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AN ASSESSMENT OF LIFE SKILLS AMONG URBAN AND RURAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MYSORE DISTRICT

DR. MANJUNATHA .P.

Assistant Professor, DOS&R in Psychology, Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru.

ABSTRACT

The major objective of the current research is assessment of life skills among urban and rural high school students in Mysore district. Life skills can be defined as the capacity for adaptable and constructive conduct that enables people to successfully navigate the demands and obstacles of daily life. Life Skills are very essential to the high school students because it enhances and strengthens the life towards complete utilisation of an individual's potentialities in efficient and effective manner. The descriptive survey research method was utilised for the present study. Using Systematic random sampling 1000 high school students (500 Urban and 500 Rural) from various high schools in Mysore district were selected. Data was collected using Life Skill Scale(LSS) developed by Anjum Ahamed and Sabaparveen. The results showed significant differences between urban and rural high school students in various dimensions of life skills.

KEYWORDS: *Life skills, High School students, Urban and Rural Students, Descriptive Survey Method, Life Skills Scale.*

INTRODUCTION:

Life skills are rooted in psychosocial skills, where psycho refers to the skills of dealing with cognitive processes and social skills means the skills to deal with other people in the society.(WHO 1999).Children's develop in multifaceted settings and are susceptible to threat and life skills enables the individuals to deal with such threats and make better decisions life skills as an ability to explore different styles of taking action in different scenarios.(UNICEF 2012).

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.

For the implementation of life skills intervention programs for high school students, it is very much necessary to first assess the presence of life skills and its dimensions. Hence, the present research study emphasizes the assessment of life skills among high school students.

Aradhana Gokhale,(2016)conducted a study of life skills among secondary school students,helps in the formation of a sound personality in the child. School education can broadly be classified as elementary (class I to VIII) and secondary (IX-XII) education. Today, moreover societal pressures, greater complexity, uncertainty and diversity, rapid changes in the environment and continued deprivation put student's lives facing an uncertain future. Life skills became essential for students. Life skills are psychosocial competencies and contribute greatly to achieving psychological, social and mental well-being. WHO and UNICEF listed 10 skills as the most essential.

Agadi S. & Kulsum U. (2021) conducted a study to assess life skills among secondary school students in Karnataka. The study aimed to identify significant differences in life skills based on gender, age, school type, family type, locality, religion, and socio- economic status. A sample of 1,120 high school students was selected using a stratified random sampling method. The results revealed significant differences in life skills based on gender, age, family type, locality, and 40 school types. The study found that girls had higher life skills than boys, and students from rural areas had higher life skills than those from urban areas.

RESEARCH METHOD:

Objective of the Study: To examine the Urban and Rural differences in various dimensions of life skills, including Self-awareness, Empathy, Critical thinking, Decision making, Problem solving, Effective communication, Creative thinking, Interpersonal relationships, Coping with stress and Coping with emotion.

Hypothesis: There is a significant difference between Urban and Rural students in various dimensions of life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, and coping with emotion.

Variables:

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

Dependent Variable: 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 (2021) was 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 was recorded based on the information provided in the personal information schedule designed by the researcher.

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

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

Domicile: The Domicile (Urban and Rural) of the students was recorded based on the responses of the students given in the Personal Information Schedule.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

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

- **Survey Method:** A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on the life skills of high school students.
- **Questionnaires:** Standardized life skills scales were administered to the students to quantify their

levels of life skills across various dimensions.

Sample:

The present study involved a total of 1000 high school students from Mysore district, ensuring an equal representation of 500 Urban and 500 Rural. 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 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.

MATERIALS:

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:

Step1: 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.

Step2: 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.

Step3: 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.

Step4: 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 the self 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 Urban and 500 Rural) 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.

Step5: 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 recalculated 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 was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to interpret the data:

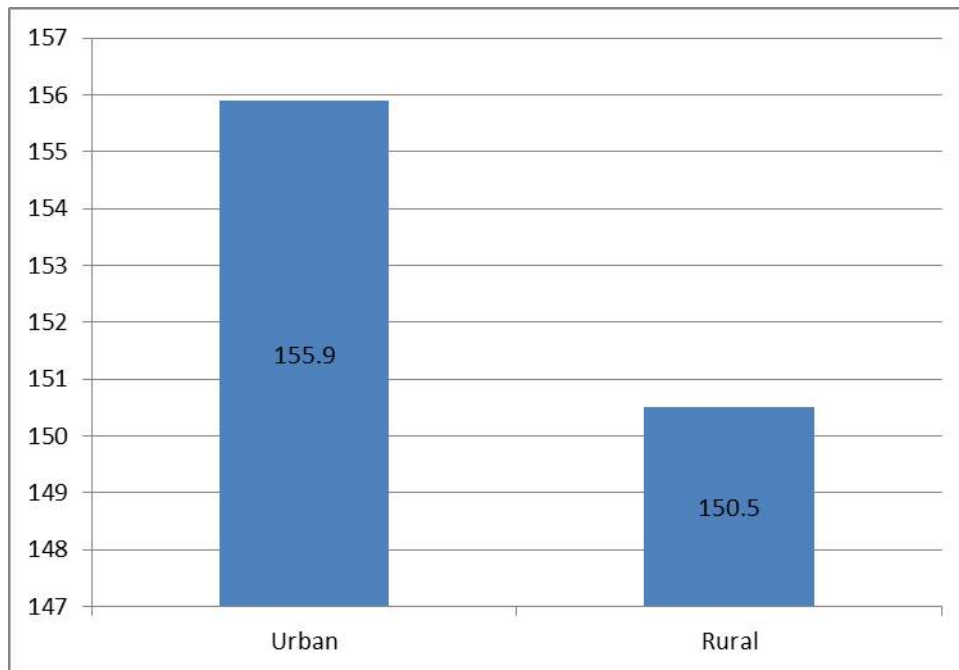
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Measures such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were used to summarize the data.
- **Inferential Statistics:** T-tests, ANOVA, and other relevant statistical tests were applied to examine differences in life skills between Urban and Rural students and 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 domicile based differences.

Table Shows the N, Mean, Standard Deviation and t ratio on difference on life skills between students from urban and rural areas

Group		A total Scores on Lifeskills				
		N	Mean	SD	t	p
A total Scores on Life Skills	Urban	500	155.9	13.37	6.26	.001
	Rural	500	150.5	13.75		
	Total	1000				

Graph shows the mean score difference on lifes kills between students from urban and rural areas



To examine H₄: There is a significant difference in overall life skill levels between students from urban and rural areas , an independent samples t-test was conducted. The descriptive statistics, including the sample size (N), mean, standard deviation (SD), and the t- ratio, are presented in Table.

There is a significant difference between urban and rural students in various dimensions of life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, and coping with emotion.

The findings of this study align with previous research indicating that urban students often demonstrate higher life skills compared to their rural counterparts due to various socio-environmental factors. Studies have consistently shown that urban environments provide greater exposure to diverse experiences, better access to educational resources, and enhanced opportunities for social interaction, all of which contribute to stronger life skills development (Arnett, 2015; Bandura, 1997). For instance, research by Ghosh and Basu (2020) found that students in urban settings benefited from structured life skills training programs, which helped them develop essential competencies such as decision-making, critical thinking, and effective communication. Similarly, a study by Singh and Kaur (2018) reported that urban students exhibited stronger interpersonal relationships and problem-solving abilities, attributing these differences to greater participation in extracurricular activities and community engagement initiatives.

Conversely, some studies have presented contradictory findings, suggesting that rural students may possess comparable or even superior life skills in certain areas. Research by Kumar and Devi (2019) highlighted that rural students often demonstrate resilience, self-sufficiency, and adaptability due to their exposure to real-life problem-solving situations in their communities. Furthermore, rural students may have stronger familial bonds and community support networks, which can enhance their coping mechanisms for stress and emotional regulation (Sharma & Patel, 2021). Despite these strengths, rural students may face limitations in terms of formal life skills education and exposure to diverse perspectives, which can result in lower scores in areas such as critical thinking and communication.

The possible reasons for the observed differences between urban and rural students could be attributed to disparities in educational infrastructure, teaching methodologies, and access to technology. Urban schools often integrate modern pedagogical approaches, including experiential learning, digital literacy, and career counseling, which enhance students' overall life skills (World Health Organization,

1997). In contrast, rural schools may rely on traditional rote learning methods with limited emphasis on skills-based education, thereby impacting students' ability to develop competencies such as decision-making and effective communication (UNICEF, 2019). Additionally, cultural

factors may play a role, as urban students are more likely to be exposed to diverse cultural and social experiences, fostering adaptability and interpersonal relationships (Brown, 2016).

In summary, while urban students demonstrate significantly higher life skills in several dimensions, it is crucial to recognize the strengths that rural students possess and implement targeted interventions to bridge the gap. Future research should explore how contextual factors, such as family support, school curricula, and extracurricular opportunities, influence life skills development in both urban and rural settings. Expanding life skills programs in rural schools and leveraging community-based learning initiatives may help address these disparities and promote holistic skill development for all students.

CONCLUSION:

Life skills are essential components for the success of life and individual. In this fast and competitive world a child without life skills cannot compete with others. Life skills can change student's lifestyle hence it is very important to possess life skills. Hence, the present investigation is done to find out the presence of life skills status among high school students in Mysore district. The major findings of the study reveals that significant differences between urban and rural high school students in various dimensions of life skills.

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