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## **A Study on Awareness of Life Skills among Postgraduate Indian Students with Special Reference to Management and Commerce Education in Gwalior Region**

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### **Abstract:**

A life skill is an aptitude that allows a person to change his/her behaviour to meet the needs and demands judiciously and also can deal with obstacles or challenges of life successfully. Life skills encourage an individual's healthy, productive, and positive growth. They also create moral and ethical maturity and improve psycho-social abilities. In various aspects of life, life skills have evolved into the essential salt and pepper. The importance of life skills in education has evolved into the core of the teaching and learning process. The goal of current study is to evaluate post graduates' understanding of life skills in relation to some demographic factors.

**Keywords:** Mental health, aptitude, coping with stress, trauma, and loss; problem-solving; decision-making, effective communication, empathy.

### **Introduction:**

Education informs pupils, giving them the tools required to lead happier and more fulfilling lives. Due to the globalisation of education, it is crucial to include life skills in the teaching and learning process for the long-term development of both students and teachers. Despite the socio-economic and political systems of democratic India's diverse culture, all share well-defined and common goals. Teachers must themselves be updated with life skills that can further provide this knowledge to the students keeping in mind how quickly a need can arise for a person to adapt with the changing society. Teaching life skills to children will increase positive

choices in their lives by identifying hidden talents and interests which will further help them in making better and more informed life decisions. From the start of life to the end, an individual will always be influenced and supported for improvement by the experience of life skills learned in schools or colleges. According to the World Health Organization (WHO; 1997), life skills are the positive and adaptable behavior that gives people the ability to successfully handle the obstacles of daily lives. Social, cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills are the components of life skills, according to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO; 2001).

Life Skills can therefore be defined as the abilities that encourage and support mental health and competence in youngsters as they face and cope up with the realities of life. Most health and development professionals agree that these skills are generally applied in the context of social and health events. In the same context, 50 male students and 50 female students were chosen for this descriptive and quantitative study from the various departments of Prestige Institute of Management and Research, Gwalior, M.P. which is affiliated to Jiwaji University, Gwalior. The study employed a normative survey research methodology. For these 100 post graduates, a tool in the form of a questionnaire with 50 questions was created to assess their awareness of life skills. The tool focused on the five life skill dimensions of problem solving, decision-making, empathy, effective communication, and coping with stress, trauma, and loss. 33 questions from the initial draft of 50 items were kept for the tool's item analysis, which was used to standardize it for data collection.

According to the results of the current study, there are no appreciable differences in post graduate students' knowledge of life skills in terms of gender, age, family type, subjects or streams, or marital status. Integrating life skills into the classroom will inevitably result in a student-centered learning environment in the twenty-first century. By examining the knowledge of life skills among postgraduate students for the effectiveness in the teaching learning process, the current paper demonstrates the role and impact of life skills in changing teaching and learning methodology.

#### **Core Dimensions of Life skills used in the study:**

1. **Problem-solving:** An individual can solve difficulties efficiently and effectively using their problem-solving life skills. Students are capable of settling disputes and even

taking the initiative to do so. The pupils' ability to solve problems helps them get through challenging situations in their daily lives. Students' ability to solve problems leads to an increase in both their critical and creative thinking abilities.

2. **Decision-making:** Decision-making abilities allow a person to select the optimal alternative by balancing the benefits and drawbacks of several options. Decision-making abilities help someone become certain, self-sufficient, assertive, and responsible to handle life's needs and expectations. Positive and constructive choices will be made. Students won't make the best decisions for their own and others' well-being unless they have conducted a thorough assessment, examined all available options, and worked through the consequences.
3. **Effective Communication:** Sharing information, thoughts, sentiments, facts, emotions, and opinions through verbal and nonverbal forms is the notion behind effective communication abilities. A person with effective communication skills can confidently express his or her thoughts, desires, ideals, etc. Effective communication skills can help you establish a good rapport and healthy relationship. It can help develop social relations through engaging encounters. By excellent communication skills, learners can build leadership abilities for the development of their whole personalities.
4. **Empathy:** The capacity and aptitude to accept, help, care for, and comprehend the challenges, conditions, or issues that others confront in their lives is known as empathy. Understanding and recognizing another person's feelings, objectives, desires, and motives, improves one's ability to empathize. Empathy is the ability to reason rationally and accept others' perspectives without bias or qualification.
5. **Overcoming stress, trauma, and loss:** Overcoming stress, trauma, and loss will help a person to cope with such challenging situations in his or her own life as well as the lives of others. To effectively handle any tensions, annoyance, or anxiety brought on by stress and trauma have a positive impact on a person's life. To control the emotions and balance the cognitive level to relax before the situation is helpful. This ability aids in maintaining equilibrium between positive and negative stress and how to handle it using the best ways. Learning how to deal with stress, trauma, and grief is made possible through life skills.

### **Review of Literature:**

The impact of age, gender, and 4-H activity on the development of life skills among kids in the age range of 8 to 18 for a year were studied by Haas et al. (2015). Gender, age, and 4-H involvement all significantly influenced the development of life skills, according to regression analysis. Results showed that the level of competencies of females was higher than that of males at the start of the programme, but that this difference decreased over the course of the year, suggesting changes in the program's designs for better engaging, keeping, and influencing males in the development of life skills.

The evaluation of life skills among 40 nursing students (B.Sc., first year) from nursing institutes in Tamil Nadu was studied by Bhuvaneshwari et al. in 2017. The life skills score was determined using a cross-sectional descriptive survey approach and the standardized life skills assessment instrument. The majority (75%) of them had ordinary level of life skills, while the remaining 25 percent scored poorly. According to the findings, there is no correlation between nursing students' socio demographic characteristics and their scores on life skills.

In order to determine how personal factors affect basic effective life skills in 544 teenagers, 292 girls and 252 boys were randomly chosen for the study by Chakra (2016). The degree of life skills was evaluated using a scale designed by experts and a tool in the form of a questionnaire. The results have showed that birth order, family incomes has influenced significantly the interpersonal relationship dimension of life skills. Core effective life skills are not significantly influenced by family type, the number of siblings, or gender.

Hohendroff (2013) sought to examine the link between social skills, socio-demographic traits, and psychopathology in 50 adolescents aged between 12 and 17 from either a private or public school in Brazil (30 females and 20 boys). Instruments in the form of a social skills inventory, a self-report questionnaire, and tools for assessing socio-demographic variables and psychopathology were created. Findings showed that there was no gender, age, or school type difference in the frequency of social skills and indications of psychopathology.

Haji et al. (2011) looked into how 26 Iranian students' quality of life, happiness, and ability to control their emotions were affected by life skills training. The study was designed as a quasi-experimental study with a control group, pre-test, and post-test. Both the experimental and control groups were subjected to testing using a questionnaire-style tool. ANCOVA and

MANCOVA were used to analyze the data. Results indicated that happiness, emotional control, and quality of life varied significantly depending on social relationships, psychological health, and physical circumstances, but there was no significant variation depending on physical health.

### **Life skills' importance as a factor to success for post graduate students:**

This research shows that while today's youth enjoy pursuing professional education to higher levels, they are not sufficiently prepared to handle the rigors of the outside world. This is due to the fact that the traditional educational system does not teach the life skills necessary for development in today's globalised society. In order to overcome the drawbacks, we should concentrate on providing post graduate students with life skills training. Honesty, assertiveness, motivation, tolerance, self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-awareness, good character, competency, flexibility, responsibility, open mindedness, dignity, self-esteem, interpersonal awareness, sociability, courage, commitment, determination, good interpersonal relations, resiliency, sensibility, adaptability, etc. can be developed among post graduates through the teaching and practicing of life skills.

By the education of post graduates, one can foster their sociability, courage, commitment, determination, good interpersonal relationships, resiliency, sensibility, flexibility, etc.

Despite their high qualifications, they are less effective at their jobs because they struggle with communication, forming strong and positive relationships with others, problem-solving, empathy, decision-making, and coping with stress, grief, and loss, among other things. To help recent graduates handle the transition from college or university to the working sectors and help them become engaged and healthy citizens of the nation, there is a need to raise awareness of the importance of life skills training. Therefore, it is crucial to include life skills in career advisory programmes, after-college activities, and the formal college curriculum. Training in life skills will undoubtedly boost post graduates' economic prospects by increasing their earning capacity.

Through life skills education programmes, learning outcomes can be improved, and postgraduates' capabilities can be strengthened. Life skills will improve student or employer preparation for the workforce and their level of job satisfaction. Youths' attitudes and behavior will change as a result of life skills training programmes, enabling them to confront peer conflict,

teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol misuse, and violent behavior. Youth should receive information about life skills that is particular, intriguing, easy to understand, and exciting. The kids will be better prepared to handle real-world and everyday circumstances by practicing their life skills.

### **Necessity and Importance of the Study**

Students are essential in preparing communities or societies to explore novel vistas and to advance their degree of development, and this is only fully achievable if they are well-versed in life skills. One must first be aware of life skills and their importance in one's personal, social, and professional lives in order to be well-equipped with them. The combination of life skills and teaching methods will undoubtedly lead to the development of the students' desired attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, values, and abilities.

Life skill awareness will lessen bullying, violence, crime, antisocial behavior, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, unplanned pregnancies, peer conflicts, suicidal thoughts, stress, trauma, and other negative behaviors while empowering students to meet challenges and demands in their daily lives. To enhance one's quality of life, life skills awareness is vital. Awareness of life skills will improve one's capacity and disposition to look for and learn more about life skills. The students' ability to transfer their knowledge from the classroom to the actual world will be aided by self-reflection. The current paper is advancement in this direction.

### **Objectives:**

1. To investigate the gender-based significant mean difference in post graduates' awareness of life skills.
2. To investigate the age-related significant mean difference in post graduates' awareness of life skills.
3. To investigate the considerable mean difference in post graduates' understanding of life skills with regard to family type.
4. To investigate the main differences between subjects/streams in post graduates' awareness of life skills.
5. To investigate how postgraduates' levels of life skills awareness fluctuate significantly

depending on their marital status.

### **Hypotheses:**

1. The level of life skills awareness between male and female post graduates does not significantly differ.
2. There are no appreciable differences between post graduates who are under 25, over 25, and equal to 25 in terms of their level of life skills awareness.
3. The understanding of life skills among post graduate students from nuclear and joint families does not significantly differ.
4. There are no appreciable differences between post graduate students in the arts and sciences in terms of their level of life skills awareness.
5. The awareness of life skills between married and single post graduates does not differ significantly.

### **Methodology and Procedure:**

This study employs a normative survey research methodology. The research is quantitative and descriptive. A sample of 100 postgraduate students from Prestige Institute of Management and Research, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh is used in the current study. The investigator used a stratified random sampling approach.

### **Sample**

100 students were enrolled at Prestige Institute of Management and Research, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. 50 male students (25 in the Management course and 25 in the Commerce & Computer Science course) and 50 female students (25 in the Management course and 25 in the Commerce & Computer Science Course) were found.

### **Tools**

The researcher created self-administered, standardized life skills awareness tools. Five life skills—problem solving, decision-making, empathy, effective communication, and coping with stress, trauma, and loss—were the subject of a questionnaire on life skills awareness for Post graduates. 33 questions from the initial draft of 50 items were kept for the tool's item analysis, which was used to standardize it for data collection.

### Statistical procedures

The statistical methods employed in this investigation were the mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

### Results and Interpretations

**Table1: Mean difference in life skills awareness among Post graduates with respect to gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	t	Remarks
Male	50	15.54	5.39	0.76	0.44	Notsignificant at 0.05 level
Female	50	15.04	6.03	0.85		

The t-value testing the significance of mean difference in life skills awareness of male and female post graduates came out to be 0.44 which is not significant at 0.05 levels. This shows that there is no significant mean difference in life skills among post graduates with respect to gender.

**Table 2: Mean difference in life skills awareness among post graduates with respect to age**

Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	t	Remarks
Below25years	80	15.00	5.70	0.64	1.02	Notsignificant at 0.05 level
25yearsandabove	20	16.45	5.65	1.26		

The t-value testing the significance of mean difference in life skills awareness of post graduates below 25 years, 25 years and above 25 years of age came out to be 1.02 which is not significant at 0.05 levels. This shows that there is no significant mean difference in life skills awareness of post graduates with respect to age.

**Table3: Mean difference in life skills awareness among post graduates with respect to family type**

Family type	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t	Remarks
Nuclear	78	15.56	5.84	0.66	0.13	Not significant at 0.05 level
Joint	22	14.32	5.14	1.10		

The t-value testing the significance of mean difference in life skills awareness of post graduates belonging to nuclear and joint family came out to be 0.13 which is not significant at 0.05 levels. This shows that there is no significant mean difference in life skills awareness among post graduates with respect to family type.

**Table 4: Mean difference in life skills awareness between arts and science post graduates (Both are admitted in Management)**

Subjects/Streams	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Mean t	Remarks
Arts	50	16.08	5.69	0.80	1.39	Not significant at 0.05 level
Science	50	14.50	5.65	0.80		

The t-value testing the significance of mean difference in life skills of arts and science post graduates came out to be 1.39 which is not significant at 0.05 levels. This shows that there is

no significant mean difference in life skills awareness among post graduates with respect to Management and Commerce streams.

**Table 5: Mean difference in life skills awareness between married and unmarried post graduates**

Marital Status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	T	Remarks
Married	15	15.60	5.97	1.54	0.22	Notsignificantat 0.05 level
Unmarried	85	15.24	5.68	0.62		

The t-value testing the significance of mean difference in life skills awareness of married and unmarried post graduates came out to be 0.22 which is not significant at 0.05 levels. This shows that there is no significant mean difference in life skills awareness of post graduates with respect to marital status.

**Discussion:**

According to the results of the current study, there are no appreciable differences between post graduate students' levels of life skills awareness and their demographic characteristics. These results are consistent with those of Bhuvaneshwari et al. (2017), Chakra (2016), Hohendroff (2013), and Haji et al (2011). The degree of life skill awareness is unrelated to differences in gender, age, family structure, subjects/streams, and marital status. As a result, the current study concludes that an individual's awareness level is the only factor that influences it. The demographic factors have no bearing on it. So, beginning at a young age, parents and teachers can try to promote and raise children's understanding of life skills. Parents can help their kids gain life skills. Providing children with practical life skills can boost their self-esteem and happiness as they begin nursery or pre-primary school and get them ready for their future. The sustainability of efforts will be ensured by developing life skills education programmes for youth that are pertinent and meaningful by recognizing their needs and demands.

### **Conclusion:**

The teaching and learning method that is focused on life skills will help to improve and develop the educational system. A positive relationship between teachers and students will be fostered by the use of life skills strategies in the teaching and learning process as well as in socially focused activities. The majority of educational institutions are currently putting a strong emphasis on life skills for students' entire development from primary to higher education levels. Students' behaviour, knowledge, attitudes, abilities, and values will change positively as a result of being made aware of the relevance and importance of life skills. This research article aims to investigate the awareness of life skills among post graduate students. Hence, additional research in the field of life skills is required so that they can be transformed to globally competent, responsible and tolerant citizens of our country.

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