

An Evaluation of a Plus Sport One-Day Life Skills Development Programme

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Abstract: This study aimed to evaluate the extent to which a one-day life skills development programme of the Right to Play Thailand Foundation improved the life skills of its participants. The specific objectives of this study were to determine the relationship between participants' gender and life skills development, to examine the relationship between participants' age and life skills development and to find out the relationship between the groups that participants' were involved in and life skills development. Using a questionnaire (adopted from the Life effectiveness questionnaire (LEQ) – H version) improvement of life skills such as appreciation in one's own and others' values, analysing, making decisions and solving problems creatively, emotion and stress management, building good relationships with others and setting goals for life were statistically analysed. Responses from 95 out of 110 participants in the Wat Tumru Mittaphap Thi 65 School, Samutprakhan, Thailand were analysed to test the research hypothesis. According to the results of the study the one day life skills development programme developed three life skills such as building relationships, setting goals and problem solving in a minor way even though there was no relationship between the participants' gender, age and group and life skills development.

Keywords: Life Skills Development, Right to Play Thailand Foundation, Sport and Play based Life Skill Development Programme, Plus Sport.

INTRODUCTION

Many organisations have become *plus sport* organisations by using sport as a tool to support social change. These organisations such as Right To Play Foundation focuses more on non-sporting outcomes that result from the sport based programmes such as increasing positive education outcomes, promoting healthy life styles and reducing violence. In Thailand, due to economic and social transformations within a short period of time children and youth [1-3] face a number of challenges such as consumerism, drugs, violence and sex as well as problems related to quality education, environment, family and community, political security and income [4] though the country has strong values such as promoting "harmony in people's minds and between people in the society [5, 6] based on Buddhism (ibid.). To overcome these challenges government, non-government and non-profit organisations are using play and sport as a tool in Thailand. To support this, sport for development and peace interventions are being introduced globally [7] "from the local, regional and national levels around five key themes such as child and youth development, health and prevention of disease, gender equality, inclusion of people with disabilities and social integration and peace-building" [8].

One of the key sport for development (SDP) organisations that uses play based sport activities to overcome such problems in Thailand is the 'Right to

Play Thailand Foundation' (RTPTF). The RTPTF, in agreement with the UN believes that sport as a "tool for education, development and peace can promote cooperation, solidarity, tolerance, understanding, social inclusion and health at the local, national and international levels" [9]. Ban Ki-moon and the UN have recognized the role sport as a tool has played during the past two decades in helping the organisation to achieve its objectives. Ban Ki-moon believes that the UN can "fully use sport as a cost-efficient tool to create a better world by including sport in development and peace programmes in a more systematic way" [10]. RTPTF believes the same and the organisation is using the power of sport and play to create a healthy and safe world [11]. RTPTF has a strong position in the Ministry of Education's new curriculum to create an environment for Thai students to increase competency in communication, analytical and critical thinking, problem solving and applying life skills. Recent guidelines of the Ministry on life skills development consist of five components viz. appreciation of one's own and others' values (hereafter referred to as 'appreciating values'), analyzing, making decisions and solving problems creatively (hereafter referred to as 'problem solving'), emotion and stress management values (hereafter referred to as 'emotion management'), building good relationships with others values (hereafter referred to as 'building relationships') and setting goals for life (hereafter referred to as 'setting goals').

Life Skills Development Programme (LSDP) by following above-mentioned guidelines aims to promote life skills education through activity based learning in Thai public schools and youth rehabilitation centers [12]. This programme “continues its direct partnership with district, provincial and national authorities across Thailand, expanding to additional schools and strengthening activities in youth centres; integrating life skills education into the formal school system and strengthening youth rehabilitation through leadership opportunities in youth centres across the country” [13]. Apart from conducting regular life skills programmes, RTPTF organises one day LSDPs with its corporate partner (CP) on request. The CP organisation of the RTPTF hosts such LSDPs as its corporate social responsibility (CSR) project. The facilitators from the CP organisation for this kind of LSDPs are trained by the RTPFT. This paper discusses the successfulness of the LSDP, which was carried out to improve the life skills of school participants by the corporate partner of RTPTF. Thus, the key objective was to evaluate to what extent the one day Life Skills Development Programme (LSDP) improved the life skills of the participants. The specific objectives were to determine the relationship between participants’ gender and life skills development, to find out the relationship between participants’ age and life skills development and to examine the relationship between participants’ group and life skills development.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study utilised a pre-test and post-test design based on Nail’s [14] research. The programme evaluated through this research was the second LSDP facilitated by the CP of the RTPTF and RTPTF on 16th of August 2016 at Wat Tumru Mittaphap Thi 65 School, Samutprakhan. There were one hundred and ten (110) secondary school students aged from 12 years to 16 years in the programme. The programme started at 8:30 a.m. and finished at 15:30 p.m. There were five separate learning stations in the school to learn the five life skills. Fifteen facilitators and forty-five support staff from the CP organisation were allocated to each learning station. The first, second, third, fourth and fifth learning stations were to learn the life skills appreciating values of self and others, managing emotions, building healthy relationships with others, problem solving and decision making and setting goals for life respectively. Before the students were directed to the learning stations, staff members from the RTPTF and the CP organisation registered the students. Then they had an opening ceremony and ice breaking activities with energisers to get to know each other. Eventually using some games the students were divided into five groups so that each group could go to all the learning stations at the end of the day. As one of the main goals of the LSDP was to continue the programme in a relaxed and joyful manner the staff decided to divide the students into groups using an activity. The activity helped the students to be physically active as

the students had to move, run and shout during the activity. There were 21, 22, 24, 21 and 22 participants in the groups ‘Pikjoo’, ‘Pee-Nong’, ‘Thunder’, ‘Classic’ and ‘Dek-Thean’ respectively. The students decided the group names during the grouping activity

To teach each life skill, the facilitators used play based activities. These games were developed based on the RTPTF’s manuals and the suggestions from the local school teachers. The play based activities were the most important part of the programme as the activities were the life skills teaching tools. Through a play based activity called ‘colour cards’ the first learning station taught the students how to appreciate one’s own and others’ values. The ‘Dodge ball’ game was used to teach the skill ‘managing emotions’. The third learning station used ‘structure building’ activity while problem solving and decision making skills were taught using the ‘treasure hunt’ game. The fifth learning station used the ‘reach the goal’ activity and the LSDP finished its activities after having a wrap-up session with all the students.

The convenience sampling method was used to conduct the study as it was easy to reach from the RTTF during the internship period. And there were hardly any LSDPs in August which was hosted by the CP. One hundred and ten participants of the Wat Tumru Mittaphap Thi 65 School, Samutprakhan, Thailand were considered the sample for this research. Seventy-two (65.5%) of the participants were boys and 38 (34.5%) were girls. Data were collected through a questionnaire based on the following assumptions. Participants will assent to participate in this study; they will complete the forms with integrity; they will answer each question honestly and to the best of their ability and they will be able to follow the instructions of the questionnaire [15]. The questionnaire consisted of fifteen questions that were adopted from the LEQ-H (Life Effectiveness Questionnaire-H) version by Neill [16]. By citing Eagle, Gordon and Lewis [17]; Neill & Flory [18]; Neill [19]; Neill [20]; Neill [21]; Neill *et al.*, [16]; Stenger [15]; Terry [22]; Nail [14] mentions that any LEQ version was used by researchers as the “Life Effectiveness Questionnaire is a self-report instrument” to measure the effects of adventure and other experiential education programmes.

According to previous studies, experience based education programmes can improve the life skills of its participants. Therefore, as shown in figure 1, it was assumed that the life skills of the participants improved because of the LSDP. Additionally, it was assumed that the gender, age and the assigned group of the participants would have an effect in improving the life skills. Other scholars assumed that there is a relationship between variables such as gender and age with the life skills development/ life effectiveness and some researchers emphasised the need for examining the relationship of such variables with the life skills

development. Thus, the study was planned to evaluate the one day LSDP by identifying life skills as

dependent variables while identifying gender, age and the represented group as the moderate variables.

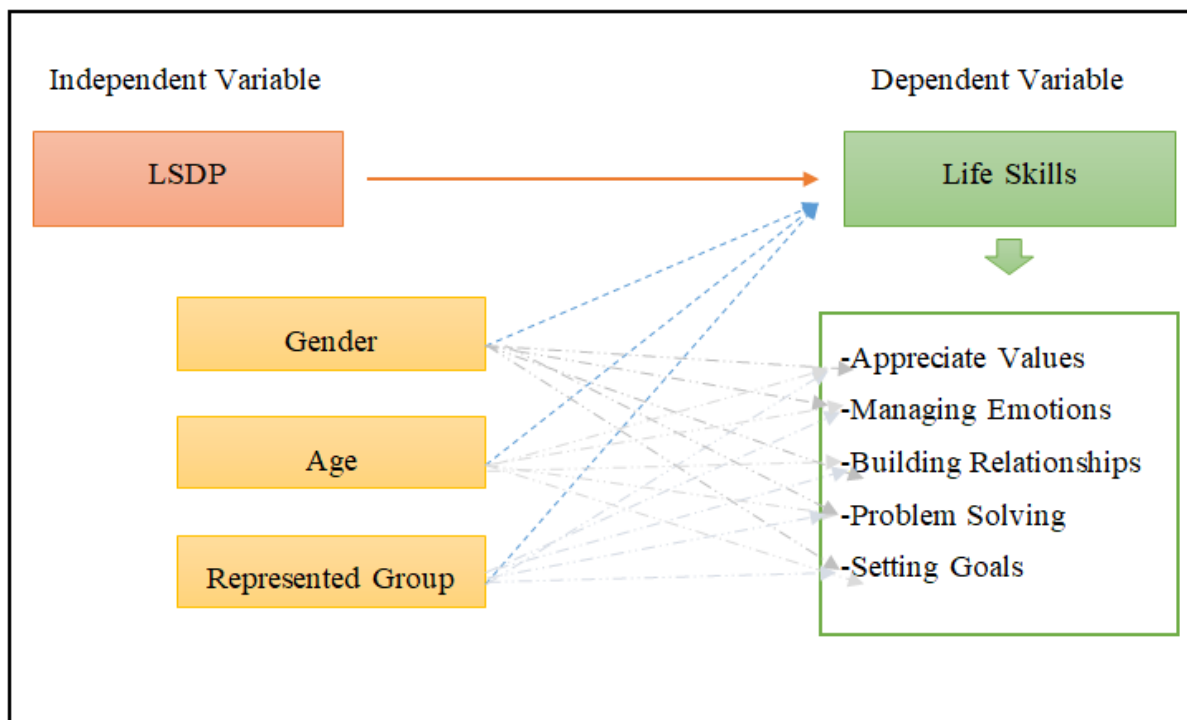


Fig-1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Developed by the Researcher, 2016

The questionnaire was distributed in Thai language. The first, sixth and eleventh questions were related to the building relationships life skill. According to LEQ-H version these questions were items contained in the social competence domain. Goal setting life skills were related with the second, seventh and twelfth questions which were items belonging to the achievement motivation domain of the LEQ-H. Through the third, eighth and thirteenth questions problem solving and decision-making skills were evaluated. These questions were the LEQ-H factors for intellectual flexibility. Questions related to emotional management skills were asked using the fourth, ninth and fourteenth questions, which were the factors in the emotional control domain in LEQ-H version. The fifth, tenth and fifteenth questions were about appreciating values. Those questions comprised the self-confidence factors in the LEQ-H version.

To be confident in the accuracy of the translation the questionnaire was also translated into English. Consent to conduct the research and to distribute the questionnaire was given by the RTPFT and the Wat Tumru Mittaphap Thi 65 School, Samutprakhan, Thailand. Apart from collecting the primary data through the questionnaire, secondary data such as organisational publications and published literature related to the research were used for reference. And to find out the characteristics of the

LSDP through a qualitative evaluation of the programme three sets of interview data and observations were recorded within a two month period.

RESULTS

The responses of secondary students who answered the same questionnaire before the commencement of the LSDP (pre-test) and after completion of the programme (post-test) were chosen for analysis. This was done in order to provide continuity in the response rate and respondent focus. To reinforce this continuity of results a second post-test was planned three months after the completion of the programme if the relevant personnel give consent. (Out of 110 respondents, only 95 participants provided answers to all the questions. Hence, only 95 responses were considered for analysis. Out of 95 respondents, 59 were boys and 36 were girls. Out of the 95 respondents, 66 students were 13 years old. 19 students were 12 years old while 08 students were 14 years old. There were two students who were 15 and 16 years old.

Using SPSS version 22, a quantitative analysis was carried out to answer the research questions of the study. A descriptive analysis, paired samples *t* test, independent sample *t* tests, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests, Cohens's *d* test, one sample Kolmogorov Smirnov (K-S) test were administered to analyse the answers from the respondents. The K-S test

confirmed that the test distribution was normal except for the post-test building relationships test, managing emotions post-test and appreciating values post-test. To determine participants' life skills improvement,

descriptive analysis (See Figure 2) and a paired-samples *t* test were undertaken. The *t* test was carried out to grasp any existing mean differences between the pre-tests and post-tests (See Table-1).

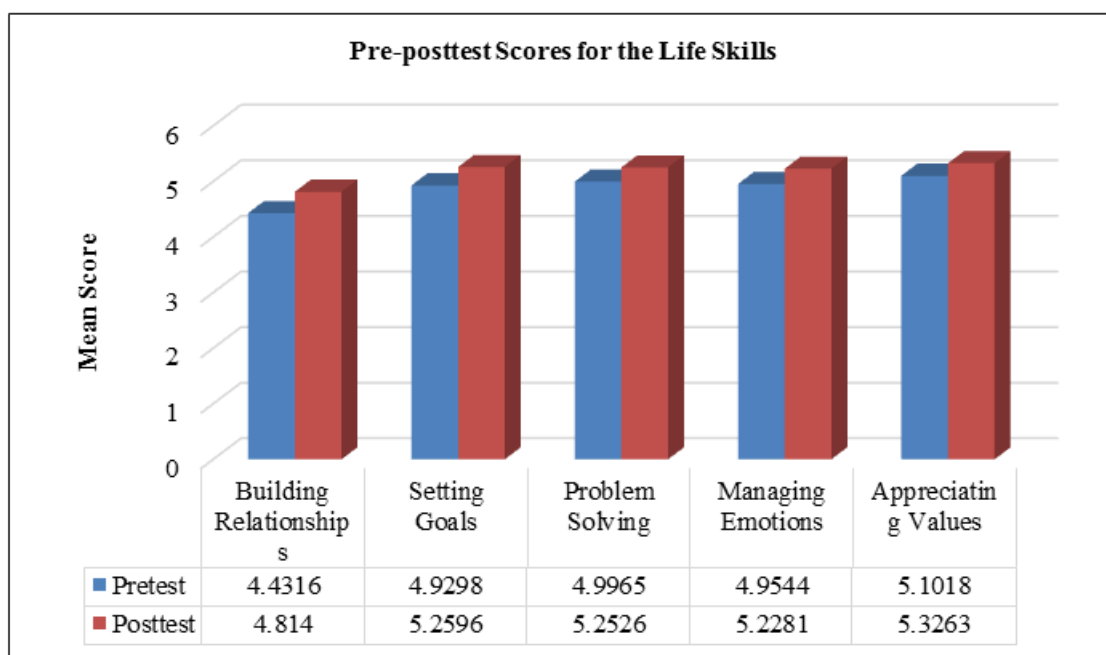


Fig-2: Mean Scores of the pre and post-tests

Source: Survey Data, 2016

As shown in the Figure-2, mean scores of the life skills such as building relationships (M= 4.43 in pre-test while M=4.81 in post-test) setting goals (M= 4.93 in pre-test while M=5.26 in post-test), problem solving (M= 4.5 in pre-test while M=5.25 in post-test),

managing emotions (M= 4.95 in pre-test while M=5.23 in post-test) and appreciating values (M= 5.10 in pre-test while M=5.33 in post-test) are slightly higher in the post-test.

Table-1: Paired Samples T Test and Effect Size Results of the Pre and Post-tests

Variables	t values	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	d
Pre Building Relationships - Post Building Relationships	-2.890	94	.005**	-0.29647
Pre Setting Goals - Post Setting Goals	-2.367	94	.020*	-0.24281
Pre Problem Solving - Post Problem Solving	-2.094	94	.039*	-0.21481
Pre Managing Emotions - Post Managing Emotions	-1.956	94	.053	-0.20065
Pre Appreciating Values - Post Appreciating Values	-1.450	94	.150	-0.1488

*P < 0.01 to 0.05, **P < 0.001 to 0.01

However, based on the paired samples *t* test and effect sizes (See Table 1), a statistical significance can be seen in the life skills viz., setting goals (p value is 0.020) and problem solving (p value is 0.039) while the life skill, 'building relationships' is statistically very significant at p = 0.005. The effect size (the magnitude of difference between the pre and post-test) of these life skills are also showing trivial effect changes as d = -0.24281, -0.21481 and -0.29647 respectively. Scores for the life skills 'managing emotions' and 'appreciating values' are not statistically significant as p = 0.53 and p = 0.150 respectively.

To find out the relationship between the gender and the life skills development of the participants, an independent samples *t* test was undertaken (See Table-2).

As shown in Table 2 neither the pre-test nor the post-test variables demonstrate statistical significances as the probability values are 0.282, 0.667, 0.168, 0.175, 0.114, 0.128 and 0.096 except pre-test results for the goal setting (p = 0.038) post-test results for the goal setting (p = 0.042) and post-test results for the appreciating values (p = 0.021).

An ANOVA test was administrated to see the relationship between the age and the life skills development of the participants (See Table-3).

According to the results the pre-test for goal setting ($p = .046$) and problem solving skills ($p = .036$) was statistically significant. However, the P values of other pre and post-tests were 0.258, 0.837, 0.448, 0.475,

0.216, .0362, 0.870 and 0.559 no statistical significance was reported.

To determine the existing relationship between the participants' group and the life skills development of the participants another ANOVA test was conducted (See table-4).

Table-2: Independent Samples T Tests of the Pre and Post-tests with Means and Standard Deviations by Gender

Variables	t values	Male		Female		Sig. (2-tailed)
		M	SD	M	SD	
Pre Building Relationships	1.083	4.5537	1.40007	4.2315	1.41829	.282
Post Building Relationships	.432	4.8644	1.36755	4.7315	1.58929	.667
Pre Setting Goals	2.100	5.1808	1.45471	4.5185	1.55010	.038*
Post Setting Goals	2.059	5.5367	1.74639	4.8056	1.56017	.042*
Pre Problem Solving	1.389	5.1695	1.54421	4.7130	1.56986	.168
Post Problem Solving	1.365	5.4237	1.61391	4.9722	1.47654	.175
Pre Managing Emotions	1.593	5.1638	1.54048	4.6111	1.79329	.114
Post Managing Emotions	1.534	5.4237	1.53607	4.9074	1.68016	.128
Pre Appreciating Values	1.682	5.3277	1.68096	4.7315	1.66728	.096
Post Appreciating Values	2.346	5.6554	1.62708	4.7870	1.93736	.021*
*P < 0.05						

Table-3: Analysis of Variance of the Pre and Post-tests with Means and Standard Deviations by Age

Variables	f values	12 years		13 years		14 years		15 years		16 years		Sig.
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Pre Building Relationships	1.349	4.0351	1.43542	4.6263	1.37190	3.6667	1.53271	4.6667		5.0000		.258
Post Building Relationships	.359	4.4561	1.34353	4.9091	1.55090	4.8333	.87287	5.0000		5.0000		.837
Pre Setting Goals	2.526	4.3860	2.11188	5.1616	1.30252	4.0000	.77664	7.3333		5.0000		.046*
Post Setting Goals	.933	5.0702	2.04450	5.3384	1.63560	4.8333	1.41421	8.0000		4.3333		.448
Pre Problem Solving	2.699	4.6140	1.92214	5.2576	1.36350	3.8750	1.57296	6.3333		2.6667		.036*
Post Problem Solving	.887	4.8947	1.95963	5.3687	1.48396	4.8750	1.24642	7.3333		5.3333		.475
Pre Managing Emotions	1.478	4.7193	1.98843	5.1465	1.50342	4.4583	1.81648	3.6667		2.0000		.216
Post Managing Emotions	1.098	4.8070	2.08260	5.3939	1.48371	4.6250	1.14694	7.0000		5.3333		.362
Pre Appreciating Values	.310	4.8772	2.04942	5.2121	1.61789	4.7500	1.67853	5.6667		4.3333		.870
Post Appreciating Values	.753	4.8596	1.99480	5.4293	1.78959	5.5417	1.32062	7.0000		4.0000		.559
*P < 0.05												

Table-4: Analysis of Variance of the Pre and Post-tests with Means and Standard Deviations by the Represented Group

Variables	f values	Pikjoo		Pee-Nong		Thunder		Classic		Dek-Thean		Sig.
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Pre Building Relationships	1.313	3.8667	1.36968	4.7333	1.52856	4.3175	1.19943	4.7222	1.39209	4.6190	1.51762	.271
Post Building Relationships	.455	4.4500	1.65531	4.8000	.99043	4.8571	1.45896	4.9259	1.32130	5.0317	1.66301	.768
Pre Setting Goals	2.603	4.1000	1.92885	5.4000	1.02508	5.2222	1.37167	4.7037	1.10784	5.2857	1.58565	.041*
Post Setting Goals	2.185	4.4833	1.98378	5.6222	1.40219	5.6667	1.78885	4.8519	1.19488	5.6825	1.72071	.077
Pre Problem Solving	1.825	4.4667	1.82702	5.2444	1.04248	5.1746	1.51518	4.5370	1.69250	5.5397	1.39234	.131
Post Problem Solving	1.238	4.8333	1.68412	5.4222	1.45005	5.6508	1.31857	4.8148	1.33931	5.5079	1.88744	.301
Pre Managing Emotions	1.505	4.7167	1.79106	5.3556	1.01939	5.3651	1.62243	4.2593	1.64716	5.0794	1.82545	.207
Post Managing Emotions	1.368	4.8667	1.76184	5.7111	.84390	5.3968	1.83066	4.6852	1.43928	5.5238	1.68184	.251
Pre Appreciating Values	2.774	4.7333	1.73913	5.8667	.76428	5.3492	1.80886	4.2037	1.50006	5.4286	1.87422	.032*
Post Appreciating Values	1.585	4.9500	2.23286	5.7333	.96937	5.4921	1.81236	4.6296	1.51200	5.8254	1.86374	.185
P < 0.05												

As the P values were 0.271, 0.768, 0.077, 0.131, 0.301, 0.207, 0.251 and 0.185 no statistical significance reported in pre and post building relationships, post setting goals, pre and post problem solving, pre and post managing emotions and post appreciating values. The results for pre-setting goals (p = .041) test and pre appreciating values tests (p = .032) were statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to evaluate to what extent the one day Life Skills Development Programme (LSDP) improved the life skills of the participants. According to the respondents', the one day life skills development programme at the Wat Tumru Mittaphap Thi 65 School, Samutprakhan, Thailand developed three life skills such as building relationships, setting goals and problem solving to a limited extent even though there was no relationship between the participants' gender, age, group and life skills development. However, the results should be further validated with a post-test.

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