



## International Journal of Arts & Education Research

### LIFE SKILL AND ACADEMIC ANXIETY OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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#### ABSTRACT

Life skills have been defined by WHO as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. They represent the psycho-social skills that determine valued behavior and include reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, to personal skills such as self-awareness, and to interpersonal skills. Practicing life skills leads to qualities such as self-esteem. Life skills are thus distinctly different from physical or perceptual motor skills, such as practical or health skills, as well as from livelihood skills, such as crafts, money management and entrepreneurial skills. Health and livelihood education however, can be designed to be complementary to life skills education, and vice versa.

**Key Words:** Life skill, anxiety, WHO.

#### LIFE SKILLS

Life skills have been defined by WHO as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. They represent the psycho-social skills that determine valued behavior and include reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, to personal skills such as self-awareness, and to interpersonal skills. Practicing life skills leads to qualities such as self-esteem. Life skills are thus distinctly different from physical or perceptual motor skills, such as practical or health skills, as well as from livelihood skills, such as crafts, money management and entrepreneurial skills. Health and livelihood education however, can be designed to be complementary to life skills education, and vice versa. Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) has a long history of supporting child development and health promotion. In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion recognized life skills in terms of making better health choices. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) linked life skills to education by stating that education should be directed towards the development of the child’s fullest potential. The 1990 Jomtien Declaration on Education for All took this vision further and included life skills among essential learning tools for survival, capacity development and quality of life. The 2000 Dakar World Education Conference took a position that all young people and adults have the human right to benefit from “an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be”, and included life skills in two out of the six EFA Goals.

### **Learning Outcomes from Life Skills-Based Education**

Expected learning outcomes include a combination of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills with a particular emphasis on those skills that related to critical thinking and problem solving, self management and communication and inter-personal skills. Life skills are essential to job functioning, and they must be included in instruction for students with special needs. Several million individuals with learning problems are still denied the opportunity to engage in meaningful employment in the United States. Large numbers of students with disabilities, both high school graduates and dropouts, earn very low salaries (Edgar, 1988). These students do possess the potential to live and work in the community if they receive appropriate life skills instruction (Rusch & Phelps, 1987). However, without this instruction they often fail to hold their jobs. A life skills curriculum approach blends academic, daily living, personal/social, and occupational skills into integrated lessons designed to help students learn to function independently in society.

### **Types of child anxiety:**

Children experience several types of anxiety. A child might have only one type of anxiety, or she might show features of several of them. Everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest adult, experiences anxieties and fears at one time or another. Feeling anxious in a particularly uncomfortable situation never feels very good. However, with kids, such feelings are not only normal, they're also necessary. Dealing with anxieties can prepare young people to handle the unsettling experiences and challenging situations of life.

### **Many Anxieties and Fears Are Normal:**

Anxiety is defined as "apprehension without apparent cause." It usually occurs when there's no immediate threat to a person's safety or well being, but the threat feels real. Anxiety makes someone want to escape the situation — fast. The heart beats quickly, the body might begin to perspire, and "butterflies" in the stomach soon follow. However, a little bit of anxiety can actually help people stay alert and focused. Having fears or anxieties about certain things can also be helpful because it makes kids behave in a safe way. For example, a kid with a fear of fire would avoid playing with matches. A certain amount of anxiety is a normal part of a child's healthy development. Brief separation anxiety, fears of the dark, of strangers, of loud noises or of storms is all common worries children may experience as they grow and mature. Frustrations and repeated difficulties in social relationships and school performance can lead to increased anxiety about being embarrassed in front of peers, as well as fears about letting down parents or teachers. Though these feelings are all normal, if they don't subside with time and instead escalate or begin to interfere with a child's daily activities, there may be more cause for concern. As a parent, it is important to be aware of some of the ways severe anxiety can show up in children. With increased awareness, you'll be able to intervene early and get help.

**Separation Anxiety:**

Children with separation anxiety experience excessive fear of being separated from their home and parent(s), caretaker, or to whomever the child is attached. The child may develop persistent worrying to the point of becoming panicky, refusing to go to school, throwing major tantrums, and clinging to the parent. She may be terrified of being apart even for brief periods. Simply the anticipation of separation can bring on extreme stress and raw feelings of vulnerability. It is often difficult for these children to sleep alone because of the separation that occurs during the night time hours. These kids may have repeated nightmares and complain of frequent physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches that result from the anxiety.

**Generalized Anxiety:**

Kids with generalized anxiety experience excessive, unrealistic worry and fear about every day things. They often anticipate disaster. The tension and stress is chronic and debilitating, affecting multiple areas of the child's life. Just getting through the day can be a struggle. Though the child may recognize that his anxiety is exaggerated, he still has great difficulty controlling and managing it. There may also be restlessness; difficulty concentrating (even times when the child's "mind goes blank"); irritability; edginess; muscle tension; fatigue; difficulty swallowing; a need for frequent urination; stomach aches; and sleep difficulties associated with the anxiety. The child may startle easily and just can't seem to relax.

**Phobias:**

Children may also develop phobias or persistent, irrational and extreme fears about a specific thing or situation. This anxiety causes the child to avoid the object, activity, or situation at all costs. If it cannot be avoided, it is painfully endured. Specific phobias result in terrifying internal distress -- feelings of imminent danger or doom; the need to escape; heart palpitations; sweating; trembling; shortness of breath or even a feeling of being smothered as though one can't breathe; chest pain; dizziness; a fear of losing control and "going crazy" or of dying. Kids with social phobia (also called social anxiety worry about being scrutinized and negatively judged. They fear embarrassment and teasing in social situations. At school, they may have great difficulty answering questions in class, reading aloud, initiating conversations, talking with unfamiliar people, and attending social activities. They feel powerless in controlling anxiety and tend to have few social relationships, resulting in even more isolation, loneliness, and feelings of being different.

**Panic Attacks:**

When a child has a panic attack, he or she experiences a period of intense fear which starts suddenly and may escalate to the point of terrifying thoughts of impending doom when there is no real danger. The attacks are unexpected (and can even occur during sleep) and recurrent. They are so intense that the child begins to not only panic during the attacks, but become preoccupied about the dreaded anticipation of the attacks. In addition to the overwhelming fear that

something bad is going to happen, the child may also experience shortness of breath; choking or smothering sensations; pounding heartbeat; chest pain; nausea; lightheadedness; trembling and shaking; and fear of losing one's mind. If you have concerns or questions about possible symptoms of anxiety in your child, be sure to talk with your pediatrician or mental health professional. Early intervention and treatment can make a world of difference for your child and can prevent further complications around the anxiety. Learn strategies to help your child manage feelings.

## Life skill and academic Anxiety of Higher Secondary School Children

### Statement of the Problem

“Life skill and academic anxiety of higher secondary school children”

### OBJECTIVES

- To assess the impact of gender on life skills among higher secondary school students
- To assess the impact of private and government school on life skill among higher secondary school students
- To assess the impact of gender on academic anxiety among higher secondary school students
- To assess the impact of private and government school on academic anxiety among higher secondary school students
- To assess the relationship between life skill and academic anxiety of higher secondary school students.

### HYPOTHESES

- There is no significant difference in life skills of boys and girls of higher secondary school.
- There is no significant difference in life skills of private and government higher secondary school students.
- There is no significant difference in academic anxiety of boys and girls of higher secondary schools.
- There is no significant difference in academic anxiety of private and government higher secondary school.
- There is no significant relationship between life skills and academic anxiety of higher secondary school students

### SAMPLE

A sample of 120 students from 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard was randomly selected from Anand district in Gujarat. It comprised of 60 students from private and 60 from government schools. In terms of gender, it consisted of 60 boys and 60 girls.

**Table-1 : Sample Distribution**

School	Gender	No. of Students
Private	Boys	30
	Girls	30
Government	Boys	30
	Girls	30

**Tools:**

Tools have been used for the data collection. These are:

Peter Shepherds online tool to measure different personality traits. The tool is in the form of a questionnaire available at <http://www.Trans4mind.com/personality/questionnaire1.htm>. The researcher has selected four traits from the tool that are considered as essential life skills for the students.

The total number of items in the questionnaire comprising of above mentioned 125.

**Statically Analysis:**

Mean, S.D. and 't' test were used to assess the significant difference between boys and girls, and private and government schools with regard to life skills and academic anxiety. Correlation technique was used to assess the significant relationship between life skills and academic anxiety.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Table-2: Significance of Difference between Boys and Girls in Life Skills**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significance
Boys	60	64.89	13.78	1.10	Not significant at 0.01
Girls	60	64.07	14.30		

Table 2 indicates that the Mean of boys is 64.89 and that of girls is 64.07. The SDs for the same groups is 13.78 and 14.30 respectively. The t-value was found to be 1.10 and it is not significant at 0.01 levels. Hence null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in life skills between boys and girls of higher secondary schools. However, from the Mean Values, it is clear that girls have more life skills than boys of higher secondary schools.

**Table-3: Significance of Difference between Private and Government Schools in Life Skills**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Private	60	67.05	14.56	5.58	Significant at 0.01
Government	60	63.05	12.45		

It is evident from table 3 that the Mean of private schools is 67.05 and that of government schools are 63.05. The SDs for the same groups is 14.56 and 12.45 respectively. The t-value is found to be 5.58 and is significant at 0.01 levels. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in life skills between students of private and government higher secondary

schools is rejected. It is concluded that there is significant difference in life skills between students of private and government higher secondary schools and, students from private schools have better life skills than students of government schools.

**Table-4: Significance of Difference between Boys & Girls in Academic Anxiety**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of significant
Boys	60	11.65	4.68	0.57	Not significant
Girls	60	11.90	4.50		

Table 4 shows that the Mean of Boys is 11.65 and that of girls are 11.90. The SDs for the same groups is 4.50 respectively. The t-value is found to be 0.57 and it is not significant at 0.01 levels. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant difference in academic anxiety between boys and girls of secondary schools. However, from the Mean values, it is clear that girls have more academic anxiety than boys of higher secondary schools.

**Table-5 Significance of difference between Private & Government of school in Academic Anxiety**

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of Significant
Private	60	11.67	4.37	0.11	Not significant
Government	60	11.78	4.78		

From table-5, it is clear that the Mean of private schools is 11.67 and that of government schools is 11.78. The SDs for the same groups is 4.37 and 4.78 respectively. The t-value is found to be 0.11 and is not significant at 0.01 levels. Hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in academic anxiety between students of private and government higher secondary schools is accepted. However, from Mean values, it is concluded that students from government schools have more academic anxiety than students of private schools.

To find out the relationship between life skills and academic anxiety, correlation was calculated and found to be highly negative (-0.94). It means that increasing the scores in one variable will reduce the scores in academic anxiety will be decreased. The calculated value is higher than table value and hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between life skills and academic anxiety is rejected. It is therefore, concluded that these two variables are not only highly negatively correlated but also significantly related.

#### **Major findings of the study:**

- There is no significant difference in life skills of boys and girls of higher secondary schools. Girls possess more life skills than boys.
- There is a significant difference in life skills of private and government higher secondary school students. Students from private schools have better life skills than government school students.

- There is no significant difference in academic anxiety of boys and girls of higher secondary schools. However, girls have more academic anxiety than boys.
- There is no significant difference in academic anxiety of private and government higher secondary schools students. But, government school student have more academic anxiety than students of private schools.
- There is significant relationship between life skills and academic anxiety of higher secondary school students. The results clearly reveal that more the life skills, lesser is the academic anxiety.

#### **Suggestion and Educational Implications:**

The researcher, on the basis of results, suggests incorporating life skills in the school education program itself. The curriculum needs revision in this direction. The teachers as well as the teacher educators need training for this inclusion. The present study was confined to higher secondary school students only with four life skills. The researcher by studying primary school students, more life skills and their relation with academic anxiety, attitude of teachers towards life skills education in schools, and other related variables of academics.

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