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A Study of Life Skills among College Students

H. Emilda Josephine

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Meston College of Education, Royapettah, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Dr. S. Devasahayam Selvakumar

Principal, Meston College of Education, Royapettah, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract:

The growing pace of this modern life possesses enormous demands and challenges on youth. There has been a growing awareness among school and college managements that examination success does not necessarily translate into success in personal and professional life. Many countries are now considering the development of life skills-based education in response to the need to reform traditional education systems which appear to be out of step with the realities and the challenges of modern social and economic life. Life skills are problem-solving behaviours appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs. The aim of this research is to study the Life skills among college students. To carry out this study college students (including male and female) studying in Medicine, Engineering, Education, Arts and Science Colleges were chosen as sample of the study. To assess the Life Skills, Life Skills Inventory by Thangadurai, S. (2012) was used. The investigator collected 498 samples from various colleges. The investigator used random sampling method as the sampling technique. The data were analyzed using the statistical procedures Percentile Analysis and Differential Analysis. The study concluded that there is a significant difference among college students with respect to Gender and Course of study.

Keywords: Life skills, English language proficiency, Communicative competency

1. Introduction

In today's world, there has been a growing awareness among school and college managements that examination success does not necessarily translate into success in personal and professional life. It requires something more than memorizing up textbooks to be a successful doctor, engineer, architect, teacher, manager or entrepreneur. Life skills are problem-solving behaviours appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs. Life skills education approach is an interactive educational methodology that not only focuses on transmitting knowledge, but also aims at shaping attitudes and developing interpersonal skills.. The various types of life skills are Personal Skills, Emotional Skills, Social Skills, Academic Skills, Intellectual Skills, Communication Skills, Motor Skills, Aesthetic Skills, Technical Skills and Managing Skills.

2. Emergence of the Problem

The diversity of cultures and heterogeneity, such as rural and urban, socially disadvantaged, gender differences are crucial pointers towards the fact that each student has different problems of their own and needs different skills to cope up with them, so is their preference for life skills. It would also point out the least preferred life skills needed to be strengthened in order to make every student a whole some personality irrespective of their gender and locality. This in turn would lead to the preparation of better future citizens contributing member of the family, the society and world at large. So, the researcher decided to undertake the present study in order to enhance the life skills of college students.

3. Statement of the Problem

The problem for the study is stated as follow: "A Study of Life Skills among College Students".

4. Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been set in the present study.

1. To find out the levels of Life Skills among college students.
2. To study whether there is any significant difference in Life skills and its dimensions with regard to
 - a. Gender
 - b. Course of Study

5. Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses have been set in the present study.

1. The levels of Life Skills and all its dimensions in total among college students are not high in nature.
2. There is no significant difference between the male and female college students in their life skills in total and all its dimensions.
3. There is no significant difference among the college students studying arts, science, Medicos, engineering and education courses in their life skills in total and all its dimensions.

6. Population and Sample of the Study

The population for the present study consists of students of Medicine, Engineering, Education, Arts and Science Colleges. The investigator has randomly selected students from Medical, Engineering, Education, Arts and Science Colleges. The investigator collected 498 samples from various colleges. The investigator used random sampling method as the sampling technique.

7. Tools Selected for the Present Study

The following tools have been used in this study Life Skills Inventory by Thangadurai, S. (2012). The reliability of the tool is 0.79 by test retest method and the validity of the tool is 0.83. Hence the inventory is highly reliable.

8. Data Collection Procedure

The investigator selected descriptive survey method for the study. The investigator personally visited the selected colleges in Chennai and approached the heads of the respective colleges regarding the data collection which was held from February 2014 to July 2014. After seeking the permission, the researcher explained the tools to the respondents personally. They were requested to answer all the statements in each and every tool and return them promptly to the investigator. The filled-in tools were scored and the data were tabulated for analysis.

9. Statistical Methods Used

The data were analyzed using the statistical procedures Percentile Analysis and Differential Analysis.

- Hypothesis 1

The levels of Life Skills and all its dimensions in total among college students are not high.

Life Skills and its dimensions	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal Skills	96	19.28	332	66.67	70	14.06
Emotional Skills	121	24.30	267	53.61	110	22.09
Social Skills	85	17.07	275	55.22	138	27.71
Academic Skills	115	23.09	235	47.19	148	29.72
Intellectual Skills	109	21.89	245	49.20	144	28.92
Communication Skills	117	23.49	227	45.58	154	30.92
Motor Skills	93	18.67	280	56.22	125	25.10
Aesthetic Skills	67	13.45	379	76.10	52	10.44
Technical Skills	92	18.47	323	64.86	83	16.67
Managing Skills	116	23.29	302	60.64	80	16.06
Total	72	14.46	312	62.65	114	22.89

Table 1: Levels of Life Skills and all its Dimensions in Total among College students

From the above table, it is inferred that 14.46% of the college students are low, 62.65% of them are moderate and 22.89% of them are high in their life skills. 19.28% of the college students are low, 66.67% of them are moderate and 14.06% of them are high in their Personal Skills. 24.30% of the college students are low, 53.61% of them are moderate and 22.09% of them are high in their Emotional Skills. 17.07% of the college students are low, 55.22% of them are moderate and 27.71% of them are high in their Social Skills. 23.09% of the college students are low, 47.19% of them are moderate and 29.72% of them are high in their Academic Skills. 21.89% of the college students are low, 49.20% of them are moderate and 28.92% of them are high in their Intellectual Skills. 23.49% of the college students are low, 45.58% of them are moderate and 30.92% of them are high in their Communication Skills. 18.67% of the college students are low, 56.22% of them are moderate and 25.10% of them are high in their Motor Skills. 13.45% of the college students are low, 76.10% of them are moderate and 10.44% of them are high in their Aesthetic Skills. 18.47% of the college students are low, 64.86% of them are moderate and 16.67% of them are high in their Technical Skills. 23.29% of the college students are low, 60.64% of them are moderate and 16.06% of them are high in their Managing Skills.

- Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the male and female college students in their life skills in total and all its dimensions.

Life Skills and its dimensions	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	LS
Personal Skills	Male	254	78.42	8.95	2.01	S
	Female	244	80.43	9.84		
Emotional Skills	Male	254	72.83	13.55	2.15	S
	Female	244	74.64	14.58		
Social Skills	Male	254	80.23	12.02	2.18	S
	Female	244	82.03	12.77		
Academic Skills	Male	254	80.73	13.20	0.00	NS
	Female	244	80.73	13.19		
Intellectual Skills	Male	254	77.57	12.23	2.37	S
	Female	244	79.99	12.79		
Communication Skills	Male	254	80.69	17.44	2.33	S
	Female	244	82.16	18.74		
Motor Skills	Male	254	86.46	14.83	0.58	NS
	Female	244	85.68	15.03		
Aesthetic Skills	Male	254	80.90	16.42	2.19	S
	Female	244	82.17	15.43		
Technical Skills	Male	254	77.48	9.83	0.42	NS
	Female	244	77.09	10.70		
Managing Skills	Male	254	84.54	11.58	1.24	NS
	Female	244	83.25	11.61		
Total	Male	254	799.85	107.93	2.27	S
	Female	244	817.17	113.73		

Table 2: Difference in the Life Skills of College Students in Total and all its Dimensions with regard to Gender
(Table value is 1.96 for 496 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance)

From the above table, it is inferred that the calculated 't' values are greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected, with regard to life skills in total and its dimensions – Personal Skills, Emotional Skills, Social Skills, Intellectual Skills, Communication Skills and Aesthetic Skills. Hence, "There is significant difference between the male and female college students in their life skills in total and its dimensions – Personal Skills, Emotional Skills, Social Skills, Intellectual Skills, Communication Skills and Aesthetic Skills". While comparing the mean scores, the female college students are found better in their life skills in total and its dimensions – Personal Skills, Emotional Skills, Social Skills, Intellectual Skills, Communication Skills and Aesthetic Skills.

It is inferred that the calculated 't' values are lesser than the table value, the null hypothesis is accepted with regard to Academic Skills, Motor Skills, Technical Skills and Managing Skills. Hence, "There is no significant difference between the male and female college students in their Academic Skills, Motor Skills Technical Skills and Managing Skills".

- Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference among the college students studying arts, science, Medicos, engineering and education courses in their life skills in total and all its dimensions.

Life Skills and its dimensions	Course of Study	Mean	SSb	SSw	Calculated 'F' Value	Remark
Personal Skills	Arts	78.92	927.95	43447.50	3.93	S
	Science	79.26				
	Medicos	82.55				
	Engineering	77.58				
	Education	76.82				
Emotional Skills	Arts	71.82	2017.36	97084.22	3.29	S
	Science	72.22				
	Medicos	80.14				
	Engineering	73.55				
	Education	70.31				
Social Skills	Arts	79.99	1011.63	75460.88	3.16	S
	Science	79.99				
	Medicos	83.98				
	Engineering	80.27				

Life Skills and its dimensions	Course of Study	Mean	SSb	SSw	Calculated 'F' Value	Remark
Academic Skills	Education	77.31	1132.24	85767.71	3.91	S
	Arts	80.20				
	Science	80.57				
	Medicos	84.18				
	Engineering	81.53				
Intellectual Skills	Education	78.16	1457.77	77183.04	3.73	S
	Arts	77.49				
	Science	77.86				
	Medicos	79.43				
	Engineering	77.60				
Communication Skills	Education	79.78	3836.34	160509.70	2.41	S
	Arts	85.81				
	Science	79.82				
	Medicos	83.72				
	Engineering	80.96				
Motor Skills	Education	76.57	1825.19	109811.06	2.93	S
	Arts	86.06				
	Science	86.01				
	Medicos	92.01				
	Engineering	86.06				
Aesthetic Skills	Education	82.96	1493.23	125524.25	2.48	S
	Arts	84.74				
	Science	80.90				
	Medicos	82.27				
	Engineering	81.63				
Technical Skills	Education	78.59	1376.78	51956.41	2.89	S
	Arts	77.06				
	Science	77.83				
	Medicos	78.38				
	Engineering	80.05				
Managing Skills	Education	75.20	1373.90	66481.03	2.69	S
	Arts	83.77				
	Science	89.03				
	Medicos	84.78				
	Engineering	84.31				
Total	Education	81.55	56166.28	6034705.50	3.15	S
	Arts	795.85				
	Science	798.48				
	Medicos	834.43				
	Engineering	800.55				
	Education	773.25				

Table 3: Difference in the Life Skills of College Students in Total and all its Dimensions with regard to Course of Study
(Table value is 2.39 for 4, 493 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance)

From the above table, it is inferred that the calculated 'F' values are greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected, with regard to life skills in total and all its dimensions. Hence, "There is significant difference among the college students studying arts, science, medicos, engineering and education courses in their life skills in total and all its dimensions". While comparing the mean scores, the medicos are found better in their life skills in total and all its dimensions.

10. Major Findings of the Study

1. The levels of Life Skills and all its dimensions in total among college students are moderate in nature.
2. The female college students are found better in their life skills in total and its dimensions – Personal Skills, Emotional Skills, Social Skills, Intellectual Skills, Communication Skills and Aesthetic Skills.
3. The medicos are found better in their life skills in total and all its dimensions. It is generally spoken that the medicos may have wide range of opportunities in interacting with several people belong to different social as well as economic status while they enter into the hospital campus for their medical needs.

11. Educational Implications

The important goals of the life skills approach are to enhance young people's abilities to take responsibility for making healthier choices, resisting negative pressures and avoiding risk behaviour. The biggest adjustment for college students is the increase responsibility. There is a greater need to multi-task and balance and be a part in a myriad of new social challenges and responsibilities. It is important for students to speak for themselves in an assertive manner that is not aggressive or passively allowing others to take advantage of them. It demands roommate communication, study groups, teams and conflict resolution. It also involves learning and practicing healthy boundaries. It requires developing mature interpersonal relationships which serves as a previous experience for their work later. Students have to feel that sense of belonging. They need to develop confidence in their relationship with peers, strong social networks and similar forms of social interaction that signify peer acceptance. Participation in clubs and organizations and establishment with roommates and others in the living unit gives the person feedback how to fit into the peer environment.

12. Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations.

1. This study was limited to the under graduates only.
2. Only ten types of life skills are considered for the present study.
3. The sample was restricted to 498 students only.
4. The psychological aspects like motivation, attention, interest is beyond the capacity of the investigator.

13. Suggestions for Further Studies

The investigator would like to suggest the following research topics for further investigation.

1. A comparable study can be conducted in a true experimental environment.
2. The same study can be conducted on the other districts of Tamil Nadu.
3. A study on interpersonal skills of college students can be conducted.

14. Conclusion

This study gives an overall picture of the thesis work related to life skills among college students, which consists of the major findings, summaries, suggestions for further research and educational implications of the study which is the goal to be reached. The present study is sure to provide some insight into the field of educational research and the findings of the study can serve as a database for further research.

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