

## INTERACTION EFFECT OF COGNITIVE LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION PROGRAMME AND GENDER OF MARGANALIZED STUDENTS' ON THEIR DECISION – MAKING

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### Abstract

*School as a formal agency of education plays an important role in developing an effective personality. Imparting life skills education along with school education can change the views of students about life. Essential life skills will help enhance a child's personality and strengthen their knowledge in all settings. Life skills education can be seen as empowering children and thus enabling them to take more responsibility for their actions (Orley, 1997). Incorporating Life skills into the fabric of our educational system can equip every child with the necessary tools to deal with the challenges confidently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and craft out a triumphant life. The present study aims to ascertain the interactive effect of life skills education program and gender on decision making among marginalized students of standard eighth. For this purpose, an intervention program on life skills education was prepared. The programme was of 25 to 29 hours. The aim of the research was to ascertain the interactive effect of the intervention programme and gender of marginalized students on their decision – making. The Total sample of the study was 320 students. 173 students were in experimental and 147 students in the control group respectively. The conclusion of the study was that the intervention programme was found to be effective in enhancing decision- making skill and gender of marginalized students. The decision- making of marginalized students was not influenced by gender.*

**Keywords:** *Life Skills Education Programme, Gender, Marginalized Students, Decision- Making (DM).*



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### Introduction

“Life skills programmes are those that seek to build the capacity of individuals to make decisions and take actions that positively influence their lives and the lives of those around them. A primary goal is to promote psychological as well as physical well-being.” (UN Women, 2012)

School as a formal agency of education plays an important role in developing an effective personality. Imparting life skills education along with school education can change the views of students about life. Essential life skills will help enhance a child's personality and strengthen their knowledge in all settings. Life skills education can be a remedial measure to eliminate the problems of academic backwardness, communication, behavioural and

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emotional problems. Research shows that it is a necessity for adolescents to learn life skills throughout their adolescent years to facilitate development of students to function successfully as social beings.

Research studies have shown that lack of life skills leads to problems in the student's life. Life skills education should be imparted in the adolescence stage. Identifying the children with lack of skills and conducting intervention in those areas will bring significant changes in one's life. Life skills education can be seen as empowering children and thus enabling them to take more responsibility for their actions (Orley, 1997).

Incorporating Life skills into the fabric of our educational system can equip every child with the necessary tools to deal with the challenges confidently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and craft out a triumphant life.

### **Need of the Study**

UNICEF lists ten life skills as most important under the domain of psychosocial and interpersonal skills. These are problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, decision making, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness building skills, empathy and coping with stress and emotions.

Decision making can be one of the life skills that can be inculcated in the students. Each decision presents its own challenges and different people have different ways of approaching the problems. In order to avoid making a wrong decision, a systematic approach is needed for decision making. It is important to teach them the steps and process involved for good decision-making. So the researcher developed an intervention programme on life skills education programme which focused on cognitive life skills. It studied interactive effect of life skills education programme and gender on decision-making of marginalized students.

### **Review of Related Literature**

In the present study prior researches were explored by the researcher in the area of life skills intervention programme and decision – making skill.

Seth (2002) conducted a research on planning life skills education for adolescents incorporating, relationship health and gender. Researcher concluded in his studies that various components of life skills such as: critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, interpersonal relationships, and stress and anxiety management, effective communications are interrelated. According to the study decision making skills includes creative thinking and critical thinking. Further the study reveals that the bases of sound interpersonal relation skill

are empathy and good communication. Language also plays an important role in learning stress management, reducing tension and developing healthy interpersonal relations. Study emphasis on learning important life skills which help in the holistic development of children and its significance cannot be ignored.

BharathSrikala, KV Kishore Kumar (2010) conducted a research on empowering adolescents with life skills education in schools – School Mental Health Program: Does it work? The researcher raises the question regarding Mental Health Promotion among adolescents in schools using life skills education (LSE) and for teachers as life skill educators. He also recommended LSE introduction into the school curriculum with the help of resources of schools and teachers. They evaluated at about 605 adolescents' students from two secondary schools in comparison to age, sex, socioeconomic status-matched adolescents from nearby schools. The adolescents comprises both sex of 14 to 16 years of age group studying in 8th to 10th standard in secondary schools, randomly selected 100 life skill educator-teachers. SPSS version 10 was used for data entry and analysis. The chi-square test was used for measurement and Student 't' test for continuous measures. Assessment showed improvement in adjustment of the adolescents with teachers, school and helped in increasing pro-social behavior, coping, and self-esteem, as there was a significant difference between the groups in the program. Findings reveal that Inclusion of life skills in curriculum will promote psychosocial competence and reduce problem behaviors in adolescents.

PrawitErawan (2010) conducted a study on developing life skills scale for high school students. This research is developed and based on principles of theory as well as empirical data investigation. The construction of the scale was created from the school students and personnel who explored life skills condition of the high school in every region or the adolescents aging from 12 to 17 years. The researcher developed scale through the calculation of T-scores for comparison of raw scores on all aspects. The level of life skills is identified into 3 classes including low, normal, and high. The result of identifying behaviour indicators through affinity diagram technique reveals that there are 125 behaviour indicators grouping into 37 variables based on 9 components of the life skills as follows: 1) Critical thinking with 10 indicators, 2) Creative thinking with 12 indicators, 3) Self-awareness with 13 indicators, 4) Empathy with 15 indicators, 5) Self-esteem with 14 indicators, 6) Social responsibility with 14 indicators, 7) Interpersonal relationship and communication skills with

17 indicators, 8) Decision making and problem solving skills with 17 indicators, and 9) Coping with emotion and stress skills with 13 indicators.

Sandhya Khera (2012) conducted a research on a study of core life skills of adolescents in relation to their self concept developed through Yuva School Life Skill Programme. The objectives of the study was to study the relationship between Core affective life skills and Self-Concept of adolescents developed through YUVA School Life Skills Programme and to study the relationship between Core cognitive life skills and Self Concept of adolescents developed through YUVA School Life Skills Programme. The study investigated the relationship between self concept and core life skills selected randomly 500 adolescents studying in secondary classes of sarvodaya schools situated in south Delhi under gone for YUVA (SLP). The Major findings of the study that there is a positive co-relation between Core Affective Life Skill and Self Concept of adolescents which means those who posses these essential skills are better confidence in all aspects.

Parvathy V, Renjith R Pillai (2015) conducted a study on impact of life skills education on adolescents in rural school. The background of this study is related to Life Skills like coping with difficulties they face in their personal, emotional and social development. The main aim of Life Skills Education is to provide deeper understanding of the life skills especially in the case of adolescents. The major objective of the study is to analyze the knowledge of life skills among adolescents and the impact of life skills education training on their knowledge level. The study is carried out in the coastal area school in the taluk of Karunagapally, Kerala, India. An experimental study method involving pre-post study is conducted with experiment-delayed group. The total sample is of 57 with 30 samples in experimental group and 27 samples in other experiment-delayed group. The result of experimental and experiment-delayed group were found almost similar regarding their socio-demographic status. The study reflected significant impact of Life Skills Education training on adolescents. This gives new vision to conduct more research in this field with reforms and modification of training modules. Contextualisation needs to cater the needs of the target group especially when it comes to the backward sections of the community.

Gayatri, et al (2017) conducted a study on life skills education program among high school children: An intervention study. In the present study an attempt was made to study the efficacy of life skills education program among high school children, who were referred for academic backwardness. The objective of the present study was to assess the needs of

referred children, impart the appropriate life skills and test the efficacy of the intervention. 15 ninth standard children consisting of 6 girls and 9 boys were referred by teachers in the school. The data was collected using life skills scale (Vrunda, 2011) and through interview method. The present study was carried out using AB Single Subject Design and the data was analyzed using non-parametric tests. Need Assessment show that the children had lack of self-awareness, creative thinking and critical thinking skills? Based on the findings, the researcher used life skills activities suggested by WHO and implemented using group work approach. The results show that out of 15 children 13 children's parents are either illiterates or educated up to 10th standard only and have very poor parental supervision. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test shows that there is a significant difference between baseline and post intervention in the domains of Self Awareness ( $p < 0.05$ ) Creative Thinking ( $p < 0.001$ ) and Critical Thinking Skills ( $p < 0.01$ ). It was also observed that parental supervision and academic performance had been increased significantly. The conclusion of the study was that life skills are very important in each stage of life to cope with the various situations. Schools should integrate life skills into their academic activities and teachers should be trained on this. There is a need to identify children who have lack of skills in rural areas and teach them in order to make them compete with their urban counterparts.

The review related literature shows gap in the area of training and enhancing the decision-making skill and life skill education programme. Very few researches have been conducted in this area.

### **Operational Definitions of the Terms**

1. **Decision- Making :** It is the ability of a student of selecting the best alternative from a series of actions to achieve a goal as measured by the score obtained by a student on decision – making (Mincemoyer and Perkins, 2001).
2. **Marginalized students:** refers to those students who are pushed to the margin of the society and are denied the privileges and resources available in the society. In a normal distribution those who get a score of less than  $-1\sigma$  and  $M - 1\sigma$  will be termed as marginalized section.
3. **Life skills Education:** An approach to train and enhance the cognitive skills of students belonging to the marginalized section of the society and prepare them to face the challenges of life.

### **Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

In the present study, English medium schools from South Mumbai affiliated to S.S.C board have been included. It excludes schools with other medium of instruction such as Marathi, Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati etc. Students from standard eighth were included for the study; other primary and secondary classes have been excluded. It also excludes schools affiliated to ICSE and CBSE boards. The present research studied the interactive effect of life skills education programme and gender on decision- making of marginalized students. It has excluded other student- background variables such as religion, mother- tongue etc. from its purview. The study adopted a quantitative approach.

### **Aim of the Study**

1. To ascertain the interactive effect of the intervention programme and gender of marginalized students on their decision – making.

### **Objectives of Study**

1. To ascertain the interaction effect of the intervention programme and gender on decision - making of marginalized students after partialling out the effect of pre-test score on decision - making.
2. To compute the effect size of the intervention programme and gender on decision - making of marginalized students.

### **Null Hypothesis of the Study**

1. There is no significant interactive effect of the intervention programme and gender of marginalized students after partialling out the effect of pre-test score on decision - making.

**Sampling Technique:** The study adopted a two stage sampling technique. At the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used. At this stage, five schools were selected which were known to admit students from low socio-economic status i.e. marginalized section. Students from these five schools were administered SES Inventory to identify the marginalized schools. This was followed by comparing the SES scores of students from these five schools using the technique of ANOVA. Here, the F-ratio was found to be 24.56 ( $P < 0.0001$ ). Hence, the Mean SES of the five schools was found to be significantly different. Now, the school which had the least SES mean scores was selected as the experimental school and the second least mean scores was identified as control group.

At the second stage, intact class were selected from these two schools using cluster sampling technique.

**Sample of the Study:** The total sample for the study was 320 students studying in eighth standard were selected from aided school in Mumbai city. The age range of the sample was 12+. The sample included students from urban area only. The control group consisted of 147 students and experimental group consisted of 173 students.

### **Tools used for the Study**

The following tools were used for data collection:

1. Decision – making- Mincemoyer, C. C., & Perkins, D. F. (2001)
2. Socio- economic status Inventory - Patel (2015)

**Intervention Programme:** The Intervention programme (treatment) included lessons on decision- making skill. The duration for each lesson was of an hour. A constructivist approach was used. The duration of the intervention programme was of 29 hours .The experimental group was taught about life skills education through the intervention programme whereas no treatment was given to the control group. The life skills programme highlighted the cognitive life skill of decision making. Activities were designed to enhance the decision- making skill among the marginalized students which included Five Step Decision Making, PWT (plungers, waders, testers and delayers) as decision makers, Decision Making Wheel and problematic situations were given. The activities enabled the students to understand, analyse and take decisions on daily life problems.

**Methodology of the Study:** The methodology of the present study was of an experiment type. The present study adopted a quasi-experimental design of the pre-test- post-test, non-equivalent groups design.

**Statistical Technique used for the Study:** The statistical techniques used for the data analysis was- one- way ANOVA and two – way ANCOVA.

### **Findings and Discussion of the Study:**

**H<sub>0</sub>1:** There is no significant interactive effect of the intervention programme and gender of marginalized students after partialling out the effect of pre-test score on decision - making.

This null hypothesis was tested using two- way ANCOVA in which the pre-test scores of students was controlled. The following table shows the relevant statistics of decision making of students by treatment and gender.

**Table 1: Relevant statistics for ANCOVA**

Group	GENDER		Total
	Girls	Boys	
	N	N	N
CG	98	49	147
EG	79	94	173
<b>Total</b>	128	192	320
	Mean	Mean	Mean
CG	64.05	65.15	64.78
EG	69.46	69.60	69.54
<b>Total</b>	67.39	67.33	67.35

The following table shows the ANCOVA for decision making of students by intervention programme and gender after partialling out the effect of the pre-test decision making of students.

**Table 2. ANCOVA for Decision Making of students by IP and Gender**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P
<b>Row (IP)</b>	1731.55	1	1731.55	14.93	0.0001
<b>Column (Gender)</b>	0.3	1	0.3	0	1
<b>Interaction (IP x Gender)</b>	39.4	1	39.4	0.34	0.5602
<b>Error</b>	36531.95	315	115.97		

The preceding table shows that (a) the F-ratio for rows i.e. intervention program is significant at 0.0001 level. Hence it may be concluded that there is a significant effect of intervention programme in the experiment group (b) The F-ratio for columns i.e. gender is not significant. (c) The F-ratio for interaction effect of intervention programme and gender is not significant. Hence it may be concluded that the Mean DM of students does not differ on the basis of the interaction effect of intervention program and gender of students. Since the F-ratio for DM when compared on the basis of treatment is significant; t- test was applied for further analysis. The t- ratio of DM of students on basis of treatment was 14.93 and is significant at 0.0001. Thus it may be concluded there is a significant effect of intervention programme and experiment group.

The effect size of the independent variable DM was computed using Partial eta squared formula which was found to be 0.0231. The effect size was small of the intervention programme.

**Conclusion**

It may be concluded that the decision – making of marginalized students of the experimental group was significantly greater than that of the control group. Thus the life skills education

programme was found to be effective in enhancing decision- making of students in the experimental group.

### **Discussion**

The intervention program i.e. treatment was developed by the researcher and was found to be effective for enhancing decision making of marginalized students. Making correct choices and decisions are important part of our life. Children should be encouraged and involved in the household activities so that they can learn the life skills at home. The teacher should enhance the life skills in the classroom by conducting activities that is required for a joyful life. Activities like problematic situations related to their life helped the students to understand how proper decisions can make a difference in the real life. The decision making wheel- made them aware about the steps to be taken and how to reflect upon the decisions taken.

Jayant Arrawatia(2009) conducted a study on the schools to be responsible for teaching life skill education to children.The study emphasizes life skill education imparted to our children to teach them the way of living the life, managing emotions, taking right decision, no use of drugs and alcohol and how to behave in a critical situation which is out of the text books and improve deteriorated parent-child relationships.

The study can be corroborated with Aparna.N and Raakhee (2011) a similar kind of study conducted on life skill education for adolescents and its relevance and importance. The study focuses on life skill education essential for the society and every education system should integrate and impart life skill education as a part of itscurriculum to develop positive health behaviour, positive interpersonal relationships and well- being of individuals.

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