

Role Of Life Skills In Promoting Mental Health Among Undergraduate Students In Aizawl City

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Abstract

Mental health and life skills have become increasingly important in today's dynamic and demanding society, especially for young adults and students. Making wise decisions, controlling daily stress, and preserving emotional equilibrium are all made possible by life skills. The ability to use these life skills in daily settings has a significant impact on mental health, which is a crucial aspect to overall wellness. Higher levels of resilience, confidence, and self-esteem are typically expected of students with well-developed life skills, which enable them to more successfully navigate academic, social, and personal problems. On the other hand, worry, anxiety, and other psychological issues might result from a lack of these abilities. Therefore, encouraging life skills education is crucial for reducing emotional discomfort and creating better mental health outcomes. This paper makes an effort to examine the role that life skills play in supporting undergraduate students' mental health since they can foster a supportive and mentally healthy learning environment for students and equip them with the strength, adaptability, maturity, and stability needed to succeed in the modern world.

Keywords: Life skills, Mental health, gender, undergraduate students.

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I. Introduction:

The journey through undergraduate studies represents a critical period of transition, marked by academic pressures, financial uncertainties, and the complex process of establishing an independent identity. This convergence of challenges has positioned mental health as a crucial concern in educational institutions worldwide.

Mental health is an integral and indispensable aspect of overall well-being. This comprehensive well-being can be conceptualized in various dimensions, including the absence of disease, the optimal functioning of the organism, and a harmonious balance within oneself and in relation to one's physical and social surroundings. Life skills, as defined by the World Health Organization, are "the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (World Health Organization, 1999). These are not merely soft skills but essential psychological tools that include emotional regulation, critical thinking, effective communication, stress management, and interpersonal effectiveness. These competencies form the bedrock of our capacity to navigate life's complexities, serving as a buffer against psychological distress and enhancing overall mental wellness. The connection between life skills and mental health is both profound and well-documented. Emotional regulation; the ability to understand and manage one's feelings—directly impacts vulnerability to mood disorders (Gross, 2015; Berking & Whitley, 2014). Similarly, effective stress management techniques can prevent academic pressure from escalating into debilitating anxiety. Problem-solving skills enable students to transform overwhelming challenges into manageable tasks, reducing feelings of helplessness (Hofmann et al., 2012; Conley et al., 2015). Furthermore, competencies in communication and empathy facilitate the development of strong social support networks, which consistently demonstrate protective effects against mental health difficulties (Ozbay et al., 2007).

Objectives:

1. To find out the mental health level of Undergraduate students in Aizawl city with respect to gender.
2. To find out the life skills level of Undergraduate students in Aizawl city with respect to gender.
3. To find out the relation between life skills and mental health of male Undergraduate students in Aizawl city.
4. To find out the relation between life skills and mental health of female Undergraduate students in Aizawl city.

II. Methodology:

Method: The investigation is descriptive in nature. The research methodology focuses on the mental health and life skills of undergraduate students in Aizawl city.

Population and Sample: The population includes all Undergraduate students studying in different colleges in Aizawl city. A simple random sampling method was employed to select a sample of 100 undergraduate students from Aizawl City. Out of these, 39 students are male and 61 students are female.

Tools used: Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastava was used to find out the mental health of the students. A separate scoring norm for female and male students was provided in the manual. A self-developed standardized Life Skills Scale was used to find out the Life Skills of Undergraduate students in Aizawl City.

Statistical Techniques: Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and correlation was used.

III. Major Findings:

Findings regarding the Mental Health level of Undergraduate students with respect to gender.

Table 1: Mental Health of female and male Undergraduate students in Aizawl city

Component	N	Level			
		Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Female	61	0	12 (19.67%)	30 (49.18%)	19 (31.14%)
Male	39	2 (5.12%)	11 (28.20%)	22 (56.41%)	4 (10.25%)

The above Table 1 shows that out of 61 female students, nearly half of the respondents (49.18%) reported poor mental health. This was followed by 31.14% who reported very poor mental health and 19.67% who reported average mental health.

Table 1 also showed that out of 39 male students, nearly half of the respondents (56.41%) reported poor mental health. This was followed by 28.20% who reported average mental health, 10.25% who reported very poor mental health and only 5.12% have good mental health.

Thus, we may conclude that male students have slightly better mental health than female students.

Findings regarding the Life Skills level of Undergraduate Students with respect to gender.

Table 2: Life Skills level of female and male Undergraduate students in Aizawl city

Component	N	Level			
		Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Female	61	8 (13.11%)	47 (77.04%)	6 (9.83%)	0
Male	39	1 (2.56%)	37 (94.87%)	1 (2.56%)	0

The above Table 2 shows that out of 61 female students, a large majority (77.04%) were categorized at an average level. A smaller proportion (13.11%) reported good life skills while 9.83% demonstrated a poor level of life skills.

It was also found that out of 39 male students, majority of the respondents (94.87%) reported average Life skills. A small minority of participants (2.56%) possessed good and poor life skills respectively. Thus, we may conclude that female students have slightly better life skills than male students.

Findings regarding the relation between male life skills and mental health of Undergraduate students in Aizawl City.

Table 3: Relationship between Life Skills and Mental Health level of male Undergraduate students in Aizawl City

MALE		FEMALE	
Statistical measure	value	Statistical measure	value
Sample size (n)	39	Sample size (n)	61
Pearsons *r*	0.86	Pearsons *r*	0.16

Based on the above Table 3, out of 39 male students, the findings indicate a **strong, positive correlation** between male mental health and life skills level among undergraduate students in Aizawl City, with a correlation coefficient of $r=0.86$.

It was also found that out of 61 female students, the findings indicate a **weak, positive correlation** ($r=0.16$) between female mental health and life skills level among undergraduate students in Aizawl City.

IV. Conclusion

The findings regarding the relation between mental health and life skills of male students indicate that there is a substantial statistical relationship between the two variables. This suggest that as life skills level increases, so does the level of mental health. Consequently, this result demonstrates that life skills have a significant and impactful role in influencing the mental health of the male undergraduate student population in this context. The strength of the correlation underscores a close interconnection between these two variables.

The findings regarding the relation between mental health and life skills of female students indicate that while a statistical relationship exists between the two variables, the connection is minimal. Consequently, it can be inferred that life skills have only a slight or limited impact on the mental health of female students in this specific sample. The results suggest that other factors, not measured in this study, likely play a more substantial role in influencing their mental well-being compared to the life skills assessed.

In conclusion, while the students generally possess average life skills, a mental health crisis is evident, with male students being disproportionately affected. The strong correlation for males indicates that life skills training could be a potent intervention strategy for them, whereas a more multifaceted approach is required to support female students' mental well-being. These results strongly advocate for the implementation of gender-sensitive support programs that combine life skills development with comprehensive mental health services.

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