

# A Study on the level of Life Skills among Youth in Colleges of Shillong

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**Abstract:** “Life Skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, which enable individuals to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO, 1997). Life Skills are being categories into following two major groups:

- a. Core Affective Life Skills such as coping with stress, empathy, interpersonal relationship and coping with emotions.
- b. Core Cognitive Life Skills such as self awareness, critical thinking, decision making, communication, creative thinking and problem solving.

The main objective of this study is to find out the level of life skills among the youth and also to find out whether there is any difference in Life Skills among youth based on few demographic variables. Sample for the study consists of 100 youths enrolled in three colleges in Laban Town, Shillong. The tool used is the Life Skills scale developed by the investigator herself. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS package. The researcher found that youth possess moderate level of Life Skills. The investigator found that there is significant difference in the level of core cognitive life skills with regards to gender and no significant difference in the level of core affective life skills with regards to gender and age.

**Key Words:** Life Skills, Life Skills Education, Youth.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

In today's world the needs, challenges and complexity of life is increasing and also being transformed from time to time therefore youth are needed to be very much skilled so as to cope up with these transitions. However, a comprehensive and multi- strategic approaches is the need of the hour in order to be able to empower the psychosocial competency of an individual because education alone does not contribute completely to solve the varied problems of life. Therefore developing of Life skills is the top priority of the hour. Life skills are those psycho-social skills which strengthen individuals themselves to deal with the demands of life. WHO in 1997 define Life Skills as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individual to deal with the demands and challenges of life”(1). Adaptive means that a person is flexible in approach and is able to adjust to the different circumstances encounter in everyday life. Positive behaviour implies that a person is forward looking and even in difficult situations can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions to them. These are the personal and social skills required for young people to function confidently and competently with themselves, with other people and with the wider community (TACADE, UK) (2,3).

The WHO has recommended ten core life skills needed for individuals which come under generic life skill category. They are self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, communication skills, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotions (1). These skills are interrelated to each other and works together for the holistic development of an individual.

## 2. LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION:

United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF, 2000) defines Life Skills based education as basically being a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: attitude, skills and knowledge”(4). It refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enable learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes and skills which support the adoption of healthy behaviours such as acquiring the ability to reduce specific risk behaviour and adopt healthy behaviour that improve their lives such as planning ahead, career planning, decision making and taking responsibilities for their decision (WHO, 1997) (5,6). Moreover, Life Skills Education will also encompass ones the ability to respond to any situations in a logical, sensitive and positive manner without either harming either self or society.

## 3. NEED AND SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY:

Youth being the most productive member of the society, yet it is pathetic to realise the fact that most youth are unable to utilise their potential in an appropriate way as they lack the opportunity and the skills relevant to realities. Although we know that Life Skills are abilities that each and every one of us possesses, but yet efforts should be made

to enhance these abilities within each one of us which has not been fully made till today. Hence every society should develop these skills so that it empower and encourage its youth to internalise and practice these skills in order to meet with the complex challenges of life. At the same time it will also improves their knowledge, skills, abilities, confidence and personality as a whole which will in turn empowers the youth intellectually, brings in maturity, teaches them to live in the society and adapting to the changing environment and promotes the overall well being of an individual. In this context, it will be highly significant to study the level of life skills among the youth, so that it can guide them to be forward looking even in difficult times and also find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions.

#### 4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- To find out the level of Life Skills among the Youth.
- To find out whether there is any significant difference in their Life Skills based on gender and age.

#### 5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

- There is no significant difference in their Life Skills based on gender.
- There is no significant difference in their Life Skills based on age.

#### Sample:

Hundred Youth were drawn as sample for the study enrolled in three Colleges situated in Laban area of Shillong Town ie., Umshyrpi College, Raid Laban College and Shankar Dev College.

#### Tool used in the study:

A five point Likert Scale which is named as Core Affective Life Skills Scale (CALSS) and Core Cognitive Life Skills Scale (CCLSS) developed by the researcher herself. The scales consist of both positive and negative items (7).

#### Scoring Procedure:

The investigator made the youth to answer the Life Skills Scales on the basis of option- Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never. Positive items have been scored by giving weights such as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 while reverse scoring for negative items respectively (7).

#### 6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis and it is analyzed using SPSS package. Frequency, Percentage, Mean, SD, t test and F ratio were computed for the entire sample.

Table 1.1: Gender distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	51	51
Female	49	49
Total	100	100

Table 1.1 above describes the gender distribution among the sample respondents where the data collected reveals that 51% of the respondents are male while 49% are female.

Table 1.2: Age in Years

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
15-19	42	42
20-24	47	47
25-29	11	11
Total	100	100

The data collected shows that 42% of the respondents are in the age group between 15-19 years, 47% are between the age group of 20-24 years and only 11% of the respondents are in the age group between 25-29 years.

Table 1.3: Level of Core Affective Life Skills Scores

Core Affective Life Skills	Frequency	Percentage %
Medium	63	63
High	37	37
Total	100	100

Table 1.3 above reveals that majority 63% of the youth have moderate level of core affective life skills while only 37% of the youth has high level of core affective life skills.

Table 1.4: Level of Core Cognitive Life Skills Scores

Core Cognitive Life Skills	Frequency	Percentage %
Medium	63	63
High	37	37
Total	100	100

Table 1.4 above reveals that majority 63% of the youth have moderate level of core cognitive life skills while only 37% have high core cognitive life skills.

Table 1.5: ‘t’ value on core affective life skills with respect to gender

Variable	Background Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ Value	Level of Significance
Core Affective Life Skills	Gender	Male	51	1.35	.483	.357	NS
		Female	49	1.39	.492		

Table shows that the calculated ‘t’ value is .357 which is not statistically significant. Hence it can be interpreted that there is no significant difference between the core affective life skills of male and female youth respondents. Therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 1.6: ‘t’ value on core cognitive life skills with respect to gender

Variable	Background Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ Value	Level of Significance
Core Cognitive Life Skills	Gender	Male	51	1.20	.401	3.912	S
		Female	49	1.55	.503		

\*denotes significant at 0.05 level

Table above shows that the calculated ‘t’ value is 3.912 which is significance at 0.05 level. Hence it can be interpreted that there is significant difference between the core cognitive life skills of male and female youth respondents, where female have higher core cognitive life skills as compare to that of male. Therefore the hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1.7: Group difference on core affective life skills with respect to age

Variable	Background Variable	Source of Variation	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	Level of Significance
Core Affective Life Skills	Age	Between Groups	2	.015	.008	.032	NS
		Within Groups	97	23.295	.240		
		Total	99	23.310			

Table above shows that the calculated ‘F’ value is .032 and it is not statistically significant. Hence it can be interpreted that there is no significant difference between the core affective life skills of with respect to age of the youth respondents. Therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 1.8: Group difference on core cognitive life skills with respect to age

Variable	Background Variable	Source of Variation	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F ratio	Level of Significance
Core Cognitive Life Skills	Age	Between Groups	2	.125	.062	.261	NS
		Within Groups	97	23.185	.239		
		Total	99	23.310			

Table above shows that the calculated ‘F’ value is .261 and it is not statistically significant. Hence it can be interpreted that there is no significant difference between the core cognitive life skills with respect to age of the youth respondents. Therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

The present study can be concluded that the youth respondent’s posses moderate level of life skills. And that there is significant difference between the core cognitive life skills of male and female while no significant difference can be noted between the core affective life skills of male and female youth respondents. Besides there is no significant

difference between the core affective and core cognitive life skills with respect to age. Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are being made. In order that the level of life skills of the youth improves, life skills education is the need of the hour. And that Life Skills should be taught as a separate subject right from the school level otherwise it will get lost. Hence by doing so the youth of today will be in tune and helped to overcome with the multi challenges face in everyday complex life and it will further helped them to lead a good life and ultimately be empowered.

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