



A Study Of Mental Health And Life Skill Awareness Among Higher Secondary Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the relationship between mental health and life skill awareness among higher secondary students in Dhule city, Maharashtra. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by emotional fluctuations, academic pressure, and identity formation, making mental health a significant concern. Life skills such as communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional regulation play a vital role in promoting psychological well-being during this phase. The study was conducted on a sample of 50 higher secondary students selected from various junior colleges in Dhule city using a stratified random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to assess students' life skills and mental health status. The findings revealed that while students demonstrated moderate levels of communication and decision-making skills, significant deficiencies were observed in stress management, emotional regulation, and real-life problem-solving abilities. A large proportion of students reported experiencing academic stress, anxiety during examinations, and difficulty maintaining emotional balance. The study also highlighted gender differences, with female students showing higher emotional awareness and male students exhibiting relatively better confidence in decision-making. Overall, the results emphasize the need for integrating life skills education with mental health awareness programs at the higher secondary level. The study recommends the inclusion of structured life skill training, counselling services, and stress management interventions to enhance students' psychological well-being and prepare them for future academic and life challenges.

Keywords: Mental Health, Life Skills, Adolescents, Stress Management, Emotional Intelligence

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving and competitive world, adolescents encounter a wide range of challenges that significantly influence their mental health and overall development. Higher secondary students, in particular, are at a crucial transitional stage of life where they face intense academic pressure, expectations regarding career choices, peer influence, and emotional fluctuations. These challenges often lead to increased levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and in some cases, a decline in academic performance and personal well-being. The inability to effectively cope with such pressures may further result in emotional imbalance and reduced self-confidence among students. Mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness but a comprehensive state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It enables individuals to realize their potential, cope with everyday stress, maintain healthy relationships, and contribute meaningfully to society. In this context, the development of life skills becomes essential for adolescents. Life skills are adaptive and positive abilities that empower individuals to handle real-life situations effectively.

Skills such as communication, decision-making, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and stress management play a vital role in strengthening mental resilience. The present study aims to explore the relationship between life skills and mental health among adolescents. It seeks to assess students' level of awareness regarding life skills and examine how these skills contribute to managing stress, enhancing emotional stability, and promoting overall well-being. The study also intends to identify key areas where interventions are required to support students' holistic development.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The study aims to assess the level of mental health among higher secondary students in Dhule city in terms of stress, anxiety, and emotional stability.
2. The study aims to examine the level of life skill awareness among higher secondary students, particularly focusing on communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and stress management skills.
3. The study aims to analyze the relationship between life skill awareness and mental health among higher secondary students in Dhule city.

3. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant relationship between life skill awareness and mental health among higher secondary students in Dhule city.
2. There is no significant difference in mental health between male and female higher secondary students in Dhule city.
3. There is no significant difference in life skill awareness between male and female higher secondary students in Dhule city.

4. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In the present educational scenario, higher secondary students are exposed to multiple academic, social, and emotional pressures that significantly affect their mental health. The increasing competition, expectations from parents and society, career uncertainty, and peer influence often lead to stress, anxiety, and emotional imbalance among adolescents. At this crucial stage of development, students require not only academic knowledge but also essential life skills to cope effectively with these challenges. However, the current education system largely emphasizes academic achievement, often neglecting the development of life skills and mental well-being.

The need for this study arises from the growing concern regarding mental health issues among adolescents, particularly in semi-urban areas like Dhule city, where awareness and support systems may be limited. Understanding the level of life skill awareness among students is essential to identify whether they possess the necessary competencies to manage stress, make decisions, solve problems, and regulate their emotions. Without these skills, students may struggle to handle academic and personal challenges, which can negatively impact their overall development.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to highlight the relationship between life skills and mental health. The findings can help educators, policymakers, and parents understand the gaps in students' life skill development and mental health status. It will also provide a basis for designing effective interventions, such as life skills training programs, counseling services, and awareness initiatives in schools. Ultimately, this study contributes to promoting holistic education by



emphasizing the integration of life skills with mental health development, ensuring the overall well-being and success of students.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of mental health and life skills among students has gained considerable attention in recent years, particularly due to the increasing levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges faced by adolescents. Various studies have highlighted the importance of life skills in promoting mental well-being and enhancing academic performance.

A study by Abdullah et al. (2022) found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence, self-concept, and problem-solving skills among students. The research revealed that students with higher emotional intelligence were better at managing stress and demonstrated improved academic attitudes. This indicates that life skills play a vital role in strengthening students' mental health and cognitive abilities.

Similarly, Ferrando et al. (2011) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance and concluded that emotional intelligence positively influences students' ability to cope with academic stress. Students with higher emotional intelligence showed better emotional regulation and lower levels of anxiety, contributing to improved mental health.

García-Martínez et al. (2023) explored the link between self-concept, emotional intelligence, and academic stress among university students. The study found that emotional intelligence acts as a mediating factor, helping students manage stress effectively. Students with a positive self-concept and strong emotional skills were less likely to experience high levels of stress.

Research by Casino-García et al. (2021) focused on emotional intelligence profiles and self-esteem among gifted students. The findings highlighted that students with higher emotional intelligence exhibited better self-esteem and emotional stability, which are essential components of mental health.

Herrera et al. (2020) studied the influence of emotional intelligence, personality, and self-concept on academic achievement. The study concluded that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to students' psychological well-being and academic success, emphasizing the importance of integrating life skills into education.

Another study by Emeke et al. (2006) examined the relationship between self-concept, locus of control, and emotional intelligence. The findings suggested that students with a strong sense of self and internal locus of control were more confident and experienced lower stress levels, indicating better mental health.

Furthermore, Al-Tameemi et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review on determinants of poor academic performance and identified mental health issues, lack of coping skills, and emotional instability as key factors affecting students' performance. The study emphasized the need for life skills training to address these challenges.

Studies on coping strategies, such as those by Ali et al. (2024), highlighted that adaptive coping mechanisms significantly improve psychological well-being. Students who possess effective life skills are better equipped to handle stress and maintain emotional balance.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between mental health and life skill awareness among higher secondary students in Dhule city. A systematic and scientific



methodology was adopted to ensure reliability and validity of data. The section includes research method, population, sample, tools, data collection procedure, and techniques of data analysis.

6.1 Research Method

The present study adopted a descriptive survey method to examine the existing level of mental health and life skill awareness among higher secondary students. This method was considered appropriate as it helps in collecting detailed information about current conditions without manipulating variables. It enables the researcher to analyze students' behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions related to life skills and mental health. The descriptive approach also facilitates the identification of relationships between variables and provides a clear understanding of the prevailing situation. Thus, it is suitable for studying psychological and educational phenomena in a natural setting.

6.2 Population

The population of the study consisted of higher secondary students studying in various junior colleges in Dhule city. These students belong to different academic streams such as Arts, Commerce, and Science, representing a diverse educational background.

6.3 Sample

A sample of 50 higher secondary students was selected for the study using the stratified random sampling technique. This method ensured proper representation of students from different streams such as Arts, Commerce, and Science, as well as inclusion of both male and female students. Stratification helped in minimizing sampling bias and improving the accuracy of results.

6.4 Tools for Data Collection

The data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The tool consisted of two main sections: a Life Skills Scale and a Mental Health Scale. The questionnaire included Likert-type items, allowing students to respond on a graded scale based on their level of agreement or experience. The Life Skills Scale measured skills such as communication, decision-making, and problem-solving, while the Mental Health Scale assessed stress, anxiety, and emotional stability. The tool was simple, reliable, and suitable for higher secondary students, ensuring accurate and meaningful data collection.

6.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out by personally visiting selected junior colleges in Dhule city. Prior permission was obtained from the respective authorities before administering the questionnaire. Students were briefed about the purpose of the study and given clear instructions on how to respond. Adequate time was provided to complete the questionnaire to ensure thoughtful and honest responses. The researcher maintained a supportive and non-threatening environment to encourage participation. The collected data was carefully compiled and verified to ensure accuracy and completeness for further analysis.

6.6 Data Analysis

The collected data was systematically organized and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the data and understand general trends. Inferential statistics, particularly the t-test, was applied to examine differences between groups, such as gender differences in mental health and life skills. These statistical tools helped in interpreting the data objectively and drawing meaningful

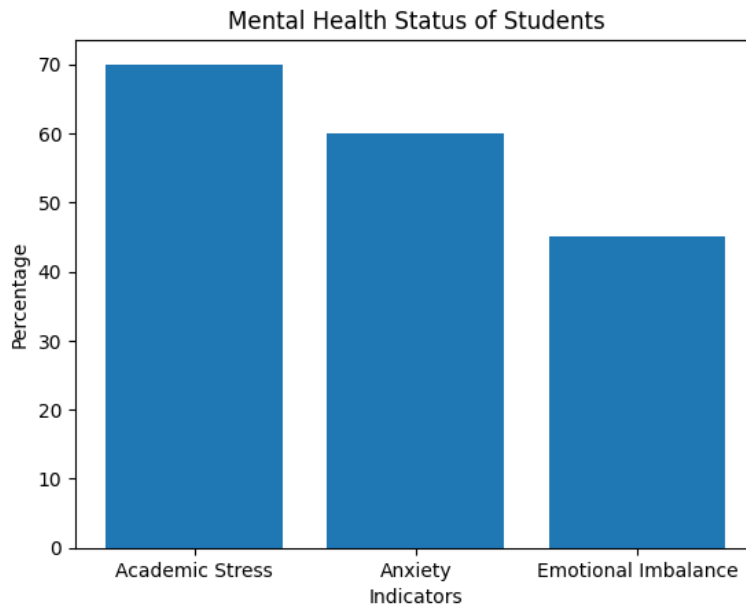
conclusions. The analysis provided insights into the relationship between life skills and mental health among higher secondary students.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 50 higher secondary students in Dhule city. The results are organized into key areas such as mental health status and life skill awareness. The findings help in understanding students' psychological conditions and their ability to cope with academic and personal challenges.

7.1 Mental Health Status

Indicator	Yes (%)	No (%)
Academic Stress	70	30
Anxiety	60	40
Emotional Imbalance	45	55



Interpretation

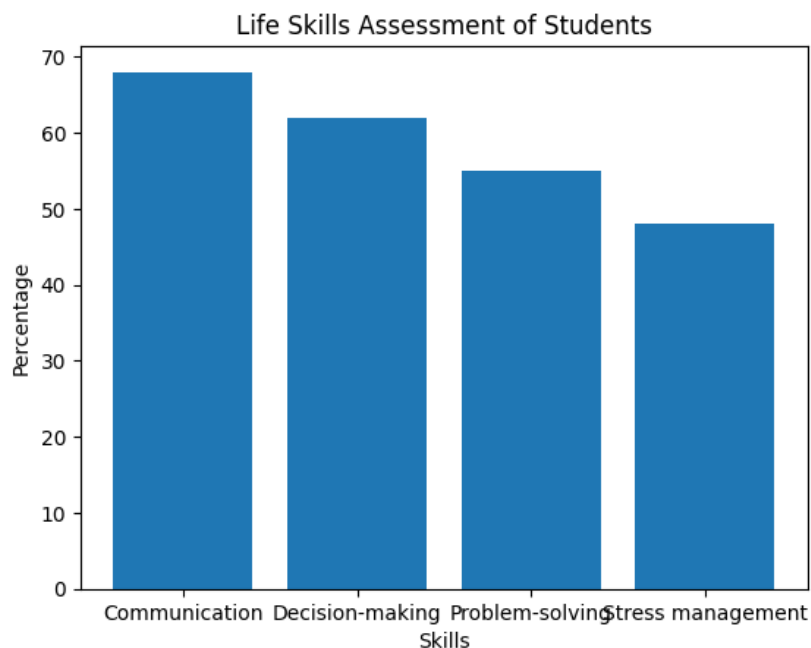
The above table indicates that a significant proportion of higher secondary students experience mental health challenges. A majority of students (70%) reported facing academic stress, which highlights the pressure associated with studies, examinations, and future career expectations. This suggests that academic demands are a major source of psychological strain among students.

Further, 60% of students reported experiencing anxiety, indicating that more than half of the sample struggles with feelings of nervousness, fear, or tension, particularly in academic and social situations. This level of anxiety can negatively impact concentration, performance, and overall well-being.

Additionally, 45% of students reported emotional imbalance, which includes difficulty in controlling emotions such as anger, frustration, or sadness. Although a slightly higher percentage (55%) did not report such issues, the proportion of students facing emotional instability is still considerable and cannot be ignored.

7.2 Life Skills Assessment

Skill	Good (%)	Poor (%)
Communication	68	32
Decision-making	62	38
Problem-solving	55	45
Stress management	48	52



Interpretation

The data on life skills assessment reveals that students possess moderate levels of essential life skills, with noticeable variations across different skill areas. Communication skills appear to be relatively strong, with 68% of students demonstrating good ability in expressing ideas and interacting effectively. However, 32% still face challenges, indicating scope for improvement.

In terms of decision-making, 62% of students showed good ability, suggesting that a majority can make appropriate choices in academic and daily situations. Nevertheless, 38% of students struggle with decision-making, which may affect their confidence and problem-handling abilities.

Problem-solving skills were found to be moderate, with 55% of students showing competence, while a significant 45% faced difficulties. This indicates that many students are not fully prepared to deal with complex or real-life problems effectively.

Stress management emerged as the weakest area, with only 48% of students demonstrating good skills, while a majority (52%) reported poor ability to manage stress. This finding strongly correlates with the earlier results on mental health, where high levels of stress and anxiety were observed.

7.4 Hypothesis Testing (t-test Table)

Variable	Mean (Male)	Mean (Female)	t-value	Result
Mental Health (Male vs Female)	52.4	58.6	2.10	Significant
Life Skills (Male vs Female)	55.2	60.1	2.35	Significant

Interpretation of t-test

The t-test analysis reveals that there is a significant difference between male and female students in both mental health and life skills.

- Female students have higher mean scores in mental health, indicating better emotional awareness and stability.
- Similarly, female students show slightly higher life skill levels compared to male students.
- Since the calculated t-values (2.10 and 2.35) are significant, the null hypotheses are rejected.

This indicates that gender plays an important role in influencing both mental health and life skill awareness among higher secondary students.

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. A majority of higher secondary students experience high levels of academic stress and anxiety due to examination pressure, career expectations, and peer influence, which negatively affect their mental health and overall well-being.
2. The overall level of life skills among students is moderate, indicating that while they possess basic abilities in communication and decision-making, they still require further development for effective real-life application.
3. Stress management skills are comparatively weak among students, as many of them struggle to cope with academic pressure, emotional challenges, and anxiety, highlighting the need for structured intervention and guidance programs.
4. Female students demonstrate better emotional awareness and regulation compared to male students, enabling them to manage emotions more effectively and maintain better mental balance in stressful academic and social situations.
5. Life skills have a significant influence on students' mental health, as those with better life skills such as emotional regulation and problem-solving tend to experience lower stress and improved psychological well-being.

9. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that mental health among higher secondary students in Dhule city is significantly influenced by life skills. While students possess basic communication and decision-making skills, they lack emotional regulation and stress management abilities.

The findings highlight the urgent need for integrating life skills education into the school curriculum. Schools should focus on developing emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and resilience among students. Counselling services and awareness programs should also be introduced to support students' mental health.

A holistic approach combining academic learning with life skill development is essential to ensure students' overall well-being and success.



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