

Life Skills Education for Adaptation, Self-Awareness and Self-Respect of Young Girls

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Abstract – Education system in our country is achievement oriented than person oriented. It does not deal with the needs of adolescents who are capable of learning to become empowered and to live successfully in this world. This empowerment is very important in these days as there is rapid globalization and urbanization with the breakdown of joint family system leading to more and more nuclear families and decreasing traditional support systems. Academic and family stress, peer pressure, violence, drug abuse, poor infrastructure and social divide are some of the most important problems which an adolescent has to compete with in this rapidly changing society. An empowered adolescent has the competence to cope with the challenges of life using the available resources in such adverse conditions.

The present study was conducted to assess the impact of the life skills education program on young girls in the areas of adjustment with parents, siblings, teachers and peers; self-awareness in terms of coping with a variety of demands in life and self-respect. One hundred young girls were selected from CIS Kanya Mahavidyalya ,Pundri, Haryana. Fifty young girls were given Life Skills Education (LSE) programme for a period of two months, while the other fifty young girls were taken as control group and were not exposed to any programme. Results revealed that young girls who were given LSE programme had better adjustment with parents, siblings, teachers and peers; better perceived self-awareness and better self-respect than those who were not provided any LSE programme. Results indicated that the program prepares the young girls to be a competent person in a changing and competitive society.

Key Words – Life Skills Education, Adjustment, Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem

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INTRODUCTION

Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands, challenges, and stress of everyday life (World Health Organization, 1997). Childhood and adolescence are the developmental periods during which one acquires these skills through various methods and people. The common life skills, which need to be taught at the schools and college level especially to adolescents and youth, include critical thinking and creative thinking, decision making and problem solving, communication skills and interpersonal relations, coping with emotions and stress, self-awareness and empathy. Life skills may be learnt by teaching, training or basically by individual's personal experiences. Actually no life skill is used alone they are always used in a combination of more than one.

Self-efficacy or awareness is a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation. These beliefs are determinants of how people think, behave, and feel (Bandura, 1997). Bandura has reported that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how

goals, tasks, and challenges are approached. People with a strong sense of self-efficacy form a stronger sense of commitment to their interests and activities, develop deeper interest in the activities in which they participate and recover quickly from setbacks in their life. On the other hand, people with a weak sense of self-efficacy believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities and quickly lose confidence in personal abilities. Self-efficacy begins to develop in early childhood as children deal with a wide variety of experiences, tasks, and situations. The development of self-efficacy does not end during youth, but continues to evolve throughout life as people acquire new skills, experiences, and understanding.

Research indicates that low self-efficacy can lead to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness about one's capability (Heslin&Klehe,2006). The relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy was examined by some researchers who have reported that there is a significant negative relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy (Leganger et al., 2000; Hermann, 2005; Luszczynska et al., 2005). It can be interpreted from these researches that self-efficacy is associated

with social adjustment in home with family members, and in school/college with teachers and peers.

Self-esteem is a concept used to describe a personality variable that captures the way a person generally feels about him/herself, or the way a person may evaluate his/her abilities and attributes. Self-esteem ranges from very high to extremely low. A person with high self-esteem generally has a fondness or love for herself, whereas a person with low self-esteem may have negative feelings toward herself (DiMaria, 2011).

Self-respect affects our trust in others, our relationships and our work. Positive Self-respect gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection. Self-respect can involve a variety of beliefs about the self, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behaviors. Self-respect is an essential human need that is important for survival and normal development. The terms self-worth, self-respect and self-value are the terms very often used for self-esteem. Persons with high self-esteem tend to view themselves as capable and of-worth. Poor self-esteem can make it impossible to successfully achieve personal goals (Cherry, 2013).

Self-esteem has been regarded as an essential component of mental health (Taylor & Brown, 1988). When low self-esteem is formed, it affects all aspects of an individual's life especially the relationship with others. Individuals with low self-esteem usually avoid social settings and isolate themselves resulting in having the feelings of loneliness from their lack of confidence (Nurmi et al., 1997). Research indicates that self-esteem is negatively correlated with loneliness (Lasgaard&Elklit, 2009; Mahon et al., 2006). In a more recent study, adjustment level of adolescent was found to be highly associated with self-esteem level; a feeling of self-worth and competence that make an adolescent able to adjust adequately with the surroundings (Mankar, 2011).

In another study, Pasha and Munaf (2013) investigated the relationship between the self-esteem and adjustment of traditional university students in the first semester of their Master's program. Results indicated a positive relationship of self-esteem with over-all adjustment, as well as with other areas of adjustment.

Research indicates that life skills programs contribute to an improvement in pro-social behavior, positive impact on mental health in relation to self-image, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social and emotional adjustment and a decrease in social anxiety. In general life skills development, there have been reported signs of improvement in problem solving, communication, and coping skills (Botvin& Kantor, 2001).

The present study was undertaken to assess the impact of life skills education programme on adjustment, self-efficacy and self-esteem of young girls.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was carried out in town Pundri situated in Kaithal District of Haryana State. One hundred young girls from the commerce stream were selected for the present study from CIS Kanya Mahavidyalya, Pundri, Haryana. The age range of these young girls varied from 19 years to 21 years with mean age of 20.19 years ($\pm .77$ years). All these girls were assessed for their adjustment, self-esteem and self-efficacy. On the basis of total scores of adjustment, these girls were divided in two groups – experimental and control group.

Measures Used

A questionnaire consisting of three measures—adjustment inventory, generalized self-efficacy scale and Rosenberg scale of self-esteem was used to collect data from young girls. Family background information was also collected from these girls.

Adjustment Inventory: Adjustment inventory was prepared to assess adaptability of young girls in four areas – with parents, siblings, teachers and peers. The inventory has 5 items in each area, with a total of 20 items. Each item has two options for answering i.e. Yes or No. Total adjustment score ranges from 20 to 40 with high score indicating unsatisfactory adaptability and low scores indicating satisfactory adaptability.

Generalized Self Efficacy Scale: Generalized self-efficacy scale (Schwarzerand Jerusalem, 1995) was used to assess self-awareness of young girls. The scale has 10 items and responses are made on a 4-point scale. The score ranges from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating better self-awareness.

Rosenberg Scale of Self-Esteem: Rosenberg scale of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure young girls' feelings of self-worth or self-respect. It has 10 statements and the responses are on 4 point scale. Scores range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating better self-respect.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data was personally collected by the investigators. At pre-testing stage, all the one hundred respondents were explained the purpose of the research as well as the academic use of the data later on. Questionnaires were given individually to the girls. Before administering the measures, the respondents were briefed about the measures in detail. They were assured about the confidentiality of their responses. Fifty adolescent girls were given Life Skills Education (LSE) programme for a period of two months, while the other fifty adolescent girls were taken as control group and were not exposed to any programme. Life skills education was imparted to experimental group children in the areas of critical and creative thinking,

problem solving, communication skills and interpersonal relations, coping with emotions and stress, and self-awareness and empathy. After a gap of two months, experimental and control group children were post-tested for adaptability, self-awareness and self-respect.

RESULTS

Relationship between adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect of young girls:

Correlation coefficients were computed to examine relationship between adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect of college going young girls. As presented in Table 1, general self-awareness was positively and significantly correlated with adjustment with parents ($r=0.34^*$), siblings ($r=0.37^*$), peers ($r=0.56^*$) and total adjustment ($r=0.60^*$). Although not significant, positive relationship was observed between adjustment with teachers and self-awareness of young girls. Similarly, self-respect was positively and significantly correlated with adjustment with parents ($r=0.29^*$), siblings ($r=0.26^*$), peers ($r=0.46^*$) and total adjustment ($r=0.51^*$). A positive relationship was observed between adjustment with teachers and self-respect of girls. These were positive and significant correlation between general self-awareness and self-respect ($r=0.85$).

It can be interpreted from these results that self-awareness and self-respect are positively related to each other. If a person has high self-esteem, he/she is likely to have high self-efficacy or awareness. Self-awareness and self-respect have positive relationship with adjustment with parents, siblings, teachers and peers.

Table 1: Correlations between adjustment, self-efficacy and self-esteem of young girls

Variables	General self-awareness	Self-respect
Adaptability with parents	0.34*	0.29*
Adaptability with siblings	0.37*	0.26*
Adaptability with teachers	0.15	0.18
Adaptability with peers	0.56*	0.46*
Total Adaptability	0.60*	0.51*
General self-awareness	1.0	0.85*

Pre-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental and control girls:

Means and standard deviations, as presented in Table 2, were computed for adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental group and control group girls. Although these two groups were matched on the basis of total adaptability scores, independent t-test was used to compare both these groups at pre-testing stage. There was no significant difference in

adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect of experimental and control group young girls.

Table 2: Pre-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental and control group girls

Variables	Experimental (n=50) (mean±SD)	Control (n=50) (mean±SD)	t-values (df=98)
Adaptability with parents	6.86±0.35	6.88±0.52	-0.23
Adaptability with siblings	6.88±0.56	6.86±0.61	0.17
Adaptability with teachers	6.14±0.45	6.20±0.40	-0.70
Adaptability with peers	6.42±0.50	6.40±0.53	0.19
Total Adaptability	26.30±1.05	26.34±1.24	-0.17
General self-awareness	30.20±1.23	30.22±1.80	-0.07
Self-respect	29.00±1.47	29.08±1.65	-0.26

Pre and post-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental group girls:

Experimental group young girls were imparted life skills education programme for a period of two months, post-testing of these young girls was done after a gap of two months. Pre and post-testing comparison in the areas of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect of experimental group young girls was done by paired t-test. In the areas of adjustment low scores indicate satisfactory adjustment. As presented in Table 3, after exposure to life skills education programme, young girls reported to have better adaptability with parents (Mean=6.22), siblings (Mean=6.24), teachers (Mean=5.64) and peers (Mean=6.18) with low scores as compared to pre-testing stage (Means=6.86, 6.88, 6.14 and 6.42 respectively). Mean of total adaptability scores at post-testing stage was low (Mean=24.28) as compared to pre-testing stage (Mean=26.30) indicating better adaptability after exposure to life skills education programme. Further, general self-awareness (Mean=31.26) and self-respect (Mean=29.86) improved significantly after implementation of life skills education programme as compared to pre-testing stage (Means=30.20 and 29.00 respectively).

These results clearly indicate the impact of life skills education programme on adaptability of young girls with their parents, siblings, teachers and peers.

Table 3: Pre and post-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental group girls (n=50)

Variables	Pre-testing (mean±SD)	Post-testing (mean±SD)	Paired-t values (df=49)
Adaptability with parents	6.86±0.35	6.22±0.71	-7.17*
Adaptability with siblings	6.88±0.56	6.24±0.52	-8.62*
Adaptability with teachers	6.14±0.45	5.64±0.75	-6.50*
Adaptability with peers	6.42±0.50	6.18±0.56	-3.93*
Total Adaptability	26.30±1.05	24.28±1.34	-13.48*
General self-awareness	30.20±1.23	31.26±1.41	10.53*
Self-respect	29.00±1.47	29.86±1.51	10.64*

*Statistically Significant at 5% level.

Pre and post-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of control group girls:

Control group young girls were not imparted life skills education programme. Post-testing of these young girls was also done after a gap of two months with experimental group girls. Pre and post-testing comparison in the areas of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect of experimental group young girls was done by paired t-test.

Research indicates that low self-efficacy can lead to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness about one’s capability (Heslin & Klehe, 2006). The relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy / awareness was examined by some researchers who have reported that there is a significant negative relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy (Leganger et al., 2000; Hermann, 2005; Luszczynska et al., 2005). It can be interpreted from these researches that self-efficacy is associated with social adjustment in home with family members, and in school/college with teachers and peers.

As presented in Table 4, there were no significance differences in adjustment, self-efficacy and self-esteem scores of control group girls at pre and post-testing stages.

Table 4: Pre and post-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of control group girls (n=50)

Variables	Pre-testing (mean±SD)	Post-testing (mean±SD)	Paired-t values (df=49)
Adaptability with parents	6.88±0.52	6.86±0.40	-0.38
Adaptability with siblings	6.86±0.61	6.84±0.47	-0.26
Adaptability with teachers	6.20±0.40	6.16±0.47	-0.47
Adaptability with peers	6.40±0.53	6.38±0.49	-0.57
Total Adaptability	26.34±1.24	26.24±0.94	-0.80
General self-awareness	30.22±1.80	30.28±1.71	1.00
Self-respect	29.08±1.65	29.18±1.75	1.15

Post-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental and control group girls:

Adaptability, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental and control group young girls were compared using independent t-test. In the areas of adjustment low scores indicate satisfactory adaptability. As presented in Table 5, after exposure to life skills education programme, experimental group young girls reported to have better adaptability with parents (Mean=6.22), siblings (Mean=6.24), teachers (Mean=5.64) and peers (Mean=6.18) with low scores as compared to control group girls (Means=6.86, 6.84, 6.16 and 6.38 respectively). Mean of total adaptability score of experimental group girls was low (Mean=24.28) as compared to control group girls (Mean=26.24) indicating better adaptation after exposure to life skills education programme. General self-awareness (Mean=31.26) and self-respect (Mean=29.86) of experimental group girls improved

significantly after implementation of life skills education programme as compared to control group respondents (Means=30.24 and 29.18 respectively).

These results clearly indicate that life skills education programme promoted Adaptability, self-awareness and self-respect of college going young girls.

Table 5: Post-testing comparison of adaptation, self-awareness and self-respect scores of experimental and control group girls

Variables	Experimental (n=50) (mean±SD)	Control (n=50) (mean±SD)	t-values (df=98)
Adaptability with parents	6.22±0.71	6.86±0.40	-5.55*
Adaptability twith siblings	6.24±0.52	6.84±0.47	-6.08*
Adaptability with teachers	5.64±0.75	6.16±0.47	-4.16*
Adaptability with peers	6.18±0.56	6.38±0.49	-1.90
Total Adaptability	24.28±1.34	26.24±0.94	-8.47*
General self-awareness	31.26±1.41	30.24±1.81	3.14*
Self-respect	29.86±1.51	29.18±1.75	2.08*

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study indicate that self-respect and self-awareness have positive relationship. If a person has high self-respect, he/she is likely to have high self-awareness. Also, self-awareness and self-respect have positive relationship with adaptability of girls with their parents, siblings, teachers and peers.

As reported by Cherry (2013), self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships with others and our work. Positive or high self-esteem gives us the vigor to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection by others. Persons with high self-esteem tend to view themselves as a capable person. Poor self-esteem can make it difficult to successfully achieve personal goals. Hence high self-esteem is more likely to increase our self-efficacy.

Results of the present study showed that positive and high self-respect and self-awareness of young girls were positively and significantly related to their adjustment with parents, siblings, teachers and peers indicating that these girls had better adjustment and were more socially competent. In other words it can be said that self-respect and self-awareness results in poor adjustment with family members, teachers and peers. These results get support from the research findings in literature (Nurmi et al., 1997; Lasgaard & Elklit, 2009; Mahon et al., 2006). These authors reported that when low self-respect is formed, it affects all aspects of an individual’s life especially the relationship with others. Individuals with low self-respect usually avoid social settings and isolate themselves resulting in having the feelings of loneliness from their lack of confidence. In another study, Mankar (2011) reported that adjustment level of adolescent was found to be highly associated with self-esteem level; a feeling of self-worth and competence that make an adolescent able to adjust adequately with the surroundings. Similar results

were obtained by Ningamma and Armin (2010), and Pasha and Munaf (2013). These authors found a positive relationship of self-respect with over-all adjustment, as well as with other areas of adjustment.

The results of the present study clearly indicate that after exposure to life skills education programme, adaptability with parents, siblings, teachers and peers and total adaptability improved significantly. Also, life skills education programme promoted self-respect and self-awareness of young girls significantly. These findings get support from the findings of Botvin and Kantor (2001). They reported that life skill programs contribute to an improvement in pro-social behavior, positive impact on mental health in relation to self-image, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social and emotional adjustment and a decrease in social anxiety. In general life skills development, there have been reported signs of improvement in problem solving, communication, and coping skills

In the area of training on interpersonal problem-solving skills, research has been conducted by Balda and her associates. Results revealed that social skills training significantly improved the thought and behaviour of socially incompetent children through problem solving techniques. Educational training helped children to think of different, relevant, and flexible alternatives to solve interpersonal social dilemmas (Malik, 2003; Malik et al., 2005a, Malik et al., 2005b, Malik et al., 2006; Malik et al., 2010). These authors suggested that the early intervention programme for interpersonal social problem solving during childhood years can help children to think alternative solutions to a problem, and to look at the possible consequences of any solution. Balda and Turan (2010) and Balda et al. (2010) have reported similar findings. Thus, early identification and intervention helps in primary prevention of maladaptive and behavioural problems.

IMPLICATIONS:

The results of the present study have great implications for children, adolescents, youth and care givers. During childhood and adolescent years, individuals are required to develop healthy social relationships with parents, siblings, teachers and peers. Therefore, it becomes very important for them to learn to cope with the problems and demands of every day like and to achieve their goals. Life skills education in the areas of problem solving, critical thinking, effective communication and interpersonal relationship skills help individuals in better adaptability with family members, peers, teachers and other adults. It is particularly important for young girls, as after marriage they have to make adjustment in another family with their in-laws and life partners. High and positive self-respect and self-awareness also promote competence of the individuals and has directly related to adjustment in different areas. Life skills education programmes can prevent adaptability problems which has long-term negative impact on psychological health and socio-

emotional well-being of individuals; and promote self-awareness and self-respect of individuals.

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