

Life Skills among the Grade 6 Learners in West II District Cagayan De Oro City

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Abstract

While academic knowledge is the cornerstone of education, students may apply knowledge, navigate complexity, and thrive in a variety of life domains with the help of life skills. This study examined the life skills of sixth-grade students in West II District of Cagayan de Oro City during the 2023–2024 academic year. In particular, the study aimed to describe the respondents' characteristics; assess the respondents' life skills such as positive mindset, interpersonal skills, higher-order thinking skills, and community mindset; and determine whether a significant relationship exists between the respondents' life skills and their characteristics. The study used a descriptive–correlational approach and included 186 students in Grade 6 who were chosen via stratified sampling. A validated and reliable researcher-modified questionnaire based on the IYF Life Skills Survey Tool (LiSST) with a high acceptability score of 0.96% was used to collect the data. Statistical tools such as mean, frequency, mean, standard deviation and Pearson r were used in data analysis.

The findings showed that most of the respondents were females, with 2-3 siblings, both parents' highest educational attainment was college or high school, and belonged to a nuclear/conjugal family structure. The study also found that students exhibited high levels of life skills in each of the four domains with the highest level in Community Mindset. Finally, the only factors that were significantly correlated with this domain were Parents' Occupation and Highest Educational Attainment. These results imply that whereas interpersonal, cognitive, and personal thinking skills may be more influenced by individual characteristics and school-based experiences, socioeconomic considerations have a stronger impact on community-oriented abilities. The study concludes that while learners generally possess strong life skills, targeted programs involving parents and strengthened school-based interventions are needed to further enhance these competencies and support students' readiness for high school.

Keywords: Life Skills, Positive Mindset Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Community Mindset Skills, Higher-Order Thinking Skills.

1. Introduction

Life skills are essential for Grade 6 learners as they help them manage everyday challenges, adapt to changes, communicate effectively, build relationships, solve problems, think critically, regulate emotions, and apply knowledge to real life situations. These skills become particularly important during the transition from elementary to secondary education because learners experience changes in their academic environment, social relationships, emotional development, physical condition, and level of independence.

While learners receive considerable support from families and teachers in elementary school, secondary education requires greater independence and responsibility. Life skills, together with 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration, adaptability, problem solving, and digital literacy, can help learners cope with these demands and prepare for future education and adult life. However, some learners may still experience difficulties in communication, anxiety, adjustment, access to resources, and readiness for secondary education, which may have been further affected by challenges brought about by the pandemic. Thus, the study focuses on determining the life skills of Grade 6 learners in West II District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City by examining their characteristics, assessing their life skills across four domains, and determining the relationship between their characteristics and life skills, with the findings intended to provide useful information for curriculum development, educational policies, and interventions that can strengthen learners' preparedness for secondary education.

2. Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the life skills of Grade 6 learners in West II District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City during the School Year 2024-2025.

Specifically, this study sought to address the following questions:

1. What are the respondents' characteristics in terms of sex, number of siblings, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' occupation, and family structure?
2. How do the respondents assess their life skills in considering positive mindset skills with regard to self-confidence, self-management, and self-awareness?
3. How do the respondents assess their life skills considering interpersonal skills with regard to conflict management, teamwork, and communication?
4. How do the respondents assess their life skills considering higher order thinking skills with regard to critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity and innovation?
5. How do the respondents assess their life skills considering community mindset skills with regard to responsibility, empathy, and cultural awareness?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' characteristics and each of their life skills?

3. Significance

The study may benefit individuals and groups involved in developing learners' life skills and preparing them for the transition from elementary to secondary education. Its findings may provide curriculum developers with useful information for improving learning programs that address the needs and demands of learners entering high school. Teachers may also gain a clearer understanding of the challenges students face in developing life skills and may use the findings to provide appropriate support in managing their personal and academic responsibilities. Grade 6 learners may benefit by recognizing how life skills can strengthen their readiness for high school through improved critical thinking, problem solving, and study habits. The study may also serve as a useful reference for future researchers who wish to explore other factors that may influence the development of students' life skills.

4. Scope and Limitations

This study focused on determining the life skills of grade 6 learners in West II District, Cagayan de Oro City, School Year 2024-2025. The study's respondents were limited to Grade 6 learners that belonged to West II District in the Division of Cagayan de Oro City. The independent variables were limited to the respondents' characteristics, namely sex, number of siblings, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' occupation, and family structure.

In addition, the dependent variables are limited to the four domains of life skills such as positive mindset, interpersonal, higher order thinking, and community mindset.

5. Literature Review

Respondent Characteristics

Students' development of life skills is shaped by a combination of personal characteristics and family-related factors. Differences in sex may affect emotional regulation, communication, and coping strategies, with studies noting differences in how boys and girls manage emotions and respond to challenges. Sibling relationships also contribute to children's communication, cooperation, conflict management, and social development, while family size and other sociocultural factors may influence academic and personal outcomes (Sagario et al., 2023; Jensen et al., 2023). Parents' educational attainment and involvement can further shape children's learning experiences and development, as educated and involved parents are more likely to provide academic support and stimulating environments (Deepak et al., 2021; Wang & Wei, 2024). Likewise, parents' occupation and socioeconomic status may affect children's access to educational resources, social networks, and opportunities that support the development of competencies and aspirations (Mastekaasa & Birkelund, 2023). Overall, these studies indicate that personal characteristics and family circumstances may contribute to students' academic, social, emotional, and life skills development.

Domains of Life Skills

Life skills education encompasses a range of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral abilities that help students respond effectively to everyday challenges and develop positive relationships. Lakshmana et al. (2020) emphasized that continuous life skills instruction integrated into the curriculum can strengthen students' social, emotional, and cognitive development, while Pahilanga et al. (2023) described life skills as abilities that enable learners to adapt positively to daily demands and improve their quality of life. In particular, positive mindset and self-confidence support students in managing emotions, maintaining motivation, and approaching challenges constructively (Liu et al., 2023). Interpersonal skills also contribute to effective communication, cooperation, and collaborative learning, which may support students' academic and social development (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2022). Higher order thinking skills further enable learners to move beyond memorization toward application, analysis, evaluation, and creation, helping them address real-life problems more effectively (Aromatario et al., 2023). Overall, the literature highlights that life skills domains work together to develop learners' capacity to think critically, interact positively, manage challenges, and participate effectively in their families, schools, and communities.

6. Methodology

Research Design

The study used a descriptive correlational research design which included the collection of data related to the four domains of the students' life skills and their personal characteristics. Descriptive research is a quantitative research technique that is considered conclusive and is used to test specific hypotheses and describe characteristics. A correlational research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. A correlation reflects the strength and/or direction of the relationship between two (or more) variables. The direction of a variable can be either positive or negative (Bhandari, 2023).

In this study, the respondents' characteristics were described using some categorizations of each variable. In addition, the students' assessment of their own life skills was described as measures using the indicators of each of the four domains of life skills.

Participants

The respondents involved in the study were the 186 Grade 6 learners in West II, Division of Cagayan de Oro City. During the academic year 2024–2025, when this study was carried out, they were formally enrolled. They were from the district's elementary schools. The respondents were selected because they could take part in the study by evaluating their own life skills.

Data Collection

The primary research tool for this study was a survey questionnaire, which made it easier to collect quantitative data from the respondents. There are two components to the research tool.

Part 1 of the life skills questionnaire used in the study asked about the respondents' sex, number of siblings, parents' occupation, parents' highest level of education, and family structure. The learners' life skills, positive mindset, interpersonal skills, higher order thinking skills, and community mindset were examined in Part 2. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher and adapted from the IYF Life Skills Survey Tool (LiSST). It consisted of two parts. Part I gathered information about the respondents' characteristics, while Part II assessed the learners' life skills in terms of positive mindset, interpersonal skills, higher order thinking skills, and community mindset. Each variable has 5 indicators with the options of 4- always, 3- Very Often, 2-Rarely and 1- Never.

Data Analysis

The following descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized in the study: Frequency and percentage were used in Problem 1 to determine the characteristics of the respondents. Mean and standard deviation were used in Problems 2 to 5 to assess the respondents' level of life skills across the four domains. Pearson r was used in Problem 6 to determine whether a significant relationship existed between the respondents' characteristics and their assessment of life skills across the four domains.

7. Results and Discussions

Problem 1. What are the respondents' characteristics in terms of sex, number of siblings, parents' highest educational attainment, parents' occupation, family structure?

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics in terms of Sex and Number of Siblings

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	80	43.0
	Female	106	57.0
Total		186	100.0
Number of Siblings	6 or more	8	4.3
	4 – 5	47	25.3
	2 - 3	116	62.4
	1	15	8.1
Total		186	100.0

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the respondents in terms of sex and number of siblings. The respondents were predominantly female, with 106 or 57 percent, while 80 or 43 percent were male. This slightly higher representation of females may reflect differences in participation in academic and survey activities, while sex may also influence communication, emotional coping, and regulation. In terms of number of siblings, the largest group consisted of respondents with two to three siblings, comprising 116 or 62.4 percent of the sample. This suggests that most respondents came from moderately sized families where sibling relationships may provide opportunities to develop cooperation, empathy, emotional intelligence, communication, and conflict management skills. Smaller families may allow greater parental attention and educational support, while learners from larger families may develop independence and adaptability through their experiences with siblings. However, family size alone does not determine learners' academic and social development, as parental resources, education, and family circumstances may also influence the support available to children. Only 8 or 4.3 percent of the respondents had six or more siblings, indicating that very large families represented a small portion of the respondents. Overall, the findings show that the respondents had varied family backgrounds and that both sex and family structure may provide important context in understanding learners' life skills and experiences.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics in terms of Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Category	<u>Father</u>		<u>Mother</u>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
College Graduate	59	31.7	59	31.7
College Level	35	18.8	43	23.1
High School Graduate	58	31.2	51	27.4

High School Level	19	10.2	26	14.0
Elementary Graduate	8	4.3	4	2.2
Elementary Level	7	3.8	3	1.6
Total	186	100.0	186	100.0

Table 2 presents the respondents' characteristics in terms of their parents' highest educational attainment. The largest group consisted of respondents whose fathers and mothers were both college graduates, with 59 or 31.2 percent, indicating that many parents had substantial educational backgrounds that may support their children's learning and school participation. In contrast, only a small proportion of respondents had parents whose highest educational attainment was at the elementary level, showing diversity in the educational backgrounds of the parents. Parents with higher educational attainment may have greater confidence and opportunities to participate in their children's education, provide academic guidance, and discuss school related concerns. Parents' educational backgrounds may also influence children's knowledge, skills, values, study habits, and academic performance because children learn through observation and interaction with their parents. Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents generally came from families with varied but relatively strong educational backgrounds, which may contribute to parental involvement and support in the development of learners' life skills and academic development.

Table 3

Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics in terms of Parents' Occupation

Category	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Government Employee	48	25.8	17	9.1
Private Employee	49	26.3	51	27.4
Self-Employed	60	32.3	66	35.5
Unemployed	29	15.6	52	28.0
Total	186	100.0	186	100.0

Table 3 presents the occupational characteristics of the respondents' parents. Most fathers, with 60 or 32.3 percent, and mothers, with 66 or 35.5 percent, were self-employed, indicating that self-employment was the most common occupation among the parents. The distribution suggests that the respondents came from families with varied economic backgrounds, particularly since many parents may rely on entrepreneurship or informal work as their source of income. The presence of private and government employees also indicates that some families have more stable employment arrangements that may provide consistent support for their children's school needs. Meanwhile, 29 or 15.6 percent of fathers were unemployed, representing the lowest frequency among fathers, while only 17 or 9.1 percent of mothers were government employees. The findings also suggest that some mothers may prioritize household responsibilities and child care over formal employment. Parents' educational and occupational backgrounds may influence the support, resources, social experiences, and opportunities available to learners, which can contribute to the development of their life skills. Overall, the findings show that learners come from families with diverse occupational circumstances that may shape their educational experiences and social development.

Table 4

Distribution of Respondents' Characteristics in terms of Family Structure

Category	Frequency	Percent
Nuclear/Conjugal	137	73.7
Separated Parents	35	18.8
Extended Family	14	7.5
Total	186	100.0

Table 4 presents the respondents' characteristics in terms of family structure. Most respondents, with 137 or 73.7 percent, belonged to nuclear or conjugal families, indicating that this was the most common family structure among the participants. This type of family may provide children with direct parental support in financial, emotional, and academic matters while also allowing parents to give attention to their children's individual needs and growing independence. Only 14 or 7.5 percent of the respondents belonged to extended families, showing that relatively few learners lived with grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives. Different family structures may provide varying forms of support and influence children's emotional stability, social development, adjustment, and educational experiences. Overall, the findings indicate that most learners came from nuclear or conjugal families, while a smaller number experienced extended or other family arrangements, suggesting that family structure provides an important context for understanding learners' development and life skills.

Problem 2. How do the respondents assess their life skills considering positive mindset skills with regard to self-confidence, self-management and self-awareness?

Table 5

Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Life Skills in terms of Positive Mindset

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Confidence	2.88	0.96	High
Self-Management	3.08	0.96	High
Self-Awareness	3.1	0.95	High
Overall	3.02	0.96	High

Table 5 presents the respondents' level of life skills in terms of positive mindset, which obtained an overall mean of 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.96, interpreted as high. This indicates that the respondents frequently demonstrate positive mindset behaviors such as self-awareness, self-management, emotional regulation, and confidence in dealing with everyday situations. Among the three indicators, self-awareness obtained the highest mean of 3.10, showing that respondents frequently recognize their emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This may reflect their growing independence and ability to understand and manage their thoughts and behaviors. On the other hand, self-confidence obtained the lowest mean of 2.88, although it remained within the high level, suggesting that learners generally believe in their abilities but may still experience uncertainty when facing challenges or unfamiliar tasks. Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents possess a high level of positive

mindset, with self-awareness emerging as a strength while self-confidence may require further development through opportunities for leadership, meaningful activities, positive feedback, mentoring, and real-life experiences.

Problem 3. How do the respondents assess their life skills considering interpersonal skills with regard to conflict management, teamwork and communication?

Table 6
Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of
Life Skills Considering Interpersonal Skills

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Conflict Management	3.17	0.89	High
Teamwork	3.30	0.89	High
Communication	3.10	0.95	High
Overall	3.19	0.91	High

Table 6 presents the respondents' level of life skills in terms of interpersonal skills, which obtained an overall mean of 3.19 with a standard deviation of 0.91, interpreted as high. This indicates that most respondents demonstrate strong skills in interacting and working with others. Among the indicators, teamwork obtained the highest mean of 3.30 with a standard deviation of 0.89, showing that respondents are generally comfortable working with others and participating in collaborative activities. This strength may be supported by classroom activities that provide opportunities for group work and cooperation. Communication obtained the lowest mean of 3.10 with a standard deviation of 0.95, although it remained at a high level, suggesting that learners generally communicate effectively but may still experience difficulties in expressing ideas clearly, listening actively, or responding appropriately in social situations. The variation in responses also indicates that some learners may have less confidence or experience in interpersonal interactions. Overall, the findings show that respondents possess a high level of interpersonal life skills, particularly in teamwork, while communication remains an area that may be further strengthened through activities that develop active listening, clear expression, cooperation, and positive interaction with others.

Problem 4. How do the respondents assess their life skills in terms of higher order thinking skills with regard to critical thinking, problem solving and creativity and innovation?

Table 7
Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Life Skills
Considering Higher Order Thinking Skills

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Critical Thinking	3.10	0.89	High
Problem Solving	3.16	0.91	High
Innovation and Creativity	3.08	0.92	High

Overall	3.11	0.91	High
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Table 7 presents the respondents' level of life skills in terms of higher order thinking skills, which obtained an overall mean of 3.11 with a standard deviation of 0.91, interpreted as high. This indicates that the respondents frequently apply higher order thinking skills in dealing with academic, personal, and everyday situations. Among the indicators, problem solving obtained the highest mean of 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.91, suggesting that learners generally feel confident in identifying and addressing problems, although differences in their experiences and abilities are evident. Creativity and innovation obtained the lowest mean of 3.08 with a standard deviation of 0.92, but remained at a high level, indicating that learners still demonstrate creative thinking, particularly when completing projects and performance tasks. Overall, the findings show that the respondents possess a high level of higher order thinking skills, with problem solving emerging as a relative strength while creativity and innovation may be further developed by providing learners with more opportunities to explore ideas, create solutions, and apply innovative thinking in different learning situations.

Problem 5. How do the respondents assess their life skills in terms of community mindset with regard to responsibility, empathy and cultural awareness?

Table 8

Summary Distribution of Respondents' Life Skills Considering Community Mindset

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Responsibility	3.16	0.91	High
Empathy	3.26	0.92	Very high
Cultural Awareness	3.19	0.92	High
Overall	3.20	0.92	High

Table 8 presents the respondents' level of life skills in terms of community mindset, which obtained an overall mean of 3.20 with a standard deviation of 0.92, interpreted as high. This indicates that the respondents frequently demonstrate community related skills such as empathy, responsibility, accountability, and awareness of others. Among the indicators, empathy obtained the highest mean of 3.26 with a standard deviation of 0.92, showing that learners generally demonstrate concern and understanding toward the feelings and situations of others. This may be supported by their participation in classroom activities, group interactions, and community related experiences that encourage cooperation and social responsibility. Responsibility obtained the lowest mean of 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.91, although it remained at a high level, suggesting that learners generally act responsibly but may differ in how consistently they demonstrate this skill. Overall, the findings indicate that the respondents possess a high level of community mindset, with empathy emerging as a strength while responsibility may be further strengthened through meaningful activities that promote accountability, participation, cooperation, and active involvement in the community.

Table 9
Summary Distribution of Respondents' Level of Life Skills Domains

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Positive Mindset	3.02	0.96	High
Interpersonal Skills	3.19	0.91	High
High Order Thinking Skills	3.11	0.91	High
Community Mindset	3.20	0.92	High
Overall	3.13	0.93	High

Table 9 summarizes the respondents' overall level of life skills across the four domains, with an overall mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 0.93, interpreted as high. This indicates that the respondents frequently demonstrate life skills that help them manage academic, personal, and social challenges. Among the four domains, community mindset obtained the highest mean of 3.20, showing that learners frequently demonstrate empathy, responsibility, social awareness, and concern for the well-being of others. Positive mindset obtained the lowest mean of 3.02, although it remained at a high level, suggesting that learners generally demonstrate self-awareness, self-management, and confidence but may still need further support in strengthening these abilities. The findings also indicate that differences exist among learners in the development and application of life skills, particularly in interpersonal areas such as communication, teamwork, emotional regulation, and relationship building. Overall, the results show that the respondents have developed a high level of life skills across all four domains, while continued guidance, collaborative activities, service learning, communication exercises, and meaningful real-life experiences may further strengthen areas where learners show greater need for development.

Problem 6. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' assessment of life skills and their characteristics?

Table 10
Test of Relationship between the Respondents' Assessment of Life Skills and their Characteristics

Characteristics	Assessment of Life Skills														
	Positive Mindset			Interpersonal Skills			Higher Order Thinking Skills			Community Mindset			Overall		
	R	p-value	Int.	r	p-value	Int.	r	p-value	Int.	R-value	p-value	Int.	R-value	p-value	Int.
Sex	.013	.860	NS	.195**	.008	S	.018	.804	N	.114	.123	N	0.085	0.45	NS
Number of Siblings	.003	.966	NS	.045	.542	N	.123	0.095	N	.041	.577	N	0.060	0.55	NS

Parents' Highest Educational Attainment	0.03	.683	NS	0.001	.985	N S	.061	.407	N S	.164*	.026	S	0.064	0.53	NS
Parents Occupation	0.082	0.264	NS	0.064	.383	N S	0.131	0.075	N S	.171*	0.02	S	0.112	0.19	NS
Family Structure	.015	.843	NS	.071	.338	N S	.118	0.11	N S	.039	.602	N S	0.060	0.47	NS

Table 10 presents the test of the significant relationship between the respondents' characteristics and their level of life skills across the four domains. The findings show that parents' occupation had a significant relationship with community mindset, with a correlation of .171 and a p value of .020, while the other respondent characteristics did not show significant relationships with the assessed life skills domains because their p values were greater than .05. This indicates that parents' occupation may be associated with learners' development of community related skills, while characteristics such as sex, number of siblings, parents' educational attainment, and other demographic factors did not demonstrate significant relationships with the learners' life skills. The findings suggest that learners' life skills may be influenced more by their experiences, family environment, school activities, and opportunities for social interaction than by their personal or demographic characteristics. Overall, the results highlight the importance of considering the learners' social and environmental experiences when developing programs and interventions intended to strengthen their life skills, particularly their sense of responsibility, empathy, and participation in the community.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study revealed that parents' occupation was significantly related to students' Community Mindset. However, sex, number of siblings, parents' highest educational attainment, and family structure did not show significant relationships with the assessed life-skills domains. These findings indicate that the respondents' characteristics examined in the study were not uniformly associated with their life-skills assessment. The findings also highlight the importance of considering the learners' social and educational environments when supporting the development of life skills.

Recommendations

As stated by the outcomes and conclusions of the research, there are some recommendations formulated.

1. Parents should be encouraged to take part in parent-child activities, aimed at fostering life skills development of children. Teachers will assist parents in doing a better job in parenting by providing them with recommendations on how to organize children's homework process, rewarding good behavior of their children and communicating with them.

2. It is important for teachers to come up with and use different activities to foster self-esteem and self-expression skills of children. Teachers' and parents' assessments of their children, praise for their minor achievements and positive comments will contribute to the development of children's self-esteem.
3. Teaching and learning should be organized in a way that students can acquire necessary communication skills, as they make oral presentations, do teamwork, and perform role plays. Student should be encouraged to share their opinion and be polite during communication in class and outside it.
4. More attention should be paid to solving problems, doing practical assignments and performing projects, as they could help develop creativity and innovativeness of children. 5. It is advisable to have cooperation between schools and families in giving easy activities to students. Students should be taken to full-scale events and programs during their life and education in order to learn responsibilities and discipline.
5. Schools need to develop different programs for supporting of feelings and emotions that can lead students to increase their self-esteem and feel psychologically stable.

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