

Life Skills

Predictors of Well-being among School Going Students

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ABSTRACT

Promotion of mental health includes the growth of psychological resources including improvement in quality of life, preventing mental disorders and increasing satisfaction and happiness. In today's world of stress and competition, students are required to imbibe some kind of skills, which can enhance their well-being and mental health and enable them to adapt and get the right direction in life. Well-being for life lies in feeling comfortable, healthy and happy. Present study takes into account the role of life skills in predicting well-being among adolescents. A group of 300 adolescents with an age range of 12-16 years from a CBSE affiliated school of Kaithal district in Haryana formed the sample of study. Tools used for present study were Life Skills Assessment Scale and Well-being Manifestation Scale. Results of the study showed high correlation between well-being and different components of life skills. The regression analysis of data showed that different variables of life skills were significant predictors of well-being of students. The study has implications in terms of organising programmes on training of life skills for students in schools. The study also emphasises on the development of modules of life skills for adolescents.

Keywords: Life Skills, well-being and adolescents.

सार

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को बढ़ावा देने हेतु जीवन की गुणवत्ता में सुधार, मानसिक विकारों का निवारण, संतुष्टि और खुशी में वृद्धि सहित अन्य मनोवैज्ञानिक संसाधनों का समावेश आवश्यक है। आज के तनाव और प्रतिस्पर्धा की दुनिया में, छात्रों को कौशलों को आत्मसात करने की आवश्यकता होती है, जो उनके कल्याण और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को बढ़ा सकते हैं और उन्हें जीवन में सही दिशा प्राप्त करने में सहायक होते हैं। स्वस्थ जीवन के लिए आराम

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और प्रसन्न महसूस करना आवश्यक है। वर्तमान अध्ययन किशोरों के जीवन कल्याण की भविष्यवाणी करने में जीवन कौशलों की भूमिका पर केंद्रित है। हरियाणा में कैथल जिले के एक सी.बी.एस.ई. (CBSE) संबद्ध विद्यालय से 12-16 वर्ष की आयु सीमा के 300 किशोरों के एक समूह ने अध्ययन में भाग लिया। वर्तमान अध्ययन के लिए लाइफ स्किलस असेसमेंट स्केल और वेल-बीइंग मैनिफेस्टेशन स्केल नामक उपकरणों का उपयोग किया गया। अध्ययन के परिणामों में जीवन कौशल के विभिन्न घटकों और कल्याण के बीच उच्च सहसंबंध पाया गया। प्रदत्त के प्रतिगमन विश्लेषण से पता चला कि जीवन कौशल के विभिन्न चरों का छात्रों के कल्याण में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है। प्रस्तुत अध्ययन विद्यालयों में छात्रों के लिए जीवन कौशलों के प्रशिक्षण हेतु कार्यक्रमों के आयोजन की सिफारिश करता है। यह अध्ययन किशोरों के लिए जीवन कौशलों के मॉड्यूल के विकास पर भी जोर देता है।

Introduction

Young people represent the future of the country. The parents, teachers, and all others concerned try to inculcate confidence, values, health, happiness and many more positive traits among them. But what we consider a source of happiness and good mental health for our young ones like unconditional love, good grades, and fulfilling their wishes may not be enough. Therefore, the efforts need to be made to capitalise the strengths of this period and foster positive attributes among them. Efforts are required for strengthening of psychological resources including awareness about self, improvement in quality of life by developing critical and creative thinking, preventing mental disorders by dealing with stressful situations of life with interpersonal skills and effective communication skills and eventually leading to satisfaction and happiness in life.

Well-being is a multi-dimensional concept, extended and context specific too. It is as outstretched as livability, abundance, social support, community credential, social adherence and the interception of mental ailment. It has functional utility and is a crucial element of the World Health Organisation's interest. A state of well-being leads to mental health in which an individual becomes aware of their own potential, can handle normal stresses of life, can work effectively and fruitfully, and is capable to contribute to the community (WHO, 2012). In recent years, evidence point out to the pivot determinants of young one's well-being like adult-child relationships, a positive self-esteem, a sense of belonging, opportunities in given responsibilities and involvement

in decision-making (Bernard, Stephanou, and Urbach, 2007; Eckersley, 2008).

A positive behaviour that encompasses a mix of knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and values and designates the possession of certain skills and know-how to do something positively, or reach a goal is referred to as life skills. Strength of this behaviour depends upon the depth of the skills acquired by the individual. Over the past few years, educators and policy makers are giving considerable emphasis on life skill training programmes as a potential tool to nourish young people for a successful and happy life in this fast changing and a globalised world. There is an ever growing urgency for life skill training to help youth to manage smooth transitions in different strata of life like home to school, school to work and managing personal life events, etc. Life skills are instilled as a product of formative churning of knowledge, impressions, encounters and experiences at both phases individual as well as social. They are part of one's day to day life and work. Life skills are in continuous evolution in both the individual contexts of personal and that of the economic, social or cultural. World Health Organisation has given a list of ten life skills that are the core of skill dependent resourcefulness to promote the health and well-being of children and adolescents. Ten core life skills, according to World Health Organisation (1996) are— self awareness, empathy, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, coping with stress, and coping with emotions.

Life skills education is an emerging area of scientific study. They are essentially those abilities that help in promoting well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. For young people, life skills are the abilities which prepare them to deal with age and experience appropriate challenges. In view of the role of life skills as an important factor in enhancing well-being, the present study investigated the relationship of different variables of life skills with well-being. It also analysed the role of life skills in predicting well-being among school going students.

Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with the following objectives.

- To examine the relationship between well-being and various dimensions of life skills.

- To study the possible role of dimensions of life skills in determining well-being.

Method

Sample

In this study, a sample of total 300 students studying in Classes VII, VIII, IX and X was selected from CBSE affiliated Public Schools of Haryana situated at district Kaithal. The age range of the students varied from 12 to 16 years.

Tools

The following tools were used to collect the requisite data for the study:

1. *Well-being Manifestation Measure Scale (WBMMS)*: This scale was developed by Masse, Poulin, Dassa, Lambart, Belair and Battaglini in 1998. The scale includes 25 items having six factors. It is a five point rating scale from 1 to 5. The six factors or subscales of the WBMMS are Control of Self and Events (4 items); Happiness (5 items); Social Involvement (4 items); Self Esteem (4 items); Mental Balance (4 items); and Sociability (4 items). Total score range lies between 25 to 125. The participants respond on a five-point frequency scale (Never, Rarely, Half the Time, Frequently, Always). An overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 for the scale, and a range of 0.71 to 0.85 on the subscales has been reported.
2. *Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS)*: Developed by Nair, Subasree and Ranjan (2010), this scale consists of 100 items measuring 10 dimensions of life skills, viz. Self-Awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationships, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Coping with emotions, Coping with Stress. Each item is responded on the 5-point scale. It has both positive and negative items. Items are scored individually as well a global score of life skills. Split-half reliability of scale is found to be 0.82. The final summated scale had a correlation coefficient of 0.84. The criterion validity was established by conducting structured interview with teachers and students on high and low scorers in life skills. The correlation between percentage obtained by each student in each skill and the teacher's judgment on each student were calculated which indicated 89 per cent concurrence.

Procedure

In the initial stage, the participants were contacted in their respective classes and their willingness to participate in the study was obtained. Subjects were first administered Life Skills Assessment Scale and thereafter Well-being Scale was administered to them. All subjects were assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

Results and Discussion

The coefficients of correlations were computed to study the relationship of wellbeing with different variables of life skills using Pearson Product Moment method. In order to have a prudent picture of contributions of different dimensions as the predictors of well-being, step-wise multiple regression analysis was done.

The correlations are shown in Table 1. A careful analysis of Table 1 depicts significant positive correlation between well-being with Self Awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationships, Creative Thinking, Critical thinking, Decision Making, Problem solving, Coping with Emotions, Coping with Stress and Global scores of life skills.

Table 1: Correlation of Well-being with Life Skills

Life Skills	Well-being						
	Self Esteem	Mental Balance	Social Involvement	Sociability	Control of Self & Events	Happiness	Overall Well-being
Self Awareness	0.19**	0.19**	0.19**	0.22**	0.28**	0.17**	0.29**
Empathy	0.08	0.18**	0.20**	0.15**	0.20**	0.09	0.21**
Effective Communication	0.15**	0.08	0.16**	0.09	0.14*	0.12*	0.17**
Interpersonal Relationships	0.27**	0.11*	0.21**	0.20**	0.18**	0.18**	0.27**
Creative Thinking	0.12*	0.15**	0.17**	0.16**	0.23**	0.11*	0.22**
Critical Thinking	0.24**	0.28**	0.30**	0.26**	0.36**	0.18**	0.38**
Decision making	0.23**	0.18**	0.28**	0.11*	0.27**	0.13*	0.27**

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Problem Solving	0.22**	0.23**	0.24**	0.22**	0.32**	0.20**	0.34**
Coping with Emotions	0.12*	0.16**	0.19**	0.18**	0.15**	0.16**	0.23**
Coping with Stress	0.16*	0.04	0.13*	0.03	0.09	0.13*	0.14*
Global Score	0.33**	0.29**	0.36**	0.31**	0.41**	0.28**	0.47**

N=300, **p<0.01,*p<0.05

The significant correlations between Well-being and life skills ranged from 0.11–0.47. Results revealed that self awareness was positively related to self esteem, mental balance and social involvement ($r=0.19$), sociability ($r=0.22$), control of self and events ($r=0.19$) and happiness ($r=0.17$). The results depicted that empathy was associated positively with mental balance ($r=0.18$), social involvement ($r=0.20$), sociability ($r=0.15$), control of self and events ($r=0.20$). Another dimension of life skills, i.e., effective communication was also significantly positively related to self esteem ($r=0.15$), social involvement ($r=0.16$), control of self & events ($r=0.17$) and happiness ($r=0.12$). Similarly various dimensions such as interpersonal relationships, creative thinking, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and coping with emotions were also significantly positively related to different dimensions of well-being. However coping with stress was significantly positively correlated to self esteem, mental balance, social involvement and happiness but not significantly correlated to sociability and control of self and events. The results revealed that life skills were positively associated with well-being.

The global life skills score was positively related to self esteem ($r=0.33$), mental balance ($r=0.29$), social involvement ($r=0.36$), sociability ($r=0.31$), control of self and events ($r=0.41$), happiness ($r=0.28$) and overall well-being ($r=0.47$). Thus, results showed that adolescents' life skills are positively related to their well-being.

Although correlation is very useful statistical tool for observing the associations between the variables, yet it does not serve any information regarding the predictors of variables. The step wise regression was used, while taking Well-being as dependent variable and different dimensions of life skills viz. Self Awareness, Empathy, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Relationships, Creative Thinking, Critical thinking, Decision Making, Problem solving,

Coping with Emotions Coping with Stress as independent variables. Table 2 shows the results of stepwise regression analyses.

Table: 2 Predictors of Well-being as Shown by Stepwise Multiple Regression

Step	Predictor Variables	Multiple R	R ²	B	F Value
	Coping with Stress	0.14	0.02	0.14	6.35
	Effective Communication	0.17	0.03	0.17	9.84*
	Empathy	0.21	0.04	0.21	14.58**
	Creative Thinking	0.22	0.05	0.22	15.64**
	Coping with Emotions	0.23	0.05	0.23	17.00**
	Interpersonal Relationships	0.27	0.07	0.27	24.71**
	Decision making	0.27	0.07	0.27	23.67**
	Self Awareness	0.29	0.08	0.29	28.99**
	Problem Solving	0.34	0.11	0.34	38.93**
	Critical Thinking	0.38	0.14	0.38	50.76**

N=300, *p<0.05,**p<0.001

It is apparent from Table 2, that there are nine significant predictors of well-being with an overall multiple R of 0.38. Critical Thinking multiple R for predictor is 0.38 and R²=0.14 (F= 50.76, p<.001), which means that critical thinking has contributed for 14 per cent of variance in well-being. Likewise, Problem solving is another factor, contributed for 11 per cent, Self awareness has contributed (8 per cent), Decision making and Interpersonal relationship contributed (7 per cent, each) and creative thinking and coping with emotions contributed (5 per cent each), Empathy contributed (4 per cent) and Effective communication contributed respectively 3 per cent to well-being. Composite contributions of these variables were found to be 66 per cent of variance in wellbeing. However, well-being was not significantly influenced by coping with stress dimension of life skills.

The results of the present study have found support from other studies (e.g., Holopainen, Lappalainen, Junntila and Savolainen, 2012; Haji, Mohammadakhani and Hatami, 2011; Nair, Ravindranath, and Thomas, 2013; Seth and Sharma, 2017).

Conclusion

The concept of Well-being is multidimensional and is generally connected to the notions of health, happiness and life satisfaction. According to the World Happiness Index, India is at 140th Position out of 156 countries (Helliwell, Layard and Sachs, 2019). This report clearly represents the grave situation as it is the clear indicator of mental health of our country. Due to increasing complexities in modern societies, emphasis is given more on preventive approach to mental health. Most of the risk taking behaviors and psychological problems among children and adolescents emerge during adolescent period which can be preventable through universal preventive programs and promotion of school mental health programs. Promoting competencies has the potential to prevent high risk behaviours, psychological problems and enhance resilience among the children and adolescents. The present study drives the focus on life skills as predictors of well-being among adolescents. It draws attention of mental health professionals, psychologists and policy makers to work on life skills of adolescents for enhancing their wellbeing and mental health. Since the individual rather than the system is recognized as the basic unit of the society, it is essential and a must to help adolescents to develop skills to handle a wide variety of choices, challenges and stressors in their lives and work towards better health. Life skills education programs in schools, colleges and universities are essential measures to assist our young ones to develop a more healthy and positive approach for life. It is a recommended tool, which has to be implemented at policy level with more firm actions.

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