

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF STUDENT TEACHERS

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of student teachers. Descriptive survey method and quantitative approach were used in this study. Social Emotional Learning Skills Scale and The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale were used for data collection. In former measure four subscales (communication 23 items, self-esteem 10 items, problem solving 10 items, and coping with stress 60 items) were included. To evaluate student teachers' life satisfaction, The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (five life satisfaction domains; family, school, friends, self, and living environment) was administered. The required data were collected during December 2014. Participants were 807 student teachers (280 males and 527 females, 392 from Yangon University of Education and 415 from Sagaing University of Education). The result of t-test revealed that there was no significant difference in student teachers' social emotional learning skills by gender and university. Life satisfaction of student teachers from fourth year second semester was higher than that of student teachers from fourth year first semester at 0.01 level. The communication skill was negatively correlated with self-esteem and problem solving but positively correlated with coping with stress and life satisfaction. And then coping with stress was positively correlated with life satisfaction. The findings of this study showed that class level, social emotional learning skills, self-esteem enhancing skills, communication and coping with stress skills were predictors for life satisfaction, but problem solving skills did not predict the life satisfaction.

Key words: Social Emotional Learning Skills, Life Satisfaction, Student Teacher

Introduction

In Myanmar, the process of education is concerned with the major stakeholders; parents, teachers and students. The roles of parents, teachers, and students are needed to be considered for promoting nation's education. The function of teachers is essential, as they have to inculcate important values in future generations and ensure the holistic development of their students. The best teachers strive continuously to develop their students

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respect for other races, other cultures, other religions, other conventions, other traditions and other points of view. They are aware of the moral or conventional nature of social values that are to be employed in character education and values (Han Tin, 2004). Thus, the training of pre-service teachers should also include the pursuit of moral, intellectual and aesthetic virtues and their acquisition, the quality of life and the perception of life goals. Social and emotional learning skills are important to determine the quality of life for all ages. People with strong social and emotional skills are more successful in many areas such as solving social problems, establishing interpersonal relationships, having self-knowledge and self-understanding. Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) wrote, "the potential effects of social emotional learning are divided into two groups". The primary effects are; academic achievement, motivating learning, increasing the interest in and commitment to the school, decreasing the possibility of expulsion from the school, graduating with a higher degree and increasing the possibility of finding a job. Secondary effects can be seen in the areas like expectation of greater competence, increased cooperation with others, developed social and problem-solving skills, community cohesion and increased healthy life expectations, less drug and violence usage and improved family relations. According to these facts, investigating the social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of student teachers became a necessary component for planning prevention programs for them. This research, therefore, conducted with the primary purpose to fulfill the necessities of previous researches. An overall evaluation of life involves all relevant criteria in the mind of the individual: for example, how good one feels, how well expectations are likely to be met and how describe various factors are deemed to be, etc.

Social and emotional learning skill (SEL) is the capacity to recognize and manage emotions solves problems effectively and establishes positive relationships with others, competencies that clearly are essential for all students. Thus, Social and emotional learning targets a combination of behaviors, cognitions, and emotions (Joseph E. Zins & Maurice J. Elias, 1997). In today's society, people face countless situations that can have a negative effect on their social-emotional and academic development and ultimately on their happiness in life. Social and emotional learning has positive effects on academic performance, benefits physical health, improves citizenship, is demanded by employers, is essential for lifelong

success and reduces the risk of maladjustment, failed relationships, interpersonal violence, substance abuse and unhappiness (Elias et al., 1997; Zins, Weissberg et al., 2004).

Life includes the desire to change the life satisfaction from the past and the future and comments about a person's life by that person's relatives (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Life satisfaction is multidimensional in that one can examine satisfaction with school, friends and family relationships, among other domains (Gilman & Huebner, 2003). As Zhang and Leung (2002) stated that "self-esteem is an important variable in addition to demographic characteristics, social relationships, personality and coping skills for explanation of life satisfaction". The relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction has been demonstrated in many research (Campbell, 1981; Diener&Diener, 1995).

Self-esteem of a person reflects the perceptions and evaluations about oneself but the life satisfaction includes the person's evaluation of whole life (Diener&Diener, 1995). Self-esteem is one of the important dimensions of being sufficient in social and emotional aspect and corresponds to the social and emotional learning skills that increase self-esteem enhancing skills.

Social and emotional learning is defined as gaining skills like recognizing and managing emotions, dealing with the other people and being responsible, building positive relationships, giving responsible decision, managing the difficult situations. In particular, social emotional learning ability known as coding, translating the social and emotional information and putting them into logical framework is related to children's social behavior. These critical social-emotional competencies involve skills that enable children to calm themselves when angry, initiate friendships and resolve conflicts respectfully, make ethical and safe choices and contribute constructively to their community (Zins & Elias, 2006).

Methodology

This study utilized a survey method to examine whether student teachers' life satisfaction and social emotional learning skills show differences with regard to gender, class level and university. Quantitative methodology was mainly used in this study. Both student teachers' life satisfaction and social emotional learning skills were assessed by using questionnaire survey method.

Sample

The sample of this study consisted of the 807 fourth year student teachers at Yangon University of Education (YUOE) and Sagaing University of Education (SUOE). Out of the subjects, 34.7% (N=280) of subjects were male and 65.3% (N=527) were female student teachers. The randomly selected 42.4% of the subjects (N=342) are attending the fourth year first semester course while the remaining students 57.6% (N=465) are from the fourth year second semester course.

Instrumentation

The study used the Social Emotional Learning Skills Scale (SELSS) (KabaKci, Korkut&Qwen, 2010) as well as instrument that assessed student teachers' life satisfaction with The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) (Huebner, Suldo, Valois, Drane, &Zullig, 2004).

Social Emotional Learning Skills Scale (SELSS). Social Emotional Learning Skills were measured by using the Social Emotional Learning Skills Scale (SELSS) (KabaKci, Korkut,&Qwen, 2010). This measure consists of 103 items divided into four subscales (a) communication (23 items), (b) self-esteem (10 items), (c) problem solving (10 items) and (d) coping with stress (60 items). Reliability coefficients were 0.88 for the total scale, 0.81 for problem solving, 0.87 for communication, 0.80 for self-esteem and 0.84 for coping with stress and they vary between 0.80-0.87 for the subscales.

The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS). In this study, to evaluate student teachers' life satisfaction, The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) adopted by Slyz and Kaya (2008) was used. The BMSLSS (Huebner, Suldo, Valois,Drane, &Zullig, 2004) consisted of the five life satisfaction domains (i.e., family, school, friends, self, and living environment). Cronbach Alpha coefficient of Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale calculated in this study is 0.85.

Procedure

The current study explored the social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of student teachers. This study was conducted with two instruments (SELSS and BMSLSS). The required data were collected from Yangon University of Education in December 2014. Respondents used 4 point Likert-type scale and 5 point Likert-type scale to rate each statement in both questionnaires. The data collection at Sagaing University of Education was

held in the 2nd week of January 2015. After collecting the required data, data analysis process was conducted.

Data Analysis and Results

In order to test whether student teachers are different in social emotional learning skills by class level, descriptive analysis was conducted.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills by Class Level

Variables	Class level	N	Mean %	SD
Communication	Fourth (first)	342	70.25	10.71
	Fourth (second)	465	72.02	9.70
Self-esteem	Fourth (first)	342	39.69	8.76
	Fourth (second)	465	40.34	8.88
Problem Solving	Fourth (first)	342	43.64	7.67
	Fourth (second)	465	42.79	8.47
Coping with Stress	Fourth (first)	342	66.19	6.64
	Fourth (second)	465	67.01	6.53
Social Emotional Learning Skills	Fourth (first)	342	63.39	5.42
	Fourth (second)	465	64.29	5.33

Note: Fourth (first) = Fourth Year (first semester), Fourth (second) = Fourth Year (second semester)

According to table 1, it was observed that the mean percentage of fourth year (second semester) student teachers' social emotional learning skills were higher than that of fourth year (first semester) student teachers.

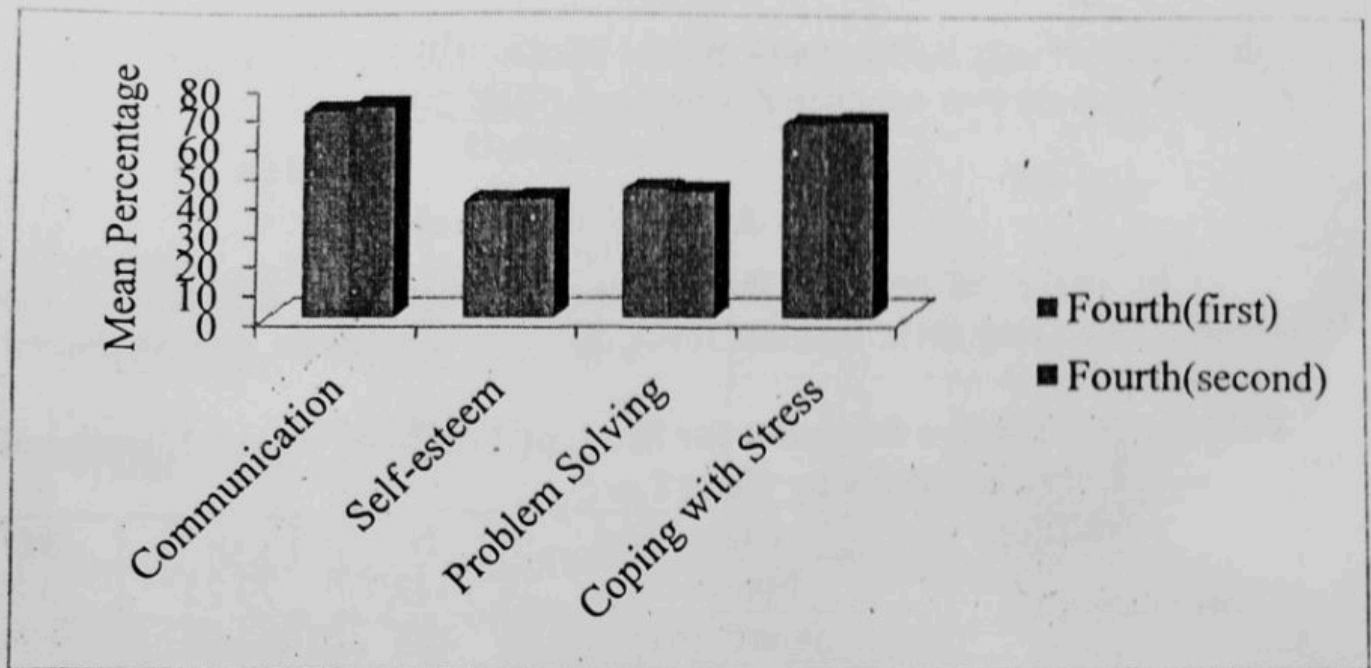


Figure 1 Mean Percentage Comparisons for Each Subscales of Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills by Class Level

The differences in mean percentages can be seen the above figure 1. Again, the independent sample *t*-test was used to examine whether these differences were significant or not.

Table 2 Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills by Class Level

Variables	<i>t</i>	df	P	Mean Difference
Communication	-2.403*	691.496	.017	-1.762
Self-esteem	-1.045	740.370	.296	-.655
Problem Solving	1.483	771.042	.139	.847
Coping with Stress	-1.734	727.706	.083	-.816
Social Emotional Learning Skills	-2.343*	728.379	.019	-.898

Note: * $p < 0.05$

According to the results of table 2, there was significant difference in student teachers' social emotional learning skills by class level at 0.05 level. So, it can be interpreted that student teachers' social emotional learning skills were increased by class level. Furthermore, the communication skills were significantly different at 0.05 levels. So, the communication skills of student teachers were also increased by class level.

In order to test whether student teachers are different in social emotional learning skills by university, descriptive analysis was conducted.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills by University

Variables	University of Education	N	Mean%	SD
Communication	Yangon	392	71.94	10.51
	Sagaing	415	70.64	9.81
Self-esteem	Yangon	392	40.38	9.04
	Sagaing	415	39.77	8.63
Problem Solving	Yangon	392	43.24	8.93
	Sagaing	415	43.06	7.33
Coping with Stress	Yangon	392	66.04	6.33
	Sagaing	415	67.25	6.79
Social Emotional Learning Skills	Yangon	392	63.72	5.39
	Sagaing	415	64.09	5.38

Note: SD = Standard Deviation, Mean% = Mean Percentage

According to table 3, it was observed that the mean percentages of social emotional learning skills of student teachers from Yangon University of Education and Sagaing University of Education were not obviously different between them. However, the mean percentages of student teachers' communication, self-esteem, and problem solving skills from Yangon University of Education were slightly higher than those of student teachers from Sagaing University of Education. But the mean percentage of student teachers' coping with stress from Sagaing University of Education was higher than that of student teachers from Yangon University of Education (see Figure 2).

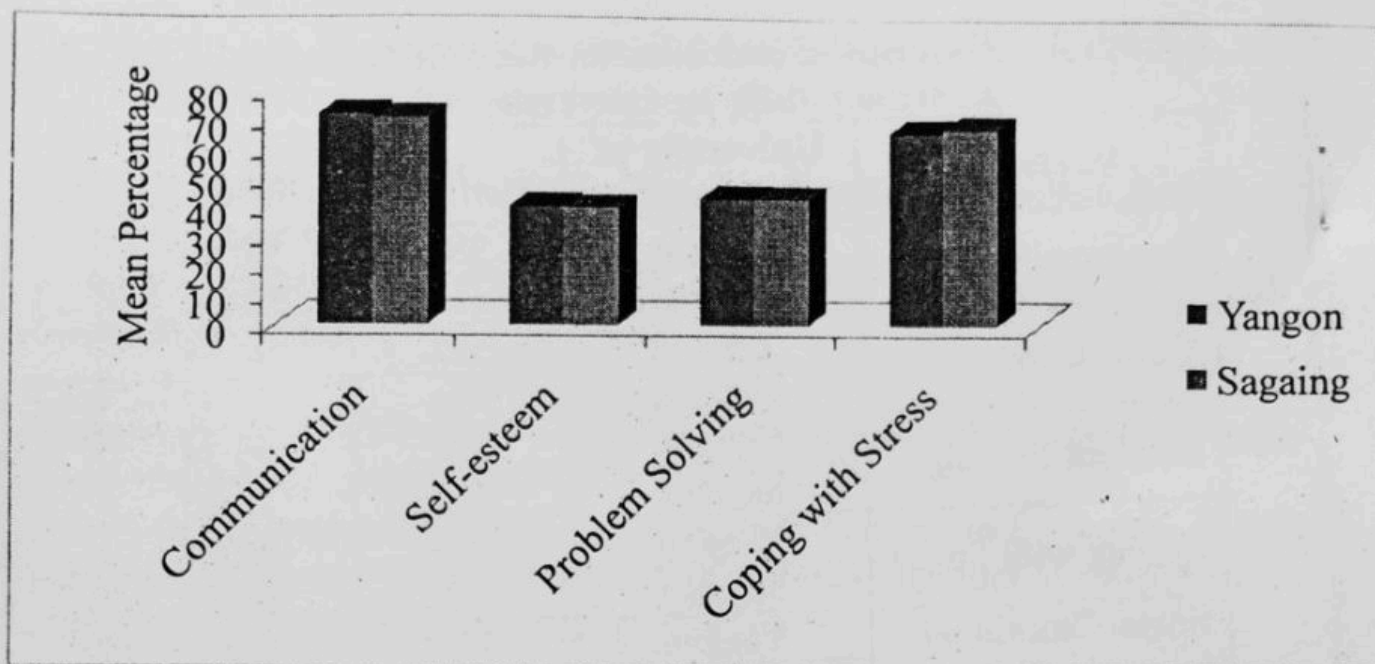


Figure 2 Mean Percentage Comparisons for Each Subscale of Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills by University

The differences of mean percentages can be seen in the above figure 2. Again, the independent sample *t*-test was used to examine whether these differences were significant or not.

Table 4. Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills by University

Variables	<i>t</i>	df	P	Mean Difference
Communication	1.813	792.497	.070	1.299
Self-esteem	.988	796.541	.323	.615
Problem Solving	.311	757.470	.756	.179
Coping with Stress	-2.612**	804.857	.009	-1.206
Social Emotional Learning Skills	-.982	802.176	.326	-.372

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

According to the results of table 4, there was no significant difference in student teachers' social emotional learning skills by university. But the subscale of coping with stress was significantly different at 0.01 level. Student teachers from Yangon University of Education were not significantly different with student teachers from Sagaing University of Education in communication, self-esteem, and problem solving skills. But student teachers from Sagaing University of Education were better than student teachers from Yangon University of Education on coping with stress.

To find out the difference between student teachers' life satisfaction by class level, descriptive analysis was made. The mean scores of student

teachers (fourth year first semester and fourth year second semester) for life satisfaction were reported in table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Student Teachers' Life Satisfaction by Class Level

Variable	Class Level	N	Mean	SD
Life Satisfaction	Fourth(first)	342	79.19	11.30
	Fourth (second)	465	81.41	10.96

Note: Fourth (first) = Fourth Year (first semester), Fourth (second) = Fourth Year (second semester)

According to table 5, it was observed that the mean score of student teachers (fourth year second semester) was higher than that of student teachers (fourth year first semester) in life satisfaction.

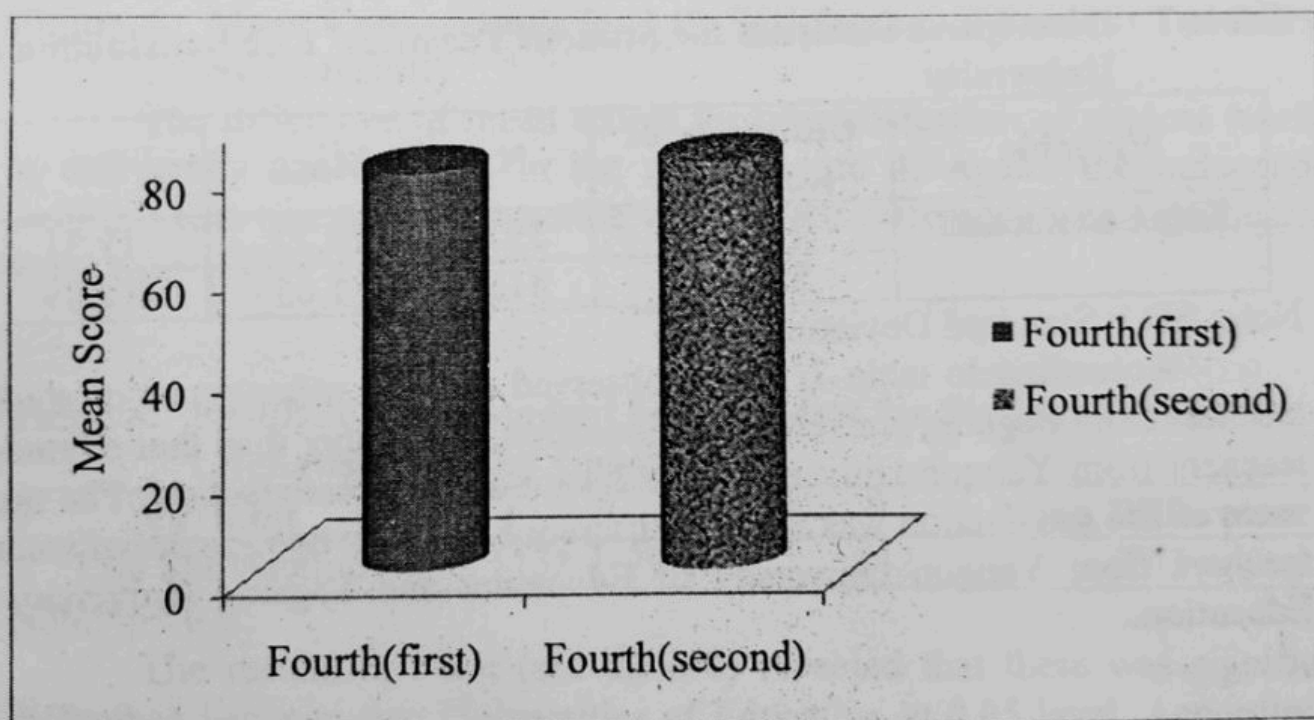


Figure 3. Mean Comparisons for Life Satisfaction of Student Teachers by Class Level

The difference of mean in life satisfaction of student teachers by class level can be seen in the above figure 3. Again, the independent sample *t*-test was used to examine whether the difference was significant or not.

Table 6. Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Student Teachers' Life Satisfaction by Class Level

Variable	<i>t</i>	df	P	Mean Difference
Life Satisfaction	-2.794**	721.942	.005	-2.221

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

The results of *t*-test (see table 6) showed that life satisfaction was significantly different between two class levels. So, it can be interpreted that life satisfaction of student teachers differed by class level. According to this result, life satisfaction increased with increasing class level.

To find out the difference between student teachers' life satisfaction by university, descriptive analysis was made. The mean scores of student teachers from Yangon University of Education and Sagaing University of Education were reported in table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Student Teachers' Life Satisfaction by University

Variable	University of Education	N	Mean	SD
Life Satisfaction	Yangon	392	79.22	11.31
	Sagaing	415	81.65	10.89

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

According to table 7, it was observed that the mean score of student teachers from Sagaing University of Education was higher than that of student teachers from Yangon University of Education in life satisfaction. The mean score of life satisfaction was slightly difference between two groups of student teachers from Yangon University of Education and Sagaing University of Education.

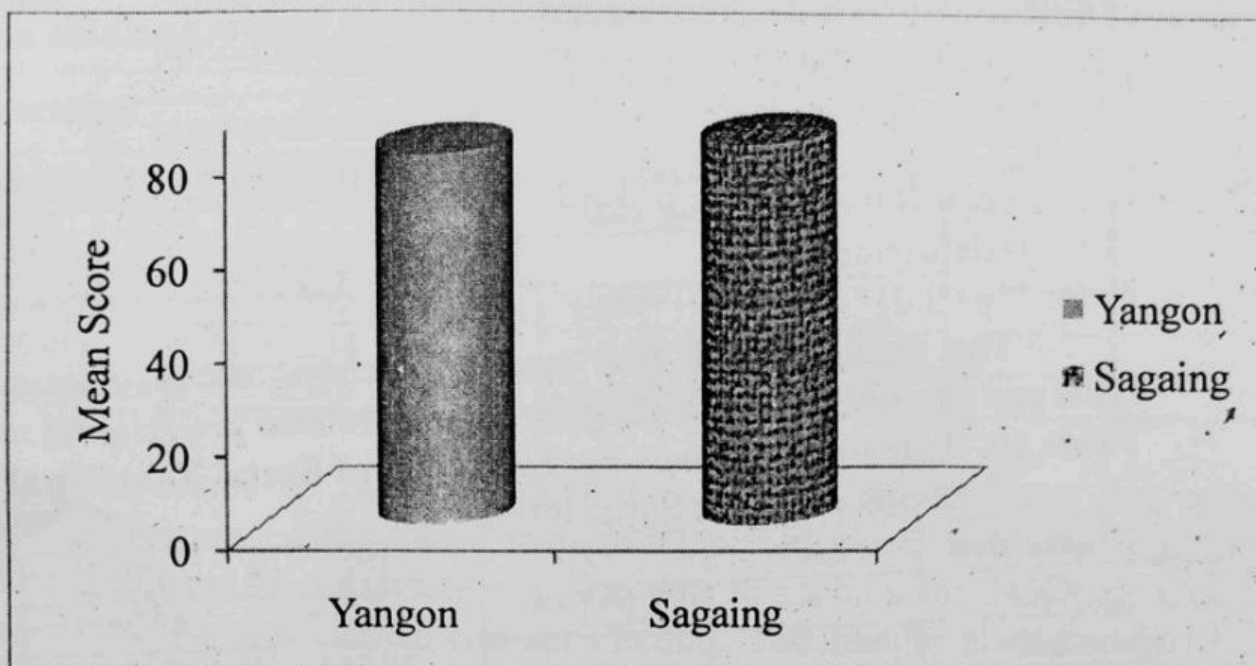


Figure 4. Mean Comparisons for Life Satisfaction of Student Teachers' by University

The difference of mean scores for life satisfaction of student teachers by university can be seen in the above figure 4. Again, the independent sample *t*-test was used to examine whether the difference was significant or not.

Table 8. Results of Independent Sample *t*-test for Student Teachers' LifeSatisfaction by University

Variable	<i>t</i>	df	P	Mean Difference
Life Satisfaction	-3.115*	797.825	.002	-2.43

Note:* $p < 0.05$

The results of *t*-test (see table 8) revealed that there was significant difference between two Universities of Education at 0.05 level. According to this research, the life satisfaction of student teachers from Sagaing University of Education was significantly higher than the life satisfaction of student teachers from Yangon University of Education. So, it can be interpreted that the life satisfaction of student teachers was differed by university.

Then, the following table 9 presented the correlations between the social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of student teachers.

Table 9. Correlations for Social Emotional Learning Skills and Life Satisfaction

Variables	Social emotional learning skills	Life satisfaction
Social emotional learning skills	-	.445**
Life satisfaction	.445**	-

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

The result showed that student teachers' social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction are highly inter-correlated at 0.01 level.

Table 10. Inter-correlations for Subscales of Social Emotional Learning Skills and Life Satisfaction

Variables	CO	SE	PS	CS	LS
CO	-	-.231**	-.165**	.437**	.375**
SE		-	.385**	-.140**	-.200**
PS			-	-.119**	-.157**
CS					.429**
LS					-

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

Note: **CO** = Communication, **SE** = Self-esteem, **PS** = Problem Solving, **CS** = Coping with Stress and **LS** = Life Satisfaction

Table 10 showed that all the subscales in social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction are highly correlated with one another. The communication skill was negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -0.231$, $P < 0.01$) and problem solving ($r = -0.165$, $P < 0.01$) but positively correlated with coping with stress ($r = 0.437$, $P < 0.01$) and life satisfaction ($r = 0.375$, $P < 0.01$). Self-esteem skill was positively correlated with problem solving ($r = 0.385$, $P < 0.01$) but negatively correlated with coping with stress ($r = -0.140$, $P < 0.01$) and life satisfaction ($r = -0.200$, $P < 0.01$). Furthermore, problem solving was negatively correlated with coping with stress ($r = -0.119$, $P < 0.01$) and life satisfaction ($r = -0.157$, $P < 0.01$). And then, coping with stress was positively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = 0.429$, $P < 0.01$). Obtained correlation coefficients show that the relationship between variables can be tested by multiple regression analysis.

Table 11. Multiple Regression Analysis Summary for Student Teachers' Social Emotional Learning Skills and Life Satisfaction

Variables	B	β	t	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F
Life Satisfaction	33.102		7.711***	.488	.238	.235	83.639***
Predictor Variables							
Communication	0.230	0.210	6.008***				
Self-esteem	-0.134	-0.106	-3.349***				
Coping with stress	0.545	0.322	9.403***				

Note: ***p<0.001

The result of multiple regression analysis pointed out that social emotional learning skills factor made a significant predictive contribution to student teachers' life satisfaction. It was able to account for 24% (adjusted R-squared) of the variance in life satisfaction. The results also clarified how social emotional learning skills factors were associated with student teachers' life satisfaction.

Among the social emotional learning skills factors, communication, self-esteem and coping with stress were significant predictors of student teachers' life satisfaction. Student teachers' coping with stress was found the strongest predictor of life satisfaction. Second strongest was communication skill. The negative coefficient value of self-esteem (-0.134) did not show a weak relation with life satisfaction. The coefficient value indicates that if the student teachers' self-esteem was low, their life satisfaction increased by 0.134 units. When the student teachers' self-esteem high, their life satisfaction decreased by 0.134 units. So, it can be interpreted that student teachers who perceived that their communication and coping with stress are well-organized and also their teachers and peers are encouraging, helping, and good relationship with them were likely to engage their academic and class activities. Moreover, student teachers may be encouraged to participate in individual or group counseling where they can learn coping with stress. Self-esteem is negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Then, the model can be defined as in the following equation:

$$LS = 33.102 + 0.230CO - 0.134SE + 0.545CS$$

Note: LS = Life Satisfaction

CO = Communication

SE = Self-esteem

CS = Coping with Stress

Based on the findings of multiple regression analysis, a diagram was drawn by describing how social emotional learning skills factors affect student teachers' life satisfaction (see Figure 5).

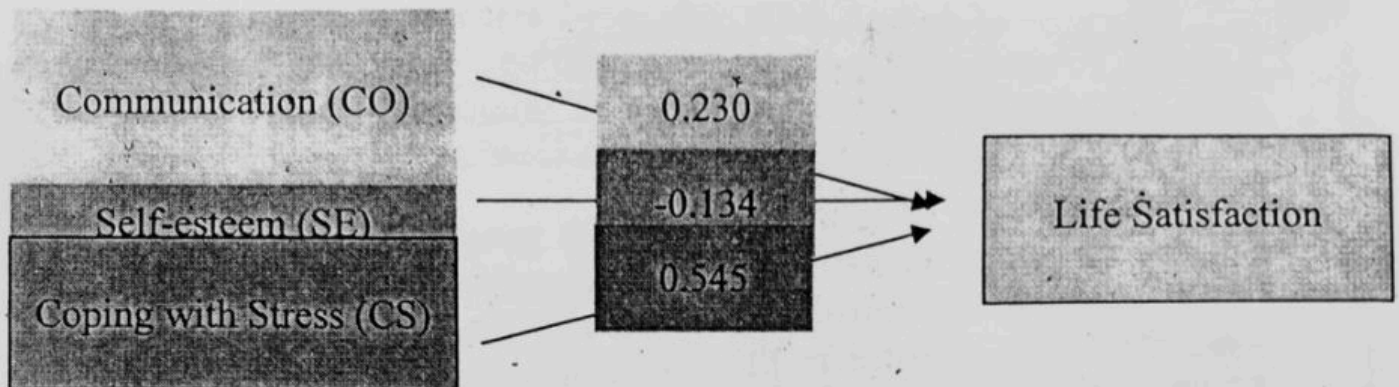


Figure 5. Predictor Powers of Social Emotional Learning Skills on Life Satisfaction

Concerning with student teachers' social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction, correlation coefficient between social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction was 0.445 at the 0.01 level. It means that student teachers' social emotional learning skills had medium effect on student teachers' life satisfaction. This finding supports the previous literature that coping with stress may positive factors in life satisfaction that can control urges which trigger destructive behaviors (DuPont 1990, cited in BALTACI, 2013).

Conclusion, Suggestion and Recommendation

Concerning with student teachers' social emotional learning and life satisfaction, the correlation coefficients between social emotional learning and life satisfaction was 0.445 at the 0.01 level. It means that student teachers' social emotional learning had medium effect on student teachers' life satisfaction. This finding supported the previous literature that coping with stress is correlated with positive factors in life satisfaction that can control urges which trigger destructive behaviors.

The results of the t-test showed that there was no significant difference in student teachers' social emotional learning skills by gender. This may be due to the fact that the same level of social emotional learning skills between the group of male and female. Student teachers from Yangon University of Education were better than student teachers from Sagaing University of

Education on communication, self-esteem and problem solving but coping with stress of student teachers from Sagaing University of Education were better than that of student teachers from Yangon University of Education. However significant difference was found in social emotional learning and life satisfaction by class level.

In this study, no significant difference was found in the life satisfaction levels of student teachers by gender. This finding is consistent with other studies reporting a no significant difference between children's and teenagers' life satisfactions depending on gender (Huebner, 1991). With this, it can be concluded that gender is not a significant variable to explain student teachers' life satisfaction.

Another result of this study showed that student teachers' life satisfaction varies by class level. The fourth year (second semester) of student teachers' life satisfaction was higher than the fourth year (first semester) of student teachers' life satisfaction. The findings of this study shows that class level, social emotional learning skills, self-esteem enhancing skills communication and coping with stress skills were predictors for life satisfaction, but problem solving skills did not predict the life satisfaction. Variable that contributed most to the prediction of life satisfaction is self-esteem enhancing skills which are a sub-dimension of social emotional learning skills. This result agrees with many researches demonstrating that the most important predictor of life satisfaction is self-esteem (Cecen 2008, Gilman and Huebner, 2006; Huebner, 1991; Huebner, et al., 1999, Huebner & Gilman, 2006).

The first limitation concerns with this study is that the researcher conducted a cross-sectional study using data at one point in time rather than a longitudinal study due to the available time. As such, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the possible changing relations between different dimensions of social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of student teachers.

The next limitation concerns the generalisability of finding. Data examined in this study were collected student teachers from Yangon and Sagaing University of Education. Although results indicated that student teachers' communication, self-esteem and coping with stress were significant predictors for these particular groups, the same result may not apply to student teachers or students from diverse university, college, or school and other grade level, further study is needed to examine other grade level, school, university or college in the social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction.

Next, the sample was relatively small different with effects based on two class level. Future research should attempt to carry out on social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of student teachers (first year to final year) from Universities of Education. Moreover, it is also required to do research on social emotional learning skills and life satisfaction of students from basic education and other universities or colleges. It should need to extend the scope of this research to examine more factors. In some cases, there is likely to be a complex inter-relationship between an apparent risk factor and well being. For instance, student-teacher conflict may be a result of student behavioral problems, as well as contributing to such problems; and behavioral problems may be a barrier to school adjustment, as well as a consequence of finding school work difficult and disliking school. For this reason, further studies should develop psycho-educational program about social emotional learning skills.

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