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The Role of Life Skills Education in Enhancing Self-Efficacy among Women Prospective Teachers

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Abstract: *This study examines the effect of a systematic life skills education program—communication strategies—on building self-efficacy among women prospective teachers. Based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the study utilized a single-group pre-test and post-test design with 100 female student-teachers from Alagappa University College of Education, Sivagangai District. The intervention comprised eight sessions in four weeks on verbal and non-verbal communication, assertiveness, public speaking, and active listening. The General Self-Efficacy Scale was used to assess data. The results showed a significant increase in the self-efficacy scores following the intervention ($t = 15.78, p < 0.001$), supporting the empowering effect of communication-based life skills education among female teacher trainees. The research concludes that the incorporation of life skills training into teacher training programs is critical towards enhancing professional confidence, particularly for women in rural and semi-urban settings.*

Keywords: *Life Skills Education, Self-Efficacy, Women Prospective Teachers*

1. Introduction

In the 21st-century teaching context, teacher roles go well beyond subject knowledge. Teachers must also exhibit emotional stability, social competence, and the ability to handle varied classroom difficulties. Of these traits, self-efficacy—a perception of one's ability to plan and implement actions needed to control future situations (Bandura, 1997)—is perhaps the most critical psychological construct for teaching success.

It is essential to provide teachers, particularly women potential teachers, with life skills. Life skills are psychosocial abilities that allow a person to cope effectively with the demands and challenges of daily life (WHO, 1999). They encompass communication, critical thinking, emotional management, assertiveness, and decision-making. For women entering careers in education, confidence in communicating and managing classroom dynamics with assertiveness is important for personal growth and career longevity.

Studies indicate that most teacher training courses in India lack emphasis on the development of life skills (Subrahmanyam & Sriram, 2020). Academic training is given priority while interpersonal and intrapersonal skills find less attention. Such a deficit surfaces more starkly among women teacher trainees, who might suffer gendered social pressures influencing their sense of self and teaching effectiveness (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). Meeting this need through well-formulated interventions

can assist in promoting self-confidence, enhancing classroom participation, and finally result in effective instructional practices.

2. Review of Related Literature

- World Health Organization (WHO, 1999), life skills are "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life." Communication, decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, and managing emotions and stress are all such skills.
- Current literature in education advocates for the incorporation of life skills into teacher education programs. According to UNESCO (2020), preparing teachers with psychosocial skills assists in establishing inclusive, emotionally intelligent classrooms. Communication skills are particularly important for classroom interaction, conflict resolution, and for motivating students.
- Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1997), is an individual's perception of his or her ability to perform behaviors required to achieve certain outcomes. High self-efficacy in teachers means good lesson planning, classroom management and defiance in adversity (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).
- Studies continuously confirm that self-efficacy of teachers predicts professional commitment, students' achievement, and quality of instruction (Klassen & Tze, 2014). Thus, the development of self-efficacy in pre-service training is deemed crucial.
- A study among B.Ed. trainees in Uttar Pradesh by Mishra and Mehta (2016) identified that those who were given systematic life skills training demonstrated considerably higher self-efficacy and classroom confidence than their counterparts.
- Sharma and Sharma (2021) investigated the impact of life skills related to communication on women student-teachers and noted that verbal self-expression, assertiveness, and public speaking ability were highly positively correlated with perceived self-efficacy.
- One recent study by Ramesh and Joseph (2023) examined the impact of a communication life skills module on self-efficacy among female teacher trainees in Tamil Nadu. Applying a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test model, the researchers identified statistically significant gains ($p < 0.01$) in the self-efficacy of the participants after the intervention. The research concluded that life skills not only increase teaching preparedness but also empower women to confront institutional issues with assertiveness.
- "Empowering potential women teachers through life skills education enhances confidence and emotional resilience, critical requirements for contemporary classrooms." (Ramesh & Joseph, 2023, p. 112).

3. Need and Importance of the Study

In the context of teacher training in India, especially in rural and semi-urban regions, there exists a pressing need to empower women teachers with requisite skills necessary to negotiate educational environments with confidence. Though women participation in teaching activities has improved, many women teachers continue to suffer from self-doubt, which works against their ability to assert themselves in classrooms and educational institutions. Through integrating communications-based life skills training into teacher education programs, this research hopes to enhance self-efficacy, enabling a more effective and confident entrance into professional positions for these women. The relevance of this research is its potential to promote professional preparedness of women teachers through focused life skills training, enrich teacher education programs with modules of self-efficacy development, and sensitise policymakers and education officials on the pivotal role of psychosocial empowerment in informing effective teacher education programs.

3.1 Statement of the Problem

Even though there is growing recognition of the value of life skills, their integration into formal teacher training is still low. This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how life skills training—specifically, communication skills—is affecting self-efficacy among women future teachers at Alagappa University College of Education, Sivagangai District.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the level of self-efficacy among women prospective teachers.
2. To design and implement a life skills education program focusing on communication strategies.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the program in enhancing self-efficacy post-intervention.

3.3 Hypotheses

1. The level of the pre-test scores of self-efficacy among women prospective teachers is low.
2. The level of the post-test scores of self-efficacy among women prospective teachers is Average.
3. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test self-efficacy scores of women prospective teachers.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This research utilized a robust single-group pre-test and post-test design, effectively demonstrating a quasi-experimental approach. It was used to study the impact of a systematic pre-service life skills education program—focusing on communication skills—on self-efficacy among prospective female teachers. Both pre-test and post-test assessments were employed to gather comparative data, allowing for the evaluation of shifts in self-efficacy levels attributable to the intervention.

4.2 Population and Sample

The sample population for this research included all women prospective teachers pursuing the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program at Alagappa University College of Education, Tamil Nadu, India, in the Sivagangai District. A total of 100 women teacher trainees were selected through purposive sampling as participants.

4.3 Life Skills Education Intervention

The major component of the study was a formatted Life Skills Education Program for specific communication skills development. The training was conducted over four weeks, with two sessions every week, lasting 1.5 to 2 hours. The intervention was participatory and experiential in nature, drawing on WHO's framework of life skills as well as Bandura's self-efficacy theory.

4.4 Topics and Activities Included:

- ✓ Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication: Interactive lectures, paired dialogues, and gesture-based games
- ✓ Active Listening and Feedback: Listening circles, reflective journaling, and peer feedback activities
- ✓ Assertiveness Training: Role-play scenarios, "I-message" exercises, and group debates
- ✓ Public Speaking: Structured speaking drills, extemporaneous talks, and group presentations

Each session was designed to include a combination of mini-lectures, practice-based tasks, peer discussion, and reflection. Participants also maintained a **personal growth journal** throughout the program.

4.5 Research Tool

To measure changes in self-efficacy, the **General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)** developed by **Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995)** was used. The tool was adapted slightly for the teacher education context to ensure relevance. The GSES is a widely validated 10-item Likert-type scale where higher scores indicate greater self-efficacy.

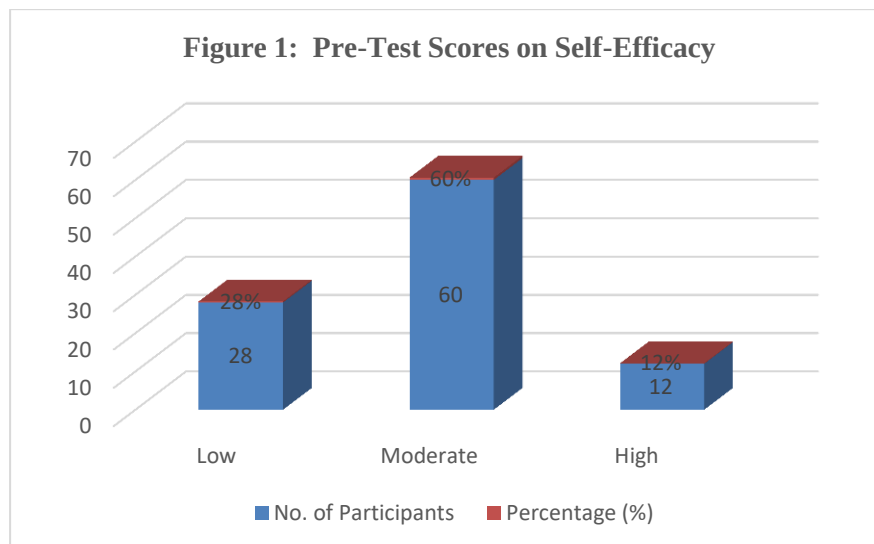
5. Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1: *The level of Pre-Test Scores on self-efficacy among women prospective teachers is low.*

Table 1: Pre-Test Scores on Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy Level	No. of Participants	Percentage (%)
Low	28	28%
Moderate	60	60%
High	12	12%

Before the intervention, 28% of the participants had low self-efficacy, 60% moderate, and only 12% high. This indicates a need for targeted interventions to boost confidence and professional self-belief among women prospective teachers. Hence, the level of Pre-Test Scores on self-efficacy among women prospective teachers is Moderate.

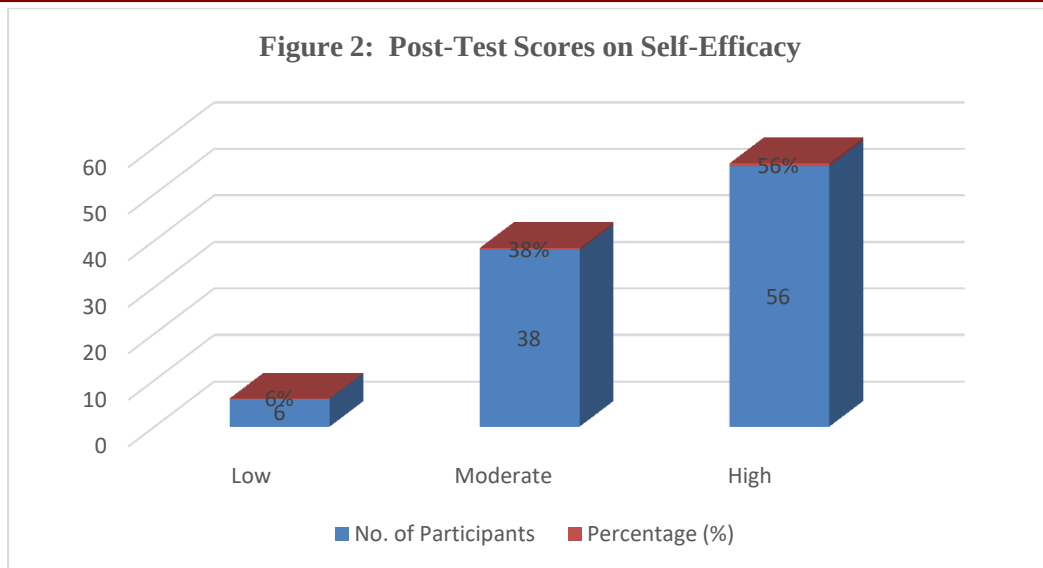


Hypothesis 2: *The level of Post-Test Scores on self-efficacy among women prospective teachers is moderate.*

Table 2: Post-Test Scores on Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy Level	No. of Participants	Percentage (%)
Low	6	6%
Moderate	38	38%
High	56	56%

After the intervention, 6% of the participants had low self-efficacy, 38% moderate, and only 56% high. Hence, the level of Post-Test Scores on self-efficacy among women prospective teachers is high.

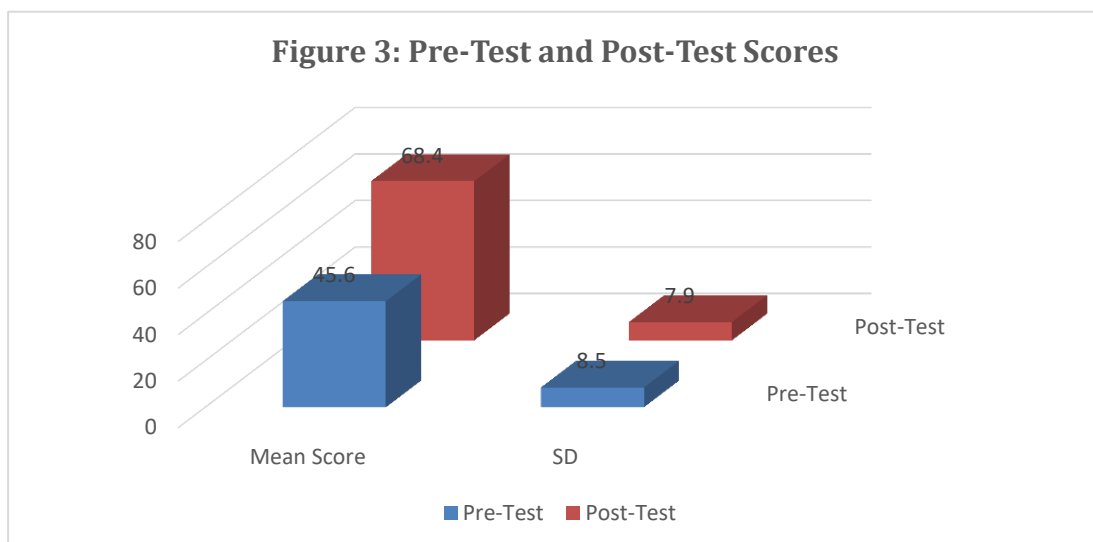


Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy scores of women prospective teachers.*

Table 3: Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Experimental Group	N	Mean Score	SD	t-value	Result
Pre-Test	100	45.6	8.5	15.78	Significant (p < .05)
Post-Test	100	68.4	7.9		

From the above table shows the mean self-efficacy score from 45.6 in the pre-test to 68.4 in the post-test, suggesting a positive effect of the life skills intervention. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.



6. Findings and Summary

6.1 Findings of the Study

- ✓ The analysis showed that prior to the intervention, 28% of participants had low self-efficacy, 60% had moderate self-efficacy, and 12% had high self-efficacy. This indicates a need for targeted life skills training to enhance their confidence.
- ✓ After the life skills education program, 56% of participants achieved high self-efficacy, 38% remained moderate, and only 6% had low self-efficacy.
- ✓ A paired sample t-test demonstrated a significant increase in self-efficacy scores from the pre-test ($M = 45.6$, $SD = 8.5$) to the post-test ($M = 68.4$, $SD = 7.9$), yielding a t-value of 15.78 and a p-value of less than 0.05. This outcome confirms the effectiveness of the program, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis.

6.2 Delimitation of the Study

- ✓ The study is limited to 100 women student-teachers from a single teacher education college.
- ✓ The study focuses specifically on communication-related life skills.
- ✓ The impact of life skills is measured only in terms of self-efficacy, not academic performance or teaching effectiveness.
- ✓ The study was confined to a single college in the Sivagangai District.
- ✓ Only communication-based life skills were addressed.
- ✓ The study measured only short-term changes in self-efficacy, without long-term follow-up.

6.3 Educational Implications

- ✓ Teacher Education Programs should embed life skills modules—especially communication and interpersonal skill development—as core components of the curriculum.
- ✓ Women-focused empowerment strategies can be more effective when psychosocial competencies are taught through experiential learning, role play, and reflective practice.
- ✓ Faculty and administrators should receive orientation on how to implement and evaluate life skills programs for teacher trainees.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

- ✓ Longitudinal Studies: Analyze the lasting effects of life skills education on professional success, teaching effectiveness, and career retention among female educators.
- ✓ Comparative Studies: Conduct experimental research comparing outcomes between women and men teacher trainees or urban and rural colleges.
- ✓ Multi-Skill Interventions: Incorporate additional life skills such as critical thinking, emotional regulation, and problem-solving to analyze their combined impact on various aspects of teacher development.
- ✓ Qualitative Analysis: Explore personal narratives and experiences of women teachers to understand the deeper psychosocial impact of life skills education.

7. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence that life skills education—with a strong focus on communication strategies—significantly enhances self-efficacy among women prospective teachers. By participating in a structured, interactive, and reflective training program, the participants developed greater confidence in their abilities to engage with students, assert themselves in educational environments, and manage classroom challenges effectively. The findings underscore the importance of integrating life skills training into teacher education curricula, particularly in regions where women may face societal or institutional barriers to self-expression and leadership.

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S. Jessy is presently researcher in Alagappa University, Research Fund (AURF) – Seed Money Research Project. Her research aims to develop vital life skills in high school students, focusing on communication, creative thinking, and critical analysis in English and psychology. She explored how students can effectively navigate digital platforms, express themselves clearly in virtual environments, and engage meaningfully across diverse media. Her goal is to provide students with the tools to communicate effectively, think creatively, and critically evaluate information in the digital age. She has published various research papers in international journals & conferences.



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