



An Analytical Study Of Life Skills Of Undergraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

This research paper, “*An Analytical Study of Life Skills of Undergraduate Students*,” scientifically examines a highly significant issue related to the mental, social, behavioral, and vocational development of students within India’s higher education system. In today’s competitive and technologically advanced environment, life skills have become the foundation of the holistic personality development of students; therefore, an analytical study of these skills among undergraduate youth is highly relevant. The main objective of the study was to examine whether there exists any significant difference in the life skills of students on the basis of gender (male/female) and area of residence (rural/urban). Keeping this objective in mind, two major hypotheses were formulated: the first hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in life skills between male and female undergraduate students, and the second hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in life skills between rural and urban undergraduate students. The population of the study consisted of undergraduate students studying in various colleges of Kanpur district. From this population, a sample of 500 students was selected using the stratified random sampling method to ensure representativeness and objectivity of the sample. The Life Skills Questionnaire developed by Dr. Anjum Ahmad and Mrs. Sabba Parveen was used as the research tool. This questionnaire included major dimensions of life skills such as decision-making ability, problem-solving, communication skills, self-awareness, empathy, stress management, time management, leadership ability, creativity, and critical thinking. For statistical analysis, mean, standard deviation, and *t*-test were used to scientifically examine the nature of differences between groups. The results of the analysis revealed that no significant difference was found in the life skills of male and female students, indicating that the development of life skills at the higher education level does not show any notable variation on the basis of gender. This finding suggests that life skills development depends more on students’ individual abilities, experiences, and academic environment rather than on gender. On the other hand, a significant difference was found in the life skills of rural and urban students, with urban students demonstrating a higher level of life skills compared to their rural counterparts. This difference indicates that better educational resources, technological facilities, opportunities for personality development, social participation, and diverse experiences available in urban environments promote the development of life skills, whereas limited resources, fewer facilities, and lack of opportunities in rural areas result in comparatively lower development of these skills. Overall, this study emphasizes the need for the enhancement of life skills in higher education and highlights the necessity of special training programs, workshops, and expansion of resources in rural areas to reduce regional disparities in life skills development. The study provides important guidelines for education policymakers, colleges, teachers, and social organizations to more effectively develop the life skills of undergraduate students in the future, thereby enhancing employability, social competence, and personal empowerment.

Keywords: Undergraduate Level, Students, Life Skills

Introduction

In the present era of global competition, technological revolution, social change, and complex life situations, life skills education has come to be regarded as an essential component of higher education, especially for students studying at the undergraduate level. This stage represents a transition point between adolescence and adulthood, where students are preparing themselves for future personal, professional, and social roles. Life skills are defined by the World Health Organization as a set of psychosocial abilities through which individuals can deal effectively, competently, and in a balanced manner with the challenges, stresses, conflicts, and changing circumstances of everyday life.

The undergraduate stage is a period when students are not only acquiring knowledge but are also developing their identity, personality, values, behavioral patterns, decision-making ability, collaborative skills, leadership qualities, sensitivity, self-confidence, and problem-solving competence. At this level, the development of life skills is considered extremely important for students' academic achievement, mental health, social adjustment, employability, career development, and overall life satisfaction. In the modern age, increasing academic demands, pressure of competitive examinations, uncertainty of employment, the intense influence of digital media, socio-economic inequalities, family expectations, and multidimensional stress further intensify the need for the systematic development of life skills.

Therefore, an analytical study of life skills among undergraduate students—such as decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, communication skills, empathy, self-awareness, stress management, emotional balance, interpersonal relationships, time management, adaptability, leadership ability, and conflict management—becomes highly relevant. Higher education institutions comprise a large student population representing diverse backgrounds, including rural and urban areas, government and non-government schools, and various socio-economic strata. In such a context, disparities, challenges, and opportunities in the development of life skills are evident, making it essential to understand them through research.

A lack of life skills among undergraduate students often leads to low self-confidence, indecisiveness, stress, depression, social isolation, communication barriers, instability in relationships, confusion in career planning, and a decline in academic performance. On the other hand, students with well-developed life skills tend to be more self-reliant, empowered, positive in outlook, socially well-adjusted, and professionally more successful. In the current education system, life skills education is being promoted through curricula, co-curricular activities, personality development programs, 81440unsellors services, NSS, NCC, workshops, and skill-based training. However, the effectiveness, accessibility, and level of acquisition of these initiatives are not uniform. Hence, a comprehensive, systematic, and analytical study of life skills among undergraduate students will help clarify which skills they are proficient in, where deficiencies exist, which social, familial, academic, psychological, or economic factors influence their life skills, and what strategies higher education institutions should adopt to foster life skills development.

This study is not only academically significant but also useful for policymakers, educators, 81440unsellors, and parents, as it provides concrete guidance toward empowering youth to become capable, confident, positive, creative, and employment-oriented. In an era where artificial intelligence, automation, globalization, and new economic policies are rapidly transforming the nature of work and working conditions, life skills enable young people not only to “secure jobs” but also to “live life successfully.” Therefore, an analytical study of life skills among undergraduate students is a need of the time, contributing not only to the holistic development of the younger generation but also to the strengthening of the nation-building process.

Need and Importance

An analytical study of life skills among undergraduate students has become an extremely necessary and significant topic in the present time because, at this stage of higher education, students not only acquire academic knowledge but also move toward personal, social, professional, and moral development. Life skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, communication skills, empathy, self-control, emotional balance, time management, teamwork, and leadership have become essential for modern life.

At the undergraduate level, students are in a transitional phase from adolescence to adulthood, during which they face social pressures, career choices, self-identity issues, relationship management, technological changes, and a competitive environment. In such circumstances, the development of life skills helps shape their personality into a balanced, confident, and competent one. The need for studying this subject has increased further because today's era is knowledge-based, technology-driven, and innovation-centered, where subject knowledge alone is not sufficient; rather, the ability to deal with problems, work effectively in teams, and possess emotional intelligence is considered more important.

A lack of self-confidence, stress, anxiety, weak communication skills, difficulties in time management, and ambiguity in decision-making are often observed among undergraduate students, which adversely affects their employability. Thus, the study of life skills not only enhances students' academic performance but also

strengthens their career development, competitive abilities, and social maturity. Such a study helps teachers, parents, and education policymakers understand the real needs of undergraduate students and identify the kinds of training workshops, curriculum reforms, and skill development programs required for them. It provides practical suggestions toward making life skills education an essential component of the current education system.

This research is also important for society because life skills serve as the foundation for building capable, sensitive, aware, and responsible citizens. Students who learn life skills make prudent decisions in stressful situations, accept social diversity, adopt moral values, and face the challenges of the digital age with ease. Moreover, in a developing country like India, where a large segment of the youth population is enrolled at the undergraduate level, the development of life skills plays a crucial role in enhancing national economic progress, social harmony, and the quality of human resources. Thus, the need and importance of an analytical study of life skills among undergraduate students are highly relevant from academic, social, psychological, and professional perspectives, as it empowers them to lead successful, balanced, and productive lives.

Review of Related Research Literature

- **Sharma, Minakshi (2025).** This study examined life skills in relation to emotional intelligence, personal development initiatives, and the academic performance of university students. The study, conducted on 800 students from the state of Punjab, revealed that male students possessed a higher level of life skills than female students, and students of government universities performed better than those of private universities.
- **Shukla and Tripathi (2024).** This research investigated the effectiveness of life skills education programs implemented in government higher secondary schools of Rewa district. Based on a study of 10 schools, it was concluded that the life skills education scheme proved effective in the physical, mental, social, and academic development of students.
- **Thakur, Monika and Neelam (2024).** In a study conducted on 1,200 adolescents in Himachal Pradesh, it was found that there was no difference in life skills on the basis of gender; however, students of government schools possessed higher life skills than those of private schools.
- **Hazel Beret Wahlang (2023).** This study examined the life skills of adolescents in child care institutions in Meghalaya. The results indicated that the life skills level of most adolescents fell into the low category; however, they were being provided opportunities to practice life skills.
- **Srivastava and Sharma (2023).** From a study conducted on 450 undergraduate students in Indore and Ujjain, it was concluded that students' attitudes toward life skills education were positive on the basis of interpersonal relationships, and this attitude was found to be stronger among male students.

Problem Statement:

An analytical study of life skills among undergraduate-level students.

Definition of Variables

- **Undergraduate Level:** The undergraduate level refers to the initial stage of higher education in which students, after completing secondary or senior secondary education, enroll in a university or college to pursue a systematic and advanced study of a specific subject or group of subjects. It is considered the first phase of higher education, with the objective of providing students with foundational, comprehensive, and in-depth knowledge of a particular discipline, as well as developing their analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, value orientation, research aptitude, and professional competence.
- **Student:** A student is an individual who, through formal, informal, or non-formal education systems, studies a subject or course while developing intellectual, social, emotional, and practical abilities. A student shapes their personality through the pursuit, understanding, practice, and experience of knowledge.
- **Life Skills:** Life skills are those psychosocial abilities that enable an individual to effectively cope with the challenges, situations, and problems of daily life. These skills help a person to think, understand, make decisions, solve problems, regulate emotions, communicate positively with others, and develop healthy social relationships. Life skills are important not only for personal development but are also considered essential for social, academic, and professional success.

Objectives of the Research Study

1. A comparative study of life skills of male and female students studying at the undergraduate level.
2. A comparative study of life skills of rural and urban students studying at the undergraduate level.

Research Study Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the life skills of male and female students studying at the undergraduate level.

2. There is no significant difference in the life skills of rural and urban students studying at the undergraduate level.

Data Collection Tool

To measure life skills, the *Life Skills Scale* developed by **Dr. Anjum Ahmad and Mrs. Sabba Parveen** was used. This scale helps in assessing various dimensions of students' life skills, such as **decision-making, problem-solving, communication skills, self-awareness, empathy, stress management, creativity, leadership ability, and critical thinking**. The responses of the participants were recorded on a **five-point scale**.

Sample:

In the present study, to obtain the sample, a stratified random sampling technique was used. For the purpose of research, 500 students studying at the undergraduate level in colleges of Kanpur district were included and were classified on the basis of gender and area.

Definition of Hypotheses

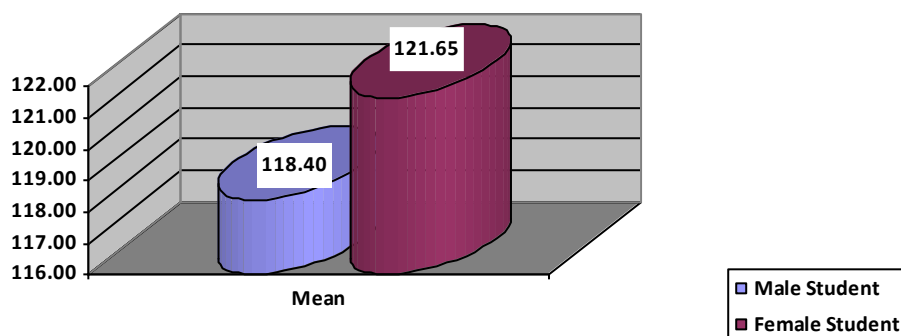
Hypothesis No. 01: There is no significant difference in the life skills of male and female students studying at the undergraduate level.

Table No. 1

Status of Life Skills of Male and Female Students Studying at the Undergraduate Level

| Group | N | M | S.D. | Lor= $\frac{1}{4}df \frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}df$ $\frac{1}{4}-05\frac{1}{2}$ * | C.R. | Result |
|----------------|-----|--------|-------|---|------|-----------------|
| Male Student | 250 | 118.40 | 15.26 | $df = 498$ | 1.82 | No Significance |
| Female Student | 250 | 121.65 | 14.83 | | | |

Graph No. 1



Analysis of Data: In the above Table No. 1, the mean scores of life skills of 250 male students and 250 female students studying at the undergraduate level are 118.40 and 121.65 respectively. The standard deviation values are 15.26 and 14.83 respectively. At the 0.05 level of significance with 498 degrees of freedom, the obtained critical ratio (t-value) is 1.82, which is less than the table value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance with 498 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the obtained value is not significant.

Interpretation of Results: Since the obtained value is not significant, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in life skills between male and female students studying at the undergraduate level.

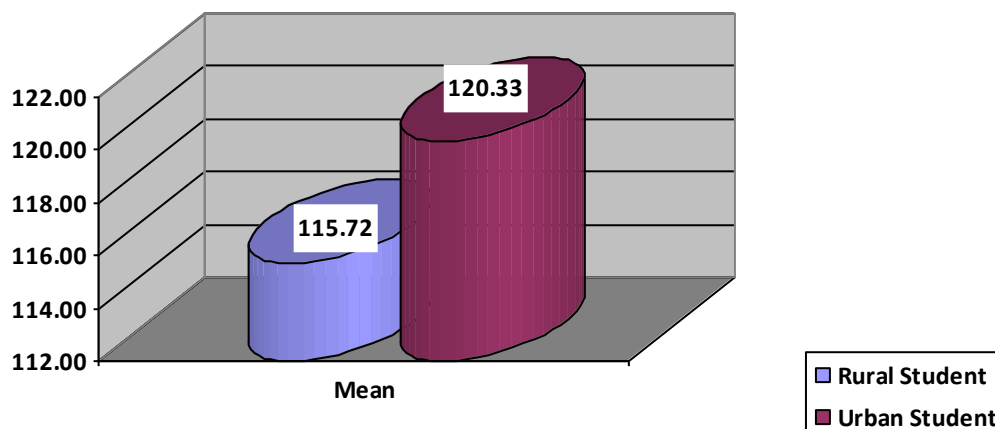
Hypothesis No. 02: There is no significant difference in life skills between rural and urban students studying at the undergraduate level.

Table No. 2

Status of life skills of rural and urban students studying at the undergraduate level.

| Group | N | M | S.D. | Lor= $\frac{1}{4}df \frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}df$ $\frac{1}{4}-05\frac{1}{2}$ * | C.R. | Result |
|---------------|-----|--------|-------|---|------|--------------|
| Rural Student | 250 | 115.72 | 16.20 | $df = 498$ | 2.15 | Significance |
| Urban Student | 250 | 120.33 | 15.74 | | | |

Graph No. 2



Analysis of the Data: In the above Table No. 2, the mean scores of life skills obtained by 250 rural and 250 urban undergraduate students are 115.72 and 120.33 respectively. The standard deviations are 16.20 and 15.74 respectively. At the 0.05 level of significance with 498 degrees of freedom, the calculated t -value is 2.15, which is higher than the tabulated value of 1.96 at the 0.05 level of significance for 498 degrees of freedom. Hence, the value is significant.

Interpretation of the Result: Since the obtained t -value is significant, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. This indicates that there exists a significant difference in life skills between rural and urban undergraduate students.

Main Findings

1. No significant difference was found in the life skills of male and female students studying at the undergraduate level.
2. A significant difference was found in the life skills of rural and urban students studying at the undergraduate level.

Results

At the undergraduate level, students' life skills directly influence their mental health, self-confidence, communication abilities, decision-making capacity, and social participation. This study concludes that there is no difference in life skills based on gender; however, regional differences do have an impact on life skills. Urban students were found to be more proficient in life skills due to better access to technological resources, social experiences, and diverse opportunities. In contrast, rural students require specialized training and life skills-based educational programs to strengthen their life skills. This research can serve as a guiding framework for higher education institutions. By integrating life skills education into the curriculum, co-curricular activities, and teacher training programs, the holistic development of students' personalities can be achieved.

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