

THE IMPACT OF LIFE SKILLS TRAINING ON COLLEGE STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Life Skills Training for students is a vital psychosocial intervention addressing academic, emotional, and social challenges. This insightful study demonstrates that implementing a life skills training program significantly improves college students' mental and physical health. Using a rigorous quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design with 300 participants—divided equally into experimental and control groups—the research highlights the positive impact of focusing on HED life skills modules. Participants outcomes were assessed using the Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) at the pretest, followed by the Youth Life Skills Scale (YLSS), WHO-5 Well-Being Index, and Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS) at the posttest. The results show that life skills training boosted psychological well-being and life satisfaction among students. These compelling findings underscore the urgent need for educational institutions to integrate such programs into their curricula to enhance students' emotional resilience, social skills, and personal development, thereby supporting their success and overall well-being. Policy implications and recommendations have been discussed.

Keywords: Life Skills Training, Psychological Wellbeing, Life Satisfaction, College Students.

INTRODUCTION

Life skills are an indispensable component of education, equipping individuals with crucial cognitive, emotional, and social abilities necessary to navigate the complexities of daily life. These skills—focused on adaptive and positive behavior—empower a person to effectively overcome everyday challenges (Chaudhary & Mehta, 2012). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life skills enable individuals to adopt flexible and constructive behaviors, vital for managing routine stresses and unforeseen obstacles (WHO, 1997). Essential life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, communication, interpersonal abilities, self-awareness, empathy, emotion regulation, and stress management are particularly vital during late adolescence

and early adulthood—stages marked by numerous academic, social, and emotional pressures that can significantly influence one's mental health and overall well-being.

Understanding the challenges of college life is crucial because addressing them can significantly enhance students' overall well-being and success. The pressures of academic workload, career uncertainty, evolving social circles, and personal responsibilities often take a toll on students' mental health and life satisfaction. However, with effective coping skills, students can navigate these difficulties more confidently. Psychological well-being—characterized by emotional stability, personal growth, positive relationships, autonomy, and a sense of purpose—serves as a foundation for a fulfilling life (Ryff, 1989). Likewise, life satisfaction—the overall judgment of life's quality based on personal standards (Diener et al., 1985)—is essential for thriving academically, maintaining healthy relationships, and enjoying a richer life. By prioritizing mental health and resilience, students can unlock their full potential and create a more rewarding college experience.

Life skills training stands out as a proven and essential approach for boosting mental health and strengthening psychosocial skills among young people. Evidence consistently shows that comprehensive life skills education empowers students to better handle stress, control emotions, communicate clearly, solve problems efficiently, and make responsible choices. These capabilities lead directly to improved mental well-being and healthier lifestyles (Kaur, 2011; Weare & Nind, 2011). Moreover, research indicates that students with well-developed life skills are more resilient, face fewer psychological challenges, and achieve greater academic success than their peers with limited skills (Tuttle et al., 2006). In the same vein, Sultan and Saleem (2019) revealed that life skills are a strong predictor of improved mental health and academic performance among Pakistani adolescents, underscoring the critical need to embed life skills education within our schools to shape healthier, more capable generations.

While a growing body of international research demonstrates the effectiveness of life skills training, empirical evidence of its impact on psychological well-being and life satisfaction among Pakistani college students remains scarce. Most studies to date have concentrated on school-aged adolescents or academic outcomes rather than exploring these psychological constructs simultaneously. This highlights a critical gap and underscores the necessity of investigating whether structured life skills training can significantly enhance psychological well-being and life satisfaction in college students. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how life skills training can genuinely improve students' psychological health and overall life satisfaction.

2.1. Study Objectives

The researcher's objective was the following

1. To check the effectiveness of life skills training on psychological well-being and life satisfaction among college students.

2.2. Hypothesis

- Students who attend life skills training will have higher psychological well-being than those who do not receive training.
- Students with life skills training will score higher on life satisfaction than those without it.
- There will be a significant difference in the psychological well-being and life satisfaction between students with and without life skills training.

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Method

3.1. Research Design

In this study, a quantitative, quasi-experimental design with a pretest-posttest control group was used to examine the effect of life skills training on psychological well-being and life satisfaction among college students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The design enabled comparison between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Both The Experimental Group and the control group, which received assessment Training.

3.2. Participants

300 undergraduate students (aged 18-22 years) from two public colleges in Punjab, Pakistan, managed by the Higher Education Department (HED), were recruited for the study. Fifteen training sessions were conducted for the participating students. Students in the experimental group received the life skills training intervention, while those in the control group did not. All participants volunteered and provided their informed consent.

3.3. Life Skills Training Modules

According to the HED Government of Pakistan Life Skills Module (2021), the program is divided into five key life skills areas. The following is a summary of the intervention.

3.3.1. Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills involve helping students build healthy relationships, communicate effectively, and manage their emotions. This module includes self-awareness, money management, anger management, and related topics to help students regulate their feelings, make responsible choices, and interact positively with others.

3.3.2. Social Skills

The focus of social skills is to enhance the student's ability to interact with others through communication, listening, and conflict resolution. These skills boost teamwork and empathy among children, enabling them to cooperate and settle disputes peacefully while respecting others.

3.3.3. Cognitive Skills

Students' thinking and reasoning are strengthened with cognitive skills. The module focuses on decision-making, problem-solving, and logical reasoning, so that students learn to analyze situations carefully, evaluate options, and make well-informed, responsible decisions.

3.3.4. Wellness Skills

The wellness component of holistic health encourages mental well-being, stress reduction, and mindfulness. College students learn to maintain an emotional balance, manage stress effectively, practice self-care, adopt healthy habits, and more.

3.3.5. Digital Skills

Students prepare to use technology using Digital Skills in college. In this module, learners were taught digital literacy, safe internet and social media habits, online communication, and digital citizenship awareness to use the digital space ethically and effectively.

3.4. Instruments

They utilized standardized instruments to evaluate the study variables. In the pretest phase, the Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) was employed, while the Youth Life Skills Scale (YLSS) was used during

the posttest phase. Psychological well-being, measured by the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), was assessed at baseline, and the WHO-5 Well-Being Index was administered post-intervention. Life satisfaction was gauged with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) at pretest and the Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale (TSWLS) at posttest. All instruments have demonstrated reliable psychometric properties and have been utilized in previous research (Diener et al., 1985; Greene, 2014; Stewart-Brown et al., 2008; WHO, 1998).

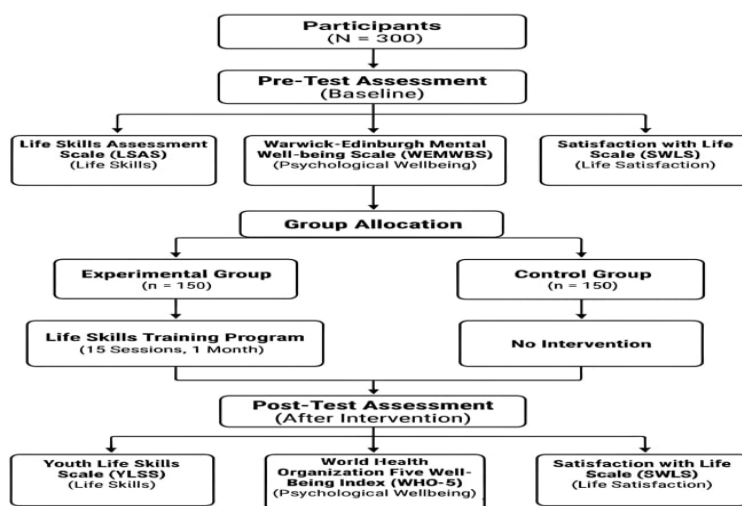
3.5. Procedure

Once ethical approval and informed consent were obtained, the participants completed their baseline assessments of life skills, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. The Life Skills module, designed in July 2021, aims to help college lecturers and principals incorporate life skills into mainstream education. This additional academic resource was developed by consultants, the HED Secretariat, authors, and contributors through benchmarking against global modules. The module is freely available and can be used for research purposes. However, permission was obtained from the module authors before the study began. The experimental group participated in a Life Skills Training Program based on the Life Skills Module by the HED (Government of Punjab, 2021). The module comprised 15 interactive sessions over the course of a month. Training sessions used participatory teaching methods, including group discussions, role-plays, brainstorming, case studies, worksheets, reflections, and practical exercises. Participants in the experimental group completed a pretest before the intervention and a posttest afterward. The control group completed the same pretest and posttest assessments at similar times but did not receive any life skills training or intervention during the study.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed in accordance with APA VII standards to protect participants' safety and rights. Before participating, individuals were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and the one-month life skills training, and informed consent was obtained. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not collecting identifiable information, and the data were used solely for research purposes.

3.6. Research Model of the Study



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Results

Table 4.1

Frequencies of percentages and Categories of the Demographic Characteristics of Participants. (N=300)

Characteristic	Category	N (%)
Gender	Male	30 (10.0)
	Female	270 (90.0)
Age	18–22 years	300 (100)
Marital Status	Single	242 (80.7)
	Married	58 (19.3)
Family System	Nuclear	162 (54.0)
	Joint	138 (46.0)
Socioeconomic Status	50,000–100,000	105 (35.0)
	100,000–200,000	130 (43.3)
	Above 200,000	65 (21.7)

Note. *f*= Frequency, %= percentages

Table 4.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants (*N* = 300). Most of the participants were female (90.0%), single (80.7%), and belonged to nuclear families (54.0%). All participants were between 18 and 22 years of age. Most participants reported a monthly family income of PKR 100,000–200,000 (43.3%), followed by PKR 50,000–100,000 (35.0%) and above PKR 200,000 (21.7%).

Table 4.2

Multiple Linear Regression Analyses Predicting Psychological Well-Being and Life Satisfaction (N=300).

Outcome Variable	Predictor	B	SE B	β	T	p
Pre WEMWBS	Constant	58.25	5.35	—	10.89	.001
	LSAS	0.01	0.01	.111	1.96	.051
	YLSS	−0.05	0.01	−.224	−3.97	.001
Pre SWLS	Constant	26.05	3.28	—	7.95	.001
	LSAS	−0.01	0.00	−.173	−3.02	.003
	YLSS	0.01	0.01	.055	0.95	.342
Post WHO-5	Constant	16.56	2.32	—	7.15	.001
	LSAS	0.00	0.00	.046	0.79	.431
	YLSS	−0.00	0.01	−.024	−0.42	.675
Post TSWLS	Constant	72.73	6.69	—	10.87	.001
	LSAS	0.04	0.01	.305	5.56	.001
	YLSS	−0.05	0.02	−.179	−3.27	.001

p < .05*, *p* < .01**, *p* < .001***

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE B* = standard error of *B*; β = standardized regression coefficient; LSAS = Life Skills Assessment Scale, WEMWBS = Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale, YLSS= Youth Life Skills Scale, WHO-5 Index

Scale = The World Health Organization Five Wellbeing Index Scale, TSWLS=Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale.

Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine whether specific life skills could predict levels of psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction ($N = 300$). Before the intervention, YLSS significantly and negatively predicted psychological well-being ($\beta = -.224, p < .001$), while LSAS significantly and negatively predicted life satisfaction ($\beta = -.173, p = .003$). After the intervention, neither LSAS nor YLSS significantly predicted psychological well-being ($p > .05$). However, both significantly predicted post-intervention life satisfaction, with LSAS showing a positive relationship ($\beta = .305, p < .001$) and YLSS a negative one ($\beta = -.179, p < .001$). These findings overall suggest that life skills have a more pronounced and consistent association with life satisfaction than with psychological well-being, highlighting the potential importance of targeted skill development to improve overall life contentment.

Table 4.3

Analysis of Paired-Sample t-test of Pre- and Post-test ($N=300$).

Variables	Mean Difference	SD	t	df	Sig.
LSAS – YLSS	44.82	85.19	9.11	299	.000***
WEMWBS – WHO5Index Scale	26.28	8.24	55.22	299	.000***
SWLS – TSWLS	-42.89	11.10	-66.92	299	.000***

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

Note. SD= Standard deviation, LSAS=Life Skills Assessment Scale, WEMWBS = Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale, YLSS= Youth Life Skills Scale, WHO5Index Scale = The World Health Organization Five Wellbeing Index Scale, TSWLS=Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale.

The results demonstrated statistically significant differences between the two assessments across all three measured variables, which included life skills, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. Specifically, life skills scores improved notably, $t(299) = 9.11, p < .001$. Psychological well-being also showed a significant change from pretest to posttest, $t(299) = 55.22, p < .001$. Likewise, life satisfaction scores differed significantly between the tests, $t(299) = -66.92, p < .001$, with higher scores in the posttest. Overall, these findings suggest that the life skills training program led to significant improvements in life skills, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. Overall, these findings strongly suggest that the structured life skills training program effectively contributed to notable gains in participants' life skills, psychological well-being, and overall life satisfaction, implying its potential as a beneficial intervention for personal development.

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Table 4.4

Independent-Samples T-Test Mean Differences in Experimental and Control Groups among Students N=300).

Scales	Experimental (n=150) M (SD)	Control(n=150) M (SD)	t	df	Mean Difference	p
LSAS	483.66 (33.93)	366.89 (72.86)	17.79	210.73	116.77	.001
WEMWBS	42.61 (7.72)	42.76 (7.46)	-0.17	297.64	-0.15	.867
SWLS	24.18 (5.17)	25.52 (3.79)	-2.56	273.20	-1.34	.011
YLSS	380.89 (32.59)	380.02 (32.35)	0.23	297.99	0.87	.816
WHO5 Index scale	16.75 (3.25)	16.07 (3.11)	1.84	297.43	0.67	.067
TSWLS	70.09 (7.65)	65.40 (11.07)	4.27	264.82	4.69	.001

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

Note. M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation, LSAS=Life Skills Assessment Scale, WEMWBS = Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale, YLSS= Youth Life Skills Scale, WHO5Index Scale = The World Health Organization Five Wellbeing Index Scale, TSWLS=Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale.

The independent-samples t-test comparing the experimental and control groups indicates that the experimental group had a higher mean score in life skills ($M = 483.66$, $SD = 33.93$). In contrast, the control group had an average score of 366.89 ($SD = 72.86$). Despite differences in activity levels, there was no evidence of bias in psychological well-being or life satisfaction. The results indicated that, at posttest, the experimental group ($M = 16.75$, $SD = 3.25$; $M = 70.09$, $SD = 7.65$) scored significantly higher than the control group ($M = 16.07$, $SD = 3.11$; $M = 65.40$, $SD = 11.07$). Similarly, the experimental group's posttest scores were slightly higher than those of the control group ($M = 380.89$, $SD = 32.59$ vs. $M = 380.02$, $SD = 32.35$). Overall, the descriptive results suggest that the experimental group's post-test outcomes are relatively better than those of the control group. However, there was a statistically significant difference between the post-test scores, $t(264.82) = 4.27$, $p < .001$. According to the independent t-test, the experimental group's mean score ($M = 70.09$, $SD = 7.65$) was substantially higher than that of the control group ($M = 65.40$, $SD = 11.07$).

Table 4.5

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for the Impact of Life Skills on Psychological Well-Being and Life Satisfaction (N=300).

Analysis	Outcome Variable	Test Statistic	F	df	p	Partial η^2
Pretest	Combined dependent variables	Pillai's Trace = .037	5.65	(2, 297)	.004	.037
	Psychological Well-Being (WEMWBS)	—	2.56	(1, 298)	.111	.009
	Life Satisfaction (SWLS)	—	8.71	(1, 298)	.003	.028
Posttest	Combined dependent variables	Pillai's Trace.024	3.71	(2, 297)	.026	.024
	Psychological Well-Being (WHO-5)	—	0.13	(1, 298)	.721	.001
	Life Satisfaction (TSWLS)	—	7.23	(1, 298)	.008	.024

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

Note: LSAS=Life Skills Assessment Scale, WEMWBS = Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale, YLSS= Youth Life Skills Scale, WHO5Index Scale = The World Health Organization Five Wellbeing Index Scale, TSWLS=Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale.

A one-way MANOVA was performed to assess the impact of life skills training on psychological well-being and life satisfaction. The multivariate effect was significant at both pretest, Pillai's Trace = .037, $F(2, 297) = 5.65$, $p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$, and posttest, Pillai's Trace = .024, $F(2, 297) = 3.71$, $p = .026$, partial $\eta^2 = .024$. Follow-up univariate analyses indicated that psychological well-being showed no significant difference between groups at either the pretest, $F(1, 298) = 2.56$, $p = .111$, or the posttest, $F(1, 298) = 0.13$, $p = .721$. Conversely, life satisfaction differed significantly at both the pretests, $F(1, 298) = 8.71$, $p = .003$, and the posttest, $F(1, 298) = 7.23$, $p = .008$. Overall, the results suggest that life skills training was associated with notable improvements in life satisfaction but not in psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

This study, employing a quasi-experimental pretest-post test control-group design, demonstrates that life skills training significantly boosts college students' life satisfaction and enhances their life skills competencies. While its effect on psychological well-being is more subtle, the overall evidence strongly supports integrating such training into student development programs to foster holistic well-being.

The study clearly demonstrated that participants who underwent life skills training reported significantly higher psychological well-being than those who did not. The experimental group showed marked improvements in their well-being following the intervention. Consistent with prior research in Pakistan, these findings reinforce the effectiveness of life skills training in enhancing psychosocial competencies, although it remains essential to consider the overarching influence of environmental and social factors on overall well-being (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2017).

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These findings show that support through life skills training significantly improves life satisfaction. The current results strongly support existing research, which indicates that life skills positively predicted mental health, academic resilience, academic self-efficacy, and academic achievement among adolescents (Sultan & Saleem, 2019).

The results demonstrated a marked difference in psychological well-being and life satisfaction between students who received life skills training and those who did not. The evidence, supported by prior research, shows that structured training in communication, emotion management, decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal relationships empowers students to effectively navigate their academic and personal challenges (Vranda et al., 2019).

5.1. Implications

Educational institutions must incorporate life skills training programs into their curricula to foster students' emotional, social, and personal growth. University counseling centers should adopt life skills modules as essential preventive measures to enhance students' coping mechanisms and resilience. Additionally, teachers and academic administrators have a vital role in embedding communication, problem-solving, stress management, and decision-making activities into educational programs to better prepare students for life's challenges.

5.2. Limitations

This study provides valuable insights, but it is important to recognize its limitations. Conducted with students from only two higher education institutions, the findings may not fully generalize to other settings. Additionally, the predominance of female participants suggests that the results could be less applicable to male students. The absence of long-term follow-up assessments leaves the durability of the intervention effects uncertain, highlighting the need for further research to confirm these promising outcomes.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should incorporate a broader range of universities and colleges across various regions of Pakistan to enhance the applicability of the findings. Additionally, extending intervention durations and including follow-up assessments are crucial to thoroughly evaluate the enduring effects of life skills training.

5.4. Conclusion

This study examined the effect of organized life skills training on psychological well-being and life satisfaction among university students using a pretest-posttest control-group quasi-experimental design. The study found that life-building skills training is an effective intervention among students. The program increased students' coping ability, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and self-management, resulting in improved life satisfaction and psychosocial development. Life skills education may improve students' mental health and quality of life. Thus, the introduction of organized life skills training in higher educational institutions should be undertaken to help students develop personally, socially, and emotionally.



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