

Role of Life Skills Education in Empowering Secondary School Students: An Explanatory Study

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Abstract

Life skills Education enables secondary students to understand critical situations intelligently and wisely and behave in a logical way to solve life-related problems (Mulyadi, Suryadi, & Aliyyah, 2020; Life Skills-Based Education, 2014). The study intended to investigate the extent to which secondary school students possess life skills and explore gender-wise (male/female) and school-wise (public/private) differences among secondary school students about life skills development. The study was quantitative following the explanatory research method. A total of 220 secondary school students were selected as a sample for the study using a proportionate sampling technique. To collect data a structured questionnaire was employed. The data analysis illustrated the positive perception of most of the participants (male/female) about having essential life skills. However, a significant difference was observed between the perception of female and male students regarding life skills development among them. This was also concluded that students of private schools have a strong perception about possessing essential life skills as compared to the students of public schools. So, it is recommended to arrange equal learning opportunities for both male/female students in private/public schools to promote essential life skills among young students.

Keywords: life skills, life skills education, empowerment, satisfaction of students

Introduction

Life skills education is being emphasized throughout the world to ensure the survival of

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young people in this demanding world. Generally, the life skills education seeks to develop skills and promote the behavior of students that help them to take decisions of their life, accept responsibilities of their decisions, effectively communicate, manage their emotions, develop strong relationships and get overall success in their life (Baird, et al., 2021; Meyer & Jones, 2015). Life skills are important in everyone's life, especially in adolescence, and equip them with key skills to deal with various matters of their life and handle the successfully challenging situation (Coskuner, Büyükçelebi, Kurak, & Açak, 2021).

Various researches supported that developing life skills is a way to develop positive and productive youth. It helps people to adapt to the times and circumstances (Bastian, Burns, & Nettelbeck, 2005; Coskuner, Büyükçelebi, Kurak, & Açak, 2021). There are certain assumptions related to life skills which are some key features of young student's life such as through learning the life skills they become able to make reason-based decisions when equipped with proper knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Education-based on life skills enable students to learn how to respond the socio-cultural issues like school conflicts, use of drugs, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS. However, life skills can be linked to five key areas of young people's lives, such as psychological abilities; promoting health; use of drugs; prevention of teen pregnancy; peace education; and support for self-respect and self-esteem.

The transitional stage of young children is a very crucial phase of life that is manifested through changes in physical, mental, social, and emotional changes. Internal buffers in society guide adolescents toward adulthood when controlled and supported by their loved ones. Life skills education at this stage worked as a development approach. The WHO proposed in 1997 that internalizing basic essential life skills education could help adolescents to cope with the challenges of this complex world and lead them towards success. Young students also need to learn to realize their strengths and weaknesses for effective adjustment in uncertain life situations. These basic skills will assist young children to cope with various problems in their emotional, personal, and social development. Life skills are primary skills that help young people to develop mental health and abilities while facing the realities of life. With life skills, one can find alternatives, weigh the pros and cons and make appropriate decisions in solving every problem or problem as it arises.

Secondary education is recognized as an important stage because children's transit from childhood to adolescence brings about rapid changes in the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of their personality (Vineeta & Avinash, 2012). In addition to these transitional changes, societies are evolving to be more diverse and demanding, pushing young people into more complex and challenging situations and demanding key skills for young people that not only improve their quality of life and social cohesion but also maintain and even build as healthy, productive and independent individuals (Keith, Stastny, Agnew, Brunt, & Aune, 2017). However, the life skills education mainly focuses on the psychological and social competencies development among students that are expected to be the part of curriculum not only as knowledge but involve behavior, skills, and attitudes of young children that in result enable them to take responsibility for their actions and decisions, promote their overall wellbeing, and deal their everyday matter effectively (Bilal, 2019; Kaya & Deniz, 2020).

Learning life skills, especially in everyday life, can be a great way to help young children to show acceptable behavior, have strong interpersonal relationships, and get their interests.

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Life skills education teaches people to apply their knowledge, beliefs, and skills to make appropriate decisions related to various tasks and in different situations. These life skills assist young children to choose suitable strategies to adopt a healthy lifestyle; provide social support environmental and cultural factors to director adolescents to behave creatively and positively for a successful life. Moreover, the acquisition of essential life skills can change young children's perceptions of themselves and others; it helps to develop self-esteem, confidence, self-efficacy, that impact their way of thinking and interactions with other individuals. Hence, life skills education is realized as a key tool to promote the overall well-being of young students which also helps them prevent behavioral problems and health-related problems.

Life skills have been defined by various people in different perspectives but sometimes overlap the list. According to researchers life skills are commonly targeted in educational and various youth training programs but often poorly conceptualized (Duerden & Witt, 2011). The World Health Organization (WHO) suggested the most commonly adopted concept of life skills as a positive and adaptive behavior that promotes the abilities of individuals to deal courageously and effectively with their everyday challenges/demands. Scott (2015) has further explained life skills under four heads that are 'learn to know, to do, to be, and to live together. The first head 'learn to know' involves knowing about oneself, others, and contexts; 'learning to do' is about decision-making skills, creative thinking, and solving their problems; 'learning to be' mean accepting responsibilities, metacognitive skills, self-regulation, and lifelong learning; and finally, 'learning together' involves diversity, teamwork, and collaborative activities, civics and citizenship, and intercultural and global competences (Gupta, 2021).

Recent researches proved that developing life skills among children could be best by providing relevant educational interventions and training in schools (Schurer, 2017). The children need to be indulged in practical learning so that their lifelong learning could be ensured. In this context, the philosophical assumptions follow the experiential learning concept that provides a strong basis and adds students' reflective and participative contributions to their learning experiences (Wurdinger & Allison, 2017). It is suggested that teachers have to offer an independent and practical learning environment to ensure enriched and lifelong learning among young students (Croes & Visser, 2015; Mulyadi, Suryadi, & Aliyyah, 2020). Keith, Stastny, Agnew, Brunt, and Aune (2017) supported the ideas of social cognitive and self-efficacy theories as key elements of behavior change of young students that positively influence their behavior and enable students to view their capabilities and change agent and handle challenges of life.

Life skills equip students with certain abilities such as transforming learned knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes into practical skills such as what to do, how to do, and when to do, to resolve any problem (Duerden & Witt, 2011). These skills enable secondary students to understand critical situations intelligently and wisely and behave in a logical way to solve life-related problems. The successful acquirement and application of essential life skills greatly e.g. the way they believe, feel, and think about others and themselves (Miri & Rasedinejad, 2020; Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss, & Ahmed, 2019).

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Contextual background of the study

Secondary education in Pakistan refers to two years of education IX and X grades. This is locally termed as “Matriculation or Metric”. After the successful completion of the matric examination, the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education awards students with Secondary School Certificate (SSC). In Pakistan, the young people are more than two hundred million, that demand extra efforts to equip this young generation with essential knowledge, skills, and competencies including critical and creative thinking, decision making, self-management skills so that they could positively contribute to creating a healthy society and prosperous country (IIPS, 2021). Kazim (2021) pointed out that education doesn’t mean only to provide knowledge acquisition to young children, but it should be a key source of promoting their overall well-being and comprehensive personality. As the global commitments also emphasize the promotion of lifelong learning through providing equal and quality education mentioned in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In Pakistan, the term life skills were introduced in the National Education Policy 2009 and it was emphasized that our curriculum must include all essential life skills especially for young students. Later, in the National Education Policy 2017 the term ‘Life Skills’ has been significantly emphasized and highlighted in various chapters of the document. In the introduction part, it is highlighted that global demands insist to develop ‘human capital’ among students that involve constructive, creative, and productive individuals; and overall wellbeing. “Pakistan also has adopted various international commitments such as SDGs (goal 4), MDGs (goal 2), and EFA as its agenda for national development” (GoP, 2017). Moreover, the main focus of the National Education Policy (NEP 2017) was to “bring explicit improvement in the education quality by addressing students learning needs; learning content based on knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes; and learning tools in terms of Literacy, communication, problem-solving, and numeracy skills” (p. 5-6). The provision of equal and quality education for all is also mentioned in Pakistan’s Constitution 1973 as article 25(a) that emphasized compulsory and free education for all 5-16 years old children and this is the state’s responsibility and basic right for every child. As the educational policies emphasized the provision of equal and quality education to all especially the secondary school students irrespective of gender biases (male and female) and various education systems (private and public).

The rationale for the study

Adolescence is a critical period when every individual interacts with sudden physical, emotional, psychological, and behavioral changes. About these changes, the young people are not well aware and prepared which causes a lot of complications in their lives such as anxiety and depression that sometimes leads them towards such courses of action (drug addiction, bullying, cheating, etc.) which could ruin their lives (UNICEF, 2006; Mohammadzadeh, Awang, Hayati, & Ismail, 2017). Education is considered as the most crucial factor that enables young people to avail themselves the chances of productive and responsible life opportunities. It is recognized that secondary education should prepare students for a productive life and enable them as peaceful and responsible citizens by realizing their capacities and strengths to be successful and how to use it effectively to live a healthy life (Kazmi, 2021). Moreover, education is expected to promote secondary pupils’ social

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adjustment and positive that help them solve their problems effectively and meet the everyday challenges (Life Skills-Based Education, 2014; Baird, et al., 2021). The development of essential life skills is now increasingly considered one of the key components of social and national development and solidity.

The overarching objective of this research was to investigate the extent to which life skills have been developed among secondary school students through the formal education system in Pakistan. Moreover, efforts were made to explore the gender-wise (male/female) and school-wise (public/private) differences in life skills development among secondary school pupils. Various stakeholders e.g. parents, students, community, policymakers' curriculum developers, and most importantly future researchers will be benefited from the outcomes of this research as this research would be helping to understand the importance of life skills education as an emerging trend for the comprehensive development of young students and comprehend the status of life skills development among students, particularly at the secondary level. This will also enhance the educationists' and parents' awareness about the children's life skills competencies for assisting them to be independent and lifelong learners. Furthermore, the study will be a great value-added to the limited related literature available in Pakistan on this topic. Considering the study objectives following were developed:

1. To what extent life skills are being developed in secondary school students?
2. How well public and private schools are promoting life skills among their students?
3. To what extent various life skills have been developed among male and female students?

Moreover, the following hypotheses were constructed to answer the above-mentioned questions:

H₀₁ Male and female secondary school students don't have significant differences in their opinions about essential life skills development

H₀₂ Private and public school students don't have significant differences in their perception about essential life skills development

Methodology

The study was quantitative following the explanatory research design. A proportionate random sampling technique was used to select the sample size for the study. At first, 11 schools (10%) were randomly selected from 110 of the total private and public schools of Sargodha city; secondly, 120 male and 100 female students were selected from public and private school by using proportionate random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was developed for data collection about the extent to which they feel that they possess essential life skills. The questionnaire contained a total of 47 items comprising eight items related to creative thinking/critical thinking (CRT); eight items related to problem-solving/decision-making skills (DM); ten items related to interpersonal/communication skills (IPC); nine items related to the self-awareness/empathy (SAE); and twelve items related to the coping/self-management skills (CSM). All statements were based on a five-point Likert scale. Moreover, to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability was calculated with a score of 0.89 which is considered as an appropriate measure to continue the questionnaires for further study. The researcher personally visited the public and private schools to collect the data and

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distributed the questionnaires among 9th and 10th-grade students.

Data Analysis and Results

The obtained data were analyzed by calculating mean scores and standard deviations to determine the extent to which students agree with the statement about essential life skills they possess. Moreover, an independent *t*-test was administered to explore the significant difference of opinion of male and female students and the private and public school students about their views regarding their life skills. The scoring range is given in Table 1 to determine the level of students' perception of the life skills they possess.

Table 1. *The scoring range for variables*

Items	Frequencies	Negative opinion	Positive opinion
CRT	8	8-24	25-40
DM	8	8-24	25-40
IPC	10	10-30	31-50
SAE	9	9-27	28-45
CSM	12	12-36	37-60
Life Skills	47	47-141	142-235

Table 1 is a detailed description of scoring range for determining the negative and positive perception of participants on the given statement such as CRT consisting of eight items and ranges between 8-24 for negative perception and 25-40 for a positive opinion. Similarly, the range for all variables is determined to make decisions about the perception of students regarding life skills development among them.

Table 2. *Students' overall score on life skills*

Items	N	Mean Scores	SD
CRT	220	33.35	3.839
DM	220	33.82	3.594
IPC	220	40.94	5.029
SAE	220	38.21	4.885
CSM	220	49.37	6.440
Life Skills	220	195.68	19.438

Table 2 revealed students' positive opinion of having life skills such as the students' mean scores ($M=195.68$) about overall life skills fall within the range 142-235; the mean score ($M=33.35$) about creative and critical thinking falls in range 25-40 which reflects their positive perception. Similarly, students' average scores ($M=33.82$) for decision making and problem-solving skills fall within the positive range 25-40; average score ($M=40.94$) for the interpersonal and communication skills fall within the range 31-50; the average score ($M=38.21$) related to self-awareness/empathy life skills (SAE) comes in the range 28-45, and the mean score ($M=49.37$) about coping and self-management come in the score range 37-60 which represents that most of the students are in the view that they possess essential life skills.

Table 3. *The average score on the overall life skills of male students*

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Items	N	Mean Scores	SD
CRT	120	33.96	3.868
DM	120	34.27	3.808
IPC	120	41.16	5.284
SAE	120	38.23	4.852
CSM	120	48.76	6.798
Life Skills	120	196.37	20.248

Table 3 represented the overall male students' perception about various life skills such as mean score ($M=33.96$) about the CRT variable falls between 25-40 range which indicates their positive response. Similarly, mean scores ($M=34.27$) of DM comes in the 25-40 range related to; average score about IPC variable ($M=41.16$) falls within the range 31-50; the average score for the SAE variable ($M=38.23$) is around the range 28-45; the average score for the CSM variable ($M=48.76$) falls in 37-60 range group, and the average score of overall life skills fall within the range 142-235 showing positive perception towards life skills development among male students.

Table 4. *The average scores of female students as a whole are about life skills*

Items	N	Mean Scores	SD
CRT	100	32.61	3.690
DM	100	33.29	3.258
IPC	100	40.67	4.718
SAE	100	38.18	4.949
CSM	100	50.10	5.933
Life Skills	100	194.85	18.487

It was observed that overall female students perceive positively about various life skills as represented in Table 4. The mean score ($M=32.61$) about the CRT variable falls within the 25-40 range which indicates their positive response. Similarly, mean scores ($M=33.29$) related to the DM comes in the range 25-40; the average score about the IPC variable ($M=40.67$) falls within the range 31-50; the average score for the SAE variable ($M=38.18$) ranges around the range 28-45, the average score for the CSM variable ($M=50.10$) falls within the range 37-60, and the average score about overall life skills ($M=194.85$) is within the range 142-235 which represents a positive perception of all the students related to life skills development.

Hypothesis Testing

H_{01} *Male and female secondary school students don't have significant differences in their opinions about essential life skills development*

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Table 5. Results of female and male students for CRT

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Male students	120	33.96	3.868	2.629	218	.009
Female students	100	32.61	3.690			

Table 5 shows that ($M=33.96$) female students have more positive perception of Creative thinking/Critical thinking (CRT) than male students ($M=32.61$). Furthermore, t-test results showed significant differences in perceptions of female students ($M=32.61$, $SD=3.690$) and male students ($M=33.96$, $SD=3.868$) $t(218) = 2.629$, $p = .009$ as $p < 0.05$.

Table 6. Male and female students' results for DM

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Male students	120	34.27	3.808	2.021	218	.044
Female students	100	33.29	3.258			

Table 6 revealed that the male students ($M=34.27$) have more positive perceptions than the female ($M=33.29$) regarding the decision-making/problem-solving skills (DM). However, the independent samples t-test results showed that female and male students have significant difference in their opinions with $t(218) = 2.021$, $p = .044$ as the $p < 0.05$.

Table 7. Male and female students' results for IPC

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Male students	120	41.16	5.284	.716	218	.475
Female students	100	40.67	4.718			

Table 7 shows a more positive perception of Interpersonal/communication life skills (IPC) variables about male students ($M=41.16$) than female students ($M=40.67$). However, a non-significant difference of opinion was exhibited among male and female students with the t-test score (218) = .716, $p = .475$ as $p > 0.05$.

Table 8. Male and female students' results for SAE

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Male students	120	38.23	4.852	.080	218	.936
Female students	100	38.18	4.949			

Table 8 shows that male students ($M=38.23$) have more positive feedback on variable self-awareness and empathy (SAE) than female students ($M=38.18$). However, a non-significant difference of perception was observed through t-test score as $t(218) = .080$, $p = .936$ as $p > 0.05$.

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Table 9. *Male and female students' results for CSM*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Male students	120	48.76	6.798	-1.543	218	.124
Female students	100	50.10	5.933			

Table 9 highlighted the more positive perception of female students ($M=50.10$) than male students ($M=48.76$) about competing and self-managing life skills (CSM) variables. However, t -test scores showed no significant difference in the opinions of female students ($M=50.10$, $SD = 5.933$) and male students ($M=48.76$, $SD=6.798$) $t(218) = -1.543$, $p=.124$ as $p > 0.05$.

Table 10. *Male and female students' perception regarding overall life skills*

	N	M	SD	t-scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Male students	120	196.3	20.248	.579	218	.564
Female students	100	194.8	18.487			

Table 10 highlighted the more strong perception of male students ($M=196.3$) as compared to female students ($M=194.8$) about the overall life skills. However, the results of t -test exhibited a non-significant difference of opinion among female and male students with $t(218) = .579$, $p= .564$ as $p > 0.05$.

H_{02} Private and public school students don't have significant differences in their perception about essential life skills development

Table 11. *Private and public school students' results for CRT*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Public	100	32.80	4.408	-1.884	178.1	.061
Private	120	33.80	3.240			

Table 11 displays that private school students ($M=33.80$) have a more positive impression of creative thinking/critical thinking (CRT) than public school students ($M=32.80$). Furthermore, the t -test scores showed non-significant difference of opinion among private and public school students with t -score (178.1) = -1.884 , $p = .061$ as $p > 0.05$.

Table 12. *Private and public school students' results for DM*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Public	100	33.90	3.797	.291	218	.772
Private	120	33.76	3.430			

Table 12 indicates that public school students ($M = 33.90$) and private school students ($M = 33.76$) have almost the same impression of decision-making/problem-solving (DM) skills. Additionally, the results of the t -test showed a non-significant difference among perception of private and public school students with $t(218) = .291$, $p = .772$ as $p > 0.05$.

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Table 13. *Private and public school students' results for IPC*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Public	100	40.89	5.521	-.125	218	.901
Private	120	40.98	4.603			

Table 13 displays that private school students ($M=40.98$) and public school students ($M=40.89$) have nearly the same opinion of Interpersonal/communication life skills (IPC) development. Furthermore, t -test result exhibited a non-significant difference in opinion of private and public school students with t -score (218) = $-.125$, $p=.901$ as $p > 0.05$.

Table 14. *Private and public school students' results for SAE*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Public	100	38.16	5.891	-.131	165.4	.896
Private	120	38.25	3.879			

Table 14 illustrated that the public school students ($M=38.16$) and the private school students ($M=38.25$) possess almost the same opinion about the awareness/empathy life skills (SAE) and the results of the t -test also exhibited a non-significant difference of opinion among private and public school students with t -score (165.4) = $-.131$, $p=.896$ as $p > 0.05$

Table 15. *Private/public school students' results for CSM*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Public	100	48.93	7.120	-.904	190.7	.367
Private	120	49.73	5.819			

Table 15 reflects the average score of private school students ($M=49.73$) has a more positive impression as compared to public school students ($M=48.93$) about self-management life skills (CSM). However, results of t -test showed non-significant difference of perception among private and public school students with t -score (190.7) = $-.904$, $p=.367$ as $p > 0.05$.

Table 16. *Private and public school students' opinion regarding overall life skills*

	N	M	SD	t scores	df	Sig. (2tailed)
Public	100	194.6	23.180	-.674	168.7	.501
Private	120	196.5	15.710			

Table 16 reveals that students of private school ($M=196.5$) have a stronger impression of overall life skills variables than public school students ($M=194.6$). However, the results of t -test exhibited a non-significant difference of opinion among private and public school students with a t -score (168.7) = $-.674$, $p=.501$ as $p > 0.05$.

1.1 Discussion and conclusions

Analysis of the data showed very positive perception of male and female; private and public

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students about possessing essential life skills. However, it was established that male students have more positive perception as compare to female students about having creative and critical thinking; decision making and problem solving skills. Nevertheless, significant difference was observed among the opinion of male and female students. In addition, there was a slight difference in the opinions of male and female students regarding Interpersonal and communication skills; Self-awareness/empathy; and overall Life skills, showing that male students possess more skills as compared to girls. However, female students seemed to have more strong skills related to coping and self-management.

Shea and Siu (2016) determined in their study that male students participate more in play-related activities and these helped to improve their interpersonal, acceptance of cultural diversity and self-awareness-related skills. They insisted that play/games can support social, emotional, and personal skills among both male and female students, especially of age 14-18. A study explored the impact of life skills education programs on emotional and empathy skills development among students and its results revealed that females had a more positive response in learning various life skills (Ghasemian & Kumar, 2017). The results of Mech Ludy-Mofrad (2013) investigated the gender differences related to health maintenance and life skills and it was concluded that males are more health-conscious and possess more life skills as compared to females. He explained the reason for this is that male students always have more opportunities and mostly like to take part in health-related activities as compared to females. He added that educators need to provide ample opportunities for both male and female students to practice their personal and social skills so that they can prepare for a better life in the future. However, Dobson and Hulseman's (1994) study indicated that life skills education improved the emotional and interpersonal skills among students but they found no difference in the training of life skills between male and female students.

The study results also established that private school students have higher mean scores showing a more positive perception about possessing most of the life skills compared to public school students. However, it was found that the difference in opinion between the students of private and public schools was not significant, particularly about overall life skills. Many studies supported the fact that students of private schools have more interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies because they have been provided with more facilities and practical learning experiences as compared to public schools. Farooq et al. (2017) reported that private schools are considered more attractive places for parents to send their children for better learning due to their better learning facilities, improved assessment criteria, and more skilled teachers (Farooq, Feroze, & Kai, 2017). The researches also highlighted that better learning facilities and practical involvement of students in various activities improve overall life skills among students such as cognitive, emotional, and social skills. The participation of students in sports promotes teamwork, leadership, initiative-taking, respecting others, and time management-related skills especially at the secondary level (Coskuner, Büyükçelebi, Kurak, & Aak, 2021).

Unfortunately, Pakistan is facing many challenges in offering quality and equal education to its young children. Iqbal Institute of Policy Study (IIPS) reported that there is a huge difference between the quality and standards of education that is being offered to students in Pakistan. It suggested that to promote quality education, it is important to train quality teachers and there is a dire need to work on this matter (IIPS, 2021) Secondary education in

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Pakistan has so many issues related to gender disparity, diverse education systems, quality of education, physical facilities, and quality assessment (Raouf, 2018) and these could be the main reasons for differences among male and female students' opinions.

Life skills equip students with certain abilities such as transforming the learnt knowledge, experiences, and values into noticeable capacities about what to do, how to do, and when to solve their problem. These skills enable secondary students to understand critical situations intelligently and wisely and behave in a logical way to solve life-related problems (Mulyadi, Suryadi, & Aliyyah, 2020). The successful acquirement and application of essential life skills greatly impact students' lives e.g. the way they believe, feel, and think about others and themselves. Furthermore, LSE contributes to preparing students in their self-efficiency, self-assurance, and self-respect. Therefore, we can say that life skills education has a significant contribution to promoting holistic capacity building and the overall development of individuals (UNICEF, 2012).

Recommendations

Keeping in view the results of this study some recommendation are made such as, it has been observed that male students have a stronger impression of life skills than female students, which highlights the discrimination in learning opportunities provided to male and female students in schools. So, it is recommended that educational departments, teachers, and even parents need to be aware of this discrimination and try to overcome this by ensuring equal opportunities for both male and female students. Furthermore, the study concluded that private school students have more positive perceptions about possessing more life skills as compared to public school students. So, there is a need to exalt and upgrade learning opportunities and instructional endeavors at government schools as well to promote life skills among young students.

As the study was limited to only secondary school students and of the urban areas only; hence the life skills development may be different among children from rural areas. As this study was limited to a specific age group of students belonging to a specific area, so the results of this study may not be generalized. However, the present study was limited to only secondary level students, therefore, it is suggested that future researchers may conduct investigate/explore life skills development among students of different levels (i.e. primary, middle, and higher level) to obtain a wider perspective on the study theme. Though, more research in this area may be helpful to have a broader picture of the current situation of life skills education in Pakistan. Nevertheless, this study provides empirical data showing the key differences of opinions among male and female students and private and public school students that highlight the gender discrimination and differences in various education systems prevailing in the country.

Authors' Conflict of Interest and Ethical Considerations

This is certified that no author of this study has any conflict of interest and all ethical measures were taken while conducting this study such as the identity of participants being kept confidential and obtained data were used only for the research purpose.

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