



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND LIFE SKILLS AMONG ADOLESCENTS STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship between life skills and self-efficacy among adolescents, examining potential gender differences. The study was carried out in four different senior secondary schools of Amritsar City for 150 adolescents studying in class XII. The study was performed based on Self-Efficacy and Life Skills scale using a survey method. The findings reveal a linear relationship between life skills and self-efficacy, with no significant gender differences in self-efficacy. However, there is a disparity in life skills, with males displaying slightly higher levels. As life skills can be taught and may boost self-efficacy, understanding these connections is crucial for fostering adolescent success and personal growth. Addressing gender disparities in life skills may contribute to more equitable student outcomes. Based on a sample of 150 adolescents aged 17 to 18, this study finds a linear relationship between life skills and self-efficacy but no significant differences in self-efficacy between genders. However, there was a notable difference in life skills, with males exhibiting slightly higher levels on average than females.

Keywords: Adolescents, Self-efficacy, Life skills



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I. Introduction

This paper investigates the relationship between life skills and self-efficacy among adolescents to understand how these variables impact each other. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to achieve a goal or outcome, influencing motivation and behavior. Adolescents with high self-

efficacy are more likely to tackle challenging tasks and recover from setbacks, while those with low self-efficacy may avoid difficult goals. Life skills training can help develop the competence and confidence needed for career success. Adolescence is a crucial period for developing self-confidence and problem-solving skills. Developing self-efficacy and life skills like decision-making, communication, and problem-solving are essential for success in adulthood. Classroom-based programs and real-world experiences can help adolescents develop these skills. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and other classroom programs teach self-awareness, relationship management, leadership, and communication skills. Real-world experiences like volunteering, extracurricular activities, and community service allow adolescents to practice these skills in practical contexts.

Albert Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy in the 1970s (Bandura, 1970), and has since been extensively studied (Bandura, 1997; Pajares & Schunk, 2001; Lent et al., 1994). Life skills development also has a long history, with educational reformers like John Dewey and researchers like Benjamin Bloom emphasizing the importance of experiential learning and practical skills. The rise of "soft skills" in the 1980s and 1990s led to competency-based education and training programs, often targeting disadvantaged youth.

Recent research (Bandura, 1997; Fung et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2012; Macarangas & Kinnunen, 2016) has focused on the intersection of self-efficacy and life skills development among adolescents, leading to various programs and interventions. Theories exploring the importance of personal factors in shaping behavior and outcomes include Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012; Lent et al., 1994), Life Skills Theory (Botvin, 2000; Bond, Patton et al., 2004; World Health Organization, 1997), and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Vansteenkiste et al., et al., 2004).

Social Cognitive Theory posits that behavior is shaped by reciprocal interactions between personal factors, environmental factors, and behavior itself, with self-efficacy being a fundamental construct. The Life Skills Theory proposes that specific skills and abilities are essential for navigating life's challenges, and these can be taught and developed through structured interventions. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, with self-efficacy beliefs promoting competence.

The study examined the relationship between life skills and self-efficacy among adolescents, considering potential gender differences. Results showed a linear relationship between life skills and self-efficacy, with no significant gender differences. However, males displayed slightly higher life skills levels than females.

These findings emphasize the importance of understanding the connections between life skills and self-efficacy for fostering success and personal growth among adolescents. Addressing gender disparities in life skills development may contribute to more equitable outcomes for all students and highlights the need for further research.

The paper is divided into five sections. Section 2 reviews the literature, Section 3 discusses the methodology used in the study, Section 4 discusses the findings or results of the study and deliberates on the findings, and the last section, Section 5, concludes.

II.Literature Review

Sagone et al. (2020) found that Italian adolescents with higher self-efficacy perceived themselves as more capable of engaging and adapting in different situations, highlighting self-efficacy's importance in developing adaptive life skills. Yang et al. (2020) developed a tool to assess career guidance programs' effectiveness in building career self-efficacy, emphasizing the role of self-efficacy in shaping adolescents' career-related skills. Yuen & Datu (2020) found that a higher sense of meaning in life correlated with increased connectedness and academic self-efficacy, demonstrating self-efficacy's role in promoting key academic benefits among adolescents. Fairless et al. (2020) found that self-efficacy, among other factors, significantly contributed to academic achievement, reinforcing self-efficacy's importance in adolescents' success. Brown & Cinamon (2014) found that higher self-efficacy beliefs were associated with better decision-making and motivation for academic success, highlighting the role of self-efficacy in shaping adolescents' academic choices.

In summary, these studies underscore self-efficacy's significant role in adolescents' development of life skills, academic success, and career decision-making abilities.

Srikala and Kishor (2010) found that a school-based life skills program improved self-esteem and coping among adolescents. Maryam et al. (2011) showed that life skills training significantly increased high school students' self-esteem. Khera and Khosla (2012) reported a positive correlation between core affective life skills and self-concept in adolescents

participating in the YUVA School Adolescent Education Program. Tripathi and Shukla (2013) found that female teachers were more positive toward life skills education than male teachers. Anuradha (2014) observed differences in adolescents' life skills based on gender, college type, and city. Abdi and Davoudi (2015) found that higher levels of life skills, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication, resulted in better academic achievements among Iranian high school students. Prakash and Devi (2015) reported that Chennai's undergraduate students had moderate life skills levels, with no significant gender difference. Satyabhama and Eljo (2016) found that most adolescent girls had low life skills, suggesting the need for school mental health programs. Kauts and Kaur (2017) showed parental involvement affected students' life skills and academic achievement. Mooman and Cronin (2018) found that parental behavior significantly impacted life skills development among youth soccer players.

This paper explores the following hypothesis:

- There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and the life skills of adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in the self-efficacy of adolescents with respect to gender.
- There is no significant difference in the life-skill of adolescent boys and girls.
- There is no significant difference in self-efficacy with respect to life skills.

III. Methodology

This study used a stratified sample of 150 adolescents (75 boys, 75 girls) aged 17-18, randomly selected from various Amritsar City's private and government schools. The study gathered respondents' data on self-efficacy and life skills after ensuring they understood the research objectives. This data was then statistically analyzed.

The self-efficacy of higher secondary school students was evaluated using the Mathur and Bhatnagar self-efficacy scale, designed for those over 14 years. This scale includes 22 items across eight factors. The standardized scale applied to 800 participants (400 males, 400 females), contains positive and negative items for precise analysis. The scale's reliability, tested on 600 individuals (300 males, 300 females), ranged from 0.73 to 0.81 for males and 0.79 for females, significant at the 0.1 level. The concurrent validity of the self-efficacy scale, compared to expert ratings, ranged from 0.73 - 0.81 for males and 0.76 - 0.83 for females.

For scoring on the self-efficacy scale, there are 15 positives and 07 Negative items based on

the five-point scale ranging from "Always True of me" to "not at all true of me". Z-score ranged from +2.01 and above and -2.01 and below. They were awarded as excellent and very poor for seven such ranges. Various items were classified under 10 dimensions of life skills and scored; accordingly, the summation of all the scores obtained under each of the 10 dimensions would evolve as a global score for life skills. The background characteristics of the sample are given in Table 1.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age	12	32
		3.6
13	180	20.1
14	302	33.8
15	181	20.2
16	90	10.1
17	30	3.4
18	27	3.0
19	48	5.4
Male	530	59.4
Female	360	40.6
Order of Birth		
1 st Birth	257	28.8
2 nd Birth Later Born	441	49.4
	192	21.8

Table 1: Background Characteristics of the sample

For life skills, the study comprised 50 percent female and 50 percent male adolescent students studying in class XII in various schools in Amritsar. The higher the score, the higher the life skill level in each dimension. The Life Skills Scale norms were established using mean and standard deviation (SD) from 150 respondents' scores. Figure 1 displays the skills dimensions among the female and male surveyed adolescents.

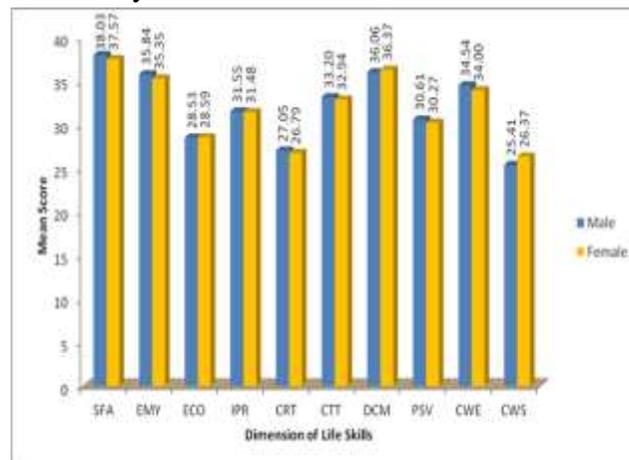


Figure 1: Dimensions of Skills - Gender-wise

The mean of the sum of LS is 311.28, while for the sum of SE is 65.62. The mean score of self-efficacy for various categories of Likert's scale denoting excellent, high, above average, etc. is shown in the figure 2 below.

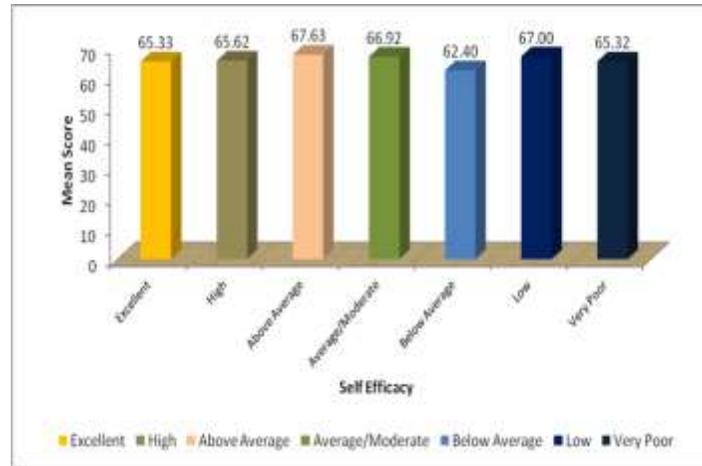


Figure 2: Likert's Scale Items' Mean Score: Self-Efficacy

IV. Results and Findings

The first hypothesis was framed to test whether there exists no significant relationship between self-efficacy and the life skills of adolescents. Pearson's correlation is negative (-0.23 at 0.666 (2-tailed) sign. level) between life skills and self-efficacy, implying that an increase in life skills might lead to a decrease in self-efficacy. However, this negative relationship is weak. Table 2 shows the correlation between self-efficacy and its various items.

	SFA	EMY	ECO	IPR	CRT	CTT	DCM	PSV	CWE	CWS
Pearson Correlation	.058	-.057	-.059	.016	.026	-.002	.005	.002	-.053	.054
Sum SE Sig. (2-tailed)	.277	.288	.269	.768	.623	.966	.923	.970	.323	.315
N	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350	350

Table 2: Correlation between SE and its Items

The correlation between self-efficacy and SFA, IPR, CRT, DCM, PSV and CWS is positive, while with rest of others is negative.

Hypothesis 2 has been framed to test whether there is a significant difference in the self-efficacy of adolescents with respect to gender. The mean (standard deviation) of the sum of Self-Efficacy for male and female were found be 65.651 (5.2015) and 65.309 (4.6543) respectively. In order to test hypothesis 2, we perform a t-test for self-efficacy for both the genders.

Independent Samples Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% C.I. of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Sum SE	.061	.804	.650	348	.516	.3429	.5276	-.6949	1.3806

Table 3: t-test for Hypothesis #2

Independent Samples Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	5% C.I of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
SFA	.396	.529	1.050	348	.294	.4686	.4461	-.4089	1.3460
EMY	.638	.425	1.320	348	.188	.4914	.3724	-.2410	1.2239
ECO	.968	.326	-.190	348	.849	-.0629	.3303	-.7125	.5868
IPR	.391	.532	.137	348	.891	.0743	.5428	-.9933	1.1418
CRT	.438	.509	.476	348	.634	.2571	.5400	-.8049	1.3192
CTT	.387	.534	.500	348	.618	.2629	.5262	-.7720	1.2977
DCM	3.071	.081	-.556	348	.579	-.3086	.5554	-1.4009	.7837
PSV	.001	.976	.573	348	.567	.3314	.5784	-.8062	1.4690
CWE	4.124	.043	1.205	348	.229	.5429	.4506	-.3433	1.4290
CWS	2.317	.129	-1.806	348	.072	-.9543	.5285	-1.9937	.0852
Sum_LS	.464	.496	1.974	348	.049	4.8800	2.4720	.0180	9.7420

Table 4: t-test for Hypothesis #3

Table 4 reveals that except for Sum_LS (aggregate life skills), no other life skill item shows significant variance between genders at a 5% significance level. Consequently, with a p-value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating significant life skills differences between male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis 4 postulates no significant difference in the life skills of adolescents with respect to high and low levels of self-efficacy.

Variables of self-efficacy	Groups	N	MEAN	S.D.	P value	Levels of significance
SFA	High SE	41	26.37	18.39	.552	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	28.68	16.704		
EMY	High SE	41	24.78	17.36	.390	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	28.00	16.36		
ECO	High SE	41	19.64	13.66	.338	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	22.41	13.39		
IPR	High SE	41	22.00	16.028	.614	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	23.71	14.459		
CRT	High SE	41	18.37	13.332	.366	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	21.00	12.92		
CTT	High SE	41	22.37	15.89	.396	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	25.34	15.67		
DCM	High SE	41	24.85	17.60	.633	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	26.63	16.023		
PSV	High SE	41	20.59	15.040	.410	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	23.27	14.264		
CWE	High SE	41	24.00	16.827	.509	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	26.39	15.805		
CWS	High SE	41	18.22	12.991	.993	P>0.05
	LOW SE	41	18.20	11.319		

Table 5: Difference in Life Skills of Adolescent Students w.r.t Self-Efficacy: Hypothesis #4

Table 5 shows that the t value of the SFA variable was -.597, that the number of degrees of that freedom on which this was 80, and that it was not significant at $P > 0.05$ (.552). the mean value for each group on average LOW SE obtaining high SFA (M= 28.68, SE=2.609) to HIGH SE (M=26.37, SE=2.872). This difference was not significant $t(80)=-.597 P<0.05$. The other levels of SE, t values of EMY, ECO, IPR, CRT, CTT, DCM, PSV, CWE, and CWS were -.864, -.963, -.506, -.908, -.853, -.479, -.829, -.663, .009 respectively, that the number of degrees of freedom on which this was 80 and these were not significant at $P>0.05$. These differences were not significant. Hence the hypothesis “there is no significant difference in life skills of adolescents with respect to high and

low levels of self-efficacy” is accepted.

V. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between self-efficacy and life skills among adolescents (15-18 years), focusing on potential gender differences. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's abilities to achieve goals, is crucial for student success, as it fosters intrinsic motivation and resilience in the face of setbacks. Life skills are essential for developing competencies that contribute to career advancement.

The results support a linear relationship between life skills and self-efficacy but no significant differences between genders. However, there was a notable difference in life skills, with males exhibiting slightly higher levels on average than females. The study highlights the need to further explore the disparities between genders and identify the reasons behind them, as life skills can be taught and are believed to enhance self-efficacy.

Future research should investigate the improvement of life skills among both genders and subsequently examine if enhanced life skills lead to increased self-efficacy. In conclusion, understanding the connections between life skills and self-efficacy is vital for fostering success and personal growth among adolescents, and addressing gender disparities in life skills could contribute to more equitable outcomes for all students.

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