha district.

There is no significant difference between rural and urban higher secondary students in the dimensions of effective communication, interpersonal relationship, creative thinking, decision making, coping with stress and coping with emotions. While comparing the mean scores, the urban higher secondary school students are better in the dimensions of interpersonal relationship and coping with emotions than the rural higher secondary students in Alappuzha district.

Conclusion

Life skills education empowers the youth to choose appropriate values and behaviour, which are ingredients of positive health. Also, from the Life Skill Inventory response, it was concluded that most of the students fall under the average level. Very few students were in the low and high levels. The present study offers valuable insights into the field of educational research, and the results of the study can serve as a database for further investigation.

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