https://africanjournalofbiomedicalresearch.com/index.php/AJBR
Afr. J. Biomed. Res. Vol. 27 (October 2024); 902-907

Research Article

A Study of Life Skills (Jeevan Kaushal) Among College Students of Mizoram in The Light of NEP: 2020, India

Muttu Vemula[1*], Ananthula Raghu[2], Christina Lalramthari[3]

[1*]*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Aizawl, India*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Delhi, Delhi, India*
[3]*Research Scholar, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Aizawl, India*

ABSTRACT
This study examined the life skills of college students in Mizoram, specifically analyzing the effects of demographic variables such as gender, locality, and family type. Employing a quantitative survey method, data were collected from 400 college students using a Life Skills Measurement Scale (LSMS) comprising 62 items across four dimensions: Universal Human Values, Professional Skills, Communication Skills, and Leadership and Management Skills. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS, including t-tests and chi-square tests. Results indicate that participants demonstrated the highest proficiency in Professional Skills, followed by Leadership and Management Skills and universal Human Values, and the lowest in Communication Skills. Significant differences were observed based on gender, locality, and family structure, with male and urban students outperforming their peers. These findings highlight the urgent need for educational institutions to implement targeted interventions aimed at enhancing Communication Skills and providing comprehensive life skills training. This research contributes to the existing literature by underscoring the importance of considering diverse student backgrounds in life skills education, ultimately fostering personal, academic, and professional success.

KEYWORDS: Professional skills, Universal Human values, Leadership and management, Life Skills, NEP: 2020

**Author for correspondence: Email: drmuttuedu@gmail.com*

Receiving Date: 23/09/2024, Acceptance Date: 30/09/2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.53555/AJBR.v27i3.1941

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, there is an increasing recognition among educational institutions that examination success does not necessarily equate to personal and professional achievement. To become a successful doctor, engineer, architect, teacher, manager, or entrepreneur requires more than mere memorization of textbooks; it demands the development of essential life skills. Life skills encompass problem-solving behaviors that individuals employ responsibly to manage their personal affairs effectively. Various terms are commonly used interchangeably to describe life skills, such as 21st-century skills, transferable skills, soft skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies, and social and emotional learning. This overlapping language leads to confusion about the precise definition of life skills. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), life skills are defined as abilities that foster adaptive and positive behavior, helping individuals effectively manage the demands and challenges of daily life. Conversely, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) views life skills as social and emotional competencies crucial for regulating one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. The life skills education approach adopts an interactive methodology that prioritizes not only the transmission of knowledge but also the shaping of attitudes and the development of interpersonal skills. The University Grants Commission (UGC) categorizes life skills into four main areas: Communication Skills, Professional Skills, Leadership and Management Skills, and Universal Human Values. Professional

Skills encompass training in resume development, interview techniques, group discussions, brainstorming, and professional etiquette. Leadership and Management Skills focus on instilling leadership qualities and entrepreneurial ethics in students. These life skills are crucial for enhancing communication and self-organization, empowering individuals to contemplate their personal growth. Increased self-confidence contributes to a sense of agency over one's life, allowing individuals to make meaningful contributions to their communities (Jones & Lavallee, 2009).

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation and interaction with others, allowing college students to acquire essential skills from their peers and mentors. Similarly, Cognitive-Behavioral Theory highlights the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, suggesting that students can modify their actions by changing their thought patterns (Beck, 2011). This approach nurtures critical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional regulation, equipping students to manage stress and make informed decisions. Additionally, Emotional Intelligence (EI)**,** as articulated by Daniel Goleman (1995), focuses on the ability to recognize and manage emotions, which is crucial for developing empathy and effective communication skills. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive understanding of how life skills can be cultivated, preparing students to navigate the complexities of adulthood successfully. Life skills are crucial for successful living, as they enable individuals to adopt positive behaviors that help navigate daily challenges (WHO, 1997). Skills like emotional recognition, goal-setting, and problem-solving enhance students' well-being and performance in education and careers (NEP, 2020). By integrating life skills education into academic curricula, institutions can better prepare students for adulthood, fostering a more competent and resilient society. This study aims to explore how developing life skills significantly enhances college students' academic performance, personal growth, and readiness for professional challenges in a rapidly changing world.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of life skills among college students.
- To determine whether significant differences exist in life skills based on demographic variables, including gender, locality, and family type.

HYPOTHESES

Ho1: There is a significant difference in the level of life skills among college students.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in life skills (i.e. Universal values, Communication, Professional, Leadership, and overall life skills) among college students concerning gender, locality, and family type

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach utilizing a survey method. The population for this study consisted of all college-going students in Mizoram during the academic year 2023-24, including both male and female students from various localities, enrolled in different streams. A sample of 400 college students was selected from this population using a simple random sampling technique. The researchers developed a Life Skills Measurement Scale (LSMS) comprising four dimensions: universal human values, professional skills, communication skills, and leadership and management skills. The items were formulated after a thorough review of relevant literature. A pilot study was conducted to assess the validity of the items, and the reliability of the scale was determined using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.86, indicating good reliability. There are 62 items in the final tool, which consists of positive and negative statements. During administration, students respond to every item in the scale by putting tick (√) mark on the right of the side of each statement as), Agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D). The positive statements carry three, two, one, and negative statements carry one, two, and three respectively to the above Likert scale. There is no right or wrong answer to these statements. Permissions were obtained from the selected colleges, and the principals were informed about the study. Fifty students from eight colleges participated, receiving booklets of the scale during the administration, where any questions or doubts were clarified. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software. Statistical analysis included calculations of mean and standard deviation, as well as Chi-square tests, T-tests, and F-ratios.

RESULTS, DESCRIPTIVE AND CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

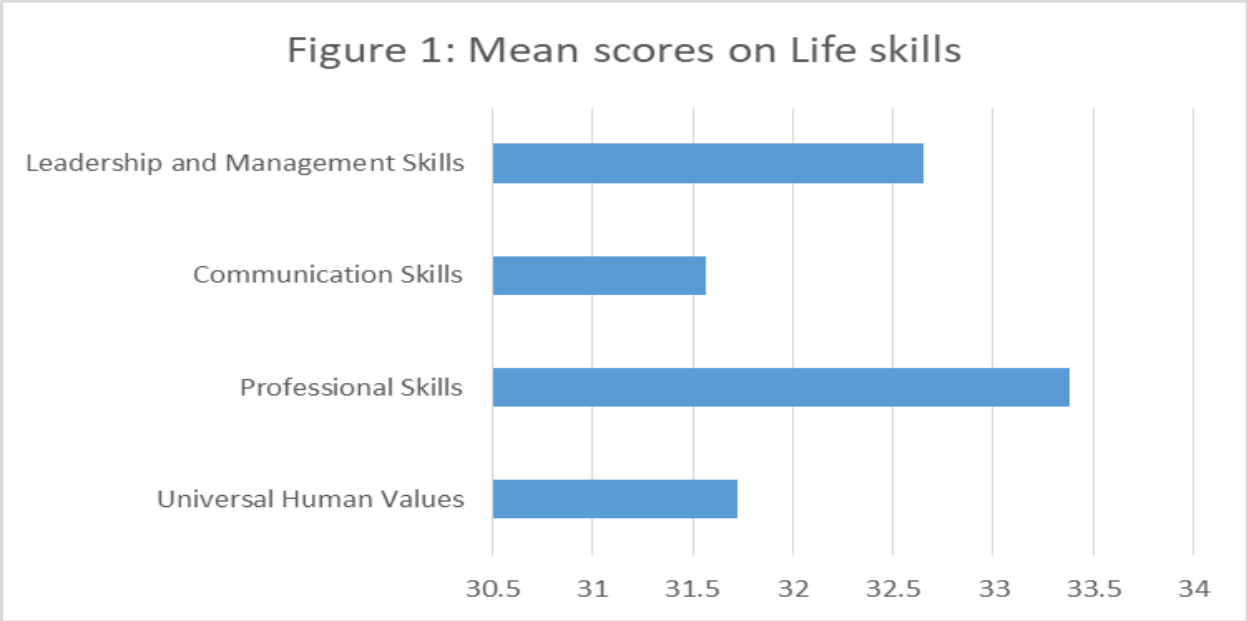
The first objective of the study was to assess the level of Life skills among college-going students in Mizoram. The total scores obtained from the scale (LSMS) were categorized based on the Normal Probability Curve (NPC). This categorization aimed to delineate different levels of life skills, allowing for a clearer understanding of students' skills in each dimension. Mean and standard deviation (SD) were calculated for grouping the students in to three distinct levels according to their performance on the test. The categorization resulted in the first group, known as the **Low-Level Group**, consisting of students whose scores fell below the mean minus standard deviation (Below the score of (Mean – SD)). The second group, termed the **Moderate-Level Group**, includes students whose scores ranged from the mean minus standard deviation to the mean plus standard deviation (Mean - SD to Mean + SD). Third group, the **High-Level Group** comprises students whose scores exceeded the mean plus standard deviation ((Mean + SD) to Maximum score). To explore differences among these levels across various dimensions, the hypothesis "There is a significant difference in the level of life skills among college students" was formulated. Chi-square analysis was employed to test this hypothesis, with the results from the descriptive and chi-square analyses presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean, SD values, Level of life skills among college-going students in Mizoram and its chi-square values

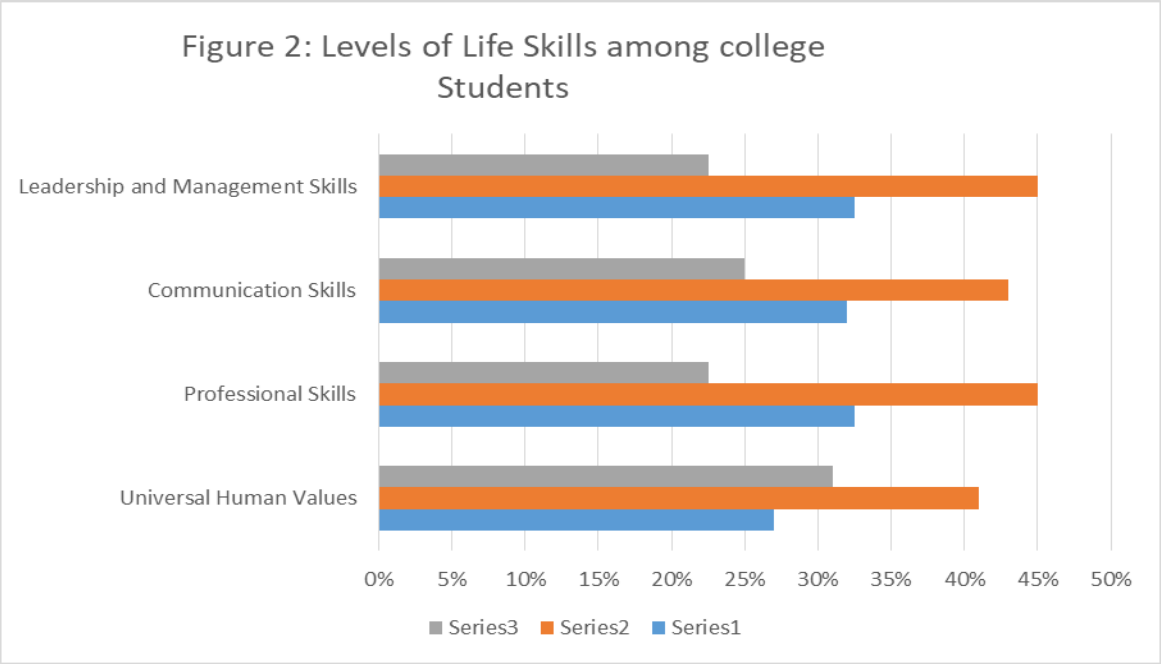
S. No	Dimension	Mean	SD	Low (Count, %)	Moderate (Count, %)	High (Count, %)	Chi-square value
1	Universal Human Values	31.725	3.105	110 (27%)	165 (41%)	125 (31%)	12.125**
2	Professional Skills	33.382	3.617	130 (32.5%)	180 (45%)	90 (22.5%)	30.50**
3	Communication Skills	31.565	3.462	130 (32.5%)	175 (43.75%)	95 (23.75%)	24.12**
4	Leadership and Management Skills	32.655	3.752	130 (32.5%)	180 (45%)	90 (22.5%)	30.50**
	Overall	129.328	10.598	120 (30%)	172 (43%)	108 (27%)	17.36**

**Significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 outlines the mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and levels of life skills among college-going students in Mizoram across four dimensions: Universal Human Values, Professional Skills, Communication Skills, and Leadership and Management Skills. The overall findings suggest that students possess moderate life skills, with Professional Skills scoring the highest mean at 33.382, followed by Leadership and Management Skills (32.655), Universal Human Values (31.725), and Communication Skills (31.565). The graphical representation of the means of the scores on life skills is presented in Figure 1. The chi-square results indicate significant differences in the distribution of students across the low, moderate, and high levels of proficiency for each dimension.



From Table 1, the dimension of Universal Human Values shows a mean of 31.725 and a standard deviation of 3.1054, with 27% of students at a low level, 41% at a moderate level, and 31% at a high level. This indicates a recognition of the importance of these values but also highlights a need for educational initiatives to enhance their application. In Professional Skills, the mean score is 33.382 (SD = 3.6179), with 32.5% of students at a low level, 45% at a moderate level, and 22.5% at a high level. The high mean suggests a good understanding, yet the low level percentage indicates a need for improved training and real-world exposure through internships and workshops. For Communication Skills, the mean is 31.565 (SD = 3.4620). The distribution reveals that 32.50% are at a low level, 43.75% at a moderate level, and 23.75% at a high level. This indicates that while many students have some proficiency, targeted interventions like communication workshops are necessary to bolster these skills. Regarding Leadership and Management Skills, the mean is 32.655 (SD = 3.7525), with similar distributions: 32.5% low, 45% moderate, and 22.5% high. This reflects an opportunity for educational institutions to integrate leadership training and experiential learning into their curricula. Overall, the mean life skills score is 129.328 (SD = 10.5989), with 30% of students at a low level, 43% at a moderate level, and 27% at a high level. It can be concluded that the college students in Mizoram demonstrate moderate life skills, there is a pressing need for targeted educational interventions across all dimensions. (See Figure 2).



RESULTS AND DIFFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

The second objective of this study was to examine life skills among college-going students in relation to their demographic characteristics, including gender, locality, type of family, and stream of the course. The hypothesis proposed that life skills such as universal human values, professional skills, communication skills, leadership and management skills, and overall life skills would not significantly differ based on these demographic variables. To test this hypothesis, t-tests were conducted to evaluate the significance of differences observed between the groups. A summary of the t-test results, detailing the mean scores and standard deviations for life skills, along with the corresponding t-test statistics and p-values are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: T-test Results on College students' Life Skill across Dimensions

Variable	Gender			Locality			Type of Family		
	Male= 193 (Mean, SD)	Female=207 (Mean, SD)	t-value	Rural (N=179) (Mean, SD)	Urban (N=221) (Mean, SD)	t-value	Nuclear (N=223) (Mean, SD)	Joint (N=177) (Mean, SD)	t-value
Universal Human values	33.79, 3.02	32.66, 3.18	3.65**	31.23, 3.12	32.78, 3.22	4.87**	32.26, 3.16	32.17, 3.03	0.29#
Professional skills	34.64, 3.66	33.24, 3.56	3.89**	33. 78, 3.22	34.56, 3.08	2.46**	34.77, 3.26	33.13, 3.23	4.97**
Communication Skills	32.24, 3.16	31.10, 2.56	3.93**	31.55, 3.67	32.88, 3.67	3.60**	32.88, 3.87	31.02, 3.18	5.29**
Leadership & Management	34.15, 3.16	33.22, 2.51	3.21**	32.77, 3.21	33.99, 3.79	3.49**	32.56, 3.49	33.34, 3.26	2.29*
Overall	130, 10.33	126, 10.70	3.81**	128.56, 11.12	130.89, 10.56	2.14*	130.89, 11.12	128.12, 10.68	2.54**

**Significant at 0.01 level, * Significant at 0.05 level, # Not significant

The results indicate significant gender differences in life skills. In universal human values, male students had a mean score of 33.79 (SD = 3.02) compared to 32.66 (SD = 3.18) for females, resulting in a t-value of 3.65, significant at the 0.01 level. Similar trends were observed in professional, communication, and leadership and management skills, with t-values of 3.89, 3.93, and 3.21, respectively, all significant at the 0.01 level. Overall, male students also outperformed females in combined life skills, yielding a t-value of 3.81 ($p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that gender plays a crucial role in the development of life skills among college students. Locality also emerged as a significant factor influencing life skills. Students from urban areas consistently outperformed their rural counterparts across all measured dimensions. In universal human values, urban students scored a mean of 32.78 (SD = 3.22), while rural students scored 31.23 (SD = 3.12), resulting in a t-value of 4.87 ($p < 0.01$). This pattern continued with professional skills (t-value = 2.46, $p < 0.05$) and communication skills (t-value = 3.60, $p < 0.01$). The overall life skills scores further corroborated these findings, with urban students achieving a mean of 130.89 (SD = 10.56) compared to 128.56 (SD = 11.12) for rural students, yielding a t-value of 2.14 ($p < 0.05$). These results highlight the impact of locality on the life skills development of college students, suggesting that urban environments may offer more opportunities for skill enhancement. The type of family also influenced students' life

skills. While students from nuclear families demonstrated significantly higher scores in professional skills (t-value = 4.97, $p < 0.01$) and communication skills (t-value = 5.29, $p < 0.01$) compared to those from joint families, no significant difference was found in universal human values (t-value = 0.29). In leadership and management skills, nuclear family students scored higher (t-value = 2.29, $p < 0.05$), and the overall life skills score was also greater for nuclear family students, with a t-value of 2.54 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates that family structure may play a role in the development of specific life skills, though universal human values may be less affected by family type.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that college students in Mizoram exhibit the highest proficiency in Professional Skills. The results suggest that while students demonstrate a good understanding of professional skills, their performance in Communication Skills is notably lower. This underscores the urgent need for educational institutions to implement targeted training programs, such as language laboratories and enrichment workshops, to enhance communication proficiency. This aligns with Bharathi (2016) who emphasizes the critical importance of communication skills for employability, noting that poor communication is a prevalent reason for hiring rejections. Suggested that communication, and cooperation, through integrating group work, conversations, and cooperative projects Nafis & Nasri (2024) while Mohd Basar (2021) highlights the challenges posed by technology, indicating the necessity for students to acquire effective communication strategies in digital contexts. The overall assessment reveals that most students possess moderate life skills, yet significant variations are observed across gender, locality, and family structure. Male students consistently outperformed female students across all dimensions, with statistical significance, suggesting that gender may play a crucial role in the development of life skills (Archer & Lloyd, 2002). This finding reflects existing literature that discusses how traditional gender roles can influence skill acquisition, particularly in areas such as leadership and communication (PISA, 2022).

Additionally, the data show that students from urban areas consistently scored higher than their rural counterparts, indicating that urban environments may provide more opportunities for life skills enhancement. This observation is corroborated by previous studies that highlight the benefits of urban settings in facilitating educational and developmental opportunities. Children raised in urban areas consistently achieve higher levels of human capital than those in rural regions, even when considering cognitive ability and various family characteristics (Maarseveen, 2020). This highlights the benefits that urban environments offer in promoting educational and developmental outcomes. Family structure also emerged as a significant factor influencing life skills, with students from nuclear families scoring higher in Professional and Communication Skills compared to those from joint families. Nuclear families often excel in professional and communication skills due to individualized attention and a focus on independence, which fosters self-expression. Additionally, greater access to educational resources and diverse social interactions enhance their development in these areas. Rooted in the needs and strengths of both the child and family, the approach to family support should highlight the importance of relationships, support networks, and community contexts in understanding family dynamics (Dolan et al., 2017). This comprehensive perspective acknowledges that effective support systems bolster family resilience and foster child development. However, no significant differences were found in Universal Human Values, suggesting that family type may affect certain skills more than others. Overall, these results highlight the need for educational institutions to develop inclusive and comprehensive training programs that address the diverse backgrounds of students, ensuring that all demographics have access to essential life skills education (Yadav & Yadav, 2009).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, educational institutions in Mizoram should prioritize the development of targeted training programs aimed at enhancing Communication Skills among college students. It is recommended that the government of Mizoram actively support and promote leadership training programs organized by college authorities. Many institutions have established dedicated skill enhancement centers that effectively train and mentor students, helping them develop essential skills. Continued investment in these programs is crucial for enhancing "jeevan kousal" competencies among college students. To further bolster these initiatives, the government should consider providing funding, facilitating partnerships with industry, and integrating leadership training into the formal curriculum. Additionally, recognizing and incentivizing colleges that excel in leadership development can motivate others to enhance their offerings. By fostering a robust framework for leadership training, the government can play a significant role in equipping students with the skills necessary for success in their future endeavors. Institutions should design inclusive and comprehensive life skills curricula that consider the diverse backgrounds of students, including gender, locality, and family structure. This may involve tailored workshops that address specific needs and encourage participation from all demographics. Furthermore, fostering partnerships with community organizations can provide additional resources and real-world experiences that enhance life skills development. By taking these steps, educational institutions can better prepare students for personal, academic, and professional success.

About the Authors

Dr. Muttu Vemula, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram, India. His research interests focus on various aspects of education, including the behavior of secondary school teachers, the implementation of mathematics projects, and the achievement levels of mathematics competencies among secondary-level students. He has also explored the role of self-regulation and social support in academic success, contributing to several publications in these areas.

Dr. Ananthula Raghu, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education (CIE) at University of Delhi, India. His research encompasses educational psychology, ICT in education, mathematics education, educational evaluation, and psychometrics. With over 20 publications in national and

international journals, he actively conducts workshops and seminars focused on data analysis and research methods in education.

Christina Lalramthari, Research Scholar, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Aizawl, India. She is interested in the field of Social Psychology and Educational Adminisstration.

Data Availability

Currently, there are no datasets generated or analyzed concerning the relationship between Life Skills (Jeevan Kaushal) among college students in Mizoram in the context of NEP 2020, India. This study was conducted using survey research methodologies, alongside an analysis of existing educational frameworks and theoretical insights.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors express their heartfelt gratitude to the principals and teachers of college going colleges applicated with Mizoram University in Mizoram. for their invaluable support in conducting this research. Special thanks are also extended to the students for their cooperation and friendliness throughout the study.

REFERENCES

Archer, J., & Lloyd, S. (2002). Boys and girls: Understanding gender differences. Routledge.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Beck, J. S. (2011). *Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Basics and Beyond*. Guilford Press.

Bharathi, A. V. (2016). Communication skills–core of employability skills: Issues and concerns. Higher Learning Research Communications, 6(4).

Dolan, Patrick & Shannon, Mary & Smyth, Berni. (2017). Family support in practice: voices from the field. European Journal of Social Work. 21. 1-13. 10.1080/13691457.2017.1320533.

Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books.

Jones, M. I., & Lavallee, D. (2009). Exploring the life skills needs of British adolescent athletes. Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 10, 159-167. https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/7664/1/PSE_2009.pdf.

Maarseveen, Raoul. (2020). The urban–rural education gap: do cities indeed make us smarter?. Journal of Economic Geography. 21. 10.1093/jeg/lbaa033.

Mohd Basar, Z., et al. (2021). The effectiveness and challenges of online learning for secondary school students – A case study. *Asian Journal of University Education*, *17*(3), 119-129. https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/AJUE/article/view/14514

Nafis, S. A. B. M., & Nasri, N. M. (2024). A Comparative Study on Students' Performance and Satisfaction between Traditional and Online Teaching Methods in Secondary School. International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development, 13(3).DOI: 10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i3/21935

National Education Policy (NEP) (2020) Ministry of Education, Government of India. Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf.

PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). (2022). PISA 2022 Results. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i_53f23881-en.html

World Health Organization (WHO) (1997). Life Skills Education for Children and Adolescents in Schools. Pt. 1, Introduction to Life Skills for Psychosocial Competence. Pt. 2, Guidelines to Facilitate the Development and Implementation of Life Skills Programmes, 2nd rev. World Health Organization.

https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/63552.

Yadav, R. K., & Yadav, S. (2009). Impact of Life Skill Training on Adolescents: A Study. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, *31*(1), 7-11.