

Factors Influencing Development Of Life Skills In Children: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Life skills are widely recognized as essential competencies that enable individuals to effectively navigate the complex demands of everyday life. The present study aims to review the key determinants influencing life skills development among children by synthesizing existing literature. Using research published between 2010 and 2025 from databases like Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus, a thematic review methodology was used for synthesizing. The results show that children's development of life skills is greatly impacted by their home environment, involvement in sports, peer relationships, and educational setting. Positive and encouraging environments in all of these areas improve life skills.

Keywords: Life skills, Social Factors, Educational Factors, Social Factors.

INTRODUCTION

Life skills are widely recognized as essential competencies that enable individuals to effectively navigate the complex demands of everyday life. The World Health Organization, defines life skills as a group of psychosocial abilities, including critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation, which contribute to adaptive and positive behaviour (WHO,1977). In the context of childhood, these skills are particularly significant, as early developmental experiences shape not only cognitive growth but also social adjustment, emotional stability, and long-term well-being (Ravindra et al.,2017; Vranda & Rao, 2011).

In today's discussion around education, the significance of life skills has grown to include not just individual growth but also wider societal and developmental objectives. Organizations on a global scale, like UNESCO and UNICEF, have repeatedly highlighted the need to incorporate life skills education into official educational frameworks to prepare children with the abilities required for the 21st century. According to empirical data, life skills are strongly linked to better mental health, higher academic achievement, and a decrease in risky conduct (Roodbari et al., 2013). Despite this acknowledgment, children's life skills development is

still unequal, especially when it comes to different socioeconomic and cultural circumstances. Children's life skill development is a complicated, multifaceted process that is impacted by the interplay of social, environmental, and individual factors. The current paper is based on two main theoretical stances in order to fully comprehend these factors: Social Learning Theory and Ecological Systems Theory. These theories offer a comprehensive framework for analysing how life skills are learned, developed, and impacted in various settings.

The Ecological Systems Theory explains that children's life skills are shaped by multiple environmental contexts such as family, school, peers, and society. These interconnected systems influence children's behaviours, emotional development, and social competencies (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

According to the Social Learning Theory, children pick up life skills through social contact, imitation, and observation. Peers, instructors, and parents serve as role models for the development of coping, communication, and decision-making abilities (Bandura,1977).

REVIEW GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTION:

What are the key factors influencing the development of life skills among children?

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METHODOLOGY

The current study uses narrative review technique to investigate the factors that influence children's life skills. Several scholarly databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ResearchGate, were used to gather pertinent material. A thematic review methodology was used for synthesizing the existing literature. To ensure both fundamental and contemporary viewpoints, the evaluation primarily covered academic publications, reports, and policy documents published between 2010 and 2025.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

EDUCATIONAL FACTORS: In recent years, life skills education has become more important in schools (Munsi & Guha, 2014; UNICEF, 2019). Because it aids students in overcoming obstacles in real life, it is now regarded as a crucial component of education. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2003; WHO, 1994) states that life skills education encompasses three primary skill types: (a) interpersonal and communication skills, which enable students to interact with others effectively; (b) critical thinking and decision-making skills, which enable them to think critically and make wise decisions; and (c) coping and self-management skills, which enable them to control their behaviours and manage stress. In order to teach students how to apply these abilities in their everyday lives, life skills education is grounded in real-world scenarios. Instead, then only listening to lecturers, students participate in activities, conversations, and group projects as part of its interactive and participatory teaching methods (Pellegrino et al., 2012; Nasheeda et al., 2019). Learning becomes more efficient and significant as a result. Education in life skills also promotes emotional and physical well-being. It supports kids' development of positive connections, self-awareness, and emotional fortitude. Additionally, it fosters social, psychological, and physical development as well as general well-being (UNICEF, 2012; Sancassiani et al., 2015; O' Connor et al., 2018; Singla et al., 2020).

SPORTS FACTORS: Playing sports, especially in a peer-driven setting, is important for children's life skill development (Yabunaka et al., 2023; Kendellen & Camire, 2017; Trottier & Robitaille, 2014; Camiré & Trudel, 2013; Camiré et al., 2013; Forneris et al., 2012). Sports environments give kids valuable

chances to learn a variety of vital life skills, such as social responsibility, self-control, interpersonal communication, and stress management, according to numerous studies. In organized athletic settings, these abilities are developed via active participation, peer interaction, and experience learning processes. Additionally, this kind of involvement helps children's basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—be met, which promotes holistic development and makes it easier for these skills to be applied in many contexts (Kendellen & Camire, 2017).

SOCIAL FACTOR: Parenting practices have both direct and indirect effects on children's life skills. Parents play a very important role in shaping how children think, feel, and behave. When parenting is negative—such as being harsh, neglectful, or unsupportive it can harm a child's overall development and limit the growth of important life skills, in contrast, positive parenting where parents are supportive, caring, and understanding helps children grow better by fulfilling their basic psychological needs, such as the need for love, security, and independence (Kim et al., 2025). Peers have a significant impact on the development of life skills in addition to family influence. According to research, a peer-created mastery environment fosters the development of several critical life skills, including cooperation, goal-setting, social competence, emotional regulation, problem-solving, decision-making, leadership, time management, and interpersonal communication (Mossman et al., 2021). Children learn in these kinds of settings by cooperating, exchanging ideas, and encouraging one another. They get the chance to work as a team, overcome obstacles, and develop better social skills. This kind of setting promotes experiential learning, which increases the efficacy and significance of life skill development.

CONCLUSION

The current analysis concludes that a variety of factors connected to home, school, peers, and sports influence children's development of life skills. Peers reinforce these talents through social interaction, schools and sports offer structured chances for skill development, and a supportive family environment sets the groundwork. The study highlights the

importance of creating environments that are encouraging and helpful in all of these areas in order to develop critical life skills including social responsibility, communication, self-control, and problem-solving. Children's general development can also be greatly improved by incorporating life skills instruction into the classroom, encouraging sports involvement, and fostering positive peer relationships.

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