

Identification of Elementary School Teachers' Life Skills in District Narowal

Abdul Qayyum Chaudhry*, Khadija Sittar**, Sumaira Munawar*** and Misbah Malik****

Abstract

Life skills are an integral and important component of a successful life of individuals. In order to increase productivity and advancement in life, education must focus on the development and enhancement of potentially up dated life skills in students especially during school years. Teachers can do it efficiently if they have acquired these skills. The aim of the study was to identify life skills of elementary school teachers. The study was quantitative in nature and used survey method. The population of the study was all the elementary school teachers of district Narowal of province Punjab. The sample of the study was 286 elementary school teachers from district Narowal. A questionnaire was developed by the researchers for data collection which contained statements related to life skills i.e. "Self-Awareness", "Empathy", "Interpersonal relationship skills", "Communication", "Critical thinking", "Creative thinking", "Decision making", "Problem solving", "Coping with stress", and "Coping with emotions". Instrument was validated by a pilot study. The reliability index Cronbach alpha was .79. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated. The findings of the study indicated that teachers have acquired most of the life skills. It is suggested to include practical experiences in prevailing curriculum to develop life skills in students in order to develop life skills in students and oppose rigidity in current education system.

Keywords: Life skills, elementary school teachers

*Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: qayyum.ier@pu.edu.pk

**Assistant Professor, The Lahore Leads University, Pakistan.

Email: khadijasittar@gmail.com

***Assistant Professor, The Lahore Leads University, Pakistan.

Email: sumairamunawar16@gmail.com

****Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: misbah.ier@pu.edu.pk

Introduction

Education of life skills is a main focus of successful economies in order to make their men power productive and effective on a practical and strategic level. Life skills are perceived as knowledge, abilities and skills required to render a normal life. According to Adewald (2011) and Papacharisis (2005) through learning experiences education of life skills provides a platform for teaching, practising and reinforcing these skills. Adewald (2011) stated that self-sufficiency and literacy may promote through interpersonal and psychosocial skills often related to health and social issues. Teachers play an important role in the development of life skills. In general, life skills are universal but according to social and cultural norms, it would be relevant. UNICEF (2010) and WHO (1994) stated that for life skill education schools are perceived as a suitable platform because many adolescents and children are operating in a social context. Where many stakeholders, for example, trained teachers, children, adolescents and parents are presented at one place. So, life skills of teachers may trigger stimulation among other stakeholders for the development of life skills.

Arur and DeJaeghere (2019) argued that the only necessary criteria for the development of an institution is skilful and dedicated workforce. A good beginning for learning skills comprised of responsibility and participation of teachers improvising purposeful and well-planned classroom transaction pattern. In order to develop life skills, the best venue might be the meaningful use of co-curricular activities. Planning of classroom and co-curriculum activities are the basic requirements for this purpose. If teachers have competence in life skills than they can deal with the issues related to developing life skills in students, otherwise these life skills issues may become a threat to students' healthy pattern of life. In order to deal effectively through life skills to overcome these issues, mastery is required. The challenges of life and jobs which are faced by students may tackle through life skills effectively. But instead of developing life skills through providing experiences only students are "dumping" with only academic information. Teachers think that academic excellence is the only aim of education because of our teachers' teaching pattern and family pressure. For a meaningful life academic performance is not enough either it has its own credit. Overall development of a citizen is the demand of a meaningful society.

The academic excellence if blended with life skills might contribute effectively. Teachers who them-self have life skills can do this all. In this regard teachers' training is the best venue to empower teachers to develop their own life skills so that they can inculcate these skills in their students. Refresher and orientation programs might be an

integral part to learn/improve life skills immediately. Jarrah (2019) stated that “Let the teacher armed first” what teacher will learn through training allow them to practice. Then wait for a generation healthy both in mind and spirit in future.

Nair (2010) argued that life skill meanings and concept is beyond its definition. In general it is suitable to explain but it is difficult to explain in some particular life situations. It is argued by Goody (2001) that life skills in general can be defined in some specific situations. Life skill may develop as a result of rapid change occurs in one’s life, individual and social experiences in one’s life, impressions, and information processing constructivism. In order to get better results, the education of life skills through self-evaluation, assessment and training in respective area might be effective. In a healthy environment through knowledge, attitudes and values life skills may help individual to improve their skills. With the need and challenges of day to day life practice, attitudes, knowledge and valued into positive behaviour may change through life skill abilities. “A life skills education is one of these interventions that have been adopted and implemented in schools to replace social education and ethics (Fitzpatrick, 2014).

In order to contribute a meaningful life to make healthy choices and decisions with strategies for an individual is the major objective of life skills education. The healthy and meaningful relationships may promote through positive individual actions through life skills education. Life skills have been defined as “*the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life*” (WHO). “*Adaptive*” means that individuals may adjust in different situations, it is a flexible approach. “*Positive behaviour*” means that even in difficult situation a person is forward looking and to find solutions of the problems he can find a ray of hope. In order to peruse individuals’ household and economic goals the resources, capabilities and opportunities are referred as “*Likelihood skills*”. Therefore, livelihood skills are different from life skills (Parvathy & Pillai, 2015).

People manage their lives in a healthy and productive manners through acquiring the life skills of building healthy relationships, problem solving, informed decisions, communication, creativity and help people. Life skills education included these all interpersonal and psychosocial competencies. Related to thinking abilities there are two skills called “thinking skill” which is related to thinking and “social skills” which are related to dealing with others. For making not only rational decisions but make others agree at one point is called “Emotional skills (Ginter, 2011). Self-Awareness recognizing our liking, disliking, strengths and weaknesses included in self-awareness. When we feel under pressure and stressed, developing self- awareness help us to cope with tough situation. Developing empathy with others, making interpersonal relationships and effective communication it works as a prerequisite. Empathy at large scale in society and

our loved ones empathy helps us to make successful relations. A person's desires, needs and feelings may need to understand. "Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person." Our communication without empathy is one-way traffic. We are bound to run into problem while behaving and acting according to our self-interest. There are many relationships like brothers, sisters, neighbours', parents, with them we grow up. Therefore, empathy develops in ourselves through communicate with our desires and needs (Fallahchai, 2012).

Critical Thinking is an ability to analyse information and experiences is called critical thinking. Media, peer pressure, values, attitudes and behaviours are the factors which assessed thorough critical thinking to contribute health. Creative Writing is characterized of four components for doing things in novel ways, for example, fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (Abdullah & Chaudhry, 2018). Decision making about or lives are deal constructively in decision making. It may have some health consequences. It may help people about making decisions of their lives in the light of healthy assessment and also see the effects of these decisions in different ways. Problem Solving is constructive decisions in our lives are taken through problem solving skill. Causes of mental stress left unsolved significantly and physical strain may accomplished to rise. Interpersonal Relations deals with the people we interact in our daily lives. For our mental and social well-being health these relationships have great importance. Interpersonal relationships may help us to keep friendly relationships. Relationship with family members which is a source of social support may develop through interpersonal relations and it also end relations constructive (Lefevre, 2017).

Effective Communication: According to our culture and situations we may able to express ideas and opinions verbally and non-verbally through effective communications (Abdullah, 2019). It may help to discuss desires and opinions, needs and fears and also have solutions to the problems. Coping with Stress recognizing source of stress, their effect and to find out solutions of our stress with changing environment of the society is called coping stress (Abdullah, Raza & Akhtar, 2015). Coping with Emotions could help recognize our behaviours with others and their influence on our behaviours. Behaviours are influenced by emotions (Malik & Abdullah, 2017). There are negative effect of intense behaviours like anger and sadness if not respond properly.

Theoretical Framework

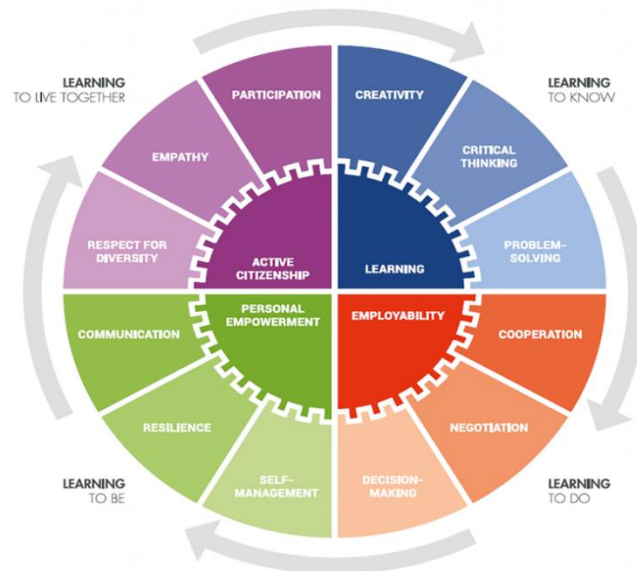


Figure 1 theoretical Framework

Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives of this study:

- To identify the life skills of elementary school teachers.
- To find out difference in life skills of elementary school teachers on the basis of gender.

Research Questions

Following were the research questions of the study:

- What is the level of life skills of elementary school teachers?
- What is the difference in life skills of elementary school teachers based on gender?

Research Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature and survey method was followed. Population of the study consisted of all elementary school teachers at district Narowal. In this research, random sampling technique was used to select the sample. There 286 elementary school teachers selected from public schools of district Narowal.

Instrumentation

The researchers used a self-developed questionnaire for data collection. Five point Likert type scale was used to measure responses. Questionnaire consisted of items related to “Self-Awareness”, “Empathy”, “Interpersonal relationship skills”, “Communication”, “Critical thinking”, “Creative thinking”, “Decision making”, “Problem solving”, “Coping with stress”, and “Coping with emotions”. Instrument was validated by a pilot study. The reliability index Cronbach alpha was .79.

Data Collection

Researchers visited the school for data collection. After taking proper permission from the concerned authorities the data were collected from elementary teachers at District Narowal in three months.

Data Analysis

The SPSS version 24 (trial version) was used to analyse data. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used. Mean scores and Standard Deviations were calculated.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation

Sr.no	Statements	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1.	I know about me.	286	4.54	.499
2.	I have Control on myself.	286	4.50	.535
3.	I know my rights and responsibilities.	286	4.56	.504
4.	I know how people are alike and how they differ and learn.	286	4.44	.538
5.	I understand how to appreciate different people.	286	4.43	.517
6.	I avoid prejudice and discrimination against people who differ.	285	4.43	.517
7.	I can care people in different ways.	286	4.52	.507
8.	I value relationships with friends and families.	284	4.68	.469
9.	I form new relationships and avoid losing friendships.	286	4.65	.478
10.	I seek support and take advice from others in a time of need.	286	4.64	.516
11.	I can do basic verbal and nonverbal communication.	286	4.47	.514
12.	I use assertive communication in the face of peer pressure.	286	4.37	.589

13. I use assertiveness to resist pressure to engage in potentially health damaging activities.	286	4.28	.806
14. I know the basic processes in critical thinking.	286	4.45	.600
15. I make objective judgments' about choices and risk.	286	4.35	.602
16. I resist media influence on attitude towards smoking and alcohol.	285	4.32	.639
17. I develop capacity to think in creative ways.	285	4.57	.543
18. I generate new ideas about things that are taken for granted.	286	4.50	.573
19. I adapt to changing social circumstances.	284	4.51	.554
20. I know the basic steps for decision making	286	4.50	.528
21. I make difficult decisions	286	4.42	.609
22. I make decision about important life plans	286	4.47	.584
23. I know the basic steps for problem solving.	285	4.56	.518
24. I generate solutions to difficult problems.	286	4.51	.515
25. I solve conflict willpower	285	4.48	.547
26. I identify the sources of stress.	286	4.45	.526
27. I can use different methods for coping in stressful situations.	286	4.40	.606
28. I copy in situations of adversity.	286	4.41	.602
29. I can recognize the expression of different emotions	286	4.57	.536
30. I can understand how emotions affect the way we behave	286	4.58	.536
31. I cope with emotional distress	286	4.60	.545

In the table above, responses of elementary school teachers were calculated through descriptive statistics to identify their life skill through five point Likert type. It is indicated from above table the mean scores ($M=4.54$, $SD=.499$) for the statement “I know about me as a special person”, “I have Self-Control about me” ($M=4.50$, $SD=.535$), “I understand my rights and responsibilities” ($M=4.56$, $SD=.504$), “I understanding how people are alike and how they differ and learning” ($M=4.44$, $SD=.538$), “I understand how to appreciate different between people” ($M=4.43$, $SD=.517$). “I avoid prejudice and discrimination against people who differ” ($M=4.43$, $SD=.517$), “I can care people in

different ways” (M=4.52, SD=.507) ,”I know to value relationships with friends and families” (M=4.68, SD=.469), “I know forming new relationships and surviving loss of friendships” (M=4.65, SD=.478), “I am seeking support and advice from others in a time of need” (M=4.64, SD=.516).

The mean and standard deviation for the statement “I know basic verbal and nonverbal communication skills” is (M=4.47, SD=.514), “I know assertive communication in the face of peer pressure” (M=4.37, SD=.589). “I use assertiveness to resist pressure to engage in potentially health damaging activities” (M=4.28, SD=.806), “I know the basic processes in critical thinking” (M=4.45, SD=.600), “I make objective judgments’ about choices and risk” (M=4.35, SD=.602). “I resist media influence on attitude towards smoking and alcohol” (M=4.32 SD=.639). “I develop capacity to think in creative ways” (M=4.57, SD=.543), “I generate new ideas about things that are taken for granted” (M=4.50, SD=.573). “I adapt to changing social circumstances” (M=4.51, SD=.554), “I know the basic steps for decision making” (M=4.50, SD=.528).

The mean and standard deviation for the statement “I make difficult decisions” is (M=4.42, SD=.609), “I make decision about important life plans” (M=4.47, SD=.584). “I know the basic steps for problem solving” (M=4.56, SD=.518), “I generate solutions to difficult problems” (M=4.51, SD=.515).

The mean and standard deviation for the statement “I identify the sources of stress” is (M=4.42, SD=.609), “Methods for coping in stressful situations Methods for coping in stressful situations” (M=4.40, SD=.606). “Methods for coping in stressful situations” (M=4.41, SD=.602), “Recognition of the expression of different emotions” (M=4.57, SD=.536). Significant mean scores. In this way, the analysis was carried out to achieve the main objective of the study that was to find the level of life skills of Elementary school teachers of District Narowal. The items related to “Self-Awareness”, “Empathy”, “Interpersonal relationship skills”, “Communication”, “Critical thinking”, “Creative thinking”, “Decision making”, “Problem solving”, “Coping with stress”, and “Coping with emotions” were showing significant results.

Table 2

Difference in life Skills of Elementary School Teachers on the Basis of Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df.	t-value	p
Life Skills	Male	93	52.06	5.10	284	2.90	.041
	Female	193	50.04	4.09			

Table specifies that the mean score for male elementary school teachers regarding their life skills was greater (M=52.06, SD=5.10) than the female elementary school teachers (M=50.04, SD=4.09). There was a statistically significant difference

found at the $p \leq 0.05$ level of significance between the male and female elementary school teachers' life skills $t(284) = 1.90, p = .041$. Hence, it is concluded that the level of life skills in male elementary school teachers was high than the female elementary school teachers.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study was designed to identify life skill of elementary school teachers i.e. "Self-Awareness", "Empathy", "Interpersonal relationship skills", "Communication", "Critical thinking", "Creative thinking", "Decision making", "Problem solving", "Coping with stress", and "Coping with emotions" in district Narowal. On the basis of data analysis, it is concluded that teachers have and frequently use different life skill. In an education system, life skills are integral and important part. In order to enhance productivity and innovation among students a teacher must be equipped with basic life skills. For humanizing education life skills are most important even it is not taken as a subject. In order to achieve goals it may helpful to organize thinking. There is need to develop thoughts that how to inculcate these life skills in the schools

"Self-Awareness", "Empathy", "Interpersonal relationship skills", "Communication", "Critical thinking", "Creative thinking", "Decision making", "Problem solving", "Coping with stress", and "Coping with emotions" were showing significant results. Needs of life skill development should emphasize to develop curriculum frameworks. In order to foster life skills there is need to be effective, clear, directing and committing life skills in education. In order to build the life and dreams of youth life skill is a significant way

Results revealed that majority of the teachers possess life skills and there is a dire need of relevant and proper implementation of life skill education to transmit these skills in society through students. Teacher training to impart life skills to students can be helpful to equip them by providing them cognitive, emotional practical, social and self-management skills by specifically addressing their needs. A study conducted by Yadav and Iqbal (2009) showed positive results of developing life skills in students by teachers' involvement and by providing supportive environment to them. Erawan, and Luang-Ungkoon, (2016) argued that development of life skills may prove effective at primary level, education at this level is more activity based, interactive, and based on problem solving. At this level both teacher and students are closer and more learn through fun. Thus, there is a dire need to integrate life skills development into the national curriculum as most of the teachers possess life skills and they can develop these skills in students and can enhance the mental health of students. According to Beyer (2018) teacher can equip their students with the skills of adaptation in order to prepare them to face the challenges of emerging life situations and enable them to be effective contributors to their society.

So, it could be concluded, that, teachers' life skills have an important and significant role in the development of life skills in students. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Botvin, et al. (1998), Nair (2017) many more, who suggested life skill development as a good supportive system for adolescents.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were made on the basis of the results of the study:

1. Teacher education programs may include courses on life skills in order to highlight the importance and role of life skills in effective teaching.
2. Some seminars and workshops may be arranged in order to aware elementary school teachers about life skills. In this way, teachers can build their lives and dreams to empower themselves.
3. Life skills may be made a part of mainstream curriculum to oppose rigidity in current education system.

References

- Abdullah, N. A. (2019). Teachers' satisfaction of principal's perceived leadership at elementary level. *Journal of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Research (JSSIR)*, 8(1), 21-28.
- Abdullah, N. A. & Chaudhry, A. Q. (2018). Significance of reading and writing in understanding Islamic study subject matter: Knowledge of pre-school teachers. *Al-Adwa*, 33(49), 45-52. Retrieved from: http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/szic/PDF/3eng_33_49_Jun18.pdf
- Abdullah, N. A., Raza, S. A., & Akhtar, M. M. S. (2015). Measuring work stress of marketing professionals. *Business Review*, 10(1), 18-193.
- Adewale, J. G. (2011). Competency level of Nigerian Primary 4 pupils in life skills achievement test. *Education 3-13*, 39(3), 221-232.
- Arur, A., & DeJaeghere, J. (2019). Decolonizing life skills education for girls in Brahmanical India: A Dalitbahujan perspective. *Gender and Education*, 31(4), 490-507.
- Beyer, B. K. (2018). Critical thinking: What is it?. *Social Education*. 49(4), 270-276.
- Bollen, K. A. (2017). *Structural equations with latent variables*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

- Jarrah, H. Y. (2019). The impact of using drama in education on life skills and reflective thinking. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 14(9), 4-20.
- Erawan, P. & Luang-Ungkoon, N. (2016). *Evaluation of life skill implementation in education institutes and development of instrument for measuring like skill among students*. Bangkok: Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
- Fitzpatrick, S. (2014). Priorities for Primary Education? From Subjects to Life Skills and Children's Social and Emotional Development. *Irish Educational Studies*, 33(3), 269-286.
- Fallahchai, R. (2012). Effectiveness of academic and life skills instruction on the freshmen academic achievement. *Journal of Life Science and Biomedicine*, 2(4), 137-141.
- Ginter, E. J. (2011). David K. Brooks' Contribution to the Developmentally Based Life-Skills Approach. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 21(3), 191-202.
- Lefevre, A. L. (2017). Latino Parent Involvement and School Success. *Education and Urban Society*, 44(6), 707-723.
- Malik, A., & Abdullah, N. A. (2017). Level of Aggression among College Teachers and Students in Pakistan: An analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Social Science*, 37(2), 343-353. Online available at: <https://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol37No22017/PJSS-2017-II-02.pdf>
- Nitin, K. (2016). *Effectiveness of Instructional Strategy on Life Skill of Problem Solving in Terms of Class VIII Students*. Achievement in Science. Proceedings of 8th International Conference on Life Skills Education. New Delhi: Excel India Publisher, pp. 75-78.
- Nair, M. (2017). *Family Life and Life Skills Education for Adolescents*. Abstract, University of Southampton.
- Parvathy, V. & Pillai, R. (2015). Impact of life skills education on adolescents in rural school. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 3(2), 788-794.
- Papacharisis, V. (2005). The effectiveness of teaching a life skills program in a sport context. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17(3), 247-254.

UNICEF (2012). Global evaluation of life skills education programmes. Retrieved from:
https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_66242.html

UNESCO (2000). The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for all: Meeting our
collective commitments. Retrieved from
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>

Yadav, P., & Iqbal, N. (2009). Impact of life skill training on self-esteem, adjustment
and empathy among adolescents. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied
Psychology*, (35) Special Issue, 61-70