

LIFE SKILLS OF ORPHAN ADOLESCENT STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a crucial stage of development where the individuals undergo lot of physical, psychological and social changes and finds it difficult to overcome this stage. The orphan adolescents finds it much more difficult to cross this development stage as they lack support and care from their parents and significant others in the family. Hence it becomes essential for the orphan adolescents to acquire life skills to enhance their psycho-social competence, to make right decision at the right time, sharpen their creative and critical thinking, strengthen their problem solving skill, develop interpersonal relationship skill and enable them to manage their stress and emotions efficiently and promote positive growth and development towards life. The present study aims to analyze the level of life skills of orphan adolescent students and suggest measures to enhance the life skills by adopting Descriptive research design. The researcher has selected 60 orphan adolescents as respondents by using Disproportionate random sampling method. Life Skills Assessment Inventory developed by Dr. Radhakrishnan Nair (2010) has been executed in the form of interview schedule and the reliability co-efficient of the scale under Split half method is 0.82. The findings and suggestions will be further discussed.

KEYWORDS: *Adolescence, Orphan Adolescent Students, Life Skills, Random Sampling, Research Design.*

Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial period of transition from childhood to adulthood. At this stage, individuals need psycho-social support and co-operation from parents and significant others in order to cross this stage of development. Orphan adolescents face lot of problems such as hunger, lack of access to education, lack of proper health, lack of care and concern, lack of love and affection from their parents, lack of hope about future, loneliness, lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation and social stigma makes them to become an easy prey for deviant behaviours such as violent behaviour, stealing, drug abuse etc. Hence, Life skills are very essential for the orphan adolescents to empower them with necessary skills needed for positive growth and development. Life skills will make them to take prompt decision needed for their life at the right time which may relate to their education, stay and other related matters. It will enhance the problem solving ability as they do not have parents to find solution for their problem, they will be very assertive in solving their problems. Life skills also enrich their creative and critical thinking and become aware of their own strength and weakness. Life skills promote their interpersonal relationship skill and they learn the ways to approach others in the society. It also develops their communication skill and learns to express their desires in a positive way. They will learn to cope up with stress and express their emotions in an acceptable way.

Review of Literature

- **Aviles, Ann Helfrich, Christine (2004).** "Life skill service needs: Perspectives of homeless youth". The study was focused with the objective to describe the service needs related to life skill development from the perspective of sheltered homeless youth. The sample consisted of 30 youth and

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Qualitative semi-structured life narrative interviews addressing the use of services at an emergency shelter were administered. Youth identified factors that influence their ability to access and utilize services, categorized as service availability, factors serving as access and/or barriers to services and lack of available services. Youth identify service delivery approaches and staff characteristics as impacting service delivery. Services such as counseling and childcare were identified as facilitating development and acquisition of life skills.

- **Dawit Assefa (2015)** made a study on "The status of Life skills Education provided to Orphan and Vulnerable Adolescents: The Case of Foka Primary school in DebreZeit town". The objective of the study was to measure the status of life skills education of orphan and vulnerable adolescents' and to explore the benefits and challenges that could promote the life skills for the orphan and vulnerable adolescents. Orphan and vulnerable adolescents (35 boys and 40 girls) were selected through simple random sampling (lottery technique). A self-prepared questionnaire for socio-demographic variables and life skills scale were administered as a tool for data collection. The findings revealed that male had higher level of overall life skills when compared with female orphan adolescents. The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between age, education, grade level, ethnicity and religion and the level of life skills.

Methods and Materials

Aims and Objectives

The present study aims to analyse the level of life skills of orphan adolescents with the following objectives

- To study the socio-demographic characteristics of the orphan adolescents
- To study the level of life skills of the orphan adolescents
- To suggest suitable measures to enhance the life skills of orphan adolescents.

Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between the age of the orphan adolescents and their level of life skills
- There is a significant difference between the gender of the orphan adolescents with regard to their level of life skills
- There is a significant difference between the education of the orphan adolescents with regard to their level of life skills
- There is a significant relationship between the ordinal position of the orphan adolescents and their level of life skills

Research Design

The researcher has adopted Descriptive research design to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the orphan adolescents and also their level of life skills in the dimensions of decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skill, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress.

Pilot Study

The research has been conducted in one of the orphan homes in Trichy and the researcher interacted with few adolescents staying in the orphan home and explained them about the need and purpose of the research.

Universe

The universe of the study consists of 112 orphan adolescents studying X standard and XI standard in which 70 adolescents (40 boys and 30 girls) and 42 adolescents (12 boys and 30 girls) were studying in X standard and XI standard respectively.

Sample

The researcher has adopted disproportionate random sampling method and selected 60 respondents for the study.

Tools of Data Collection

The researcher administered the Life Skills Assessment Scale developed by Dr. A. Radhakrishnan Nair (2010) in the form of interview schedule for collecting data and the reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.82 by using Split half method.

Results and Discussions**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Variables of the Respondents**

S. No.	Variable	No. of Respondents (N=60)	% of Respondents
1	Age		
	15 years	25	42
	16 years	26	43
	17 years	9	15
	Mean = 16 years		
2	Gender		
	Male	18	30
	Female	42	70
3	Education		
	X standard	40	67
	XI standard	20	33
4	Years of stay in the residential home		
	0 to 3 years	37	62
	4 to 7 years	20	33
	8 years and above	3	5
5	Ordinal Position		
	First Child	35	58
	Second Child	21	35
	Third Child	4	7
6	Parental Status		
	Paternal Orphan	22	37
	Maternal Orphan	30	50
	Both parents Died	8	13

It is inferred from the above table that nearly half (43%) of the respondents are 16 years of age 42% of the respondents are 15 years of age and 15% of the respondents are 17 years of age. It is inferred from the above table that nearly one-third (30%) of the respondents are male and two-third (70%) of the respondents are female. The table 1 indicates that nearly two-third (67%) of the respondents are studying X standard and one-third (33%) of the respondents are studying XI standard. It is inferred from the above table that nearly two-third (62%) of the respondents are in the residential home for less than three years one-third (33%) of the respondents are in the residential home for 4 to 7 years and 5% of the respondents are in the residential home for more than 8 years. With regard to ordinal position, it is inferred from the above table that more than half (58%) of the respondents are first child more than one-third (35%) of the respondents are second child and (7%) of the respondents are third child. It is inferred from the above table that half (50%) of the respondents are maternal orphans more than one-third (37%) of the respondents are paternal orphans and (13%) of the respondents fathers and mothers are died.

Table 2: Various Dimensions of Life Skills of the Respondents

S. No	Dimensions of Life Skills	No. of Respondents (N=60)	Percentage of Respondents
1.	Decision Making		
	Low	36	60
	High	24	40
2	Problem Solving		
	Low	30	50
	High	30	50
3	Creative Thinking		
	Low	35	58
	High	25	42
4	Critical Thinking		
	Low	31	52
	High	29	48
5	Effective Communication		
	Low	37	62
	High	23	38
6	Interpersonal Relationship skill		
	Low	31	52
	High	29	48

7.	Self-awareness		
	Low	30	50
	High	30	50
8	Empathy		
	Low	36	60
	High	24	40
9	Coping with Emotions		
	Low	31	52
	High	29	48
10	Coping with Stress		
	Low	39	65
	High	21	35
11	Overall Life Skills		
	Low	30	50
	High	30	50

The above table indicates that more than half (60percentage) of the respondents have low level of decision making ability and more than one-third (40 percentage) of the respondents have high level of decision making ability. This may be due to the hesitation which they have towards life and feeling of insecurity which hinders their decision making ability.

Regarding the problem solving ability, half (50 percentage) of the respondents have low level of problem solving ability and half (50 percentage) of the respondents have high level of problem solving skill. This may be due to the fact that they have been put in the residential home and not exposed to the outside world. With regard to creative thinking, more than half (58 percentage) of the respondents have low level of creative thinking skill and more than one-third (42 percentage) of the respondents have high level of creative thinking skill. This may be due to the present education system which insists only on bookish knowledge and not allowing the students to think out of box.

Regarding the critical thinking, more than half (52 percentage) of the respondents have low level of critical thinking skill and nearly half (48 percentage) of the respondents have high level of critical thinking skill. This may be due to innocent of the orphan adolescents. As far as effective communication is concerned, nearly two-third (62percentage) of the respondents have low level of effective communication skill and more than one-third (38 percentage) of the respondents have high level of effective communication skill. This will act as a great barrier even in their higher education

With regard to interpersonal relationship, more than half (52 percentage) of the respondents have low level of interpersonal relationship skill and nearly half (48 percentage) of the respondents have high level of interpersonal relationship skill. Due to lack of parental support, the orphan adolescent students always feel sad and do not try to enrich their interpersonal relationship. With regard to self-awareness, half (50 percentage) of the respondents have low level of self- awareness and half (50 percentage) of the respondents have high level of self- awareness.

As far as empathy is concerned, more than half (60 percentage) of the respondents have low level of empathy and more than one-third (400 percentage) of the respondents have high level of empathy skill. Regarding coping with emotions, more than half (52 percentage) of the respondents have low level of coping with emotions skill and nearly half (48 percentage) of the respondents have high level of coping with emotions skill. This is a major problem of the orphan adolescent students because they do not have parents or other family members to share their emotions and as a result they develop emotional instability.

Regarding coping with stress, nearly two-third (65percentage) of the respondents have low level of coping with stress skill and more than one-third (35 percentage) of the respondents have high level of coping with stress skill. This may be a problem and land up with lot of mental illness such as depression, aggressiveness etc. Regarding the overall level of life skills, half (50 percentage) of the respondents have low overall level of life skills and half (50 percentage) of the respondents have high overall level of life skills. This reveals that life skills training are much essential for them to develop a positive regard towards the reality of life.

Table 3: Karl Pearson's Co-Efficient of Correlation Between Age of the Respondents and the Life Skills in Various Dimensions

S. No	Age of the Respondents	Correlation Value	Statistical Inferences
1	Decision Making and Age	.068	P>0.05
2	Problem Solving and age	.142	P>0.05

3	Creative Thinking and Age	-.016	P>0.05
4	Critical Thinking and Age	.035	P>0.05
5	Effective Communication and Age	-.042	P>0.05
6	Interpersonal Relationship and Age	-.107	P>0.05
7	Self Awareness and Age	-.047	P>0.05
8	Empathy and Age	-.077	P>0.05
9	Coping with Emotions and Age	-.107	P>0.05
10	Coping with Stress and Age	-.047	P>0.05
11	Overall Life Skills and Age	-.047	P>0.05

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant relationship between age of the respondents with regard to life skills in the dimensions of decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skill, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions, coping with stress and overall level of life skills. Hence the researcher has accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the research hypothesis.

Table 4: 'Z' Test between the Respondents Gender with Regard to Various Dimensions of Life Skills

S.No	Gender of the Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Statistical Inferences
1	Decision making Male	18	23.33	3.18	Z=1.631 P>0.05
	Female	42	22.07	4.58	Not Significant
2	Problem Solving Male	18	19.61	3.58	Z=1.355 P>0.05
	Female	42	19.04	4.56	Not Significant
3	Creative Thinking Male	18	16.22	3.71	Z=.017 P>0.05
	Female	42	16.35	3.96	Not Significant
4	Critical Thinking Male	18	22.61	3.50	Z=1.570 P>0.05
	Female	42	22.35	4.85	Not Significant
5	Effective Communication Male	18	20.50	3.60	Z=.210 P>0.05
	Female	42	18.50	3.87	Not Significant
6	Interpersonal Relationship Male	18	23.44	4.03	Z=1.606 P>0.05
	Female	42	22.16	4.53	Not Significant
7	Self Awareness Male	18	23.44	4.92	Z=0.593 P>0.05
	Female	42	22.78	5.17	Not Significant
8	Empathy Male	18	20.05	3.96	Z=0.367 P>0.05
	Female	42	19.51	4.09	Not Significant
9	Coping with Emotions Male	18	27.61	5.56	Z=7.836 P<0.05
	Female	42	26.09	3.88	Significant
10	Coping with Stress Male	18	16.88	3.06	Z=.006 P>0.05
	Female	42	16.09	3.63	Not Significant
11	Overall level of Life Skills Male	18	213.72	25.42	Z=0.343 P>0.05
	Female	42	205.16	34.04	Not Significant

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between gender of the respondents with regard to life skills in the dimension of coping with emotions. The mean value further indicates that male respondents have higher level of coping with emotions than female respondents.

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference between gender of the respondents with regard to life skills in the dimensions of decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skill, self-awareness, empathy, coping with stress and overall level of life skills. Hence the researcher has accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the research hypothesis.

Table 5: 'Z' Test between the Respondents Study with Regard to Various Dimensions of Life Skills

S. No	Education of the Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Statistical Inferences
1	Decision making				Z=1.398
	X	40	23.47	4.36	P>0.05
	XI	20	20.40	3.11	Not Significant
2	Problem Solving				Z=5.225
	X	40	20.42	4.43	P<0.05
	XI	20	17.00	2.82	Significant
3	Creative Thinking				Z=0.531
	X	40	16.90	4.07	P>0.05
	XI	20	15.15	3.16	Not Significant
4	Critical Thinking				Z=0.105
	X	40	23.07	4.62	P>0.05
	XI	20	21.15	3.91	Not Significant
5	Effective Communication				Z=0.581
	X	40	19.70	3.61	P>0.05
	XI	20	17.90	4.20	Not Significant
6	Interpersonal Relationship				Z=.003
	X	40	23.25	4.41	P>0.05
	XI	20	21.15	4.09	Not Significant
7	Self Awareness				Z=1.225
	X	40	24.10	5.12	P>0.05
	XI	20	21.75	4.22	Not Significant
8	Empathy				Z=0.517
	X	40	20.40	4.21	P>0.05
	XI	20	18.40	3.34	Not Significant
9	Coping with Emotions				Z=1.438
	X	40	27.97	4.28	P>0.05
	XI	20	23.70	3.34	Not Significant
10	Coping with Stress				Z=0.313
	X	40	16.92	3.39	P>0.05
	XI	20	15.15	3.39	Not Significant
11	Overall level of Life Skills				Z=.003
	X	40	216.22	31.05	P>0.05
	XI	20	190.75	26.32	Not Significant

It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between standard studied by the respondents with regard to life skills in the dimension of problem solving. The mean value further indicates that the respondents who study X standard have higher level of problem solving ability.

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference between standard studied by the respondents with regard to life skills in the dimensions of decision making, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skill, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions, coping with stress and overall level of life skills. Hence the researcher has accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the research hypothesis.

Table 6: Karl Pearson's Co-Efficient of Correlation between Ordinal Position of the Respondents and various Dimensions of Life Skills

S. No	Ordinal Position of the Respondents	Correlation Value	Statistical Inferences
1	Decision Making and ordinal position	.077	P>0.05
2	Problem Solving and ordinal position	-.135	P>0.05
3	Creative Thinking and ordinal position	.159	P>0.05
4	Critical Thinking and ordinal position	.161	P>0.05
5	Effective Communication and ordinal position	-.006	P>0.05
6	Interpersonal Relationship and ordinal position	.215	P>0.05
7	Self Awareness and ordinal position	.189	P>0.05
8	Empathy and ordinal position	.187	P>0.05
9	Coping with Emotions and ordinal position	.053	P>0.05
10	Coping with Stress and ordinal position	.161	P>0.05
11	Overall Life Skills and ordinal position	.189	P>0.05

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant relationship between ordinal position of the respondents with regard to life skills in the dimensions of decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skill, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions, coping with stress and overall level of life skills. Hence the researcher has accepted the null hypothesis and rejected the research hypothesis.

Social Work Intervention

Social work intervention in the form of individual intervention is very essential for the orphan adolescents as it helps them to strengthen their ego and to share their feelings with the social worker which in a way helps to relieve them from the problem. Group work could be facilitated for the orphan adolescents in order to motivate them to gain self-confidence and face the reality. Life skills training need to be inculcated for the students to enable them to gain positive outlook towards their life in future. This training is to be given for the orphan adolescents in the form of role play, games, group discussions, debate and dance so that it becomes interesting for them and at the same time they will think about the programme after a while and gain insight about life skills.

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