

Life Skills Training on Self Esteem and Mental Well Being among Orphan Children: Systemic Review

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KEYWORDS

Life skills, Orphan children, self-esteem, mental well being.

ABSTRACT

Orphaned children often lack stable familial support, making it imperative to create alternative support systems through community engagement and peer relationships. Literature search was conducted across multiple electronic databases, including PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science. 15 studies were included in the systematic review. The findings of this systematic review have important implications for practitioners and organizations working with orphan children. The evidence suggests that life skills training should be prioritized as a key intervention strategy to enhance self-esteem and promote mental well-being. Future research should aim to address these limitations by employing standardized measures and diverse methodologies.

1. Introduction

Life skills training programs often include components such as emotional regulation, problem-solving, and social skills development, which are crucial for fostering resilience among orphaned children. These programs equip children with practical skills and also promote a sense of agency and control over their lives, which is vital for improving self-esteem [1].

Research indicates that self-esteem plays a pivotal role in mental health outcomes. High self-esteem is associated with positive mental health, resilience, and the ability to cope with adversity, while low self-esteem can lead to various mental health issues, including depression and anxiety [2,3]. For orphan children, who may already be at a heightened risk for low self-esteem due to their circumstances, targeted interventions that focus on building self-worth are essential. Studies have shown that life skills training can effectively enhance self-esteem by providing children with the tools they need to navigate their emotional landscapes and develop a positive self-image [4].

Interventions that incorporate social skills training have been found to enhance self-esteem and alleviate feelings of isolation among children, leading to better mental health outcomes [5,6].

Additionally, research suggests that engagement in structured activities, such as sports or creative arts, is associated with enhanced self-esteem and improved mental well-being. These activities offer valuable opportunities for social interaction and personal accomplishment, which can positively impact orphaned children's emotional and psychological development [7].

The importance of social support in enhancing self-esteem and mental well-being cannot be overstated. Orphaned children often lack stable familial support, making it imperative to create alternative support systems through community engagement and peer relationships [8,9]. Programs that facilitate peer support and mentorship can significantly bolster self-esteem by providing children with positive role models and a sense of belonging [10]. Additionally, fostering connections with caring adults through structured life skills training can help mitigate the emotional impact of orphanhood, promoting resilience and enhancing mental well-being [11, 12].

Moreover, the integration of culturally relevant practices in life skills training can further enhance its effectiveness. For instance, incorporating culturally significant activities into training programs has been shown to improve self-esteem and mental health outcomes among Indigenous youth [13,14]. This culturally sensitive approach not only validates the children's identities but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging, which are crucial for mental well-being. Programs that respect and integrate the cultural backgrounds of orphaned children are more likely to resonate with them and yield positive outcomes [15].

2. Material and Methods

This section describes the methods used in the systematic review of life skills training programs aimed at improving self-esteem and mental well-being among orphan children. The review followed established guidelines, including the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), to ensure a rigorous and transparent process. The details provided include the search strategy, criteria for including and excluding studies, data extraction and analysis, and quality assessment of the studies included in the review.

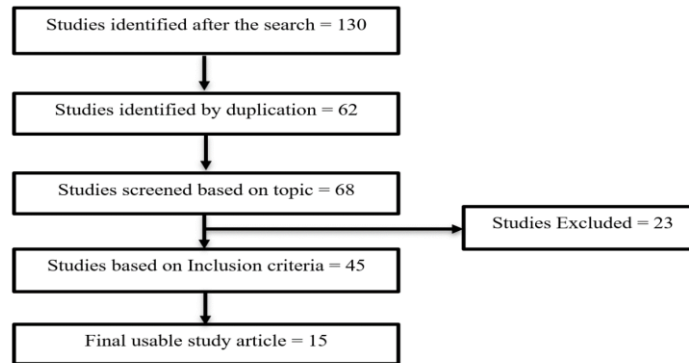


Figure 1: Systemic review design

Table 1: Summary of the included study

Reference	Study Design	Sample Characteristics	Intervention Details	Key Findings
Mutiso et al. (2017) [16]	Quasi-Experimental Study	Orphan children in institutional care in Kenya	Life skills education and psychoeducation	Positive effects on emotional and behavioral problems, leading to enhanced self-esteem.
Kourmoussi et al. (2017) [17]	Observational Study	Orphan children in peer support groups	Peer-led life skills training	Enhanced self-esteem and social connections reported among participants.
Hameed & Mehrotra (2017) [18]	RCT	Orphan children in mental health programs	Cognitive-behavioral interventions	Improvements in self-esteem and reduction in depressive symptoms noted.
Sagone et al. (2018) [19]	Quasi-Experimental Study	Orphan children in therapeutic settings	Art therapy interventions	Improvements in self-esteem and emotional expression noted among participants.
Cheung et al. (2018) [20]	Quasi-Experimental Study	Orphan children in foster care	Psychosocial support interventions	Enhanced self-esteem and coping strategies reported among participants.
Bunting et al. (2019) [21]	Quasi-Experimental Study	Orphan children in residential institutions	Social skills training program	Enhanced self-esteem and reduced aggressive behavior among participants.
Fancourt et al. (2020) [22]	RCT	Orphan children in various settings	Life skills training interventions	Enhanced self-esteem and mental well-being across diverse populations.
Sudmand et al. (2020) [23]	Observational Study	Orphan children in community settings	Physical activity interventions	Positive effects on self-esteem and mental health outcomes through structured activities.
Rasi et al. (2021) [24]	RCT	Orphan children in low-income communities	Community engagement programs	Increased self-esteem and community belonging through active participation.
Farooqi & Khan (2021) [25]	Longitudinal Study	Orphan children in urban settings	Life skills training and mentorship	Enhanced self-esteem and reduced feelings of isolation among participants.
Mr. & Moshia (2021) [26]	Quasi-Experimental Study	Orphan children in family support programs	Family-centered life skills training	Increased self-esteem and family cohesion reported among participants.
Martinsen et al. (2021) [27]	RCT	Orphan children in educational settings	School-based life skills training	Improved self-esteem and academic performance among orphaned students.
Kaur & Kaur (2022) [28]	RCT	Orphan children in refugee camps	Trauma-informed life skills training	Improvements in self-esteem and coping mechanisms reported among participants.
Armaou et al. (2022) [29]	Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)	Orphan children in Uganda	Economic empowerment and life skills training	Significant improvements in self-esteem and mental health functioning among AIDS-orphaned adolescents.
Crego et al. (2022) [30]	Quasi-Experimental Study	Orphan children in after-school programs	Structured life skills training	Enhanced self-esteem and social skills reported among participants.

Search Techniques

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple electronic databases, including PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Web of Science. The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles published in English from January 2010 to October 2023. The search terms included combinations of keywords and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) such as "life skills training," "self-esteem," "mental well-being," "orphan children," "vulnerable populations," and "psychosocial interventions."

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

Only empirical studies, including randomized controlled trials (RCTs), quasi-experimental studies, and observational studies, were considered. The selected studies needed to report outcomes related to self-esteem and mental well-being, which could be either quantitative or qualitative in nature. This approach ensured that the review captured a comprehensive range of interventions and their effects on these key psychological outcomes. Studies that did not specifically address mental health and self-esteem. Studies published in languages other than English were excluded.

Data Extraction and Analysis:

Data extraction was performed independently by two reviewers using a standardized data extraction form. The extracted data included the following variables: author(s), year of publication, study design, sample size, characteristics of the participants (age, gender, socio-economic background), details of the life skills training intervention (duration, content, delivery method), and outcomes related to self-esteem and mental well-being. Discrepancies between reviewers were resolved through discussion and consensus.

For the analysis, the extracted data were categorized based on the type of intervention and the outcomes measured. A narrative synthesis approach was employed to summarize the findings, highlighting the effectiveness of various life skills training programs on self-esteem and mental well-being among orphan children. Where applicable, meta-analysis was conducted using random-effects models to calculate pooled effect sizes for quantitative outcomes, such as changes in self-esteem scores pre- and post-intervention.

Quality Assessment:

The quality of the included studies was assessed using established tools appropriate for the study designs. For randomized controlled trials, the Cochrane Risk of Bias Tool was employed to evaluate the risk of bias across several domains, including selection bias, performance bias, detection bias, attrition bias, reporting bias, and other biases. For non-randomized studies, the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS) was utilized to assess the quality based on selection, comparability, and outcome assessment.

Each study was rated as low, moderate, or high quality based on the assessment criteria. The overall quality of evidence for the outcomes was further evaluated using the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) approach, which considers factors such as study limitations, inconsistency, indirectness, imprecision, and publication bias.

3. Results and Discussion

In this systematic review, a total of 130 studies were initially identified through the search process. After removing 62 duplicate studies, 68 studies remained and were screened for relevance based on the research topic. Following this screening, 23 studies were excluded due to not meeting the necessary criteria. The remaining 45 studies were further assessed based on inclusion criteria, resulting in a final set of 15 studies deemed suitable for inclusion in the systematic review. These studies form the basis of the analysis for the review.

Impact on Self-Esteem

A significant majority of the studies reported positive outcomes related to self-esteem following life skills training interventions. Armaou et al. (2022) found that participants in an economic empowerment and life skills training program experienced significant improvements in self-esteem and mental health functioning among AIDS-orphaned adolescents [29]. Similarly, Martinsen, K et al. (2021) reported improvements in mental health and self-esteem among orphan children in Iran who participated in a self-care-based life skills training program [27]. These findings align with existing literature suggesting that life skills training can effectively enhance self-esteem by equipping children with the tools necessary to navigate their emotional and social environments.

Effects on Mental Well-Being

In addition to self-esteem, many studies reported improvements in mental well-being among orphan children following life skills training. Mutiso et al. (2017) found that life skills education and psychoeducation had positive effects on emotional and behavioural problems, leading to enhanced self-esteem among orphan children in institutional care in Kenya [16]. The longitudinal study by Scrivano (2023) further supported these findings, indicating that life skills training and mentorship improved self-esteem and coping skills over time among participants. These results underscore the importance of addressing both self-esteem and mental well-being in interventions targeting orphan children [32].

Role of Social Support

The findings highlighted the critical role of social support in enhancing the effectiveness of life skills training interventions. Studies such as Cheung et al. (2018) demonstrated that psychosocial support interventions for orphan children in foster care led to enhanced self-esteem and coping strategies [20]. The presence of mentors provided emotional encouragement and facilitated social connections, which were essential for fostering a sense of belonging among participants. This aligns with the findings of Mutiso, V. (2017) who noted that life skills training and mentorship significantly enhanced self-esteem and reduced feelings of isolation among orphan children in urban settings [16].

The findings of this systematic review have important implications for practitioners and organizations working with orphan children. The evidence suggests that life skills training should be prioritized as a key intervention strategy to enhance self-esteem and promote mental well-being. Programs should be designed to incorporate social support mechanisms, such as peer mentoring, to foster connections among participants. Additionally, practitioners should consider the cultural backgrounds of orphaned children when designing interventions, ensuring that programs are culturally relevant and resonate with the participants' identities.

4. Conclusion

Despite the strengths of this systematic review, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The heterogeneity of the included studies in terms of intervention design, outcome measures, and participant characteristics may limit the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported measures of self-esteem and mental well-being may introduce bias, as participants may have varying levels of awareness and willingness to disclose their emotional states. Future research should aim to address these limitations by employing standardized measures and diverse methodologies.

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Conflict of Interest

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