



DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS AMONG CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Dr. Geeta Garg

Principal, Pratap College of Education, Karnal, Haryana.

Abstract

Dyslexia is one of the most common learning disabilities affecting school-age children and often influences both academic performance and psychosocial development. In addition to reading difficulties, children with dyslexia may experience challenges related to social competence, perseverance, and self-esteem. The present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of a structured life skills intervention programme designed for primary school children with dyslexia. The study employed an experimental research design using a pre-test–post-test control group model. The sample consisted of 30 students studying in Grades IV and V in CBSE schools in Karnal district, Haryana. Participants were identified as exhibiting dyslexic traits and deficits in life skills. The students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group received a structured life skills intervention programme consisting of activities such as discussions, role-playing, collaborative tasks, and expert guidance. Data were collected using diagnostic tests and a Life Skills Scale developed by the investigator. Statistical analysis using mean scores and t-tests revealed significant improvement in life skills among students in the experimental group, whereas the control group did not demonstrate significant changes. The findings highlight the importance of structured intervention programmes in promoting the psychosocial development of children with dyslexia.

Keywords: Dyslexia, Life Skills Development, Learning Disabilities, Intervention Programme, Primary Education

Introduction

Learning disabilities have emerged as a significant concern in modern educational systems. Among these disabilities, dyslexia is widely recognized as a neurological condition that affects reading and language processing abilities. Children with dyslexia often struggle with decoding words, reading fluently, and comprehending written text (Snowling & Hulme, 2018). These difficulties can lead to academic underachievement and reduced participation in classroom activities.

The impact of dyslexia, however, extends beyond academic limitations. Research indicates that children experiencing persistent learning difficulties may develop feelings of frustration, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Lerner & Johns, 2015). These emotional challenges can negatively influence social relationships and overall adjustment in school environments.

Life skills are essential psychosocial competencies that enable individuals to cope effectively with everyday demands and challenges. Skills such as social competence, perseverance, self-awareness, and emotional regulation contribute to healthy personal and social development (World Health Organization [WHO], 1997). For children with dyslexia, developing these skills can help them overcome emotional barriers and build confidence in their abilities.

Educational intervention programmes that incorporate life skills training have been shown to improve students' coping abilities and social adjustment (Swanson & Hoskyn, 2019). Therefore, structured life skills programmes may play a crucial role in supporting children with dyslexia in both academic and social contexts.



The present study investigates the effectiveness of a structured life skills intervention programme designed to enhance social competence, perseverance, and self-esteem among children with dyslexia at the primary school level.

Review of Related Literature

Previous research highlights the importance of early intervention for children with learning disabilities. Lerner and Johns (2015) reported that students with dyslexia often experience lower levels of self-confidence and social interaction compared to their peers. According to the authors, intervention programmes focusing on emotional and social development can significantly improve students' academic engagement.

Snowling and Hulme (2018) emphasized that dyslexia should not be viewed solely as a reading disorder but as a condition that can influence a child's emotional and psychological well-being. The researchers suggested that comprehensive educational approaches should address both academic and psychosocial aspects of development.

Life skills education has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for promoting emotional resilience and interpersonal competence. The World Health Organization (1997) defined life skills as abilities that enable individuals to deal effectively with everyday challenges. Programmes focusing on these skills have been shown to improve communication abilities, decision-making, and problem-solving among students.

Studies conducted by Swanson and Hoskyn (2019) demonstrated that structured intervention programmes involving collaborative activities, peer interaction, and role-playing significantly improved the social competence and perseverance of students with learning disabilities.

Similarly, Kavale and Forness (2017) concluded that intervention programmes addressing both academic and psychological needs can positively influence the self-esteem and social behavior of children with dyslexia.

The review of literature suggests that life skills education can play an important role in improving the overall adjustment and development of children with learning disabilities.

Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To identify deficits in life skills among children with dyslexia.
2. To design a life skills intervention programme for these children.
3. To implement the intervention programme among students with dyslexia.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention programme in improving life skills.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested:

The life skills intervention programme will significantly improve life skills among children with dyslexia.



Methodology

Research Method

The present study adopted the **Experimental Research Method**.

Research Design

A **Pre-Test Post-Test Control Group Design** was used in the study.

Population

The population consisted of students studying in **Grades IV and V in CBSE schools in Haryana**.

Sample

The sample included **30 students from Karnal district** who exhibited characteristics of dyslexia and deficits in life skills.

The students were divided into two groups:

- Experimental Group – 15 students
 - Control Group – 15 students

 - ✓ The age of the participants ranged between **8 and 11 years**.
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Tools Used

Measuring Tools

The following instruments were used to collect data:

1. Previous academic records
2. Colored Progressive Matrices
3. Teacher Referral Form for Learning Disabilities
4. Diagnostic Test for Learning Disability (DTLD)
5. Diagnostic Test of Reading Disorders (DTRD)
6. Life Skills Scale (developed by the investigator)

Treatment Tool

The intervention programme served as the treatment tool. It included activities such as:

- i. Group discussions
- ii. Role-playing and dramatization
- iii. Expert lectures
- iv. Educational videos
- v. Group games



- vi. Project-based learning activities
- vii. Sharing experiences of successful individuals with learning disabilities

These activities were designed to strengthen social interaction, perseverance, and self-confidence.

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analyzed using the following statistical techniques:

- a. Mean scores
- b. Measures of variability
- c. **t-test** to determine the significance of differences between groups.

Results and Findings

Table 1
Mean Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental Group

Life Skills	Test	Mean	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Social Competence	Pre Test	112.87		
	Post Test	213.47	9.8	Significant at 0.01
Perseverance	Pre Test	149.67		
	Post Test	271.93	8.3	Significant at 0.01
Self-Esteem	Pre Test	129.13		
	Post Test	209.27	7.8	Significant at 0.01
Overall Life Skills	Pre Test	391.67		
	Post Test	694.67	12.7	Significant at 0.01

Table 2
Mean Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Control Group

Life Skills	Test	Mean	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Social Competence	Pre Test	114		
	Post Test	115.27	1.3	Not Significant
Perseverance	Pre Test	119.47		
	Post Test	120.13	0.6	Not Significant
Self-Esteem	Pre Test	108.87		
	Post Test	109.27	0.3	Not Significant
Overall Life Skills	Pre Test	342.33		
	Post Test	344.67	1.06	Not Significant



Table 3

Comparison of Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Life Skills	Group	Mean	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Social Competence	Experimental	213.47	11.3	Significant at 0.01
	Control	115.27		
Perseverance	Experimental	271.93	11.08	Significant at 0.01
	Control	120.13		
Self-Esteem	Experimental	209.27	11.2	Significant at 0.01
	Control	109.27		
Overall Life Skills	Experimental	694.67	18.9	Significant at 0.01
	Control	344.67		

The analysis revealed that the experimental group showed significant improvement in all dimensions of life skills, whereas the control group did not exhibit significant changes.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that the life skills intervention programme had a significant positive impact on the development of social competence, perseverance, and self-esteem among children with dyslexia. The improvement observed in the experimental group suggests that structured activities designed to enhance interpersonal interaction and emotional expression can contribute to the development of essential life skills.

The results are consistent with earlier research highlighting the benefits of intervention programmes for students with learning disabilities (Swanson & Hoskyn, 2019). The lack of significant improvement in the control group further emphasizes the importance of targeted educational interventions for promoting psychosocial development among children with dyslexia.

Educational Implications

The findings of the study suggest several implications for educational practice:

- i. Teachers should identify life skills deficits among children with dyslexia at an early stage.
- ii. Schools should incorporate life skills training within the curriculum.
- iii. Teacher education programmes should include strategies for supporting students with learning disabilities.
- iv. Educational policies should emphasize inclusive practices that address both academic and psycho-social needs of learners.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was limited to:



- i. Students with reading disabilities in the English language
 - ii. CBSE schools in Karnal district
 - iii. Students of Grades IV and V
 - iv. Age group 8–11 years
 - v. A sample size of 30 students
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Conclusion

The study concludes that structured life skills intervention programmes can significantly enhance the social competence, perseverance, and self-esteem of children with dyslexia. Such programmes help students develop coping strategies and improve their confidence in dealing with academic and social challenges. Integrating life skills education into school programmes can therefore support the holistic development of children with learning disabilities.

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