

Predictive Role of Life Skills In Academic Resilience: An Empirical Analysis In The Context Of Higher Secondary Education

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Abstract

Adolescents in higher secondary education often face significant academic pressures and psychosocial stressors, necessitating strong adaptive competencies. This study explores the extent to which life skills can predict academic resilience among higher secondary school students. A total of 451 higher secondary school students were selected as sample using stratified sampling technique. Results indicated a strong positive correlation between life skills and academic resilience ($r = 0.690$, $p < 0.01$). Further, regression analysis showed that life skills significantly predicted academic resilience, explaining 47.6% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.476$). These findings suggest that students with well-developed life skills are better equipped to handle academic challenges and setbacks. The study underscores the importance of integrating structured life skills education into school curricula to enhance students' psychological strength and academic performance.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, students are increasingly confronted with academic challenges, performance pressures, and psychosocial stressors that test their emotional and cognitive stability. Among adolescents, especially those in higher secondary education, these challenges often coincide with a critical developmental stage, making the acquisition of adaptive competencies essential. In this context, life skills a set of psychosocial and interpersonal abilities that enable individuals to effectively manage daily demands and challenges have gained prominence in educational research and practice. Life skills refer to a set of psychosocial and interpersonal abilities that enable individuals to cope effectively with everyday challenges, make sound decisions, and maintain mental well-being (World Health Organization, 1997). These include self-awareness, problem-solving, decision-making, emotional regulation, and communication skills. Simultaneously, academic resilience, defined as the capacity to effectively deal with academic setbacks, stress, and pressure, is emerging as a crucial psychological construct influencing students' academic success and overall well-being. Academic resilience is defined as students' capacity to sustain or regain academic performance despite adversity (Martin & Marsh, 2006). It includes perseverance, motivation, adaptive coping, and emotional regulation. Resilient students typically maintain engagement and exhibit positive academic outcomes even under stress.

Resilient students tend to exhibit higher motivation, better problem-solving abilities, and a greater capacity to rebound from academic difficulties. The development of such resilience is believed to be strongly associated with the presence and practice of core life skills such as self-awareness, decision-making, emotional regulation, and interpersonal communication. While life skills education has been formally integrated into many school curricula across nations, empirical research examining its direct impact on academic resilience, particularly at the higher secondary level, remains limited. Understanding this relationship is essential in the Indian context, where students at

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the higher secondary level often face significant academic pressure due to board examinations and competitive entrance tests.

This study seeks to fill this gap by empirically analyzing the predictive role of life skills in shaping academic resilience among higher secondary school students. Using correlation and regression analysis, the research aims to determine whether life skills can serve as significant determinants of academic resilience, thereby offering insights for educators, counsellors, and policymakers to design more targeted interventions for student development.

Literature Review

Studies have shown that life skills positively influence academic performance and mental health among adolescents (Nasheeda, Abdullah, Laily, & Krauss, 2019). Mangrulkar, Whitman, and Posner (2001) found that incorporating life skills programs in schools enhances students' social competence and emotional adjustment. In India, Nair (2010) reported that life skills education improved problem-solving and decision-making abilities among secondary students, skills crucial for coping with academic demands.

Research by Morales (2010) and Cassidy (2015) emphasizes that academic resilience is influenced by both individual attributes and environmental supports. Factors such as teacher support, peer relationships, and intrinsic motivation have been linked to resilience (Cassidy, 2015). Within the Indian context, Rani and Venkatesan (2018) found that academic resilience among secondary students was associated with higher self-regulation and an internal locus of control.

Emerging evidence suggests a strong connection between life skills and academic resilience. Life skills, especially emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and interpersonal communication, are considered key resources for coping with academic challenges (Prajapati, Sharma, & Sharma, 2017). Joseph and Thomas (2015) demonstrated that students with well-developed life skills are more likely to exhibit resilience, adapting effectively to academic setbacks.

However, while international studies explore this relationship, there is a lack of empirical research from India applying statistical methods such as correlation and regression to analyze how life skills predict academic resilience among higher secondary students. Despite extensive research on life skills and resilience individually, few studies have directly examined their interrelation, especially within Indian higher secondary education. Empirical analyses using quantitative methods remain limited. Furthermore, contextual factors unique to Indian students, such as high academic pressure and societal expectations, require focused research to understand how life skills influence resilience. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the predictive role of life skills in academic resilience using correlation and regression analyses.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the relationship between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students
2. To determine the predictive effect of life skills on academic resilience among higher secondary school students

Hypothesis

1. There is significant correlation between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students.
2. Life skills significantly predict academic resilience among higher secondary school students.

Methodology

The population comprised of all higher secondary school students in Mizoram, from which a sample of 451 students was drawn using stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the Life Skills Scale (2013) by Raina and Tiwari, and the Academic Resilience Scale by (2015) Mahir Kr. Mallick and Sirmanjit Kaur. Both tools were recalibrated for contextual relevance and measurement reliability. Norms were developed from the score distributions to ensure the measures' accuracy, validity, and reliability.

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed to summarize the data. To examine the relationship between life skills and academic resilience, Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive influence of life skills on academic resilience.

Findings and Discussion

To assess the respondents' life skills and academic resilience, the investigator employed psychometrically validated standardized instruments: a Life Skills Scale and an Academic Resilience Scale. Individual scores were computed in accordance with the standardized scoring protocols and interpretative norms accompanying each scale. The descriptive analysis revealed that the respondents demonstrated a moderate proficiency in life skills, as indicated by a mean score of 26.95 (SD = 5.53), falling within the normative range for average life skills competence. Similarly, the respondents exhibited an intermediate level of academic resilience, with a mean score of 211.16 (SD = 34.64), likewise aligning with the established criteria for the average range of academic resilience. These findings suggest that the cohort, as a whole, maintains functional but non-optimal capacities in both domains.

Objective No.1 Relationship between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students

To investigate the association between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed as the statistical measure to quantify the linear interdependence between the two continuous variables.

Table 1: Correlation between Life Skills and Academic Resilience

		Life_Skills	Academic_Resilience
Life_Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.690**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	451	451
Academic_Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.690**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	451	451

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.690$, significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests a strong and meaningful relationship, indicating that students with higher life skills tend to exhibit greater academic resilience. Therefore, the hypothesis No.1 that assumes correlation between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students was accepted.

This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the foundational role of life skills in promoting adaptive academic functioning. Prajapati, Sharma, and Sharma (2017) emphasized that core life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional regulation—are directly linked to students' ability to cope with academic stress and persist in the face of setbacks. Similarly, Joseph and Thomas (2015) found that students with well-developed interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are better equipped to navigate academic challenges, demonstrating higher resilience and performance.

The current study's strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.690$) adds empirical support to the growing body of literature that considers life skills not just as behavioural competencies, but also as psychosocial assets that reinforce students' ability to manage adversity. As Nasheeda et al. (2019) argue, life skills function as protective factors, enhancing psychological well-being and reducing vulnerability to stress, which in turn strengthens resilience.

Moreover, these findings are particularly relevant in the context of higher secondary education in Mizoram, where students face unique academic and social pressures related to transitions, examinations, and future uncertainty. Equipping students with life skills, therefore, becomes a strategic approach not only to improve academic outcomes but also to foster emotional and psychological robustness.

Objective No.2: Predictive effect of life skills on academic resilience among higher secondary school students

To evaluate the causal impact of life skills on academic resilience among higher secondary school students, a univariate linear regression analysis was performed, designating life skills as the explanatory variable and academic resilience as the response variable, thereby estimating the magnitude and direction of their functional relationship.

Table 2Result of regression analysis (Ref. Ho.5)

Dependent Variable : Life Skills

Independent (Predictor): Academic Resilience

Model	Coefficients	t – Stat.	Sig. Level	R-square	F-Stat
Constant	3.657	3.129	.002	0.476	408.134
Life Skills	0.110	20.202	.000**		

**significant at 0.01

The linear regression analysis revealed that life skills significantly predicted academic resilience among higher secondary school students, with an adjusted R^2 of .476, indicating that approximately 47.6% of the variance in academic resilience could be explained by students' life skills. The model was statistically significant ($F(1, 449) = 408.134$, $p < .001$), suggesting a robust predictive relationship. Therefore, the hypothesis No.2 that assumes significant effect of life skill on academic resilience of higher secondary students was accepted.

This finding underscores the vital role of life skills as determinants of students' capacity to cope with academic stress, adapt to challenging environments, and maintain academic engagement despite adversity. The high predictive power of life skills in this model supports earlier research by Singh and Udainiya (2009), who found that adolescents with higher life skills displayed

significantly better emotional regulation and academic functioning. Similarly, Subasree and Nair (2014) reported that life skills training not only improved academic performance but also enhanced resilience and coping strategies in students under pressure.

The result aligns with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which posits that personal competencies, including social and emotional capabilities, enhance one's ability to face challenges successfully. Life skills such as critical thinking, emotional control, and effective communication thus function as internal resources that increase academic resilience.

Furthermore, the predictive strength observed in the current study is notable in the context of educational systems like Mizoram's, where students face heightened academic and psychosocial demands during higher secondary education. Investing in life skills education can therefore be seen not merely as a supplementary curriculum component but as a strategic intervention to build long-term psychological and academic resilience.

Implications

Given the observed relationship, educators and policymakers should consider integrating structured life skills training programs into the higher secondary curriculum. Such programs can serve as preventive and promotive tools to enhance students' resilience, academic persistence, and overall well-being.

The regression findings strongly advocate for the integration of life skills development programs within school settings. Such programs could act as protective and empowering frameworks, helping students build competencies that are critical for navigating both academic and life challenges

Conclusion

The present study sought to examine the relationship between life skills and academic resilience among higher secondary school students in Mizoram. The findings revealed that students generally exhibit average levels of life skills and moderate to high levels of academic resilience. A strong and statistically significant positive correlation was found between life skills and academic resilience, suggesting that students who possess well-developed life skills are more likely to demonstrate academic resilience in the face of challenges. Further, regression analysis indicated that life skills significantly predict academic resilience, accounting for nearly 48% of the variance.

These results underscore the critical role of life skills as protective and promotive factors in adolescent development and academic success. In particular, competencies such as decision-making, emotional regulation, interpersonal communication, and stress management appear to enhance students' capacity to cope with academic demands. The study affirms the growing consensus in educational psychology that life skills are not peripheral, but central to academic and emotional development. Given the findings, it is imperative for educational institutions and policymakers to embed structured life skills education into the higher secondary curriculum. Doing so can provide students with the psychological tools necessary to face academic pressures with confidence, adaptability, and resilience. In turn, this can foster not only academic success but also well-rounded personal growth.

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