



## Life skills education for junior high school students in Ho Chi Minh City

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### Abstract

Life skills education is a continuous and long-term process. Therefore, life skills education for students in secondary school is the next and necessary stage for students to grow up. The quality of life skills education activities for students is due to many factors, including educational management factors. Education managers will orient goals, content, plan, organize, assign personnel, supervise, check and evaluate the implementation process of life skills education activities for students born. Therefore, the management of life skills education activities has a direct influence on the quality of life skills education activities for students. Management of life skills education activities for students at lower secondary schools has the role of orienting and creating the foundation for the formation of a skill and value system for the younger generation, influencing the management of education in schools next level of study. Besides, the management of life skills education activities for students is good, it is a bridge to create trust for parents and students, especially taking care of the formation, nurturing and development of students. The student's personality is developed in the right direction. Therefore, the study of management of life skills education activities for students in secondary schools is a very necessary job for educational managers.

**Keywords:** Life skills, education, managers, personality

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### 1. Introduction

In fact, life skills education for students in secondary schools is one of the essential educational contents. Because today they are greatly influenced by globalization issues such as: the explosion of science and information technology, the strong development of the knowledge economy, the development of many value orientations. Therefore, the organization of life skills education for students in lower secondary schools is now quite diverse and rich, such as activities to integrate life skills education contents into subjects, educational topics, and activities. Experiential learning hours outside the classroom, outside of school combine with life skills education to help children know how to live and behave appropriately in relationships in family, school and society. But there are very few schools interested in teaching life skills to students on a regular basis and effectively. Meanwhile, the content of life skills education is too much, the student's life skill level is quite diverse, the educational environment is not satisfactory, the life skills and enthusiasm of the education team, the coordination of the educational force is not synchronized, so it faces many difficulties and limitations.

### 2. Research overview of the problem

According to behavioral scientist and professor of psychiatry Gilbreth Botvin (1979) (Tran Bao Quan, 2012), published a highly effective life skills training program for adolescents from 7th grade to 9th grade. The program has created opportunities for learners to have access to social skills such as: assertiveness, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving to demonstrate refusal to use substances that cause harm. Addictive like tobacco. A program of teacher and student manuals and relaxation tapes has been implemented in various schools and juvenile detention centers and has yielded impressive results. In the early 1990s, United Nations organizations such as WHO (World Health Organization),

UNICEF (Rescue Children's Fund), and world educators worked together to find ways to educate young people with disabilities psychosocial efforts to cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is life skills education to help learners turn awareness into action, meaning that teenagers not only understand but also have to do what they understand. The meeting in Senegal, launched the Dakar Action Agenda with six goals, of which goal three stated that "Each country must ensure that learners have access to appropriate life skills education program", in which "learner" here is understood from children to the elderly, while "appropriate" is understood to be suitable for the region, region, locality and suitable for ages. And in goal 6, it is required that "When assessing the quality of education, it is necessary to assess the life skills of learners". Thus, learning life skills becomes the right of learners and the quality of education must be reflected in learners' life skills (The World Forum on Education, 2000).

Faced with this situation, in many Western countries, teenagers have learned life skills about situations that will arise in life, how to face and cope with difficulties and how to overcome them as well as ways to avoid conflicts, conflicts and violence between people. In Latin American countries, life skills education is a comprehensive education. In the Caribbean, the United Nations in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health have run the CARICOM (Caribbean Community) project to put life skills into teaching at all levels across the region through the access to health education and family life.

In Asia, funded by UNICEF, UNESCO, life skills education programs have been widely deployed in countries from South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka). Central Asia (Mongolia) to Southeast Asia, but there is no clear and complete definition of life skills and no uniform set of criteria for curriculum planning for life skills education in Vietnam countries. Furthermore, international organizations have long often provided definitions and set targets that are inappropriate or cannot be effectively applied in different countries. Therefore, UNESCO undertook the project in the five Southeast Asian countries target different issues related to life skills.

In Vietnam, one of the research institutions bringing life skills education into education and training, first of all at the primary level, is the "Citizen Ethical Education Research Center", the Vietnam Academy of Educational Sciences Male.

The education and training sector has implemented life skills education programs into the formal and non-formal education systems. The educational content of the high school is oriented by the goal of life skills education. Accordingly, the content of life skills education is implemented by grade levels and is mainly through the school's curriculum of subjects and life skills education activities along with a number of projects and programs organized by the school foreign funding.

According has compiled thematic textbook: "Educating life skills" and many other topics. These are systematic studies on life skills and life skills education in Vietnam. The author and collaborators have conducted an overview study on the process of life skills perception and proposed the requirement to approach life skills in education and life skills education in high schools, and at the same time find out the reality of life skills status of life skills education for learners from preschool to adult through formal education and continuing

education in Vietnam. The author has built a theoretical framework on life skills education from defining terms, objectives, tasks, contents, principles, and methods of education to assessing the results and impacts of technical education viability (Nguyen Thanh Binh, 2010)

According to the authors (Nguyen Thi My Loc, Dinh Thi Kim Thoa, 2010) have compiled the document "Education of values and life skills for high school students" which has important value in making methodological views as well as orientation and approach to life values and life skills, education of life values and life skills for the young generation in the current period.

The article by authors (Cao Van Quang, Nguyen Thanh Nhan) published in the Scientific Journal of Van Lang University with the title: "Management of life skills education activities for preschool children according to the management function approach". Overview: on the management of life skills education activities for preschool children according to the functional approach in management. According to this approach, the administrator at the preschool will perform the management of life skills education activities for children through four basic functions: Planning; organize the implementation of the plan; Producer; Inspect and evaluate the implementation of life skills education activities for children. Currently, in fact, preschools are following the general direction of superiors in teaching to integrate life skills for children into the Early Childhood Education Program, without due attention leading to this action has not been effective. Life skills education is considered a relatively new activity in the education system in our country, especially at the preschool level. Today, the need to equip - teach life skills for preschool children is very important and necessary. The Ministry of (Education and Training, 2019) has given orientation and required educational institutions at all levels, especially preschool, to implement life skills education for children.

Theses and theses of many authors revolve around this issue. For example, the doctoral thesis of author Phan Thanh Van (2010) "Educating life skills for high school students through educational activities outside of class time". Thesis of author Nguyen Thi Quynh Anh (2012) "Management of life skills education through activities of Ho Chi Minh Pioneer Youth Team at Ly Thuong Kiet Primary School, Hanoi", Le Thi Xuan Kim Hieu (2012) "Some measures to educate life skills through extracurricular activities for 5th grade students in primary schools in Go Vap district, Ho Chi Minh City", Chau Thanh Phong (2012) "Educating life skills for primary school students through the Ho Chi Minh Pioneer Youth Team", Tran Bao Quan (2012) "Educating students in life skills at high schools in Binh Thanh district, Ho Chi Minh City".

### 3. Some concepts of life skills

According to the "Psychological Dictionary", "Skill is the ability to effectively apply the knowledge of the mode of action that has been acquired by the subject to perform the tasks respectively" (Vu Dung, 2000 p.131 -132)

According to the "Vietnamese Dictionary", "Skill is the ability to apply the knowledge acquired in a certain field into practice" (Minh Tan, Thanh Nghi, Xuan Lam, 1999, p. 690). According to author Le Van Hong and colleagues in the book "Age Psychology and Pedagogical Psychology" "Skill is the ability to apply knowledge (concepts, methods, methods) to solve a new task" (Le Van Hong, 2001, p.131)

Meanwhile, author Pham Dinh Nghiep (1999) said:

“Skill is the sum of processes that have been processed. Each form of human activity includes specific operations. There are operations in thinking and there are manipulations in behavior. However, in order to achieve the highest efficiency, in order to optimize operations, those operations must necessarily be procedural, that is, the order of operations must be clearly stated into steps to be performed, in a batch.definite point” (Pham Dinh Nghiep, 1999, p. 115)

According to the document "Educating values and life skills for high school students" by Nguyen Thi My Loc and Dinh Thi Kim Thoa (2010): "Skill is the ability to manipulate and perform an activity." (p.5).

From the above concepts, the author gives the general concept of skills as follows: Skill is the ability to apply learned knowledge into operations to perform a specific action in life. .

\* Life skills of junior high school students

According to the Education Law (National Assembly, 2019), “A learner is a person studying at an educational institution in the national education system” (Article 80). Also according to this Law, “lower secondary education is carried out for 4 school years, from sixth grade to the end of ninth grade. Students entering sixth grade must complete elementary school.

According to WHO (1993) (Nguyen Thi My Loc and Dinh Thi Kim Thoa, 2010) that: “Psychosocial competence is the ability to cope effectively with the demands and challenges of life. ". This is an individual's ability to maintain his or her mental well-being when interacting with appropriate and positive behaviors towards others, culture and surroundings. Psychosocial competence also plays an important role in the formation and development of health in the broadest sense physically, mentally and socially. Life skills are the ability to express and exercise this psychosocial capacity. Therefore, life skills “are psychosocial capabilities to meet and cope with the demands and challenges of daily life” (Nguyen Thi My Loc and Dinh Thi Kim Thoa, 2010, p. 7)

According to UNICEF (Nguyen Thi My Loc and Dinh Thi Kim Thoa, 2010) that: “Education based on basic life skills is a change in behavior or a behavioral development to create a balance between knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors”. In other words, “Life skills are the ability to convert knowledge (what to do) and attitudes (what we are thinking, feeling, or believing) into actions (what to do, and how)” in each individual.

According to UNESCO (Tran Bao Quan, 2012) that: "Life skills are the individual's capacity to perform full functions and participate in daily life". According to Jacques Delors - Chairman of the UNESCO Committee on Education for the 21st Century (1996) (Pham Minh Hac, 1999), there were four educational pillars associated with life skills, namely: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to be.

In addition, there are many other concepts of life skills: “Life skills are the ability to make one's behavior and change consistent with positive behavior, enabling people to control or effectively manage the demands and challenges of daily life” (Nguyen Thanh Binh, 2010, p.6)

“Life skills are psychosocial skills related to knowledge, values and attitudes, which are ultimately expressed in behaviors that enable individuals to adapt and deal with effectively the requirements and challenges of life” (Nguyen Thanh Binh, 2010, p.6)

#### 4. Life skills education for students in junior high school

Education is the transmission of knowledge and experience from one generation to another. Education is a general and broad concept of pedagogy used in a broad and narrow sense. The concept of education has a broad technical content, covering the entire educational process with all its organizational and impact aspects. People often call this the broad meaning of education. In this sense, “Education is a purposeful and planned impact on the formation and comprehensive development of personality” (Tran Thi Huong et al., 2017, p.26).

The concept of education is used not only in a broad sense but also in a narrower sense, going deeper into a certain issue that is organized not only in the school but also in the family and society. Therefore, “Education is a part of overall educational activities aimed at organizing and guiding the educated to form and develop the qualities of personality, including scientific worldview, political thought, moral, aesthetic, physical, labor, correct behaviors and habits of individuals in their relationships” (Tran Thi Huong et al., 2017, p.26).

The concept of life skills education is understood in different ways depending on the country and territory where life skills education is combined with other educational programs. In some countries, life skills education is directed towards education in hygiene, health, nutrition, disease prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention. Besides, there are also countries that direct life skills education into behavior education, manners, traffic safety education, environmental protection or peace love education. It is often tied to a context so that people can understand and practice it specifically. Or is it often associated with a certain educational content.

According to the authors Nguyen Thi My Loc and Dinh Thi Kim Thoa (2010) said that: "Education in life skills for students is understood as the education of personal and social skills to help them transfer what we know (perception), what we feel (attitude) and what we care about (values) into real abilities that help students know what to do and how to do it (behavior) in different situations of life”. In other words, life skills education for students must be a purposeful and planned impact process in order to help students have knowledge about life, have proper manipulations and behaviors in different situations social relationships in which the individual participates, and at the same time helps the student's personality to develop properly and easily adapt to the living environment (Nguyen Thi My Loc, Dinh Thi Kim Thoa, 2010)

#### 5. Life skills education activities for students in junior high school

According to Vygotsky (1925) (according to Le Van Hong, 2001) on activity theory, scientific psychology has discovered the category of activity, starting with the famous article "Consciousness is the opening problem of theory." behavior” (p. 95) and was followed by a series of experimental and theoretical work by generations of psychologists, led by A.N. Leontiev and S.L. Rubinstein asserted that “the real activity category is the tool category that builds up the psychology of activity – a truly objective psychology” (Le Van Hong, pp. 95).

The category of activities plays a decisive role in the formation and development of objective psychology and in liberating psychology from the crisis. This new field of



psychology has, for nearly a century, become a reliable theoretical premise for a progressive, scientific education. With the above category of activities, there are many different definitions of activities. According to A.N. Leontiev (according to Le Van Hong, 2001), "activity is understood as a combination of human processes acting on an object to achieve the goal of satisfying a certain need and the result of the activity itself is the concretize the needs of the subject" (p. 95).

According to the "Vietnamese dictionary" of the author group (Minh Tan, Thanh Nghi, Xuan Lam, 1999): "Activity is the performance of closely related activities for a certain purpose in social life." (p. 596).

Methods of organizing life skills education activities for students in lower secondary schools

Education is the process of combining the leading role of the teacher with the active self-discipline and self-training of students in order to form consciousness, character and mainly moral habits with social standards prescribed association.

The way life skills education is understood includes general approaches and specific methods along with organizational forms of life skills education activities.

### General approach

- Participatory approach: concerned with the role of student participation in skill practice.
- Learner-oriented approach: based on life experiences and needs of learners to exploit sharing and meet legitimate needs.
- Approach to activities: organize activities for students and put them in situations to experience and practice problem solving.
- Individual and process approach: behavioral change life skills education organized in small groups is more effective. Through regular communication and direct contact, observing and searching with students, will ensure continuity and maintain healthy behaviors so that they gradually accept new behaviors.
- Synchronous and integrated approach: As with any educational content, the unity and cooperation between schools, families and communities in life skills education is important. Because behavior change is easier if the community environment also encourages that change for the individual.

### Some specific methods

The active learning methods that are applied a lot in life skills education can be mentioned here, which are: organizing clubs, brainstorming, group discussions, games, role-playing, project-building, case-handling (through watching videos, skits, stories, or students coming up with their own problems, real situations...), case studies (showing examples with real people, real things...), research individual.

### Methods of organizing clubs

This method can be done according to the following procedure:

**Step 1:** Prepare the content and form of club activities corresponding to the monthly topics.

**Step 2:** Make a plan to deploy club activities, assign responsibilities.

**Step 3:** Organize the implementation of the planned plan.

**Step 4:** Organize activities according to the set program and content.

### Methods of organizing the contest

#### This method is performed

**Step 1:** Determine the topic, goal, content of the contest and name the contest.

**Step 2:** Determine the time and place of the contest.

**Step 3:** Organize information work propaganda and advocacy for the contest.

**Step 4:** Set up the contest organizing committee:

**Step 5:** Design the content of the contest program

**Step 6:** Estimate budget, prepare facilities for the competition

**Step 7:** Organize the contest

**Step 8:** End the contest

### Check, monitor and evaluate the performance of life skills education activities for students in lower secondary schools

Testing is a management function at any level. It has a very important role of "implementing the reverse relationship in the management process" (Ha The Ngu and Dang Vu Hoat, Volume 2, 1988, p.229) in life skills education activities for students. It helps managers control the process of organizing the implementation of the plan in accordance with the original goals. As a result, school leaders can evaluate and "analyze the inadequacies between what was planned and what has been achieved" (Nguyen Huu Thu, 2017, p.145) when organizing the implementation to review control and adjust the life skills education activity plan for students in accordance with the goals and reality of the school. This is an internal audit process that helps organizational members "meet expectations" (Nguyen Loc, 2010, p.180). In other words, the management subject can self-assess his management decisions to adjust and learn from experience. Inspection also has the effect of urging and motivating the subordinates to perform seriously and with quality in order to achieve the set goals. At the same time, this element is implemented throughout the school year, in stages and by job. The more closely, closely, and meticulously the inspection and evaluation of both quantity and quality of products and work progress to draw experience in time, the more effective and high-quality the program will be. To obtain the above results, testing and evaluation must be carried out in the following steps: formulating operational objectives; ensure actual operation; compare results with goals; take the necessary actions to solve the problem or discover the opportunity.

The forms of inspection and assessment are very rich and diverse, which can be classified according to the time of inspection: irregular inspection, periodical inspection; according to the test content: comprehensive test, thematic test; according to the test method: direct test, indirect test; according to the object of the test object: full test, selective test.

In addition, the form of inspection has many other forms such as initial inspection; concurrent test aka steering test; test response or sub call test after action; internal inspection; External examination, the principal collected the analysis and evaluation of the teaching situation and the positive behavior change of the students.

### 6. Conclusion

Life skills education for students needs to be based on the students' psychophysiological characteristics. Besides, life skills education for students also relies on influencing factors, objectives, content, form and methods of life skills education

to design educational programs accordingly. This education is not for children to "swim on their own" but needs support from the school, family and society. Life skills education for students in schools needs strict management to properly orient them. This changes the student's behavior in a positive and effective way to form and develop personality as well as improve the quality of life of the individual. In order for life skills education to be of such quality, it is required that school administrators plan, organize, direct, administer, and inspect and evaluate this activity.

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