

Arish University  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Fundamentals

# **The role of “Tokatsu” activities in early childhood to develop life skills**

by

**Walaa Mahammad Radwan Mansour**

To obtain a doctorate degree in education  
Specialization in Fundamentals of Education

**2025**

**Supervision By**

**Dr. Ahmed Farouk Al-Zamiti**

Emeritus Professor of Education Faculty of  
Education - Arish University

**Dr. Rizq Mansour Badawi**

Emeritus professor of foundations of  
education Faculty of Education  
Arish University

## **Abstract**

The study aimed to propose a framework for activating the role of Tokatsu activities in early childhood to develop life skills from the perspective of teachers and parents, and to identify the main obstacles hindering this process. The study adopted a descriptive approach and used a questionnaire as a research tool, which included the foundations and activities of Tokatsu for developing several life skills. The study sample consisted of 246 teachers and parents from government schools implementing Tokatsu activities and 153 teachers and parents from government schools implementing Tokatsu activities on a larger scale. The results revealed that some life skills were not achieved and developed in students through these activities. This may be due to a lack of awareness of the importance of Tokatsu activities, limited knowledge of life skills, and difficulty in measuring the return on investment. Additionally, several skills were not achieved, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, productivity, creativity, accountability, and resilience. In light of the study's findings, a proposed framework was developed to activate the role of Tokatsu activities in early childhood to develop life skills from the perspective of teachers and parents.

**Keywords: Tokatsu Activities, Life Skills, Framework**

## The Introduction:

Early childhood is one of the most critical stages of development in terms of establishing values, norms, and emotional orientations in a child. It serves as the cornerstone for building and shaping an individual's personality. During this stage, the trajectory of social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and moral development is determined. Children acquire many concepts, skills, attitudes, and inclinations during this period.

Therefore, paying attention to childhood is an integral part of nation-building, for today's children are the men and women of tomorrow who will shape the future with their creativity or failures. Moreover, caring for children is a significant aspect of investment and human capital development for all nations, as neglecting their rights is a genuine neglect of the sustainability and distinction of countries and societies (Abdel, 2010, 9).

The educational role of preschools is inseparable from the goals of education and has three complementary aspects: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Emotional education is crucial; it is a basic need for healthy growth and developing the ability to adapt. Undoubtedly, depriving a child of emotional development during childhood can lead to an inability to give or receive love throughout their life (Al Abdullah, 2012, 12).

Life skills refer to the psychosocial abilities that allow individuals to apply their knowledge, attitudes, and values to real-world situations. These skills enable individuals to make informed decisions based on logical reasoning about what, why, how, and when to do something. Additionally, life skills are positive and adaptive behaviors that equip individuals to effectively navigate the challenges and demands of life (Central Board of Secondary Education, 2013: 4).

Parry and Nomikou (2014) define life skills as "a set of abilities that contribute to the shaping of a child's personality in practical life." Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines them as "abilities that contribute to positive and adaptive behaviors which enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life."

The framework for life skills and citizenship education identifies twelve essential life skills: innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, cooperation, negotiation, decision-making, self-management, adaptability, communication, respect for diversity, empathy, and participation (UNICEF and partners, 2017).

Al-Balrasheed, Al-Zawahri, and Kamoun (2019, p. 29) pointed out that the outputs of educational institutions suffer from a lack of skills, and many often fail in their personal and professional lives due to the absence of these skills. This indicates that the focus on life skills has emerged to meet a pressing need to raise a generation equipped with life skills.

### **Problem Statement:**

Through the researcher's work as a follower and administrator of tokatsu activities in Egyptian-Japanese schools, she found that tokatsu activities have a clear and real role in developing life skills among students in the early childhood stage. This is due to the fact that Egyptian-Japanese schools apply tokatsu activities in a distinguished manner and with the success of the activities Tokatsu in Japanese schools was made by the Ministry of Education by adding it to the new curriculum in public schools and also linking it to life skills, making the early childhood stage more profound and forming his personality more. Despite the fact that Tokatsu activities were applied to the new Egyptian Curriculum 0.2 in Egyptian government schools, the development of life skills did not appear in early childhood students. This is due to teachers and parents ignoring the role of tokatsu activities in developing life skills in early childhood.

Therefore, the current study attempts to answer the following main question:

Q/What is the role of tokatsu activities in early childhood to develop life skills from the point of view of teachers and parents?

The following sub-questions branch out from this question:

- What is the role of class council activity in developing life skills?
- What is the role of guidance discussion activity in developing life skills?
- What is the role of cleaning activity in developing life skills?

-What is the role of daily entrepreneurship activity in developing life skills?

-What is the role of school activities in developing life skills?

**Research Methodology:** Descriptive research design.

Scope of the Study: Findings from field studies.

**Findings in Existing Government Schools:**

Axis 1: Classroom Council Activities

- Ten statements (71.4%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individual responses, indicating verification.
- No statements showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individual responses, indicating sometimes verification.
- Four statements (28.57%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individual responses, indicating no verification.

**Therefore, the overall judgment on the statements of the first axis indicates verification.**

For example, statement number 3, "Deepening class council activities enhances students' resilience," was achieved only 5.66% of the time and sometimes 32.08%, while it was not achieved 62.26% of the time. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of awareness of the skill of resilience, its concept, and how to develop it.

Similarly, statement number 10, "Class council activities enable students to develop critical thinking skills and build upon their peers' opinions," was achieved only 3.77% of the time and sometimes 28.30%, while it was not achieved 67.92% of the time. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is due to teachers' and parents' lack of awareness of critical thinking skills, the steps involved in applying critical thinking, and how students can build upon their peers' opinions.

Statement number 13, "Class council activities encourage students to be creative within the school," was achieved only 1.89% of the time and sometimes 28.30%, while it was not achieved 69.81% of the time. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is because students can come up with ideas but they may not be original or creative. This is also due to the teacher's role during the activity, as they may not encourage students to seek new and unconventional ideas.

Finally, statement number 14, "Class council activities develop students' ability to evaluate each other during and after the activity," was achieved only 3.77% of the time and sometimes 33.96%, while it was not achieved 62.26% of the time. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is due to the teacher's lack of awareness of the skill of accountability, which is considered feedback on the activity and helps identify strengths, areas for improvement, and how to develop them.

### **The second axis: Guided Discussion**

- Twelve statements (85.71%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating verification.
- Zero statements (0%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating sometimes verification.
- Two statements (14.29%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating no verification.

Therefore, the overall judgment of the statements in the second axis indicates verification. However, some statements were not verified, such as statement number 3: "Guided discussion activities develop students' resilience skills through justifying their opinions." This statement was verified by 1.89%, sometimes verified by 33.96%, and not verified by 64.15%, with a statistical significance of less than 0.001. This may be due to teachers or parents not understanding the skill of resilience, its concept, and how to develop it.

Statement number 5: "Guided discussion activities help students think critically and come up with good ideas" was found to be achieved by 3.77%, sometimes achieved by 26.42%, and not achieved by 69.81% of respondents. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This could be attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of awareness of critical thinking skills, the steps involved in applying critical thinking, and how to generate good ideas.

### **The third axis: Cleaning**

- Of the statements related to this axis, 12 (85.71%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05, indicating that they were achieved.

- None of the statements showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05, indicating that they were "sometimes achieved."
- Two statements (14.29%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05, indicating that they were not achieved.

**Overall, the judgments for the statements in Axis 3 indicate that they were generally achieved.**

However, some statements were not achieved, such as statement number 3: "Cleaning activities deepen students' perseverance by cleaning dirty places." This statement was found to be achieved by 5.66%, sometimes achieved by 32.08%, and not achieved by 62.26% of respondents. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This could be attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of awareness of perseverance, its concept, and how to develop it.

**Statement 10:**

"Cleaning activities develop students' critical thinking skills and ability to build upon their peers' ideas." This statement was found to be "sometimes true" in 26.42% of cases and "not true" in 62.26% of cases. The statistical significance level was less than 0.001. This result can be attributed to the lack of awareness among teachers and parents regarding critical thinking skills, the steps involved in applying critical thinking, and how to generate good ideas during and after cleaning activities.

**Axis 4: Leadership**

- The number of statements that showed a statistically significant difference at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating 'always' was 14 statements, representing 100%. This indicates full agreement or verification.
- The number of statements that showed a statistically significant difference at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating 'sometimes' was 0 statements, representing 0%. This indicates no significant difference in responses indicating 'sometimes'.
- The number of statements that showed a statistically significant difference at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating 'never' was 0 statements, representing 0%. This indicates no significant difference in responses indicating 'never'."

**Overall, the judgment regarding the statements in the fourth axis indicates a general agreement or verification.**

All 14 statements under this axis showed statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level or below, indicating that they were "true."

#### **Axis 5: School Activities**

- significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating 'always' is 12 statements, representing 85.71%.
- The number of statements that showed a statistically significant difference at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating 'sometimes' is 0 statements, representing 0%.
- The number of statements that showed a statistically significant difference at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05 between the frequencies of individuals' responses indicating 'never' is 2 statements, representing 14.29%.

**Therefore, the overall judgment of the statements in the fifth axis indicates a judgment of 'always'."**

Furthermore, some statements were found to be unverified, such as statement number 1: 'School activities develop students' resilience through health and safety-related sports activities.' This statement was verified in only 7.55% and sometimes 20.75% of cases, while it was not verified in 71.70% of cases. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This can be attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of understanding of the concept of resilience and how to develop it.

Similarly, statement number 4: 'School activities make students accountable for their performance during activities, thus enhancing their accountability skill' was verified in only 3.77% and sometimes 28.30% of cases, while it was not verified in 67.92% of cases. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This can be attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of understanding of the concept of accountability.

#### **Regarding the results of government schools:**

##### **the first axis (classroom council):**

- nine statements (64.29%) showed statistically significant differences at a significance level of less than or equal to 0.05, indicating verification.
- No statements showed statistically significant differences indicating sometimes verification.

- five statements (35.71%) showed statistically significant differences indicating non-verification.

**Therefore, the overall judgment of the statements in the first axis indicates verification."**

Some statements, however, were not fully realized.

For example, statement number 3, "Classroom council activities deepen students' resilience," was achieved only 6.10% of the time, sometimes 34.25%, and not achieved 59.76%. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is likely due to teachers and parents not fully understanding the concept of resilience and how to develop it.

Similarly, statement number 10, "Classroom council activities equip students with critical thinking skills and the ability to build on their peers' ideas," was achieved only 4.88% of the time, sometimes 21.95%, and not achieved 73.17%. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This can be attributed to teachers and parents' lack of awareness of critical thinking skills, the steps involved in applying them, and how to encourage students to build on their peers' ideas.

Statement number 11, "Classroom council activities elevate students' ability to produce high-quality work during activities," was achieved only 6.10% of the time, sometimes 20.73%, and not achieved 73.17%. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is due to teachers and parents' lack of awareness of productivity, the steps involved in applying critical thinking skills, and how to encourage students to build on their peers' ideas, as well as the characteristics of a quality product.

Finally, statement number 13, "Classroom council activities encourage students to be creative within the school," was achieved only 7.32% of the time, sometimes 21.95%, and not achieved 70.73%. The statistical significance was less than 0.001. This is because students often generate ideas but they lack originality or creativity. This can also be attributed to the teacher's role during the activity, as they may not encourage students to seek out new and unconventional ideas.

Activity 14 aimed to develop students' ability to peer assess during and after the activity. However, only 12.20% to 18.29% of students demonstrated this skill, while 69.51% did not. This significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) suggests that teachers may lack awareness of the importance of accountability as a feedback mechanism for identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

**The second axis: Guided discussion.**

- Twelve out of 14 statements (85.71%) showed a statistically significant difference ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) indicating that guided discussion was implemented.
- No statements indicated that guided discussion was sometimes implemented, while 2 statements (14.29%) showed a significant difference indicating that it was not implemented.

Overall, the results suggest that guided discussion was generally implemented.

The guided discussion activity developed students' perseverance skill through justifying their opinions. However, only 4.88% and sometimes 23.17% of respondents reported that this skill was achieved, while 71.95% reported that it was not achieved. This significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) can be attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of understanding of the perseverance skill, its concept, and how to develop it.

Similarly, the guided discussion activity did not significantly help students develop critical thinking skills and generate good ideas. Only 6.10% and sometimes 17.07% of respondents reported that this skill was achieved, while 76.83% reported that it was not achieved. This significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) can be attributed to teachers' and parents' lack of awareness of critical thinking skills, the steps involved in applying them, and how to generate good ideas."

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