



THE IMPACT OF UPBRINGING AND FAMILY SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON THE LIFE SKILLS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT SHANDONG ZIBO SCHOOL A

Qiushuo Hou¹, Panjanat Vorawattanachai^{2*}

^{1,2} Department of Education and Society, Institute of Science Innovation and Culture,
Rajamangala University of Technology Krungthep, Bangkok, Thailand
Email: panjanat.v@mail.rmutk.ac.th²

Abstract:

The purposes were to 1) To study the life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A, 2) To examine the relationship between upbringing and life skills of high school students at SHANDONG ZIBO SCHOOL A, and 3) To explore the impacts of family socioeconomic status on life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A. The sample size was 383 students. Research instruments included questionnaires, statistics (frequency, percentage, ANOVA, Multiple Regression Analysis, and Pearson correlation coefficient). 1. The life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A have a high level, 2. The relationship between upbringing and life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A was found to be moderately positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level, with a correlation coefficient of 0.65, 3. The family socioeconomic status impacts on life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A results indicate that 1) Family income had significant on high school students' life skills 2) father's education level has not significant on high school students' life skills, 3) mother's education level has not significant on high school students' life skills, 4) father's occupation has significant on high school students' life skills and 5) mother's occupation has significant on high school students' life skills.

Keywords: *Upbringing, Family Socioeconomic Status, Life Skills*

INTRODUCTION

Today's societal changes from evolving technology shaping lifestyles to parents' heightened educational expectations and adolescents' exposure to social temptations and negative role models have left many young people grappling with adjustment issues, mental health struggles, behavioral problems (e.g., game addiction), and interpersonal conflicts. These issues are particularly acute among those with low life skills and weak social resilience (Qureshi et al., 2025). Without support, these adolescents may face lifelong challenges after completing basic education ((Najiburrahman et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, families play a pivotal role in fostering children's life skills, which enable them to handle life's demands, also known as psychosocial skills (Yildirim, 2025). While "life skills" is widely emphasized in education, definitions vary across organizations (Kirchhoff & Keller, 2021), and measuring its improvement remains unclear (Schutte et al., 2022). Experts stress

the need to clarify its cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions for meaningful research (Wezyk et al., 2024).

Parenting directly shapes life skills: early childhood is critical for developing social and emotional competence (Khoiroh, 2025) and parenting quality influences long-term developmental trajectories (Zhu & Shek, 2021), with factors like parent-child relationships and cultural contexts affecting parenting practices (Zhu & Shek, 2021). For adolescents facing hormonal changes, peer pressure, and identity formation (Mansour & Al Sagheer, 2024), life skills such as decision-making and stress management are vital (Jeyapriya & Jayachithra, 2023).

This study focuses on third-grade high school students (Rodliyah et al., 2024) at Shandong Zibo School A, exploring how upbringing and family socioeconomic status (SES) impact their life skills (Mannan & Shulhani, 2024). The goal is to inform family education and help parents nurture adolescents' skills for independent problem-solving, addressing gaps in existing research on this specific group (Do et al., 2025).

The researcher aims to study "The Impact of Upbringing and Family Socioeconomic Status on the Life Skills of High School Students at Shandong Zibo School A (Ishomuddin et al., 2023)." The study aims to help families understand the importance of child-rearing during adolescence, a period of significant physical, emotional, and social changes, and to identify parenting approaches that best promote life skills, enabling students to solve the challenges they encounter independently.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study aimed to explore three main areas: the life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A, the relationship between their upbringing and life skills, and the impact of family socioeconomic status (SES) on these life skills.

Life skills were defined across four dimensions. The first dimension, *self-awareness and self-esteem*, involves recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses, acknowledging individuality, and responsibly accepting and valuing oneself and others. The second, *thinking and creative problem-solving*, refers to the ability to logically assess situations, identify causes, and make innovative decisions. The third dimension, *emotion and stress management*, covers understanding and regulating emotions, constructively handling stress, and using relaxation techniques. Lastly, *interpersonal relationships* encompass building respectful, supportive, and healthy social connections.

Upbringing was categorized into four parenting styles. *Authoritative parenting* features clear rules, explained expectations, and a warm, responsive attitude. *Authoritarian parenting* is characterized by strict rules, high expectations of obedience, and low warmth. *Permissive parenting* involves warmth and acceptance with few rules or demands, while *neglectful parenting* is marked by a lack of both demands and responsiveness, offering minimal guidance and support.

Family socioeconomic status (SES) was defined using three indicators. *Family income* was measured by categorical ranges: below 5,000 RMB, 5,000–10,000 RMB, 10,000–15,000 RMB, and above 15,000 RMB, reflecting access to resources affecting well-being. *Parental education* levels were recorded for both mother and father as no formal education, primary, secondary, or university degree and above, indicating access to economic and social capital. *Parental*

occupation was classified as employed, manual labor, professional, business owner, or other, recognizing both economic contributions and psychosocial impacts of their work roles.

This study was conducted at Shandong Zibo School A and focused on how upbringing and SES influence the development of life skills among high school students. The population included all third-grade students in the school, totaling 989 across 20 classes. Stratified random sampling based on academic class ensured proportional representation, and Yamane's formula (with a 0.04 margin of error) was used to determine the sample size of 383 students. All 383 questionnaires distributed were returned, resulting in a 100% response rate.

Data were collected through cooperation with homeroom teachers who randomly selected students in each class and distributed the questionnaires. Upon return, the researcher reviewed the questionnaires for completeness and accuracy before proceeding with data analysis.

A structured questionnaire was used, consisting of four sections: demographic information, SES, upbringing styles, and life skills. Apart from demographic and SES questions, the rest used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The instrument was validated through an Item Objective Congruence (IOC) process by three experts, with item scores ranging from 0.6 to 1.00. Reliability analysis showed Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.771 for upbringing and 0.953 for life skills, meeting acceptable statistical standards.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to summarize participant characteristics and responses on upbringing and life skills. Inferential statistics were conducted using SPSS software. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was applied to test the relationship between upbringing and life skills. One-Way ANOVA was used to examine the impact of SES on life skills, and Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to assess the predictive effects of key variables on students' life skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result of Descriptive Analysis

This study conducted a questionnaire survey among 383 third-grade high school students at Shandong Zibo School A, covering demographic characteristics, family socioeconomic status (SES), upbringing styles, and life skills. The response rate for the questionnaires was 100%, providing a solid data foundation for subsequent analysis.

1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The sample had a balanced gender distribution (50.65% male, 49.35% female). The majority were 17–18 years old (45.17%), a typical age group for high school students. The majority lived with both parents (73.63%), reflecting family stability.

Regarding economic status, most families had middle to high incomes, with the highest proportion in the 5,000–15,000 RMB range. Fathers' education was slightly higher than mothers' (more fathers had high school and university degrees), while mothers generally completed high school and primary school.

Regarding occupation, the majority of fathers and mothers were employed in professional fields (74.67% of fathers, 66.32% of mothers). Only a small proportion were employed in the business sector or were unemployed.

Overall, the sample had a balanced demographic structure, with moderate to good financial status, stable families, and most parents had stable careers and a relatively high level of education.

2. Key Variables: Upbringing Styles and Life Skills

1) Upbringing Styles

Table 1: Overall Rating of the Upbringing of High School Students $\bar{X}$ (Mean) and S.D. (standard deviation)

Upbringing of High School Students	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Level
1. Authoritative parents	3.65	0.94	High
2. Authoritarian parents	3.41	1.06	High
3. Permissive parents	3.38	1.05	Moderate
4. Neglectful parents	2.59	1.08	Low

The result: 1) Authoritative Parenting: The mean score was 3.65 (SD=0.94), reaching a "High" level. 2) Authoritarian Parenting: The mean score was 3.41 (SD=1.06), also at a "High" level. 3) Permissive Parenting: The mean score was 3.38 (SD=1.05), at a "Moderate" level. 4) Neglectful Parenting: The mean score was 2.59 (SD=1.08), at a "Low" level.

2) Life Skills

Table 2: Overall Rating of the Life Skills of High School Students $\bar{X}$ (Mean) and S.D. (standard deviation)

Life Skill	$\bar{X}$	SD	Level
1. Self-awareness and self-esteem	3.60	1.00	High
2. Analytical thinking, decision-making and problem-solving creatively	3.50	1.04	High
3. Managing emotions and stress	3.56	1.01	High
4. Building good relationships with others	3.44	1.06	High
Total	3.53	1.03	High

Overall Life Skills: The average score of life skills among students was 3.53 (SD=1.03), falling into the "High" category, indicating that the overall life skills of third-grade high school students at Shandong Zibo School A were well-developed.

Dimension-Specific Performance: 1) Self-awareness and self-esteem: The mean score was 3.60 (SD=1.00), "High" level. 2) Analytical thinking, decision-making, and creative problem-solving: The mean score was 3.50 (SD=1.04), "High" level. 3) Managing emotions and stress: The mean score was 3.56 (SD=1.01), "High" level. 4) Building good relationships with others: The mean score was 3.44 (SD=1.06), "High" level.

Result of Hypotheses Testing

1. Hypothesis H2: The life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A. have a high level.

The overall mean score for life skills was 3.53 (SD = 1.03), and all four dimensions (self-awareness, analytical thinking, emotion management, and interpersonal relationships) had mean scores in the "high" range (3.41-4.20). H1 is supported.

2. Hypothesis H2: Upbringing styles have a positive relationship with life skills

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a total correlation of 0.65 ($p < 0.01$) between upbringing and overall life skills, indicating a significant positive relationship. Authoritative parenting showed a strong positive correlation with life skills ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$); neglectful parenting exhibited a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$); permissive parenting displayed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$); and authoritarian parenting had no significant correlation ($r = -0.15$). H2 is supported.

3. Hypothesis H3: The life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A differ according to family socioeconomic status variables

Hypothesis H3 proposed that students' life skills vary with family socioeconomic status (including family income, father's education level, mother's education level, father's occupation, and mother's occupation). One-way ANOVA was used to test this hypothesis, with the results shown in the following tables:

Table 3: Hypothesis H3: Life skills differ by family SES variables

Sub-hypothesis	Factor	F Value	p Value	Result
H3a	Family income	2.919	0.034*	Supported
H3b	Father's education level	1.888	0.131	Not supported
H3c	Mother's education level	1.822	0.143	Not supported
H3d	Father's occupation	3.031	0.018*	Supported
H3e	Mother's occupation	3.206	0.023*	Supported

$p < 0.05$

H3a (Family Income): The F value was 2.919 ($p = 0.034 < 0.05$), indicating that family income had a significant impact on students' life skills. Students from families with different income levels showed significant differences in life skills, supporting H3a (The family income differences have a significant impact on the life skills of high school students).

H3b (Father's Education Level): The F value was 1.888 ($p = 0.131 > 0.05$), meaning that father's education level had no significant effect on students' life skills, rejecting H3b (The father's education level differences have a significant impact on the life skills of high school students).

H3c (Mother's Education Level): The F value was 1.822 ($p = 0.143 > 0.05$), indicating that the mother's education level did not significantly influence students' life skills, rejecting H3c (The mother's education level differences have a significant impact on the life skills of high school students).

H3d (Father's Occupation): The F value was 3.031 ($p = 0.018 < 0.05$), showing that father's occupation had a significant impact on students' life skills. Students with fathers in different occupations had significantly different life skills, supporting H3d (The father's occupation differences have a significant impact on the life skills of high school students).

H3e (Mother's Occupation): The F-value was 3.206 ($p = 0.023 < 0.05$), indicating that the mother's occupation had a significant effect on students' life skills. Students with mothers in different occupations exhibited significant differences in life skills, supporting H3e (The mother's occupation differences have a significant impact on the life skills of high school students).

Overall, Hypothesis H3 is partially supported: family income, father's occupation, and mother's occupation have a significant impact on students' life skills, while parental education level has no significant impact.

CONCLUSION

1. Conclusion for Research Objective 1: To study the life skills of high school students at SHANDONG ZIBO SCHOOL A

Hypothesis H1: Students' life skills are at a high level

The overall mean score for life skills was 3.53 ($SD = 1.03$), and all four dimensions (self-awareness, analytical thinking, emotion management, and interpersonal relationships) had mean scores in the "high" range (3.41-4.20). H1 is supported.

2. Conclusion for Research Objective 2: To examine the relationship between upbringing and life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A

Hypothesis H2: Upbringing styles have a positive relationship with life skills

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a total correlation of 0.65 ($p < 0.01$) between upbringing and overall life skills, indicating a significant positive relationship. Authoritative parenting showed a strong positive correlation with life skills ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$); neglectful parenting exhibited a strong negative correlation ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.01$); permissive parenting displayed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$); and authoritarian parenting had no significant correlation ($r = -0.15$). H2 is supported.

3. Conclusion for Research Objective 3: To explore the family socioeconomic status impacts on the life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A.

H3: Life skills of high school students at Shandong Zibo School A will be different according to the family socioeconomic status variables.

1) Family Income: The F value was 2.919 ($p=0.034 < 0.05$), indicating that family income had a significant impact on students' life skills. Students from families with different income levels showed significant differences in life skills, supporting H3a. 2) Father's Education Level: The F value was 1.888 ($p=0.131 > 0.05$), meaning father's education level had no significant effect on students' life skills, rejecting H3b. 3) Mother's Education Level: The F value was 1.822 ($p=0.143 > 0.05$), indicating that mother's education level did not significantly influence students' life skills, rejecting H3c. 4) Father's Occupation: The F value was 3.031 ($p=0.018 < 0.05$), showing that father's occupation had a significant impact on students' life skills. Students with fathers in different occupations had significantly different life skills, supporting H3d. 5) Mother's Occupation: The F value was 3.206 ($p=0.023 < 0.05$), indicating that mother's occupation significantly affected students' life skills. Students with mothers in different occupations exhibited significant differences in life skills, supporting H3e.

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