



Effect Of Life Skills On Teaching-Learning Practices Among Teacher Trainees

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Abstract: The impact of life skills training on teaching and learning practices among teacher candidates was investigated in this study, with a focus on evaluating life skills changes before and after the intervention and examining how they relate to particular demographic traits. Using a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test design with no control group, 153 teacher trainees enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs were included. A standardized Life Skills Questionnaire with 30 items covering six core domains—self-awareness, empathy, creative and critical thinking, decision-making, and stress management—was used to collect the data. The intervention included planned training sessions with the goal of enhancing classroom management, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills through interactive and experiential methods. ANOVA, paired t-tests, and descriptive statistics were used in statistical analyses to assess demographic correlations and mean differences; significance was set at $p < 0.05$. The overall life skills score increased significantly from 113.29 in the pre-test to 129.26 in the post-test ($t = -8.863$, $p < 0.001$), indicating the effectiveness of the life skills training. After the intervention, the majority of participants (94.1%) moved into the high life skills group, and the improvement of life skills was strongly correlated with both gender and the medium of instruction. The study emphasizes how important it is to incorporate life skills instruction into teacher preparation programs in order to develop reflective, sensitive, and flexible teachers. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 states that in order to improve lifetime learning and comprehensive professional development, life skills training should be incorporated into pre-service and in-service teacher education programs.

Keywords: Pedagogical approaches, life skills education, teacher candidates and life skills.

Introduction:

Education in the 21st century transcends just academic knowledge transmission, placing greater emphasis on the comprehensive development of learners. Teacher education is crucial in equipping future educators to deliver topic information and cultivate important skills in students. In this context, life skills have become an essential area in educational methods. Life skills empower individuals to adeptly navigate problems, make informed choices, cultivate strong relationships, and contribute meaningfully to society. Incorporating life skills into teacher preparation is essential for improving professional competence and pedagogical efficacy.

Theoretical Framework:

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1997) emphasized the significance of life skills, defining them as "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that empower individuals to effectively manage the demands and challenges of daily life." UNESCO and UNICEF have underscored the significance of life skills in promoting personal development, social responsibility, and employability (UNICEF, 2012). In the educational setting, life skills are essential not just for students but also for teacher trainees, who must develop and apply these abilities to proficiently plan, implement, and assess learning processes.

Key Terminology:

- **Life Skills:** Psycho-social abilities that augment an individual's ability to navigate real-life circumstances, encompassing skills such as critical thinking, communication, empathy, problem-solving, decision-making, and stress management (WHO, 1997).
- **Teaching-Learning Practices:** The methodologies, techniques, and tactics utilized by educators and students to enhance knowledge acquisition, skill development, and value cultivation.
- **Teacher Trainees:** Individuals participating in pre-service teacher education programs i.e. B.Ed. who are cultivating the professional competencies necessary for effective teaching. The theoretical foundation of life skills education is grounded in constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which asserts that learners actively construct knowledge via social interaction and personal experience. Life skills correspond with this viewpoint by promoting experience learning, reflective practices, and collaborative problem-solving—fundamental components of contemporary pedagogies.

Life skills education has become an essential aspect of contemporary teacher training, focusing on the cultivation of psycho-social competences that enable individuals to navigate problems efficiently and engage constructively in social and professional environments. Numerous scholars and organizations, including the World Health Organization (1997) and UNICEF (2012), have emphasized that life skills include competencies such as communication, empathy, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and emotional regulation—skills vital for comprehensive personal development and effective pedagogy.

Numerous research have evidenced the beneficial effects of life skills education in both educational and teacher training environments. Srikala and Kishore (2010) conducted a seminal study in Indian schools, indicating that structured life skills treatments markedly enhanced adolescents' emotional well-being, self-esteem, and interpersonal conduct. In a narrative systematic review of life skills education programs, James et al. (2018) determined that these interventions improve learners' resilience, social competence, and problem-solving skills across various age groups. A recent study by Lee et al. (2020) shown that school-based life skills programs enhanced self-regulation, cooperation, and decision-making in kids, underscoring the extensive educational benefits of these initiatives.

Empirical research within the Indian setting further substantiates the significance of life skills education in teacher training. The Puducherry study (2023) indicated that life skills education enhanced socio-emotional functioning and general well-being among teacher trainees. Savita Sharma et al. (2023) revealed that B.Ed. trainees possessing superior life skills exhibited enhanced classroom management, motivation, and learner engagement, thereby substantiating the correlation between life skills and effective pedagogical practice.

Further research underscores the necessity of including life skills into teacher education programs. Vijayarani J And Geetha .d. (2017) emphasized the correlation between life skills and value education, indicating that these programs cultivate ethical and reflective educators who can foster healthy classroom environments. Asha G H , Dr. Venkatesha K. (2022) study similarly shown that life skills education markedly improved critical thinking and decision-making competencies among B.Ed. trainees. The Monograph on Life Skills Oriented Teacher Education, issued by the Maharaja Sayajirao University of

Baroda, emphasized the necessity of integrating life skills into teacher training frameworks to enhance professional preparedness and emotional maturity in prospective educators.

Objectives:

1. To assess the change in life skills among teacher trainees by comparing pre-test and post-test total scores obtained from the standardized life skills questionnaire.
2. To examine the association of demographic variables (Age, Gender, Year of Study, Medium of Study) with the pre-test and post-test life skills scores of teacher trainees.
3. To analyse the shift in life skills categories (e.g., low, moderate, high) from pre-test to post-test among teacher trainees.

Research Methodology:

Research Design:

To determine how life skills training affected teacher candidates' pedagogical practices, the study used a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test methodology without a control group. This method worked well for testing the effectiveness of the training program by comparing changes in life skills between the same group of participants before and after the intervention.

Population and the sample:

Teacher candidates enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs, such as the B.Ed. program, during the 2024–2025 academic year made up the study's population. Convenient sampling was used to select the sample, depending on the institutions and individuals that were available. To ensure adequate representation of the target population, the final sample consisted of $N = 153$ teacher candidates, representing a range of age groups, genders, years of study, and teaching mediums.

Examine the variables:

The study's dependent variables included the pre-test and post-test total life skills scores as well as the levels of the three life skills categories (low, moderate, and high). The independent variable was the life skills training intervention. Age, gender, year of study, and medium of instruction were the background variables used to examine their relationship to the development of life skills.

Instruments and Tools:

A standardized Life Skills Questionnaire with 30 items evaluated on a five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. A Life Skills Questionnaire was developed and validated for the study. The test evaluates six core life skills: decision-making, creativity, critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, and stress management. The instrument has already been validated.

Data Collection Procedure:

There were three phases to the data collection process. To get baseline scores, participants filled out the Life Skills Questionnaire during the pre-test phase. In order to improve their communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and classroom management skills, teacher candidates participated in structured life skills training sessions during the intervention phase. To determine whether life skills had improved after the training, the same questionnaire was given again during the post-test period.

Statistical Analysis:

SPSS was used for analysis once the gathered data was imported into MS-EXCEL. Demographic characteristics and life skills aspects were summarized using descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. To assess differences between pre-test and post-test scores,

inferential analysis was performed using a paired t-test. The associations between life skills scores and demographic factors (age, gender, year of study, and medium of instruction) were evaluated using the t-tests and ANOVA tests. For every analysis, the significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

Result and Discussion:

Table 1 displays the demographic data of the 153 students that participated in the study. In line with the gender distribution typical of Indian teacher education programs, 20.3% of them were men and 79.7% were women. The majority of trainees (41.8%) were 23 years old, and 52.3% were in their second year of study.

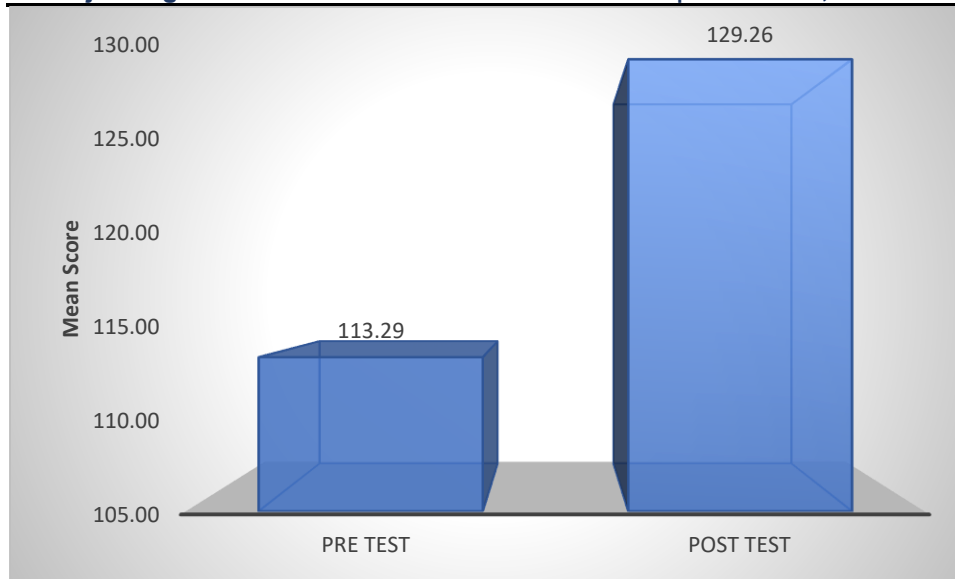
Table 1: Demographic details of participants

Gender	No. of Participants	Percent
Male	31	20.3
Female	122	79.7
Age		
21	9	5.9
22	36	23.5
23	64	41.8
24	27	17.6
25	10	6.5
26	5	3.3
28	2	1.3
Year of studying B.Ed.		
First Year	73	47.7
Second Year	80	52.3
Stream of teaching		
Arts	80	52.3
Science	73	47.7
Medium of Instruction:		
English	76	49.7
Kannada	77	50.3
Total	153	100.0

Nearly equal numbers of participants were divided between the arts (52.3%) and science (47.7%) streams, as well as between the Kannada (50.3%) and English (49.7%) mediums of instruction. This representation ensured diversity and strengthened the generalizability of the findings. Similar demographic trends were discovered by Savita, Tiwari, and Chopra (2023) in their research of B.Ed. trainees in Tonk District, confirming that bilingual instruction and female representation are common elements of teacher education programs in India.

Table 2: Paired t test results.

Life Skills Total score	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t value	p value
Pre test	113.29	153	14.592	1.180	-8.863	0.000
Post test	129.26	153	13.681	1.106		



With a t-value of -8.863 ($p < 0.001$), Table 2 demonstrates that the mean pre-test life skills score (113.29, $SD = 14.59$) climbed significantly to 129.26 ($SD = 13.68$) in the post-test. This outcome shows that trainees' life skills significantly improved after the intervention. These findings are in line with those of Srikala and Kishore (2010), who discovered that teaching students life skills greatly enhanced their capacity to regulate their emotions and find solutions to issues. Similarly, Tiwari et al. (2021) found that a life skills-based health education program significantly improved South Indian students' self-efficacy, coping mechanisms, and communication. Furthermore, Lee, Park, and Kim (2020) found that organized school-based life skills programs are associated with enhanced socio-emotional competence and decision-making abilities.

Table 3: Result of Cross tabulation

Post Test	Pre test			Total
	Low Life Skills: 30–70	Moderate Life Skills: 71–110	High Life Skills: 111–150	
Low Life Skills: 30–70	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 1.1%	1 .7%
Moderate Life Skills: 71–110	0 0.0%	3 5.0%	5 5.5%	8 5.2%
High Life Skills: 111–150	2 100.0%	57 95.0%	85 93.4%	144 94.1%
Total	2 100.0%	60 100.0%	91 100.0%	153 100.0%

Table 3 shows a discernible improvement in the distribution of life skills categories following the intervention. While just a small portion of participants began in the moderate group, 94.1% of trainees progressed into the high life skills category in the post-test. The low category was nearly dropped.

This change shows that the life skills training program has been successful in increasing general competency levels. Gayathri, Aravind, and Suganya (2023) found that structured life skills programs enhanced the socio-emotional functioning and resilience of teenagers in Puducherry in measurable ways. Additionally, according to Sridevi (2019) and Vijayarani and Geetha (2017), life skills interventions improved value orientation, self-awareness, and classroom readiness among B.Ed. trainees. The notion that teaching life skills enhances teacher candidates' social and emotional learning in a quantitative and sustainable manner is supported by all of these findings.

Table: 4. Comparison of life skills score according to demographic variables

Demographic Variables	Pre test		Post test		t value	p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Gender						
Male	118.23	14.282	130.94	16.888	2.132	0.035
Female	112.04	14.460	128.84	12.788	0.762	0.522
Year of Studying						
First Year	112.58	15.451	129.23	15.390	0.581	0.562
Second Year	113.95	13.826	129.29	12.012	0.025	0.98
Stream of teaching						
Arts	115.16	15.571	128.63	13.680	1.668	0.097
Science	111.25	13.241	129.96	13.743	0.601	0.549
Medium of Instruction:						
English	110.63	12.689	130.70	13.677	2.273	0.024
Kannada	115.92	15.902	127.84	13.626	1.293	0.198

While year of study, teaching stream, and age did not significantly differ, Table 4 shows that gender ($p = 0.035$) and the medium of instruction ($p = 0.024$) had a significant impact on the improvement of life skills. On post-test evaluations, male trainees and students attending English-medium schools performed slightly better than their counterparts.

These results are consistent with those of Lee et al. (2020), who found that learners' assimilation and use of life skills can be influenced by gender and linguistic exposure. Regardless of background disparities, life skills training is effective, as seen by the overall trend of improvement across all demographic groups. Similar findings were reached by Asha and Venkatesha (2022), who observed that life skills training improved critical thinking in B.Ed. candidates irrespective of demographic characteristics.

Table: 5. Comparison of life skills score according to Age

Age	Pre-test total		Post-test total		t value	p value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
21	102.22	20.259	136.33	11.192	1.903	0.084
22	113.19	12.365	128.86	14.860		
23	114.88	12.153	130.50	12.308		
24	113.74	15.456	124.26	17.342		
25	112.80	23.370	132.10	7.310		
26	120.40	9.633	123.20	9.149		
28	93.00	24.042	133.50	3.536		
Total	113.29	14.592	129.26	13.681		

The age-wise analysis (Table 5) demonstrates that there were no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in the mean scores, which improved steadily across all age groups. The fact that participants between the ages of 21 and 23 showed relatively larger increases suggests that younger trainees may absorb interactive and reflective teaching techniques more quickly. The results are consistent with those of Tiwari et al. (2021), who found that because younger participants were more receptive to participatory learning approaches, they gained more from structured life skills programs.

Implications for Teacher Education:

The findings of the present study highlight several important implications for teacher education programs. First, the significant improvement in life skills scores from pre-test to post-test indicates that structured life skills training can effectively enhance the personal and professional competencies of teacher trainees.

Teacher education institutions should therefore integrate life skills education as a core component of the curriculum rather than treating it as an optional or supplementary activity.

Second, life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, critical and creative thinking, decision-making, and stress management are essential for effective classroom teaching. These skills help future teachers handle diverse classroom situations, manage student behaviour, communicate effectively, and make informed pedagogical decisions. Incorporating experiential learning strategies such as role plays, group discussions, reflective activities, and problem-solving tasks in teacher training can help trainees internalize these competencies.

Third, the study revealed that demographic variables such as gender and medium of instruction showed significant associations with life skills development. This suggests that teacher education programs should adopt inclusive and flexible training approaches that address the diverse backgrounds and learning needs of teacher trainees.

Fourth, life skills training contributes to the development of reflective practitioners who are capable of adapting to changing educational environments. In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, teacher education institutions should promote holistic professional development by embedding life skills training in both pre-service and in-service teacher education programs.

Finally, integrating life skills education into teacher preparation can positively influence teaching-learning practices in classrooms. Teachers who possess strong life skills are more likely to create supportive learning environments, foster student engagement, and promote social-emotional learning among students. Therefore, policy makers and curriculum designers should emphasize life skills development as a key element in preparing competent and effective teachers.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are suggested for improving teacher education programs and enhancing the life skills of teacher trainees.

Integration of Life Skills in Teacher Education Curriculum:

Teacher education institutions should integrate life skills education as a compulsory component of the pre-service teacher training curriculum. Structured modules focusing on self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, decision-making, and stress management should be included to prepare trainees for real classroom situations.

Use of Experiential and Interactive Teaching Methods:

Life skills training should be delivered through experiential learning approaches such as role plays, group discussions, simulations, case studies, reflective journals, and problem-solving activities. These strategies help teacher trainees actively engage with the concepts and apply them in practical teaching situations.

Regular Workshops and Training Programs:

Teacher education institutions should organize regular workshops, seminars, and training sessions on life skills development. These programs can help teacher trainees strengthen their interpersonal, communication, and classroom management skills.

Incorporation of Life Skills in Teaching Practice:

Life skills training should be linked with teaching practice and internship programs. Teacher trainees should be encouraged to apply life skills strategies while handling classroom activities, managing student behaviour, and interacting with learners during their teaching practice.

Supportive Learning Environment:

Institutions should create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that encourages reflection, collaboration, and emotional well-being among teacher trainees. Mentoring and peer support systems can help trainees develop confidence and resilience.

Consideration of Demographic Differences:

Since the study identified associations between life skills development and demographic variables such as gender and medium of instruction, teacher education programs should design flexible training approaches that address the diverse needs of trainees.

Continuous Professional Development:

Life skills training should not be limited to pre-service education. Continuous professional development programs should be conducted for in-service teachers to strengthen their life skills and improve their teaching-learning practices throughout their careers.

Policy-Level Support:

Educational policy makers and curriculum planners should emphasize life skills education in teacher preparation programs in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Adequate resources, training materials, and institutional support should be provided for effective implementation.

These recommendations can help teacher education institutions develop competent, reflective, and emotionally intelligent teachers who can effectively manage classroom challenges and promote holistic student development.

Conclusion:

This study examined how life skills training affected teacher candidates' pedagogical practices and found that their overall life skills had significantly improved. The results showed that while age, stream, and year of study did not significantly differ, gender and the medium of instruction had a significant impact on the development of life skills, suggesting that the training was beneficial for all groups equally. Following the intervention, the majority of participants moved to the high life skills group, demonstrating the important impact of structured life skills instruction on enhancing psycho-social competencies such as communication, empathy, self-awareness, and decision-making. These results demonstrate how important it is to include life skills in teacher preparation programs in order to develop emotionally intelligent, considerate, and flexible teachers who can support all-around student development. In line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the study adds to the growing body of evidence supporting the inclusion of life skills training as a crucial component of teacher preparation. In addition to integrating life skills education into professional development for in-service teachers through technology-enhanced and experiential learning methodologies, future research should examine the long-term effects of such training on pedagogical practices, student performance, and teacher well-being.

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