

Study on Cognitive Life Skills Among Senior Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Teaching for thinking has always been central to the very concept of a liberal education. The liberally educated person is one who learns how to draw together knowledge from many different disciplines and makes good judgments about what to believe or what to do. The aim of present study was to assess the cognitive life skills of senior secondary school students. The present study was descriptive in nature. The sample of 120 students from residential and non residential schools of Sriganaganagar was selected randomly. The data for cognitive life skill was assessed by Cognitive Life Skill Test developed by the investigator. The result of the study shows that most of the students have average cognitive life skill. The result also shows that cognitive life skills do not differ on the basis of gender but shows significant difference on the basis of the types of school.

Keywords: Life Skills, Cognitive life skill, Senior Secondary school.

Introduction

The period of adolescence in life of an individual is a time of extensive physical, psychosocial, and cognitive development. Every adolescent is expected to develop the skills that are needed to for the socially responsible behavior as a preparation to the adulthood. In this preparation for adulthood life skills play an important role.

A skill is a learned ability and life skills are those competencies that assist people in functioning well in the environments in which they live. The World Health Organization (1997) has defined Life Skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". Life Skills are essentially those abilities that help to promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. With Life Skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. UNICEF (2006) defines Life Skills as – a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills.

CBSE (2005) in its Teacher's Manual on Life Skills categorized ten Life skills (proposed by WHO) into three main categories i.e. Thinking skills, Social Skills and Emotional Skills. Thinking skills include decision-making/problem-solving skills and information gathering skills. UNICEF defines Cognitive Life Skills as critical thinking and problem solving skills for responsible decision making. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) acknowledge that these cognitive skills receive many names: "critical thinking, reflective judgment, epistemological development, and so on". The individual must be skilled at evaluating the future consequences of their present actions and the actions of others. They need to be able to determine alternative solutions and to analyze the influence of their own values and the values of those around them.

A fundamental goal of education is to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to think critically, solve complex problems, and succeed in the 21st century society and economy (Finn, et. al., 2013). Teaching for thinking has always been central to the very concept of a liberal education. The liberally educated person is one who learns how to draw together knowledge from many different disciplines and makes good judgments about what to believe or what to do (Giancarlo and Facione, 2001). The person who is well educated is the person whose mind is liberated; he or she is able to think for him or herself. They are free

to think, not just in the sense of having been given permission, but also in the fuller sense of having been given the skills and the deep desire to do so.

Considering the fact that despite the ever so growing need of cognitive life skills in highly demanding and competitive world, these skills are seldom taught explicitly in our school curriculum. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the cognitive life skills among secondary schools.

Objectives

1. To study the difference between cognitive life skills of secondary school students on the basis of gender.
2. To study the difference between cognitive life skills of secondary school students on the basis of type of school.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference between cognitive life skills of secondary school students on the basis of gender.
2. There will be no significant difference between cognitive life skills of secondary school students on the basis of type of school.

Methodology

The present study was descriptive in nature. It was undertaken with a view to explore the cognitive life-skills of senior secondary school students of residential and non-residential schools of SriGanganagar district of Rajasthan. The sample comprised of 120 students (56 from residential and 64 from non-residential schools). Random sampling technique was used to select the schools. The data for Cognitive Life Skill was collected by using Cognitive Life Skill Test developed by the investigator which consisted of 3 dimensions – Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making as given by UNICEF (2006). The test consisted of 30 items of objective type. 45 minutes were given to the students to complete the test. Appropriate statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation and t-test were applied to derive the results of the present study.

Result and Discussion

Figure 1. Percentage of students having high, low and average Cognitive Life Skills

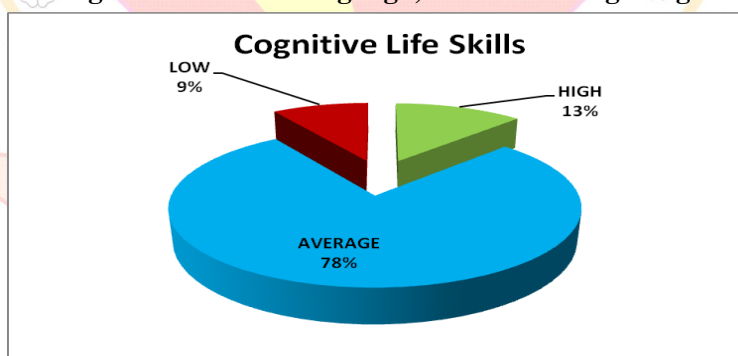


Figure 1 shows that more than 3/4th of students (78%) had average and 9 percent had low cognitive life skills. Only 13 percent were in the category of high cognitive life skills. The results of present study are in congruence with the results of the study conducted by Dhingra and Chauhan (2017) also found maximum scores were obtained by the students in the average category, indicating that adolescents have average level of life-skills. Also the study conducted by Chakra (2016) found that the level of life skills of adolescents particularly in late adolescence indicated that majority of the students possessed average critical thinking, problem solving and decision making skills (71.5%, 64.5% and 67.3% respectively).

Table 1: Significance of difference in Cognitive Life Skills on the basis of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	S.E _D	t-value	Level of Significance
Boys	69	10.72	4.92	0.80	1.06	Non-significant at 0.05 level of significance
Girls	51	11.57	3.84			

From Table 1 it is clear that the calculated t-value is 1.06 which is non-significant at 0.05 level of significance. It means there is no significant difference on the basis of gender. This indicates that cognitive life skills are not differentiated on the basis of gender. These results are in accordance with results of the study conducted by Rani and Sowjana (2016) on the impact of life skills and social maturity among adolescents. The results showed that there is no significant association between life skill scores with gender. The study conducted by Dingra and Chauhan (2017) on assessment of life-skills of adolescents in relation to selected variables indicated when students were compared for their score on the different dimensions of life skills on the basis of sex, it was revealed that both girls and boys had average scores in self-awareness, effective communication, critical thinking, interpersonal relations and decision making which indicates that there is no significant difference in cognitive life skills score on basis of gender. Balasundari and Benjamin (2014) studied the correlation between life skills and academic achievements of high school student of Karaikudi region of Kerala found life skills do not differ on the basis of gender. Kaur (2014) in her study on the development of life skills among adolescents found that female students possess higher level of life skills than male students and though the results of the present study are statistically insignificant but shows higher mean for girls than boys.

Hence hypothesis 1 stated “There will be no significant difference between cognitive life skills of secondary school students on the basis of gender” stands accepted.

Table 2: Significance of difference in Cognitive Life Skills on the basis of Type of School

Type of School	N	Mean	S.D.	S.E _D	t-value	Level of Significance
Residential	56	12.12	4.12	.573	2.51	Significant at 0.05 level of Significance
Non-Residential	64	10.17	4.37			

The mean for the residential school (12.12) is higher than the mean for non-residential (10.17) on cognitive life skills. On calculating of t-value for cognitive life skills (table 2), it was found to be 2.51 which is showing significant difference in cognitive life skill on the basis of types of schools. This indicates residential schools students have better cognitive life skills as compared to non-residential schools students.

The difference in residential and non residential school students can be attributed to the reasons that social interaction play an important role in cognitive development as development depends on interaction with people and the tool that culture provides to help form their own view of the world (Gallagher, 1999). The students studying in residential schools have more opportunities for social and cultural exchange which may be a contributing factor for better life skills among residential school students.

Hence hypothesis 2 stated “There will be no significant difference between cognitive life skills of secondary school students on the basis of type of school” stands rejected.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study show that the maximum students in the study have average cognitive life skills and very few students possess high life skills. In this study most students have average cognitive life skills and only 9 percent have low cognitive life skills while only 13 percent students have high cognitive life

skills. There exist no statistically significant difference in the cognitive life skill among boys and girls. It was also found in the result of present study that the students studying in residential schools have better cognitive life skills than the students in non-residential school.

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