



Essential Life Competencies in Education

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Abstract: Life skills encompass essential abilities and competencies crucial for effectively navigating everyday challenges. These skills span various domains, including communication, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, time management, and resilience. The study on life skills education utilized a systematic literature search across Springer, Google Scholar, Elsevier, and Web of Science databases. The selection process adhered to specific inclusion criteria, focusing on life skills intended to enhance the education sector and psychological constructs, with papers published between 2017 and 2023 from these databases. Exclusion criteria were applied to eliminate studies where life skills components were not verified or operationalized. Initially, 10 papers were removed due to their lack of relevant implications for education and psychological health. Ultimately, 26 papers meeting the criteria were selected for a comprehensive review, ensuring a focused and relevant analysis of the impact of life skills education.

Key Words: Life skills, Education, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, time management.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Life skills refer to a broad range of abilities and competencies that are essential for individuals to navigate the challenges and complexities of everyday life effectively. These skills encompass various domains, including interpersonal communication, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, time management, and resilience, among others. Developing life skills enables individuals to adapt to changing circumstances, cope with stress, build healthy relationships, achieve personal goals, and thrive in diverse social and professional settings. Essentially, life skills empower individuals to lead fulfilling and productive lives by equipping them with the tools and knowledge necessary to overcome obstacles and make informed choices. Life skills can be categorized into several main areas, each crucial for overall personal development and success. Interpersonal skills, for instance, encompass communication, empathy, and teamwork, enabling individuals to interact effectively with others and build strong relationships. Problem-solving and critical thinking skills involve analyzing situations, identifying solutions, and making informed decisions, fostering adaptability and innovation. Emotional intelligence, another vital component, involves self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, enabling individuals to manage emotions effectively, understand others' feelings, and navigate social interactions with sensitivity and tact.

Additionally, practical life skills such as financial literacy, time management, and organization are essential for achieving personal and professional goals. Financial literacy equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to manage finances responsibly, budget effectively, and make informed financial decisions, promoting financial stability and independence. Time management and organization skills help individuals prioritize tasks, manage their time efficiently, and maintain a balanced lifestyle, enhancing productivity and reducing stress.

Furthermore, resilience and coping skills are essential for overcoming setbacks, managing stress, and bouncing back from adversity. Developing resilience involves cultivating a positive mindset, building coping strategies, and seeking support when needed, fostering mental and emotional well-being. Finally, critical digital literacy skills are becoming increasingly important in the modern world, encompassing the ability to navigate digital technologies safely, evaluate online information critically, and engage in responsible digital citizenship. Life skills according to WHO 1996, include



decision making, creative thinking, communication, self-awareness, coping with emotions, problem solving, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, empathy, coping with stress¹. Life skills have been recognized as a crucial asset for fostering psychosocial, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and resilience abilities necessary to navigate daily challenges and actively participate in community engagement (Galagali 2011)². According to Savoji & Ganji, 2013, these abilities are acknowledged as significant factors in facilitating the management and resolution of the challenges that young individuals encounter as they strive to become productive members of society³.

Life skills education refers to the process of imparting essential skills and competencies that are necessary for individuals to effectively navigate various aspects of life. These skills encompass a broad range of abilities, including but not limited to communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, time management, and resilience. Life skills education aims to equip individuals with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in both personal and professional spheres, enhancing their overall well-being and success in life. This type of education is often integrated into school curricula, but it can also be delivered through non-formal education programs, workshops, and community initiatives. Life skills education is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Empowerment:** It empowers individuals to effectively manage the challenges and complexities of everyday life, promoting autonomy and self-reliance.
2. **Adaptability:** Life skills equip individuals with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and environments, fostering resilience in the face of adversity.
3. **Enhanced Communication:** Effective communication skills are vital for success in personal and professional relationships. Life skills education helps individuals develop clear and concise communication abilities, facilitating better understanding and collaboration.
4. **Problem-Solving and Decision-Making:** Life skills education cultivates critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, enabling individuals to identify issues, analyze options, and make informed choices.
5. **Social Interaction:** Interpersonal skills such as empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution are essential for healthy relationships and social cohesion. Life skills education enhances these abilities, fostering positive interactions and mutual respect.
6. **Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding and managing emotions is fundamental for mental well-being and interpersonal effectiveness. Life skills education promotes emotional intelligence, enabling individuals to recognize, express, and regulate emotions appropriately.
7. **Preparation for the Future:** In a rapidly changing world, life skills are increasingly important for success in academic pursuits, careers, and personal development. By equipping individuals with essential skills and competencies, life skills education prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of the future.
8. **Reduced Vulnerability:** Life skills education can contribute to reducing vulnerability to negative influences such as substance abuse, violence, and exploitation by empowering individuals to make healthy choices and assert their rights.

Overall, life skills education plays a vital role in promoting individual well-being, fostering positive relationships, and contributing to the development of resilient, competent, and empowered individuals capable of thriving in diverse environments. Saravanakumar 2020 explained that life skills education fosters the development of a society possessing a creative mindset, problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills, rational individuals, decision-making capabilities, strong social connections, effective communication, and interpersonal skills, along with empathy for harmonizing within the community⁴.

2. METHODOLOGY:

The life skills education were identified through a systematic literature search. The databases included in the search were Springer, google scholar, Elsevier and web of science. Twenty Six papers were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria.



Inclusion criteria

The life skills intended to improve some aspects in the education sector and psychological constructs.

The paper was published between 2017 and 2023.

The papers were from the above relevant databases.

Exclusion criteria

The life skills component are not verified or operationalized in the study.

Initially the papers were screened and 10 papers were removed due to lack of appropriate implications in the field of education and psychological health.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Shek, D.T., Lin, L., Ma, C.M. et al. (2021) conducted a series of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies among Grade 10 to Grade 12 students, teachers, and parents in Hong Kong, focusing on life skills education. The findings highlighted three key phenomena summarized by three "I"s. Firstly, there was unanimous agreement among all stakeholders regarding the importance of life skills in adolescents. Secondly, teachers and parents expressed concerns over the insufficiency of formal curriculum-based life skills education. Finally, many stakeholders perceived shortcomings in both life skills and moral development among adolescents, indicating incomplete adolescent development. These findings underscore the need for enhanced efforts in providing comprehensive life skills education to address the identified gaps and support holistic adolescent development⁵.

The research by Shovaz, Zareei, & Salehzadeh 2022 aimed to assess the effectiveness of life skills training focused on self-care in enhancing the mental health and quality of life of married Afghan women living in Taft. Employing a quasi-experimental design with a control group, the study involved 60 participants selected via purposive sampling and randomly allocated into experimental and control groups. The experimental group underwent 8 sessions of life skills training, while the control group did not. Data was collected using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQ-BREF). Statistical analysis using Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. Results indicated a significant increase in the mean scores of quality of life ($p < 0.0001$) and mental health ($p < 0.019$) post-intervention in the experimental group compared to pre-intervention. The study concluded that providing life skills training tailored to self-care for Afghan women can empower them to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, ultimately leading to improvements in their quality of life and mental health⁶.

The literature suggested a gap in understanding the perspectives of teachers and school leaders regarding the prioritization of life skills education and the efforts made in this regard. Therefore, the study by Antony & Tripathi 2023 aimed to investigate their views on which life skills were most crucial to develop at the school level. To conduct this study, a digital survey tool (Google Form) was created and distributed to both government and private school teachers and school heads across various states. The survey was available from April 26 to May 7, 2022, and received responses from 770 participants representing 17 different states. Descriptive and inferential analyses were employed to fulfill the study objectives. The findings indicated that self-awareness, effective communication, and problem-solving were perceived as the top three most important life skills to focus on. Interestingly, factors such as region, school type, and gender did not significantly influence the selection of these skills, whereas the respondent's designation (teacher/head) and years of experience in schools showed significant associations with their choices. The study concluded that prioritizing these three skills could potentially lead to the development of others in parallel, as they were interconnected. However, there were limitations to this research, including the reliance on digital data collected via survey links, resulting in non-uniform samples across states and limitations in generalizing the findings, even at the national level. Nonetheless, this study provided valuable insights for educators to prioritize life skills education effectively⁷.

In contemporary globalized societies, disruptions to traditional sociocultural structures and guidance increasingly challenged people's self-understanding, global perspectives, and well-being. These changes heightened the demand for competency in navigating diverse meaning systems and cultural pluralism. Developing generic life skills became essential for effectively handling everyday demands and challenges in multicultural complexity. As cultural globalization encompassed both similarities and differences across various locations, there was value in distinguishing between universal processes and culture-specific consequences through cross-cultural research. Ozer & Kamran 2023 indicated the association between life skills and the endorsement of peaceful dialogue, meaning in life, and perceived stress was examined across highly dissimilar contexts: the United States ($n = 312$) and Pakistan ($n = 285$). The findings



revealed that life skills were significantly linked to peaceful dialogue and meaning in life in both contexts. However, the negative relationship with perceived stress was significant only in the U.S. sample. In the U.S. sample, life skills were positively associated with peaceful dialogue and perceived stress through multicultural acquisition, whereas in the Pakistani sample, life skills were positively associated with meaning in life through ethnic protection. These results were discussed in terms of both similarities and differences, indicating that life skills are relevant capabilities for addressing globalized challenges in everyday life⁸.

In this pilot feasibility study conducted by Sanders, Turner & Baker et. al. 2023, the effects of a new trauma-informed parenting program, Family Life Skills Triple P (FLSTP), were examined in an open uncontrolled trial conducted in a regular service delivery context via video conferencing. FLSTP was tested as a group-delivered 10-session intervention, with program modules focusing on positive parenting skills (4 sessions) and adult life skills, including coping with emotions, nurturing relationships, self-care, addressing past issues, healthy living, and future planning. The study involved 50 parents with multiple vulnerabilities, stemming from social disadvantage or adverse childhood experiences, who had children aged 3–9 exhibiting early onset behavior problems. Data were collected at four points: baseline, mid-intervention (after Session 4), post-intervention, and a 3-month follow-up. Results indicated moderate to large intra-group effect sizes for changes in child behavior problems, parenting practices, and risk of child maltreatment, and medium effect sizes for parental distress, emotion regulation, and self-compassion. Both parents and practitioners reported high levels of satisfaction with the program. It was observed that parents with lower levels of parental self-efficacy, reduced personal agency, and higher baseline scores on a measure of child abuse potential were at greater risk of not completing the program. These preliminary findings suggest the need for a more rigorous evaluation using a randomized clinical trial⁹.

In a research conducted by Winarsunu, Azizaha & Fasikha et. al. 2023, students were consistently expected to possess good self-esteem; however, psychological issues such as excessive anxiety could lead to discomfort, avoidance of social situations, and interference with daily life, contributing to feelings of worthlessness. The study aimed to investigate the impact of self-esteem on anxiety through life skills training. Fourteen students participated as research subjects, divided into two groups: the experimental group and the control group. Measurement was conducted using self-esteem and anxiety scales. Data analysis utilized non-parametric methods, including Mann Whitney, Wilcoxon, and Spearman's Rank Correlation Test. The findings of the study revealed a significant reduction in anxiety levels associated with increased self-esteem through life skills training for students¹⁰.

An increasing number of researchers had explored the impact of training programs on coaches' and teachers' capacity to foster life skills development, along with athlete-related outcomes. Carrière, Trottier & Drapeau et. al. 2024 sought to investigate the development of life skills among high school student-athletes over a three-year program called Winner for Life (Gagnant pour la vie), delivered online to high school coaches and teachers. The program targeted five life skills over three years: (a) Goal Setting and Concentration (Year 1), (b) Healthy Eating Habits and Safety Behaviors (Year 2), and Physical and Mental Recovery (Year 3). A total of 148 student-athletes participated in the program, completing questionnaires at five different time points to assess life skills development. Changes over time were evaluated using a general linear repeated measures model, with missing data addressed through multiple imputations. Results indicated that student-athletes reported higher scores on the Goal Setting subscale at time 2 compared to time 1, and at time 3 compared to time 2, as well as on the Social Recovery subscale at time 2 compared to time 1. However, they reported lower scores on the Sleep Quality subscale at time 3 compared to time 2, and at time 5 compared to time 4. Furthermore, a significant interaction was observed between the student-athletes' age (mean = 13.5 years) at the start of the study and improvements on certain life skills subscales over time. The study suggested that the student-athletes did not show improvement in all life skills, potentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, which limited the program's influence from time 3 onwards. The findings should be interpreted considering limitations related to gender distribution and ceiling effects on student-athletes' scores. Recommendations for enhancing future life skills programs were discussed, such as involving parents in delivery and promoting life skills teaching over time¹¹.

Yamada, Tsuchiya & Yamaguchi 2022 aimed to investigate whether life skills served as negative predictors of stress responses in high school student-athletes and as moderators of the relationship between stressors related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and stress responses during the pandemic. A survey was conducted from July to August 2020, with 1528 high school students (717 females and 811 males) who were members of sports clubs in Japanese public high schools participating. The Stressors for Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Stress Response Scale for Athletes, and the Daily Life Skills Scale were utilized to assess COVID-19-related stressors, stress responses, and life



skills, respectively. The findings revealed that three factors of personal life skills—planning, self-esteem, and positive thinking—and one factor of interpersonal life skills—intimacy—were significant negative predictors of stress responses. Conversely, COVID-19-related stressors and one factor of interpersonal life skills—leadership—were significant positive predictors. Additionally, positive thinking was found to moderate the relationship between stressors and stress responses. These findings underscore the importance for educators and practitioners to consider effective life skills in challenging situations and to implement comprehensive life skills programs for student-athletes¹².

While a significant body of research had previously demonstrated the psychosocial benefits of specialty camps employing therapeutic recreation (TR) for children and adolescents with serious illnesses, there remained a gap in understanding the long-term outcomes of the camp experience. The primary objective of study by Papp, Somogyi & Wilson et. al. 2023 was to examine the life skills that young individuals living with serious illnesses deemed important in their daily lives and how they perceived the camp experience as crucial in acquiring those skills. The research utilized a retrospective online survey method. The questionnaire, developed based on previous interviews with camp alumni, included a series of questions regarding the subjective importance of various life skills and the camp's role in their acquisition. Descriptive analysis and principal component analysis were conducted. Results revealed that perseverance, the ability to forge close relationships with peers and appreciate diversity, empathy, relationship skills, self-confidence, and teamwork were the areas considered subjectively important by youth and attributed to the camp in their personal development. Participants deemed the camp's role significant in fostering all 18 skills, particularly in cultivating individual growth skills and fostering the ability to embrace the moment with an empathic and open presence. Significant correlations were observed between demographic groups in terms of both the perceived daily importance of these skills and the camp's role in their acquisition. The findings were discussed within the framework of Basic Needs Theory, and implications were drawn for camp program planning based on the identified demographic differences¹³.

Suburbanization was known to impact an individual's health. The aim of this study was to explore the influence of life skills training on the hope and health of women referred to comprehensive health service centers in the suburbs of Khoy city. Safaralizadeh, Azarsa & Zeinali et. al. 2022 employed a quasi-experimental design (Pre-test/Post-test with a control group). Two out of 5 comprehensive health service centers were selected as intervention and comparison groups, with 37 women randomly chosen from each center. Initially, both groups completed the Goldberg general health questionnaire and the Miller hope questionnaire. Subsequently, the intervention group received life skills training. Following the training, both groups underwent re-evaluation. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and dispersion indices, while inferential statistics employed Mann-Whitney and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests. The group training in life skills showed no significant impact on hope (P .value = 0.972) or various aspects of health (P .value = 0.421). It appeared that interventions such as life skills training alone were insufficient to enhance hope and health among suburban women. It is possible that enhancing social infrastructure and improving overall living conditions in suburban areas would be necessary to promote hope and health¹⁴.

Mental health issues among adolescents were recognized as global public health concerns, including in China. However, there was a lack of research that examined the influence of parental absence status, life skills, and personality traits on the mental health of adolescents in rural China. This cross-sectional study conducted by Mao, Yang & Tan et. al. 2022 aimed to explore the impact of parental absence status, life skills, and personality traits on the mental health of adolescents in rural China. The study utilized a self-developed demographic questionnaire, Mental Health Test (MHT), Middle School Student Life Skills Rating Scale, and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to assess the factors associated with different domains of MHT. Adolescents in rural China reported a high prevalence of mental health disorders (MHDs), including learning anxiety, sensitiveness, self-accusation, and a tendency towards physical symptoms. Despite 75.6% experiencing parental absence, this factor was not found to be associated with MHT after controlling for all other variables. Better mental health was linked with life skills such as communication skills, interpersonal morality, self-efficacy, and stress coping. Additionally, the personality trait of instability-neuroticism was positively correlated with MHDs. Adolescents in rural China exhibited high rates of MHDs. Communication skills, interpersonal morality, self-efficacy, stress coping ability, and instability-neuroticism were identified as important factors associated with MHDs¹⁵.

Life skill-based training was deemed crucial for individuals with intellectual disabilities to regain autonomy and achieve social inclusion. Virtual reality (VR) was identified as a promising tool that offered a novel application, which was both engaging and secure. The aim of this study done by Cheung, Ni & Tam 2022 was to assess the training outcomes of a VR-based multiple life skill training program on life skill performance, self-efficacy, memory, cognitive, and behavioral



functions through a multicenter randomized controlled trial. A total of 145 participants with intellectual disabilities were enrolled in the randomized controlled trial, divided into three intervention arms: VR ($n = 42$), traditional ($n = 53$), and control ($n = 50$). The life skill tasks included grocery shopping, cooking, and kitchen cleaning. Outcome measures comprised performance scores for the tasks, self-efficacy scale, digit span score, and Frontal Assessment Battery score, assessed by blinded evaluators. The pre-post effects of each group were assessed using separate Wilcoxon Signed-rank tests. VR training significantly enhanced cooking and cleaning performance, as well as memory span. In contrast, traditional training notably improved shopping, cooking, and cleaning tasks. The generalized estimating equation analyzed the effects between groups, adjusted for age, gender, and intelligence quotient (IQ). VR demonstrated significantly greater improvement effects in cooking and cleaning compared to the control group, and memory span compared to traditional training and control groups. IQ was found to be a significant confounding factor in the training effect. Future research may explore the development of artificial intelligence to tailor programs based on IQ levels¹⁶.

During adolescence, children often experience heightened emotional distress due to limited coping abilities following significant biopsychosocial changes. Lee, Wu & Chang 2020 investigated the initial effectiveness of a modified life skills training (LST) program tailored to Taiwan school settings and children's life experiences compared to a lecture-oriented curriculum. They employed a posttest-only control group design involving 39 elementary schools, with 21 randomly assigned to the experimental group receiving LST and 18 to the control group receiving education as usual (EAU). The LST comprised 8 units totaling 27 sessions. Demographic information, depression levels, and emotional regulation were assessed. The results revealed that students in the LST group reported significantly higher scores on cognitive reappraisals compared to those in the EAU group¹⁷.

The aim of this study by O'Sullivan, Gogan & Doyle 2021 was to investigate the perceptions and utilization of a CBT-oriented training program, the Decider Life Skills program, among mental health student nurses. The undergraduate nursing degree program posed significant challenges, placing high demands on students both professionally and personally. Mental health nursing students encountered specific stressors, such as working with individuals experiencing significant psychological distress, leading to feelings of overwhelm and emotional burden. It was essential for student nurses to receive support in managing professional and personal difficulties during their practice placements. The Decider Life Skills program, a one-day training initiative aimed at enhancing resilience and coping skills, was provided to mental health nursing students during their internship placements, with the goal of equipping them with tools to maintain their well-being while in clinical settings. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, and data were gathered through two 45-minute focus group interviews with mental health students ($n = 10$) during their internship placements. These students had undergone a one-day Decider Life Skills training before starting their clinical placements. The study received full ethical approval. Participants indicated that they found the skills taught in the training program easy to comprehend and apply in both their professional and personal lives. The study's findings regarding the beneficial effects of the Decider Life Skills program on students' ability to cope with stress and prioritize their mental health were significant. This underscores the importance of safeguarding the emotional well-being of mental health nursing students and supporting them in becoming resilient practitioners¹⁸.

Sayari, Vakilian & Khalajinia et. al. 2022 examined the impact of skill-based sexual enhancement counseling on the quality of life (QOL) of women with multiple sclerosis. This study utilized a quasi-experimental design. Forty-four patients diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and their spouses ($n = 88$) voluntarily participated, meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The intervention group ($n = 22$ couples) received a skill-based sexual enhancement counseling program consisting of six sessions. Both groups underwent pretest-posttest evaluations, and three months later, they completed the standard MSQOL54 questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS-20, employing descriptive and inferential statistics (repeated measures ANOVA, chi-squared test, and t-test). After three months, there were significant improvements in psychological quality of life ($P = 0.001$) and overall QOL ($P = 0.008$). The findings suggested that the skill-based sexual enhancement counseling program effectively enhanced QOL. The results indicate that the skill-based sexual enhancement counseling program is effective in enhancing quality of life. Thus, it is recommended that healthcare providers incorporate this enhancement program alongside other rehabilitation and medical services to improve the quality of life of patients with multiple sclerosis¹⁹.

Kase, Ueno & Shimamoto et. al. 2019 examined the causal relationships between sense of coherence (SOC) and life skills. The participants, consisting of 248 university students (147 men, 101 women) with a mean age of 20.4 years ($SD = 0.9$ years), completed the Japanese version of the SOC-29 scale and the Life Skills Scale for Adolescents and Adults. Structural equation modeling, including a synchronous effects model and a cross-lagged effects model, revealed



that life skills had a significant effect ($\beta = .55$ to $.75$, $p < .01$) on SOC. These results indicated that enhancing life skills played a role in strengthening SOC. The findings contribute valuable insights into the dimensions and stages of SOC and life skills, which can inform the development of theoretical models and frameworks for future practical studies aimed at enhancing SOC and implementing life skills training²⁰.

King, Kingsnorth & Morrison et. al. 2021 investigated parents' perspectives on the advantages of residential immersive life skills programs for youth with disabilities. Three- and 12-month post-session interviews were conducted with ten parents of youth with disabilities who had participated in one of three residential immersive life skills programs during three years of data collection. A deductive thematic analysis was employed to outline the types of benefits reported by parents. Parents discussed foundational benefits that were universally applicable to youth, as well as more individualized emergent benefits. Foundational benefits included the acquisition of life skills, increased awareness of future opportunities, and improvements in self-confidence. Emergent benefits included enhanced comfort in new situations, changes in motivation and initiative, maturity and responsibility, and increased community involvement. Parents noted various benefits resulting from participation in these youth transition programs. According to parents, these programs effectively prepared youth for the transition to adult roles by fostering awareness of life possibilities, amplifying existing abilities, and accelerating growth in adaptability, motivation, maturity, and community engagement. The findings underscore the value of residential immersive life skills programs and can help elucidate their diverse effects for parents and youth considering enrollment²¹.

Life skills training facilitated the resolution of family issues by family members. The aim of the study by Hosseinkhanzadeh & Yeganeh 2013 was to assess the impact of life skills training on marital satisfaction. The study employed an experimental method with a pretest-posttest design and included a control group. The sample comprised 40 individuals (20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group). The life skills training program consisted of 8 sessions for the experimental group. The research instrument used was the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (short form). The findings revealed that life skills training had a positive effect on marital satisfaction²².

Residential immersive life skills (RILS) programs were designed for youth with disabilities to foster the acquisition of adaptive behaviors necessary for navigating adulthood. Duff, King & McPherson 2019 aimed to explore parents' experiences throughout the RILS program journey, examining shifts in parenting approaches and the implications of these changes. The study utilized twenty-three qualitative interviews with nine parents of youth who participated in RILS programs in Ontario, Canada. Three rounds of interviews were conducted: Pre-program, 3 months post-program, and 12 months post-program. Data analysis followed a constructivist grounded theory approach. The interviews captured parents' experiences of the RILS program journey and how their parenting evolved as a result. Three main themes emerged: (1) Anticipation of RILS programs generated both positive and negative tensions in parenting; (2) Parenting strategies shifted after RILS programs; and (3) Limited changes in parenting resulted in challenges for youth, hindering their future growth. Attending RILS programs can prompt shifts in parenting approaches, which may have complex implications for parents as they strive to support their children's development. This study provides insight into the impact of parenting during the transition from adolescence to adulthood and offers recommendations to support parents in promoting youth development of life skills during this transitional period²³.

Kazemi, Momeni & Abolghasemi 2014 assessed the effectiveness of life skills training in enhancing the self-esteem and communication skills of students with dyscalculia. This study employed a quasi-experimental design with pre-test/post-test measures and a control group. The sample consisted of 40 students with dyscalculia selected from primary school students with learning disabilities in Ardebil city, who were then divided into two groups: an experimental group ($n=20$) and a waiting list group ($n=20$). The experimental group underwent 8 sessions of life skills training, each lasting one hour. Data were collected using the Key-Math Mathematics Test, Self-Esteem Scale, and Social Developmental Questionnaire. MANCOVA results revealed a significant improvement in self-esteem and communication skills following life skills training. Moreover, students in the experimental group demonstrated a greater increase in self-esteem and communication skills compared to those in the control group. These findings suggest that life skills training can effectively enhance the utilization of self-esteem and communication skills²⁴.

Despite the recognized need for mental health and life skills promotion among young people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), there is limited evidence for accessible and effective interventions. The objectives of study by McMullen & McMullen 2018 were to assess the effectiveness of a school-based, teacher-led, manualized intervention



focused on life skills in increasing self-efficacy, reducing internalizing problems, fostering prosocial behavior, and cultivating a sense of connectedness among secondary school students in Uganda. A cluster-controlled, before-and-after study was conducted in four schools, with one school serving as a wait-list control. A total of 620 students aged 13–18 completed baseline questionnaires, with 170 of them completing the same measures post-intervention. Additionally, interviews were conducted with four teachers and four students who had completed the intervention. Teachers from the intervention schools received three days of training on the life skills manual and subsequently delivered the program over the course of a school year. The manual, authored by the lead researcher with assistance from local facilitators, included 24 lesson plans aimed at promoting mental health and resilience, enhancing communication skills, and teaching life skills for the present and future. The training sessions also provided guidance on the pedagogical approaches necessary for effective delivery of this content. Despite its limitations, such as the sample size at post-intervention and the absence of randomization, the study illustrated the feasibility of implementing an impactful, school-based, culturally relevant life skills intervention. This intervention engaged local facilitators in the process of design, implementation, and evaluation²⁵.

Savoji & Ganji 2013 assessed the impact of the Life Skills Training (LST) program on the mental health of university students. The sample consisted of 60 undergraduate students (20 boys and 40 girls) who participated in a "life skills" workshop held at the university counseling center. The workshop comprised 12 sessions, each lasting 2 and a half hours. A pretest-posttest design without a control group was utilized. Prior to and after the LST program, participants completed the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ, 28 items). Data analysis involved t-tests for dependent groups and covariance analysis. The findings indicated a significant improvement in the mental health of students following the LST program, with girls deriving greater benefits compared to boys. This study suggests that life skills training can be a valuable tool for enhancing the mental well-being of university students²⁶.

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