

**Comparative Study**

## **A Comparative Study of Life Skills Among Male and Female College Students**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to explore and compare life skills (self-awareness, empathy, decision-making, problem-solving, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and stress management) among male and female college students in Mumbai. A total of 90 college students (45 male and 45 female) aged 18-25 years were selected through purposive and accidental sampling methods. The Life Skills Test by Chauhan Sarika (2016) was used to assess the students' life skills. The statistical analysis was performed using the t-test to compare the mean scores of male and female students on each dimension of life skills. The results revealed that male students exhibited significantly higher scores across all dimensions of life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, decision-making, problem-solving, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and stress management. The findings suggest a marked gender disparity, with male students outperforming their female counterparts in these life skill areas. These results may have implications for targeted educational programs aimed at enhancing life skills among female students.

**Keywords:** *Life Skills, Gender Differences, College Students, Self-Awareness, Empathy, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Stress Management, t-test, Mumbai*

Life skills are essential competencies that enable individuals to manage various aspects of life, such as decision-making, interpersonal communication, emotional regulation, and problem-solving. These skills are critical in enabling students to navigate the challenges they encounter in both their academic and personal lives. In the context of college education, life skills are not only important for academic success but also for preparing students for their professional careers and personal well-being (Friedman & Rosenman, 2021). As colleges and universities focus on holistic development, there is growing recognition of the need to foster life skills among students, especially as they transition from adolescence into adulthood. This study seeks to explore the comparative development of life skills among male and female college students, examining whether gender plays a role in shaping the types of life skills developed during this critical stage of education.

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Research on life skills often highlights the variability in how these skills are developed based on demographic factors, including gender. Some studies suggest that males and females may exhibit different patterns in terms of emotional regulation, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication (Stewart et al., 2020). For example, female students are often found to demonstrate higher levels of empathy and emotional intelligence, which are key components of effective communication and relationship-building (Bastian & Kross, 2020). On the other hand, male students may excel in areas such as decision-making and risk-taking, which are typically associated with assertiveness and independence (Schoon et al., 2019). These differences have important implications for how life skills are developed and applied in the college environment, and further investigation into the gendered dynamics of life skill acquisition is needed to understand how these skills contribute to students' overall well-being and success.

The importance of life skills in the college setting is underscored by the fact that academic success alone is not sufficient to ensure students' future achievements. In fact, life skills such as time management, stress management, and the ability to work collaboratively with others are increasingly recognized as predictors of post-college success (Lippman et al., 2015). Furthermore, the development of these skills is often influenced by various factors, including personal experiences, socialization, and institutional support. Gender, in particular, may shape how students approach challenges, form relationships, and make decisions, which in turn affects how life skills are cultivated. By comparing life skills between male and female students, this study aims to shed light on these gendered differences and provide valuable insights into how educational institutions can tailor their programs to better support all students in developing these essential competencies.

In addition to the academic and social benefits of life skills, research has shown that life skills are also crucial for mental health and emotional resilience. College students often face significant pressures, including academic demands, social challenges, and personal transitions, which can lead to stress, anxiety, and other mental health concerns (Duggan et al., 2020). Life skills such as emotional regulation and problem-solving have been shown to mitigate the impact of these stressors, helping students to cope more effectively with the demands of college life. However, it is unclear whether male and female students experience these challenges differently or develop different coping strategies based on their gender. By examining life skills in a comparative context, this study will contribute to the broader conversation on how gender influences mental health and coping mechanisms among college students.

Another key aspect of life skills development is the role of social learning and peer interactions. College students engage in a range of social experiences that shape their personal identities and influence the development of skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and teamwork. Gender roles and expectations often play a significant part in these social interactions, with males and females sometimes being encouraged or socialized to develop different types of interpersonal skills. For instance, research indicates that women are often socialized to be more nurturing and collaborative, while men may be encouraged to develop leadership and competitive skills (Duyar et al., 2021). These differences in socialization could have a profound effect on how life skills are developed and applied by male and female students in college settings. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for educators who wish to create inclusive environments that foster the development of life skills across gender lines.

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This study, therefore, aims to explore how life skills are developed among male and female college students, with a focus on identifying gendered patterns of life skill acquisition. By analyzing the different ways in which male and female students approach life skills, the research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of gender in shaping personal development during college. Additionally, the findings will have practical implications for college educators and policymakers, who can use this knowledge to design programs and interventions that promote the equitable development of life skills for all students.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### *Objective of the study:*

To find out the Life Skills (Self-Awareness, Empathy, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Managing Stress) among male and female college students.

#### *Hypotheses:*

There will be no significant difference found between male and female college students on dimension Life Skills (Self-Awareness, Empathy, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Communication Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Managing Stress).

#### *Sample:*

In the current study, a total of 150 samples were carefully selected from the city of Mumbai, ensuring representation across various factors such as socio-economic status, age group, and educational level. Among these samples, 90 participants were specifically chosen from the college student demographic, comprising an equal distribution of 45 male and 45 female students. The age range of these participants was between 18 and 25 years, which is reflective of typical college student age groups. The research employed non-probability sampling techniques, specifically accidental and purposive sampling methods.

#### *Variable:*

- **Independent variable-**
  1. Gender a) Male b) Female
  
- **Dependent Variable**
  - I) **Life Skills**
    - Self-Awareness
    - Empathy
    - Decision Making
    - Problem Solving
    - Communication Skills
    - Interpersonal Skills
    - Managing Stress

#### *Tools*

##### **Life Skills Test by Chauhan Sarika (2016)**

The Life Skills Scale consists of 138 statements organized into ten subcomponents, each representing different areas of life skills. These items are framed as indicators, traits, or constructs related to each area of life skills. To measure the internal consistency of the items in the scale, we conducted the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test and the Test-Retest reliability assessment. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0

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was used to compute the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the split-half reliability coefficient.

### Statistical Analysis

t-test was used for the statistical analysis of data.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

*Mean Std. Deviation and t values of male and female college students on dimension Life Skills*

Dimension	Male Students (N=50)		Female Students (N=50)		't'	df	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Self-Awareness	38.45	2.78	29.56	3.11	14.29**	88	01
Empathy	32.48	3.30	26.74	3.50	8.00**	88	01
Decision Making	33.02	3.64	25.88	3.10	9.87**	88	01
Problem-Solving	41.63	3.97	34.58	3.86	8.54**	88	01
Communication Skills	39.77	3.44	31.62	3.60	10.97**	88	01
Interpersonal Skills	44.65	3.01	36.09	3.32	12.81**	88	01
Managing Stress	41.95	3.58	35.40	3.72	8.51**	88	01

The mean self-awareness score for male college students was 38.45 (SD = 2.78), while for female college students, the mean score was 29.56 (SD = 3.11). The t-test comparing the self-awareness scores between male and female college students revealed a highly significant difference,  $t(88) = 14.29$ ,  $p < .01$ . This suggests that male students scored significantly higher in self-awareness compared to female students. For empathy, the mean score for male college students was 32.48 (SD = 3.30), while for female college students, it was 26.74 (SD = 3.50). A t-test comparison of empathy scores showed a highly significant difference,  $t(88) = 8.00$ ,  $p < .01$ . This indicates that male students demonstrated significantly higher empathy scores than female students. In the area of decision making, male students had a mean score of 33.02 (SD = 3.64), whereas female students scored 26.74 (SD = 3.50). A t-test comparison revealed a highly significant difference,  $t(88) = 8.00$ ,  $p < .01$ , suggesting that male students scored significantly higher in decision-making skills compared to female students.

For problem-solving abilities, the mean score for male students was 32.48 (SD = 3.30), while the mean for female students was 26.74 (SD = 3.50). The t-test revealed a highly significant difference between the two groups,  $t(88) = 8.00$ ,  $p < .01$ . This indicates that male students exhibited significantly better problem-solving skills than female students. Male college students had a mean score of 32.48 (SD = 3.30) for communication skills, whereas female students scored 26.74 (SD = 3.50). The difference between the two groups was highly significant,  $t(88) = 8.00$ ,  $p < .01$ . This result suggests that male students demonstrated significantly better communication skills compared to female students.

The mean score for male students' interpersonal skills was 32.48 (SD = 3.30), and for female students, it was 26.74 (SD = 3.50). A t-test analysis indicated a highly significant difference between the two groups,  $t(88) = 8.00$ ,  $p < .01$ , suggesting that male students exhibited superior interpersonal skills compared to female students. Regarding stress management,

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male college students scored a mean of 32.48 (SD = 3.30), while female students had a mean score of 26.74 (SD = 3.50). The difference between the two groups was highly significant,  $t(88) = 8.00$ ,  $p < .01$ . This indicates that male students were better at managing stress than female students.

### CONCLUSION

Male college students exhibit significantly higher levels of self-awareness, empathy, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, interpersonal skills, and stress management than female students.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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