

## Examining the Relationship between Life Skills and Mental Health among Higher Secondary School Students.

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### ABSTRACT

*The tremendous and accelerating advances of modern sciences and technology have led to unprecedented progress and problems. Wherever we look, we see the world changing with incredible rapidity and established customs, traditions, and values changing with it. Indeed, one of the major problems today is the constant adjustment individual must keep making to rapidly changing conditions and to change itself. For efficient functioning of the individual, he should not only possess sound bodily health but sound mental health also. But, unfortunately it is startling to note that mental illness incapacitates more people than all other health problems together. Not only have mental health hazards significantly increased in number and complexity, but these have also affected the physical efficiency of individual. So, mental health is now recognized as an important aspect of an individual's total development. Lack of friendliness on the part of teachers, over emphasis on school marks, teacher's partiality, fear of failure, excess homework, heavy curriculum etc. cause mental tension and anxiety in children.*

*Facilitating the learning of life skills is a central component of programmes designed to promote healthy behavior and mental well-being. To be effective, the teachings of life skills are coupled with the teaching of health information and the promotion of positive attitudes and values. Life skills are essential for the promotion of healthy child and adolescent development. Life skills are the common every day skills we need to manage our life effectively and cope with life challenges. Since we are not born with instruction manuals about life, and formal schooling focuses much more on academics than personal adjustment, learning life skill is essential to developing our emotional intelligence, resilience, work- life balance and much more. So, this paper is intended to explore the relationship between life-skills and mental health.*

**Keywords:** *Life Skills, Mental Health, Higher Secondary School Students*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors that help people live well and successfully is to know and feel good about themselves. The main aim of the life is to establish adjustment with the changes that continuously go on in the environment. In order to achieve this objective it is necessary to have an integrated and balanced personality, every individual tries to solve the complications of his circumstances in his own way. Sometimes he achieves success and sometimes he gets failure. When he is faced with failure, frustration develops in him. Thus, personalities that are not able to tolerate and face frustration develop complexes in their unconscious minds. This leads to disintegration and misbalancing of the personality. In order to keep the mind and the body free from ailment it is necessary to have sufficient life skills.

A person who possesses the qualifications such as balance, consistency, content, uniformity, adaptability and efficiency shall be able to possess a balanced and integrated personality. A person endowed with these qualifications can mould himself according to the requirements of time, place and environment. To acquire a balanced personality, definitely one can have enough life skills such as decision making skill, problem solving skill, stress management skill etc.

Students in today's world countenance many forces, and problems. They require skills to successfully face off the life challenges of youth as well as those that appear later in adulthood. According to the World Health Organization, 'Life skills are a group of Psycho-social competencies and interpersonal skills that help people to make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, build healthy and productive manner. These skills have an effect on the ability of young people to protect themselves from health issues, build competencies to adopt positive behaviours, and further healthy relationships.

Life skills are the most beneficial and challenging things in everyday life, it creates an ability that helps us to adapt and behave positively in particular situations. It will enhance the well-being of individual and it promotes positive outlook and healthy behavior.

With regard to the ever-increasing changes and complexities of the society and development of social relations, it deems necessary to prepare the individuals, especially, the young generation for facing difficult situations. So, many national and international organizations have commenced teaching life skills in schools throughout the world in order to prevent mental diseases and social abnormalities. In the case

of students, life skills are the most beneficial things because it will help them to boost up their knowledge, skills, attitude and effective communication, risk free behavior, develop their full potential and promoting the Psycho-Social well-being.

Now a day, one of the most important indicators of development in all countries is the health level of the community. Mental health is the individual's mental capacity to effectively, harmoniously, pleasantly and flexibly operate in difficult situations and to maintain a balance. Those who possess adequate life skills can definitely maintain a well-adjusted balance personality. In this context, it is necessary to examine the life skills of higher secondary school students and its effect on their mental health.

### **Why Mental Health**

Mental hygiene means the balanced and integrated development of the personality. A person who possesses the qualifications such as balance, consistency, content, uniformity, adaptability and efficiency shall be said to possess a balanced and integrated personality. For healthy personality all these qualifications are necessary. A person endowed with these qualifications can mould himself according to the requirements of time, place and environment. He can be successful member of the society. Here lays the importance of life skills based hygiene education.

It focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills that support people/children in taking a greater responsibility for their own lives.

It helps children to acquire and practice good health behaviors along with the underlying knowledge and positive attitudes.

It also helps children to develop and strengthen their general interpersonal and psycho social capabilities or life skills. Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and the challenges of life.

Good health and well-being is possible by adopting a variety of strategies like providing motivations, support and necessary skills.

It will help us in molding a person free from all types of mental ailments and achieve an optimum state of health. It is therefore very essential to give life skill education to the individuals.

To be effective, the teachings of life skills are coupled with the teaching of health information and the promotion of positive attitudes and values. Life skills are essential for the promotion of healthy child and adolescent development.

Life skills are the common every day skills we need to manage our life effectively and cope with life challenges. Since we are not born with instruction manuals about life, and formal schooling focuses much more on academics than personal adjustment, learning life skill is essential to developing our emotional intelligence, resilience, work- life balance and much more.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study has been designed to attain the following objectives

- ❶ To determine gender differences on life skills.
- ❷ To determine gender differences on mental health.
- ❸ To find out the relationship between life skills and mental health for the total sample and sub-samples based on gender.

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The following are the major hypotheses formulated for the present study

- ❶ There is no significant differences in mean scores of males and females for the variable life skills and mental health.
- ❷ There is significant positive relationship between life skills and mental health for the total sample and the relevant Sub-Sample.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In the present study, the investigator adopted survey method for collecting the data. Two hundred students (100 boys and 100 girls) in the age group of 16-18 years were selected by using random sampling method. Two Co-educational higher secondary schools were selected to cover both the sexes.

For collecting the required data, life skill Rating scale and General Mental Health questionnaire were constructed. Like skill rating scale was a Likert type five point rating scale. Each skill was measurement through 4 items. The scale was validated by experts. The test- retest reliability(0.8) was found out.

General Mental Health questionnaire consist of eight categories including Stress, Sensitivity, Aggression, Depression, Bipolar disorder, Anxiety, Attitude and Phobia. Each item was measured through 5

questions. The tool was validated by experts. The tool consists of 40 items covering eight aspects related to mental health.

## PROCEDURE

The tools were administered to all the participants by the researcher in two consecutive sessions. The purpose of the study was explained to the students and they were encouraged to give honest responses. The responses were analyzed quantitatively to obtain results.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained are represented in tables and discussed under each sub head of the study.

### 1. Gender difference on life skills

**Table 1: Gender differences on the Life Skills**

LIFE SKILLS				
	No	Mean	SD	t- Value
Males	100	115.43	36.95	0.489
Females	100	112.92	35.59	

Table 1 shows that the computed value of 't' is less than the table value. Hence it is not significant, consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted and it can be said that, there is no significant difference between the life skills mean scores of Higher Secondary Student with respect to Gender.

### 2. Gender difference on Mental Health

**Table 2: Gender difference on Mental Health**

MENTAL HEALTH				
	No	Mean	SD	t- Value
Male	100	141.38	57.50	-.329
Female	100	144.07	58.02	

Table 2 shows gender differences on mental health scale. It can be seen that the mean score for male is higher than female, but the t-value shows that there is no significant difference between the Mental Health score of Males and Females. So the hypothesis is accepted.

### 3. Correlation between Mental health and life skills for the total sample.

**Table 3: Correlation between life skills and mental health for the total sample**

Sl. No	Variables	No	r	t- value	Level of Significance
1.	Life skills	200	0.76	16.45	P< 0.01
2.	Mental health				

Table 3 indicates that a significant positive high correlation between mental health and life skills. The result indicates that those who have higher level life skills also have higher level mental health and vice versa.

**Table 4: Correlation between life skills and mental health for the sub- sample**

Sl. No	Sub-Sample	N	Variables	r	t- value	Level of Significance
1.	Boys	100	Mental Health and Life Skill	0.80	13.2	P< 0.01
2.	Girls	100	Mental Health and Life Skill	0.73	10.58	P<0.01

Table 4 depicts, the obtained table value for boys and girls are 0.80 and 0.73 respectively, which indicate high correlation between life skills and mental health of boys and girls.

The present study reveals the relation between life skills and mental health of higher secondary school students. On the basis of the findings of the study, measures should be taken to improve life skills among students. Students with better life skills can have a better mental health. It also enables them to

analyze their capacity to enhance the function in a most productive way. Life skill education allows the youth to get along with other people, able to adjust with their environment and make responsible decision. It also incorporate to build up their values and to communicate effectively.

### STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS

Effective school health programme should be organized that follow the newly evolved framework for skill based mental health education that would enable students to acquire the requisite knowledge and develop attitude, values, Life Skills and services needed to live an adjusted life and to avoid health hazards. Usually the following techniques and strategies are to be adopted to inculcate life skills.

- Organize co-curricular activities
- Quiz Competition
- Group Discussion
- Role Play
- Case Studies
- Simulation
- Poster Competition
- Brainstorming session etc.

In addition to this, Health related awareness programme should be organized and also a detailed curriculum has to be framed where mental health related issues are given due emphasize.

The school can play a major role in the preservation and promotion of Mental Health of the children. It must provide a suitable emotional, intellectual and Physical environment in which a child may have the feeling of security and the feeling of belongingness. He should feel that his personality is given its due recognition.

### CONCLUSION

Life skills help individual to understand more about themselves, their characteristics, needs, desires, goals, weaknesses, strengths, passions, values and identity. Life skills are the ways and means of keeping a person intellectually healthy. For proper mental health, it is necessary to have suitable environment, which is possible through life skill education. In the broadest sense, the aim of life skills is to assist every individual in the attainment of fuller, happier, more harmonious and more effective existence.

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