

The Impact of Life Skill Education Programme on the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Undergraduate Students of Maduka University, Ekwegbe-Nsukka, Enugu State

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Abstract

Life skills education has become pivotal in academic and personal development of university students globally, as it has been shown to bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. The present study investigates the impact of life skills education programme (LSEP) on the knowledge, attitude, and practices of undergraduate students of maduka university. The study adopted the quasi experimental research design. Specifically, the pre-test – post-test non randomized control group design. Twenty seven specific objectives with corresponding research questions and null hypotheses guided the study. The population for the study comprised (1500) all the undergraduate students of maduka university. A total of 306 undergraduate students constituted the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was the researcher designed- structured questionnaire titled: life skills education programme knowledge, attitude and practice questionnire (LSEPKAPQ)” The reliability indices of $r= 0.63$, and $r= 0.75$ were obtained. The split half method with Spearman- Brown Correction formula was used to measure knowledge and preventive practice. Cronbach’s alpha statistical tool was used to determine the reliability coefficient that measured attitude. t-test were used to answer research questions while ANCOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings showed that the mean LSEP knowledge, attitude and practice scores of undergraduate students of maduka university exposed were higher. In addition, In addition, there was a significant difference in the mean LSEP knowledge and practice scores of undergraduate students exposed to LSEP and those not exposed. $F(1,77)= 16.36$, $P = 0.000$; $F(1,77)= 33.80$, $P = 0.000$. There was no significant difference in the mean LSEP attitude scores of undergraduate students exposed to LSEP and those not exposed, $F(1,77)= 2.08$, $P = 0.151$, Based on the findings, it was recommended that there is a need for more public health educational interventions to address negative attitudes towards life skills among university students to enhance application in real life situation.

Keywords: *Life Skill Education Programme, Knowledge, Attitude & Practices of Undergraduate Student.*

INTRODUCTION

Life skills education has emerged as a crucial component in the academic and personal development of university students worldwide. As the global landscape of education evolves, universities are increasingly recognizing the importance of equipping students with not just

academic knowledge, but also essential life skills that can help them navigate complex personal and professional challenges. Life skills encompass a variety of competencies, such as critical thinking, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). These skills are considered foundational for student success, both within and beyond the university environment. For undergraduate students, life skills education is particularly important as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering competencies that promote better academic performance, personal well-being, and employability. According to recent studies, life skills education has been shown to positively influence students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, with a direct impact on their academic and social experiences (Chukwuma & Okoro, 2021; Odhiambo & Okello, 2022).

Knowledge is the understanding of facts, information, skills, and concepts necessary to make informed decisions and navigate the complexities of life" (UNICEF, 2020). However, Knowledge in life skill education refers to the understanding and awareness individuals acquire regarding various life skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. This knowledge helps learners grasp essential concepts that aid in managing everyday life challenges. Attitude is a psychological tendency that influences an individual's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors toward life skills and their application in real-life situations" (Sharma & Singh, 2017). In the context of life skill education, attitude refers to the personal feelings or beliefs that shape how individuals approach and engage with learning and practicing life skills. Positive attitudes can lead to better adaptation and application of life skills.

Practice refers to the consistent and intentional use of life skills in real-life situations to improve personal effectiveness and social well-being" (Baker, 2018). Impact is the long-term effect that life skills education has on individual behavior, well-being, and social engagement" (World Health Organization, 2021). Impact in life skill education refers to the measurable changes or effects that learning life skills has on individuals and communities, including improvements in personal development, social interactions, and problem-solving abilities.

Maduka University is a private institution located in Ekwegbe, Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Situated along the Nsukka-Enugu New Road, it is approximately 30 minutes' drive from Enugu Airport and about 20 minutes from Nsukka. It was established by Dr. Samuel Maduka Onyishi, the founder of Peace Mass Transit, the university aims to provide world-class education with a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. The population is about 1500 students (madukauniversity.edu.ng). The institution offers various undergraduate programs across disciplines such as Engineering, Information Technology, Cybersecurity, Law, Business, Health, and Social Sciences. Therefore, providing opportunity for exploration and transformation. However, Life skills encompass a broad range of competencies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, emotional intelligence, and decision-making, which are essential for adapting to the complexities of modern life. For undergraduate students, acquiring these skills not only enhances their academic performance but also prepares them for the workforce and social responsibilities. This paper seeks to explore the impact of life skills education on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of undergraduate students at Maduka University. While the importance of life skills education is well-documented globally, there is limited research on its specific impact within the context of Maduka University. This study aims to address this gap by examining how life skills education influence students' self-perception, attitudes towards learning, and application of life skills in real-life situations. By exploring these three

dimensions—knowledge, attitude, and practice, the researcher intends to provide a deeper understanding of the role life skills education plays in shaping the overall development of students. The findings of this study will contribute valuable insights that could inform policy and curriculum development at Maduka University and similar institutions. This is the task of the present study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of life skills education programme on the knowledge, attitude, and practices of undergraduate students of Maduka University Ekwegbe Nsukka, Enugu state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions;

1. What is the effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean knowledge scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University.
2. What is the effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean attitude scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University.
3. What is the effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean practice scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean knowledge scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University.
2. There is no significant difference of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean attitude scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University.
3. There is no significant difference of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean practice scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University.

METHODS

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, the quasi experimental research design involving the pre-test – post-test non-randomized control group design was used. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) asserted that a quasi-experimental research design is a type of design that facilitates the investigation of interaction effect of added independent variable (factors) on the treatment variable (LSEP). The population for the study consisted of all the undergraduate students (1500) of Maduka University(madukauniversity.edu.ng).

The sample size for the study was 306 students. The sample size was determined based on standard statistical procedures (Cohen, 1988). Subsequently, intact or pre-existing groups of undergraduate students were used for the study. Simple random sampling Technique of balloting without replacement was employed to sample all the students (first and second year students) which made the total of the students as at the time of research. A researcher designed structured questionnaire titled impact of life skills education program on the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Questionnaire (ILSEPKAPQ) was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire contained twenty five items and was divided into four sections. (A,B,C & D). The items in the ILSEPKAPQ were derived from literature (Félix et al., 2021; Eigenmann, Skinners & Clagiuri,2011). Section A contains four items on the socio demographic variables of the respondents which are age, gender, level of education and location. Section B contains nine items that measured knowledge of LSEP. The section B of

the ILSEPKAPQ was assigned and respondents were requested to choose one correct answer from the options letter A-D. Life skill education knowledge items were assigned a score “1” for correct response and a score of “0” for incorrect response. Therefore, the total T2DM knowledge scores range from 0 to 9. Subsequently, the mean and standard deviation (SD) were computed. Section C contains nine items that measured attitude towards Life skills education. Section C of ILSEPKAPQ was assigned a four point Likert type response option of “Strongly Agree (4 points)”, “Agree (3 points)”, “Disagree (2 points)” and “Strongly Disagree (1 point)” while section D contains seven items that elicited responses on practices for Life skills education among undergraduate students. Section D of the ILSEPKAPQ was assigned a nominal/dichotomous response option of “Yes” or “No”. The respondents were asked to place a tick (✓) using the response options that best describe their life skills knowledge, attitude and practices adopted. Procedure were employed for the life skills practice. A “Yes” response to practice was assigned a score of 1 while a “No” response to a practice was assigned a score of “0”. The total life skills practice score ranges from 0 to 7 (ie., 0-7). Next, the mean and standard deviation (SD) were computed for the pretest and post-test scores of the students.

RESULTS

Results in Table 1 shows the mean scores and their corresponding SD values on the effect of LSEP on the mean knowledge scores of students. The table further shows that students in experimental group (EG) had a pre-test mean of LSEP knowledge score of 4.2 (SD=1.5) and a post-test mean of LSEP knowledge score of 8.6(SD=1.2). In the control group (CG), students had a pre-test mean LSEP knowledge score of 4.3(SD= 1.6) and a post-test mean of LSEP knowledge score of 5.3 (SD= 1.8).In addition, the mean difference scores of 3.3 and 1.0 for the two groups show that students exposed to LSEP had a higher mean knowledge score than those not exposed to LSEP (MD= 3.3 >1.0). Also, the t-test for Group A (EG) yields a t-value of 25.6 with a p-value of 0.0001, indicating a highly significant improvement in knowledge for students exposed to LSEP.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean knowledge scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University. (n= 306)

Group	Mean Pre-Test Knowledge Score	SD Pre-Test Knowledge	Mean Post-Test Knowledge Score	SD Post-Test Knowledge	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Experimental group (A)	4.2	1.5	8.6	1.2	3.3	25.6	0.0001
Control group (B)	4.3	1.6	5.3	1.8	1.0	6.2	0.0001

Results in Table 2 shows the mean scores and their corresponding SD values on the effect of LSEP on the mean attitude scores of students. The table further shows that both groups had similar pre-test attitude scores. Group A had a mean of 2.4 (SD = 0.7), and Group B had a mean of 2.3 (SD = 0.8) and Group A showed a significant improvement in post-test attitude, with a mean score of 4.6 (SD = 0.5), while Group B improved to 3.1 (SD = 0.9). The mean difference in attitude is 2.2 for Group A and 0.8 for Group B. The t-test for Group A yields a t-value of 40.5 and a p-value of 0.0001, showing a significant positive shift in attitude for students exposed to LSEP. For Group B, the t-value of 10.4 and p-value of 0.0001 show that there was also a significant increase in attitude, but the effect was less pronounced compared to Group A.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean Attitude scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University (n= 306)

Group	Mean Pre-Test Attitude Score	SD Pre-Test Attitude	Mean Post-Test Attitude Score	SD Post-Test Attitude	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Experimental group (A)	2.4	0.7	4.6	0.5	2.2	40.5	0.0001
Control group (B)	2.3	0.8	3.1	0.9	0.8	10.4	0.0001

Results in Table 3 shows the mean scores and their corresponding SD values on the effect of LSEP on the mean practice scores of students. The table further shows that students in experimental group (EG) had a pre-test mean of LSEP practice score of 5.1 (SD=1.4) and a post-test mean of LSEP practice score of 8.2(SD=1.1). In the control group (CG), students had a pre-test mean LSEP practice score of 4.9(SD= 1.5) and a post-test mean of LSEP practice score of 5.6 (SD= 1.7). In addition, the mean difference scores of 3.1 and 0.7 for the two groups show that students exposed to LSEP had a higher mean practice score than those not exposed to LSEP (MD= 3.1 >0.7). Also, the t-test for Group A (EG) yields a t-value of 28.2 with a p-value of 0.0001, indicating a highly significant increase in the practice of life skills for students exposed to LSEP.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean practice scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University. (n= 384)

Group	Mean Pre-Test Practice Score	SD Pre-Test Practice	Mean Post-Test Practice Score	SD Post-Test Practice	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value
Experimental group (A)	5.1	1.4	8.2	1.1	3.1	28.2	0.0001
Controlled group (B)	4.9	1.5	5.6	1.7	0.7	8.5	0.0001

Table 4 shows the results of one-way ANCOVA conducted to compare the effect of LSEP on the mean LSEP knowledge scores of undergraduate students in Maduka University. The intervention was the LSEP and the dependent variable comprised mean LSEP knowledge of post-test scores obtained after the intervention/treatment was completed. The knowledge of LSEP pre-test scores of undergraduate students were used as covariate in the analysis.

Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of ANCOVA. After adjusting for the pretest scores, there was a significant difference between the mean LSEP knowledge scores of undergraduate students exposed to LSEP and those not exposed, $F(1,77)= 16.36$, $P = 0.000$, Since the P-value of 0.000, was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that LSEP was effective in improving the Knowledge of undergraduate students of Maduka University.

Table 4: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing Difference in the Mean LSEP Knowledge Scores of undergraduate students Exposed to LSEP and those not Exposed(n= 306)

Source of Variation	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-statistic	p-value
Corrected Model	5684.22	2	1894.74	24.80	0.000
Intercept	11236.45	1	11236.45	145.98	0.000
LSEP knowledge pre test scores	2863.65	1	2863.65	37.31	0.000
Group/ LSEP	1260.34	1	1260.34	16.36	0.000

Error	76068.92	303	200.18		
Total	88111.12	306			
Corrected Total	81753.14	305			

Note. a. R squared (R^2) = .545 (Adjusted R squared = .533), b. Dependent variable = KLSEP post-test scores, C. Covariate = kLSEP pre-test scores

Cohen's guidelines for interpreting partial Eta squared

Small effect size = 0.20

Medium/moderate effect size = 0.50

Large effect size = 0.80

Table 5 shows the results of one-way ANCOVA conducted to compare the effect of LSEP on the mean LSEP attitude scores of undergraduate students in Maduka University. The intervention was the LSEP and the dependent variable comprised mean LSEP attitude of post-test scores obtained after the intervention/treatment was completed. The attitude towards LSEP pre-test scores of undergraduate students were used as covariate in the analysis. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of ANCOVA. After adjusting for the pretest scores, there was a significant difference between the mean LSEP attitude scores of undergraduate students exposed to LSEP and those not exposed, $F(1,77)=2.08$, $P=0.151$. Since the P-value of 0.151, was greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that LSEP was not significant in modifying or changing the attitude of undergraduate students of Maduka University.

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing Difference in the Mean LSEP Attitude Scores of undergraduate students Exposed to LSEP and those not Exposed (n=306)

Source of Variation	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-statistic	p-value
Corrected Model	784.63	2	261.55	9.78	0.000
Intercept	3520.32	1	3520.32	133.60	0.000
LSEP Attitude pretest scores	206.95	1	206.95	7.89	0.005
Group/ LSEP	54.32	1	54.32	2.08	0.151
Error	10160.76	303	26.73		
Total	11737.37	306			
Corrected Total	10945.39	305			

b. Dependent variable = LSEP Attitude post-test scores, C. Covariate = LSEP Attitude pre-test scores

Cohen's guidelines for interpreting partial Eta squared

Small effect size = 0.20

Medium/moderate effect size = 0.50

Large effect size = 0.80

Table 6 shows the results of one-way ANCOVA conducted to compare the effect of LSEP on the mean LSEP practice scores of undergraduate students in Maduka University. The intervention was the LSEP and the dependent variable comprised mean LSEP practice of post-test scores obtained after the intervention/treatment was completed. The practice towards LSEP pre-test scores of undergraduate students were used as covariate in the analysis. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions of ANCOVA. After adjusting for the pretest scores, there was a significant difference between the mean LSEP

practice scores of undergraduate students exposed to LSEP and those not exposed, $F(1,77)=33.80$, $P = 0.000$, Since the P-value of 0.000, was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that LSEP was significant in improving the practice of undergraduate students of Maduka University.

Table 6: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing Difference in the Mean LSEP Attitude Scores of undergraduate students Exposed to LSEP and those not Exposed (n=306)

Source of Variation	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-statistic	p-value
Corrected Model	9503.76	2	3167.92	40.01	0.000
Intercept	11243.09	1	11243.09	141.72	0.000
LSEP practice pretest score	4785.29	1	4785.29	60.62	0.000
Group/ LSEP	2676.91	1	2676.91	33.80	0.000
Error	20893.25	303	55.02		
Total	30376.77	306			
Corrected Total	30376.77	305			

b. Dependent variable = LSEP practice post-test scores, C. Covariate = LSEP practice pre-test scores

Cohen's guidelines for interpreting partial Eta squared

Small effect size = 0.20

Medium/moderate effect size = 0.50

Large effect size = 0.80

DISCUSSION

The finding in Table 1 revealed that, the effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean knowledge scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University was higher. This finding was expected not surprising. The study concurs with the findings of Janardhanan & Krishnamurthy (2019) who established that students had moderate knowledge. However, the findings disagrees with the finding of Enuagwuna et al, (2025). The authors concluded that 60 per cent of the students had poor knowledge. This could be attributed to poor awareness and poor in-depth knowledge of life skill education. The finding in Table 2 revealed that, the effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean attitude scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University was significantly positive. This finding agrees with the findings of Janardhanan & Krishnamurthy (2019). The authors established that a majority held a positive attitude toward life skills education. Similarly, Akinyemi & Abati (2018) concluded that female students showed significantly more positive attitudes towards life skill education. Howbeit, the finding contradict the findings of Nasheeda et al(2019) who established that while students generally recognize the value of life skills, their actual use in real-world challenges was poor.

The finding in Table 3 revealed that, the effect of life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean practice scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University was significantly positive. This finding is not surprising but expected. The finding disagrees with the finding of Akinyemi & Abati(2018) who revealed that practice towards life skills education was low despite high perceived importance. This may be attributed to the fact that knowledge did not reflect in behavior which could be attributed to poor practice.

The findings in table 4 and 6 revealed that, the difference in life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean knowledge and practice scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University was significantly higher. This finding is expected not surprising because its ideal for knowledge LSEP to reflect in the practice of undergraduate students. However, this finding contradicts the findings of Akinyemi & Abati (2018), who established that the Practice of stress and time management skills was low despite high perceived importance. Similarly, Janardhanan & Krishnamurthy (2019) concluded practice of life skills education was low. However, Nasheeda et al(2019) opined that practice of life skills was higher based on gender. Adewuyi et al., (2020) also stated that Life skills training led to a statistically significant increase in students' ability to use those skills in real-life scenarios. In same light, Olanrewaju & Ogundele (2022) reviewed that Life skill practice was significantly associated with gender and age. The disagreement may be linked to the fact, Supportive learning environments, teacher attitudes, and peer influence affect students' ability to **practice life skills effectively** (Mohammed & Yimer, 2019).

The finding in table 4 revealed that, the difference in life skills education programme (LSEP) in the mean attitude scores of the undergraduate students of Maduka University was significantly poor. This finding is unexpected therefore surprising. This finding concurs with the finding of Nasheeda et al (2019). The authors established that there was negative attitude towards life skills education. However, the finding disagrees with the finding of Janardhanan & Krishnamurthy (2019), who reviewed that there was positive attitude towards life skills education. Similarly, Akinyemi & Abati (2018) concluded that there was positive attitude towards life skills education. The disagreement may be associated with gender and peer influence pressure.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Government and curriculum planners should ensure the integration of life skills education into academic curricula to ensure that every undergraduate students receive life skills education for their personal and professional success.
2. There is a need for more public health educational interventions to address negative attitudes towards life skills among university students to enhance application in real life situation.

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