

Role of Education in Promoting Life Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduate Students in Mizoram

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Abstract

This study explores the role of education in fostering life skills and enhancing mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. Recognizing the increasing challenges faced by students in academic and social environments, education serves as a critical platform to develop essential life skills such as communication, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and resilience. By integrating life skills education within the curriculum and extracurricular activities, educational institutions in Mizoram can contribute significantly to promoting mental well-being and reducing psychological distress among students. The research highlights the impact of structured educational interventions on students' ability to cope with stress, build healthy relationships, and maintain a balanced mental state. Emphasizing culturally relevant approaches, the study underscores the importance of educational programs that address the unique socio-cultural context of Mizoram. Ultimately, education emerges as a vital tool not only for academic achievement but also for holistic development, equipping undergraduate students with the competencies necessary for mental health promotion and lifelong well-being.

Keywords: Education, Life Skills, Mental Health, Undergraduate Students

Introduction:

Education is widely recognized as one of the most effective social institutions for shaping knowledge, behaviour, values, and overall health. Higher education plays a significant role in helping young adults develop life skills, such as decision-making, critical thinking, communication, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and interpersonal competence (Mirowsky & Ross, 2005). These skills are especially important during undergraduate years, a period marked by major transitions in identity, independence, social relationships, and career expectations. Simultaneously, this stage of life is associated with increased vulnerability to stress, anxiety, low mood, academic pressure, and adjustment difficulties. In this context, education can serve not only as a means of intellectual growth but also as a protective factor that supports students' mental health and prepares them for healthy functioning in their personal, academic, and social lives (Derosier, M. E., Frank, E., Schwartz, V., & Leary, K. A. 2013).

Life skills education has gained global attention as a practical approach to strengthening students' abilities to cope with everyday challenges and make healthy choices. For undergraduate students, life skills are not merely desirable traits; they are essential competencies that influence academic performance, relationships, emotional resilience, and future employability (Shirani

Bidabadi, N., Nili, M., Manani, R., & Khalili, R., 2016). Classrooms, campus environments, and co-curricular activities provide valuable opportunities for students to learn how to communicate effectively, manage time, handle stress, work collaboratively, and respond constructively to conflict. When these competencies are intentionally integrated into educational experiences, students are better equipped to navigate the demands of adulthood and maintain their psychological well-being. Thus, education has the potential to function as a platform for personal development and mental health promotion (Nair & Fahimirad, 2019).

Students' mental health has become an increasingly important concern in recent years. Undergraduate students often face a combination of academic workload, financial pressure, family expectations, peer comparison, relationship challenges, and uncertainty about the future. These pressures can negatively affect concentration, motivation, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. If mental health needs are not addressed early, students may experience declining academic outcomes, poor social adjustment, and long-term emotional difficulties. (Gull, M., Kaur, N., Abuhasan, W. M. F., Kandi, S., & Nair, S. M., (2025). Educational institutions therefore have a responsibility to create supportive learning environments that foster resilience, encourage help-seeking, and promote healthy coping mechanisms. In this regard, the role of education extends far beyond formal instruction and includes the creation of emotionally supportive spaces that nurture student well-being.

In the context of Mizoram, education occupies a central place in social development and youth empowerment. The state has a young population, and undergraduate students represent an important segment whose well-being is closely linked to the region's future human resource development. Mizoram also has unique socio-cultural characteristics, including strong community ties, cultural values, and changing social expectations, all of which shape students' educational experiences and mental health needs. While these cultural strengths can provide support and belonging, students may also encounter stress related to academic competitiveness, family responsibilities, transition from rural to urban settings, and evolving career aspirations. Understanding how education contributes to life skills and mental health in this setting is therefore particularly relevant. Such an inquiry can help identify locally meaningful strategies for strengthening student support systems within colleges and universities.

Need and importance of the study:

Education does not influence students in a single uniform way. Its impact depends on curriculum design, teaching methods, teacher-student interaction, peer climate, institutional support, and access to counselling or guidance services. A curriculum that includes participatory learning, communication-based activities, value education, and student-centred approaches is more likely to promote life skills than one focused only on memorization and examinations. Similarly, institutions that recognize mental health as part of student welfare can foster a healthier academic environment through awareness programs, mentorship, and supportive policies. Therefore, the relationship between education, life skills, and mental health should be understood as dynamic and interconnected rather than isolated (Wei, Y., Kutcher, S., Austen, E., Comfort, A., Gilham, C., Macdougall, C., McKenna, G., McKinnon, M., Thompson, K., Yeo, E., Zhang, M., Baxter, A., & Matheson, K., 2021). Despite the growing recognition of student well-being in higher education, there remains a need for more context-specific understanding of how education promotes life skills and mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. Local evidence is important because the experiences of students are shaped by regional, cultural, and institutional

factors that may differ from those in other parts of India or beyond. A focused study on this topic can contribute to academic literature, inform educational planning, and support the development of student-centred interventions. It can also help educators, administrators, and policy makers recognize the broader value of education as a tool for holistic development.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the role of education in promoting life skills and mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram. By examining this relationship, the study aims to highlight the importance of educational settings in supporting not only academic success but also emotional well-being, personal growth, and social competence. The findings may offer useful insights for strengthening undergraduate education in ways that prepare students to lead balanced, resilient, and productive lives.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study are given as follows:

1. To find out the level of life skills among undergraduate students in Mizoram.
2. To find out the level of mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram.
3. To find out the relationship between life skills and mental health among undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Definition of key terms:

Education: Here, education refers to the formal process of teaching and learning received by Undergraduate students in colleges and universities in Mizoram.

Mental health: Mental health refers to a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being in which an individual can cope with normal life stresses.

Life Skills: Life skills are a set of psychosocial abilities that enable individuals to effectively manage the demands and challenges of everyday life. Core competencies include self-awareness, critical thinking, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills.

Undergraduate: A student enrolled in a post-secondary institution pursuing their first academic degree, typically a bachelor's degree.

Methodology:

Method of the study: This Research is descriptive in nature. The research methodology focuses on role of education, life skills and mental health of undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Population: The population includes all Undergraduate students studying in different colleges in Mizoram.

Sample: A total of 400 undergraduate students from selected colleges in Mizoram were selected as sample using multistage random sampling technique.

Tools used: **Mental Health Inventory by Dr. Jagdish and Dr. A.K. Srivastava** and a self-developed Life Skills Scale was used to find out the mental health and life skills of the students.

Statistical Techniques: Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, t-test and inferential statistics like Pearson product moment correlation was used.

Major findings of the study:

The major findings of the study are presented in the following tables 1, 2 and 3.

1. Findings regarding the level of Life skills among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Table 1

Level of Life skills among Undergraduate students in Mizoram

Component	N	Mean	SD	High	Average	Low
Life Skill	400	165.67	17.141	122 (40.66%)	232 (77.33%)	46 (15.33%)

From the above Table 1, it was found that majority of the respondents 77.33% (232) reported average level of life skills. This was followed by 40.66%, (122) who reported high life skills level and 15.33%, (46) who reported low life skills level.

2. Findings regarding the level of Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Table 2

Level of Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Component	N	Mean	SD	High	Average	Low
Mental Health	400	147.41	18.035	133 (44.33%)	241 (80.33%)	46 (15.33%)

From the above Table 2, it was found that majority of the respondents 80.33% (241) reported average level of mental health. This was followed by 44.33% (133) who reported high mental health level and 15.33% (46) who reported low mental health level.

3. Findings regarding the relationship between life skills and Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram.

Table 3
Relationship between life skills and Mental Health among Undergraduate students in Mizoram

Correlations			
		Mental Health	Life Skills
Mental Health	Pearson Correlation	1	.681**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Life Skills	Pearson Correlation	.681**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

From the above Table 3, it was found that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between mental health and life skills among undergraduate students ($r = .681, p < 0.01$). This indicates that higher life skills are associated with better mental health. The findings also suggest that life skills and mental health are closely connected, and improving one may be associated with improvement in the other.

Suggestions and recommendations:

1. **Include life skills training in the curriculum.** Colleges should add regular sessions on communication, decision-making, problem-solving, stress management, and emotional regulation so students can build practical skills alongside academics.
2. **Strengthen mental health support services.** Institutions should provide counselling, peer support, and mental health awareness programmes to help students manage academic pressure, anxiety, and personal problems early.
3. **Use student-centred teaching methods.** Teachers should encourage group discussion, presentations, projects, and interactive learning, since these methods improve confidence, teamwork, and critical thinking while also supporting well-being.
4. **Conduct awareness and skill-building programmes.** Colleges should organize workshops on coping skills, self-esteem, time management, substance abuse prevention, and healthy lifestyle practices to promote both life skills and mental health.

5. **Create a supportive campus environment.** Administrators should build a friendly atmosphere where students feel safe, respected, and heard, because supportive relationships with teachers and peers can improve adjustment and psychological health.

Conclusion:

The study found that majority of the respondents (77.33 %) had average level of life skills. A moderate number (40.66%) had high life skills level and a small number (15.33%) had low life skills level.

It was also found that majority of the respondents (80.33%) had average level of mental health. Almost half (44.33%) had high mental health level and a small number 15.33% had low mental health level. It was further found that there is a strong positive and significant correlation ($r=.681$) between mental health and life skills among undergraduate students.

Thus, the findings indicate that most undergraduate students reported average levels of both life skills and mental health, with smaller groups showing high or low levels. The two variables were strongly and positively correlated, meaning better life skills were associated with better mental health.

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