

Exploration of Life Skills of Teacher Prospective Students: What is it and how is the situation

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ABSTRACT. This study aims to explore what life skills are possessed by prospective teacher students and what the conditions of these life skills are. The research method uses qualitative research with the type of descriptive research. Data were collected utilizing interviews, observations, and documentation related to the life skills of prospective teacher students. The research was conducted on student-teacher candidates in Jambi. The results showed prospective teacher students possessed the dimensions of life skills: self-awareness, personal skills, rational thinking, social skills, academic skills, and vocational skills. The state of life skills possessed by prospective teacher students differs from each dimension of life skills. The condition of his life skills is already very good, good, quite good, and not good. This finding concludes that there is a potential for the development of life skills for prospective teacher students so that they can bring up plans for developing life skills for prospective teacher students. Life skills are essential for students because they enable them to change knowledge, attitudes, and values into actual abilities.

Keywords: *Life skills, teacher prospective students*



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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st Century, the industry has evolved towards Era 4.0. To support the learning process in Era 4.0, teachers must have skills in utilizing digital technology and ensure students are skilled in learning and innovating, able to work and survive by utilizing the life skills possessed by students. Currently, life skills needed in the 21st Century emphasize individual competencies to successfully meet the complex demands of life (Buchert, 2014). In achieving quality learning in the 4.0 era, it is necessary to assume that teachers or prospective teachers in training have qualifications in digital technology and life skills. Teachers must have life skills in the form of having the ability, skills, and courage to face life independently, creatively, and innovatively and solve problems (Afandi & Rocmah, 2015). The essence of life skills is a person's ability to accept himself and his potential in life, including goal setting, problem-solving, and even living with other people (Sumantri, 2007). Life skills as the ability to adopt adaptive and positive behavior that effectively enables a person to cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. For students to lead successful and healthy lives, they need a variety of life skills (Mossman & Cronin, 2019).

Life skills are essential for someone, especially students because life skills make a person or student able to change knowledge, attitudes, and values into actual abilities (WHO, 2019). That is, in a specific situation, the individual knows what to do and how he can cope with the situation. Life skills effectively increase happiness, quality of life, and emotional regulation (Haji *et al.*, 2011).



Life skills can be directed towards personal actions or actions against others, as well as actions to change the surrounding environment so that it is conducive to a healthy and happy life. Life skills are needed to create demands and effectively use existing education, health, and other services (Singh, 2015). Life skills must be transferable across life domains (*e.g.*, schoolwork, home life, and relationships) to be considered life skills (Cronin *et al.*, 2020). Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, especially the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (in Indonesian = FTK), prepares qualified, independent, and professional teacher candidates. To realize these achievements, FTK continues to encourage lecturers to carry out a learning process that provides quality and independent students. By continuing to promote life skills-based learning. Based on the results of observations, FTK lecturers have implemented much learning in which the learning outcomes of prospective teacher students have the knowledge and skills to become teachers. Implicitly, when lecturers use active learning models such as debate, Problem Based Learning (PBL), Project Based Learning (PjBL), or discovery in the lecture process, students are equipped with life skills oriented towards gratitude for their potential. This potential is developed so that they can solve problems effectively, naturally, and creatively. Students who are involved in PBL will be identified as having life skills such as flexibility, organization, self-control, time management, and metacognition (Wurdinger & Rudolph, 2009).

Working in groups, discussing experiences, quizzes, debates, writing essays, stories, and poetry, and making posters and even performances with puppets can convey life skills (Normawati, 2016). In line with what Asmani stated, the education system's success is measured by the ability of graduates to use the results of their education throughout their lives. Therefore, education must be able to instill life skills into its graduates (Alfa, 2016). In addition, the lecture period is the right time for students to acquire new things, such as language and social roles, and is crucial in shaping life skills (Mofrad, 2013). Pascarella and Terenzi, 2005 stated that college is a time for students to explore and develop psychosocial strengths such as self-awareness, interpersonal communication skills, ethics, and health and well-being. Colleges should be more than just developing academic skills and should focus on teaching essential life skills such as creativity and problem-solving that will help students become successful members of society after they graduate (Wurdinger & Qureshi, 2015).

However, it is still found that prospective teacher students at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi have problems related to the life skills that students should have. Regarding problem-solving abilities, students still cannot manage time well, causing delays in completing assignments (for example, in completing a thesis). Furthermore, judging from the fourth dimension, especially the indicators of moral choice, some students are still doing academic cheating; this is evidenced by the high level of plagiarism in thesis writing. Furthermore, one of the root causes of the increasing unemployment rate is supported by the number of college graduates who do not work due to the lack of skills or life skills possessed by youth (Juhji *et al.*, 2019). Various studies have been conducted on life skills, including Jones and Lavalley. They studied exploring the life skills of adolescent athletes in England (Jones & Lavalley, 2009), Yokhebed *et al.*, that life skills can be improved through local wisdom-based learning (Yokhebed, 2016). Wistiawati *et al.* studied the relationship between social cognition and life skills (Wistiawati *et al.*, 2020). As a result, life skill interventions may not accurately reflect the needs of prospective teacher students, especially FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi students. Therefore, it is necessary to examine life skills to understand prospective teachers' current needs better, and it can be used as a reference for further research in developing the potential life skills of prospective teacher students. This research aims to describe what life skills are owned by prospective teacher students and what prospective teacher students' life skills are.

METHOD

Qualitative is the method that will be carried out in this research with descriptive research. A descriptive approach is used to describe the life skills of prospective teachers of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah or Elementary Schools with five measurements of life skills indicators. A description of the life skills possessed by prospective teacher students is taken through observations, interviews, and the results of data/document analysis. Data mining in the form of views from information is the first thing done in research. Observations are carried out directly on the research subject. The main instrument in the study is the researcher himself, while the supporting instrument is an interview guide. While interviews were conducted with research informants, in this case, prospective teachers and lecturers at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Interviews were structured according to the interview guidelines, which contained questions according to the indicators of the life skills dimension. The Life skills dimension is adapted from research conducted by Normawati (2016), namely self-awareness, rational thinking, social, academic, and vocational skills.

Data analysis was carried out with descriptive qualitative referring to the research design by Miles et al. covering data collection, data presentation, data reduction, and concluding. Explanations of these components include (1) data collection. Data were collected by interview, observation, and documentation. (2) Data reduction. The data collected is then reduced by summarizing, selecting, and focusing on data that is by the research objectives. (3) Presentation of data. The data is presented after getting the data from the reduction or summary results, then presented in descriptions and tables. (4) Conclusion. Conclusions are obtained from the data that has been reduced and presented (Sulistyaningrum et al., 2019). The research was held at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, with the research subjects being 22 students from FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi from various study programs at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. The research was conducted for three months, from July 2022 to September 2022.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on the results of interviews and observations on the dimensions of life skills possessed by prospective teacher students at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi, such as the dimensions of self-awareness, personal skills, rational thinking personal skills, social skills, academic skills, and vocational skills. Students with self-awareness and personal skills are aware of being servants of God, social beings, and creatures in the student environment, always showing grateful actions and not arrogant. Students are capable of seeing their physical and psychological potential and weaknesses, and they are also confident in their abilities and appear confident. According to the results of the interview with informant one regarding personal skills, self-awareness stated: *"I am grateful for the blessings given to me, by always saying the lafaz alhamdulillah, and I do not forget to carry out his orders and stay away from His prohibitions. I am aware that I am a servant of Allah SWT, and I have a personality that is shy, easy to get along with, confident, seeks distant experiences, and is not arrogant."*

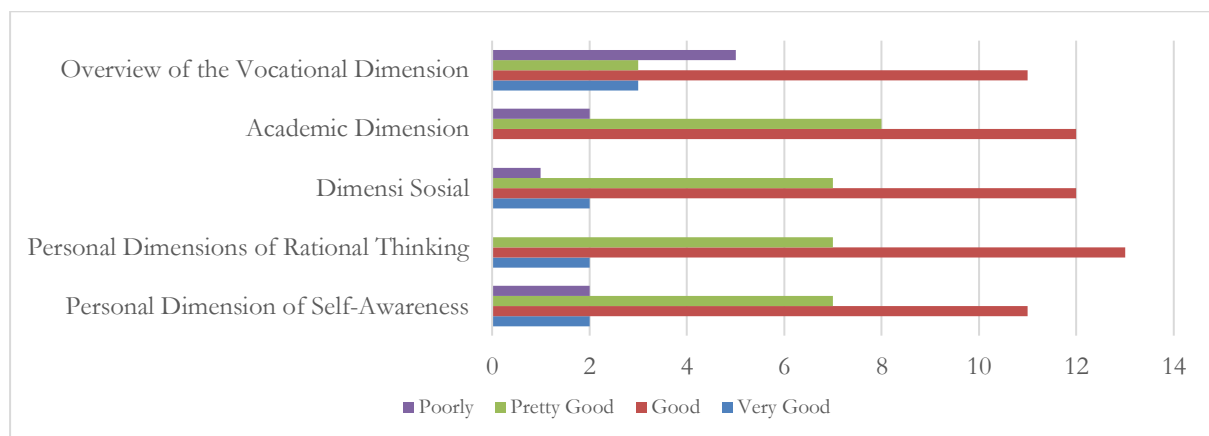
Students with personal skills of rational thinking show that students are proficient in recognizing the information received, digging and processing information, capable of taking and making decisions, and solving problems wisely and creatively. Furthermore, it was also found that students could face problems and solve problems by coming up with creative ideas to solve them. The results of the second informant interview with the question of how he can make the right decision every time he faces a problem and give an example. Mentions that:

"When I have a problem. The thing that I consider is more urgency which is, is it useful. For example, when friends are invited to hang out and I am in college, I will finish the course first."

Students with social skills are proficient in communicating orally and in writing, managing conflict, and controlling emotions, and are responsible and contribute if there are activities. The next question is how they dig up information in completing their tasks or work, then process it. The third informant answered: *"I dig for information to complete the same task or job I have through my comrades in arms, the library and the web. God willing, I can manage information well, namely by: Collecting information, Sorting information, Storing information, Retrieving it for processing and communicating it."*

In academic skills, students can identify variables, explain the relationship between variables, express phenomena, formulate hypotheses and designs, and conduct research. One of the informants stated: *"I am a 7th semester student, I am able to design and conduct research assigned to me, I am able to uncover phenomena that occur around me."*

Students who possess vocational skills show proficiency in certain occupations, such as workshops, farming, and sewing. In addition, they can also create and manufacture products, such as processing waste into animal feed products, making art and music salons, and becoming entrepreneurs in the culinary fields, mobile phones, and online businesses. As stated by one of the informants, related to vocational skills: *"I can produce products from processed food waste materials, this product can be used as animal feed and I have presented this in an innovation work competition at the student level and now I am also running an entrepreneur in the service sector."*



Picture 1. Overview of the Life Skills of Prospective Teacher Students

Based on Figure 1 above, there are two students whose personal awareness skills are on a poor scale, and seven respondents have self-awareness skills on a poor scale. The dimensions of rational thinking and personal skills were obtained by seven students who were on a reasonably good scale. Furthermore, 13 students had rational thinking personals on a good scale and only two on an excellent scale. In the social dimension, there is still one student on a lousy scale, seven students on a reasonably good scale, 12 people on a good scale, and only two on an excellent scale. The academic dimension was found to be one on a poor scale, eight on a reasonably good scale, and 13 on a good scale. For the vocational dimension, there were four students on a poor scale, three on a reasonably good scale, 11 on a good scale, and only four on an excellent scale.

Discussion

Life skills mean the everyday skills people need to live liberated lives and the skills they need to relate to others. In paying attention to skill learning, we must remember the vital role life skills play and that we develop them in everyone. *Life skills* are not related to specific intellectual or vocational disciplines but describe essential competencies to maintain a satisfying and independent existence (Dhingra & Chauha, 2017). Life skills make it possible to measure and measure and adjust based on developments to meet specific needs (Kadish *et al.*, 2001). The prospective teacher students' life skills at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi include the dimensions of self-awareness, personal, rational thinking, social, academic, and vocational skills. The

distribution of data from the 2-dimensional image of personal self-awareness shows that there are still students who are not aware of and grateful for their advantages and disadvantages.

Furthermore, students whose acquisition of life skills is good and very good show that they are aware of and grateful for what they have and make it their capital to become human beings who benefit themselves and their environment. Self-awareness includes one's recognition of oneself, one's character, one's strengths, and weaknesses, and one's desires and dislikes. Students who have self-awareness skills help students understand their self-worth and build their confidence to face life boldly. It also enables students to identify their weaknesses or negative personality traits and improve themselves (Assistant Professor, School of Counseling Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, 600042. *et al.*, 2014). In addition, personal self-awareness is practical and valuable for increasing adaptability (Manee *et al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, seven students are on a reasonably good scale from the distribution of image data 2 Dimensions of personal rational thinking skills obtained. For students who are on a reasonably good scale, students are still not proficient in processing information appropriately. They are not yet capable of generating new ideas for problem-solving. Furthermore, 13 students have personal rational thinking on a good scale, and only two on an excellent scale. The distribution of students on this sound and the excellent scale shows that students are proficient in digging up information, capable of processing that information into good information, and capable of critical thinking and generating new ideas in solving problems. It means that student-teacher candidates respond flexibly to life's challenges. It allows him to explore the possible alternatives and assess the consequences. These skills help with problem-solving and decision-making (Assistant Professor, School of Counseling Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, 600042. *et al.*, 2014). If students can deal with problems positively, they are less likely to become victims of social or personal crimes (Dhingra & Chauhan, 2017). Based on the distribution of data on the acquisition of the dimensions of social skills, there were no students on a poor scale. That is, the average student-teacher candidate already has student skills in social skills such as communicating, listening, conveying ideas, and using polite words.

Furthermore, students are also proficient in conducting discussions and collaborating in small and large groups or organizations. By working together, students can overcome obstacles, act responsibly, trust others and make decisions. Social skills enable each individual to interact with others successfully (Behroz-Sarcheshmeh *et al.*, 2017). Students with social skills can train to ask for advice and help from others when needed.

Furthermore, relating to other people is an important life skill and one of the most basic forms of human intelligence. It is referred to as people skill, which provides warmth, caring, support, and collaboration that gives joy in life and the potential for personal happiness and fulfillment. It teaches a student to relate to others positively. It also helps him develop the ability to end relationships constructively (Assistant Professor, School of Counseling Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, 600042. *et al.*, 2014). Social skills are necessary for students to initiate and maintain positive social relationships with peers, teachers, family, and other community members (Kolb & Hanley-Maxwell, 2003); individual and social skills have been introduced as factors to improve social relationships (Vernosfaderani, 2014)

The distribution of data from Figure 1 on the academic dimension shows that there are still students who are not proficient in explaining variable relationships and revealing certain phenomena and are not even proficient in designing and carrying out research; this requires training or habituation both in learning and outside learning. Furthermore, students on a good scale have shown that they are qualified for their academic dimensions in terms of academic skills, capital to become teachers, and proficiency in conducting research. Students who have academic skills show that students have critical thinking skills. Critical Thinking Critical Thinking is defined as logical Thinking and reasoning, including skills such as comparison and classification; Critical Thinking is a way of

thinking about any subject, content, or problem in which the thinker improves the quality of his Thinking by skillfully taking the structural changes inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards on them. Skills that enable a student to analyze information and experiences objectively. It also helps to identify factors such as family values, peer pressure, and the media that influence attitudes and behavior (Assistant Professor, School of Counseling Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, 600042. *et al.*, 2014).

The results of the exploration of the life skills of prospective teacher students are still found to be sufficient and not reasonable, so it is necessary to plan and develop a curriculum that integrates life skills in all courses and programs that support the development of the life skills of prospective teacher students. The curriculum must equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and practices and foster learner motivation and life skills (Roh & Kim, 2015). Life skills are needed and urgently need to be applied in Indonesia because the curriculum content in Indonesia tends to strengthen theoretical academic abilities (Shaumi, 2015). Life skills programs effectively teach skills that help improve personal abilities and social competence and reduce behaviors that may be risky for students (Behroz-Sarcheshmeh *et al.*, 2017)

CONCLUSION

Dimensions of life skills are already owned by prospective teacher students at FTK Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. The dimensions of life skills are self-awareness, personal thinking, rational thinking, and social, academic, and vocational pursuits. The state of life skills possessed by prospective teacher students differs from each dimension of life skills. The condition of his life skills is already very good, good, quite good, and not good. Because there are still sufficient and poor life skills, it is necessary to plan and develop a curriculum that integrates life skills in all courses and programs that support the development of life skills for prospective teacher students.

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