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Life Skills Comprehension: Dilemmas and Potential Alternatives

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INTRODUCTION

Life skills represent a fascinating topic in the human sciences, particularly psychology, given their potential to contribute to human development and self-realization across the lifespan. However, some aspects need to be clarified better to understand the effects of life skills in human functioning, namely: (a) how to understand the **concept** of life skills; (b) what **types** of life skills exist and how they should be identified; (c) what are the **stages** implicated in life skills learning; (d) what life skills are **learned** across the lifespan; and, (e) what **methods and techniques** can be used to train life skills.

Purpose

This paper addresses some of these issues, organized in **three** main sections: (a) **dilemmas** about life skills and potential solutions, (b) a **theoretical** proposal about life skills efficacy, and (c) **implications** for improving current knowledge about life skills.

LIFE SKILLS

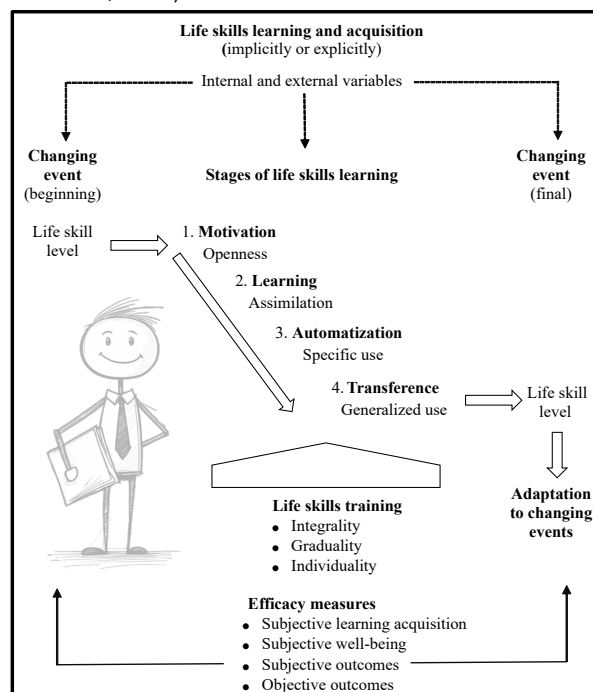
Figure 1

Typology and Functionality of Life Skills

Axis 1 Typology	Life skills (examples)	Axis 2 Functionality
Cognitive (Applied thinking)	Leading projects effectively Working productively in teams Communicating positively	Interpersonal
Intellectual (Abstract thinking)	Setting goals to stay motivated Managing time effectively	
Emotional	Solving problems	
Motor	Managing emotions and stress Managing critical life events	
Physical	Coordinating hands and arms while driving	Personal
	Relaxing body and mind Walking for a period of time in a certain rhythm	

Seven key ideas were identified to enhance understanding of how life skills operate to improve human functioning: **intervention effectiveness, multidimensional outcomes, interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies, explicit and implicit learning processes, lifespan development, training methodologies, and the transfer of life skills across contexts.**

Figure 2

Life Skills Efficacy Model (Modified from Gomes & Resende, 2020)

CONCLUSION

Life skills require a broader and more precise **conceptualization** that encompasses multiple domains, learning contexts, and their role in adapting to changing life events. The **Life Skills Efficacy Model** offers a framework for understanding how life skills are learned across the lifespan, through different learning stages, training principles, and individual and contextual factors.

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