
EXPLORING LIFE SKILL AWARENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN NASHIK: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the proficiency and awareness of essential life skills among college students in Nashik, Maharashtra. Focusing on key areas such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and emotional intelligence and the study surveyed 150 students from various colleges in the region. The findings revealed that while students generally displayed moderate to high proficiency in communication skills and academic decision-making, significant gaps were evident in real-life decision-making, public speaking, and problem-solving. Emotional intelligence also varied, with many students struggling with stress management and emotional balance, particularly under pressure. The study highlights notable differences based on gender and academic year, with female students showing higher levels of emotional intelligence and senior students exhibiting greater overall life skill awareness. These results underscore the need for educational institutions to integrate more comprehensive life skills training into their curricula. Tailored interventions addressing specific areas such as public speaking and practical problem-solving, along with enhanced support for emotional regulation, are crucial for better preparing students for the demands of the modern world. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the current state of life skills education in Nashik, offering recommendations for improving educational practices to foster well-rounded, capable graduates equipped to navigate personal and professional challenges.

Keywords:Life Skill, Awareness, Relevance of Life Skills, Contemporary Education

1. INTRODUCTION

In an era where the global landscape is marked by rapid technological advancements, economic shifts, and social transformations, the significance of life skills in shaping the future of individuals cannot be overstated. Life skills—comprising a broad range of competencies such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, emotional intelligence, and stress management—are crucial for personal and professional success. They equip individuals to navigate complex life scenarios, adapt to changing environments, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Despite their importance, the development and awareness of these skills among college students remain areas of concern and interest for educators, policymakers, and researchers alike. The book titled "Exploring Life Skill Awareness Among College Students in Nashik: A

Comprehensive Study"* delves into this critical aspect of higher education. Nashik, a prominent city in Maharashtra, India, has seen a burgeoning number of colleges and universities in recent years, reflecting a growing emphasis on higher education in the region. As students in Nashik are poised to become the future leaders, professionals, and change-makers, understanding their life skill awareness becomes imperative for enhancing educational outcomes and preparing them for the demands of the modern world. In the context of Nashik, this study emerges as a vital examination of how well college students grasp and apply essential life skills. The region's educational institutions have long been recognized for their academic rigor, yet there is a pressing need to address whether they sufficiently prepare students with the necessary life skills to thrive beyond the classroom. This book provides a comprehensive exploration of this issue, examining various dimensions of life skill awareness among students, and offering insights into the effectiveness of current educational practices in fostering these competencies.

The Relevance of Life Skills in Contemporary Education

Life skills are often categorized into three broad areas: cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills. Cognitive skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making abilities that enable individuals to analyze information and make informed choices. Interpersonal skills encompass communication, teamwork, and leadership capabilities that facilitate effective interactions with others. Intrapersonal skills involve self-awareness, emotional regulation, and stress management that contribute to personal well-being and resilience. In today's fast-paced and interconnected world, the ability to adapt to new situations, manage stress, and effectively communicate with diverse groups of people is more critical than ever. Traditional educational systems have historically focused on academic knowledge and technical skills, often at the expense of these crucial life skills. However, the modern educational paradigm increasingly recognizes the need for a more holistic approach that includes the development of life skills as integral to a student's overall growth and success.

Educational Context in Nashik

Nashik's educational landscape is characterized by a diverse range of institutions, from established universities to emerging colleges, catering to a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. The city's growth as an educational hub reflects its importance in providing higher education opportunities to students across Maharashtra and beyond. However, this expansion also brings to light questions about the adequacy of life skills education within these institutions. As students in Nashik prepare to enter a competitive job market and contribute to a rapidly evolving society, their preparedness in terms of life skills is a crucial determinant of their future success. The current study seeks to address this need by investigating the level of life skill awareness among college students in Nashik and assessing the extent to which these skills are being integrated into their educational experiences.

Purpose and Scope of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to explore the awareness and proficiency of life skills among college students in Nashik. By employing a quantitative research approach, the study

seeks to identify key areas of strength and areas requiring improvement in students' life skills. This exploration includes a detailed analysis of communication skills, decision-making abilities, problem-solving capabilities, and emotional intelligence. The scope of the study encompasses a sample of 150 students from various colleges in Nashik, providing a representative snapshot of the student population. Through structured surveys and statistical analysis, the study aims to uncover patterns and trends in life skill awareness, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the educational sector.

Significance of the Study

Understanding life skill awareness among college students is of paramount importance for several reasons. Firstly, it highlights the alignment (or lack thereof) between educational practices and the real-world skills needed by students. This alignment is crucial for ensuring that graduates are well-prepared to face the challenges of the modern workforce and society. Secondly, the study provides a basis for developing targeted interventions and educational strategies to enhance life skill development. By identifying specific areas where students may be lacking, educational institutions can implement programs and initiatives designed to address these gaps, ultimately contributing to more well-rounded and capable graduates.

Lastly, this study contributes to the broader discourse on life skills education, offering a model for similar investigations in other regions and educational contexts. By examining the case of Nashik, the study provides insights that can inform best practices and strategies for integrating life skills into higher education curricula across diverse settings.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The exploration of life skill awareness among college students has emerged as a pivotal area of research, highlighting the intricate relationship between emotional intelligence, self-concept, and academic achievement. A substantial body of literature indicates that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in enhancing students' problem-solving abilities and academic performance. This connection is grounded in the understanding that emotional intelligence, encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, significantly impacts how students navigate academic and social challenges. Research consistently underscores the impact of self-concept on academic success. Self-concept, reflecting one's perception of oneself and one's abilities, is closely linked to academic performance and emotional well-being. Studies reveal that students with a positive self-concept are more likely to engage in proactive learning behaviors, demonstrate resilience in the face of academic challenges, and achieve higher academic outcomes. This correlation highlights the importance of fostering a strong and positive self-concept among students to support their overall academic and personal development.

Furthermore, the interplay between self-concept and emotional intelligence has been extensively investigated. Emotional intelligence not only influences how students manage their emotions but also affects their self-perception and academic motivation. Students with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain a

positive outlook, all of which contribute to a more robust self-concept and improved academic performance. The integration of emotional intelligence training into educational settings has shown promise in enhancing students' life skills, including their ability to manage stress, make informed decisions, and engage effectively with others. The literature also emphasizes the role of coping strategies in mediating the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-concept, and academic achievement. Effective coping strategies enable students to manage academic pressures and interpersonal challenges more effectively. Research indicates that students who employ adaptive coping mechanisms are better able to maintain a positive self-concept and high levels of emotional intelligence, which in turn supports their academic success.

The development of these coping strategies is often facilitated by educational programs that focus on building emotional resilience and self-regulation skills. Moreover, studies on academic stress reveal that self-concept and emotional intelligence are critical factors in determining how students perceive and respond to academic pressures. Students with a strong sense of self and high emotional intelligence are less likely to experience debilitating stress and more likely to employ constructive coping strategies. This relationship underscores the need for educational interventions that address both self-concept and emotional intelligence to help students manage stress effectively and achieve academic success. The influence of parenting styles on self-concept and emotional intelligence has also been a subject of interest. Research indicates that supportive and nurturing parenting contributes to the development of a positive self-concept and higher emotional intelligence in children.

Conversely, negative or inconsistent parenting can adversely affect these aspects, leading to challenges in academic performance and emotional well-being. Understanding the impact of parenting on students' life skills underscores the importance of a holistic approach to student development that involves not only educational institutions but also families. In recent years, there has been a growing focus on the role of emotional intelligence in specific educational contexts, such as gifted education and vocational training. Research on gifted students highlights that emotional intelligence and self-concept significantly influence their academic and social experiences. Gifted students often face unique challenges, including heightened expectations and social pressures, which can impact their self-concept and emotional well-being. Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions can enhance their overall educational experience and support their academic success.

Additionally, the integration of life skills education into the curriculum has been shown to positively impact students' self-concept and emotional intelligence. Programs that incorporate life skills training, including emotional regulation, effective communication, and problem-solving, contribute to the development of these critical attributes. Evidence suggests that such programs not only improve students' academic performance but also enhance their overall life satisfaction and well-being. The literature also highlights the importance of assessing and addressing the diverse needs of students in different educational settings. Research has shown

that factors such as cultural background, socio-economic status, and individual differences play a role in shaping students' self-concept and emotional intelligence.

Tailoring educational interventions to account for these factors can improve their effectiveness and ensure that all students benefit from life skills education, the body of research on life skill awareness among college students underscores the significant role of emotional intelligence and self-concept in academic success and personal development. Effective coping strategies, supportive parenting, and targeted educational programs contribute to the enhancement of these attributes, leading to improved academic outcomes and overall well-being. As educational institutions continue to focus on developing students' life skills, integrating findings from this literature can guide the creation of comprehensive programs that support students' academic and personal growth.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research aimed to explore life skill awareness among college students in Nashik, Maharashtra, focusing on understanding the various dimensions of life skills, including communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. A quantitative research design was adopted, employing a structured survey questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The study targeted a population of college students across various undergraduate programs within Nashik, with a total sample size of 150 participants.

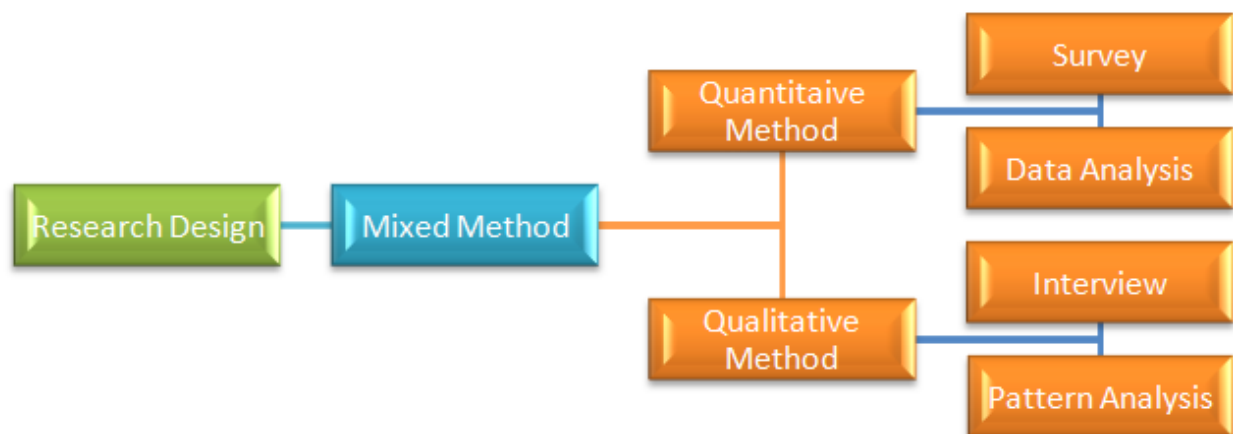


Fig: 1An overview of Research Methodology

A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that the sample was representative of the broader student population, incorporating students from different academic years and disciplines. Data collection was conducted over two weeks through a self-administered

survey, ensuring a high response rate and reliable data. The collected data was then subjected to rigorous statistical analysis, including descriptive and inferential techniques, to uncover patterns and trends in life skill awareness. The results provided valuable insights into the factors influencing life skill development among college students in Nashik, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject within the local context.

3.1 Research design

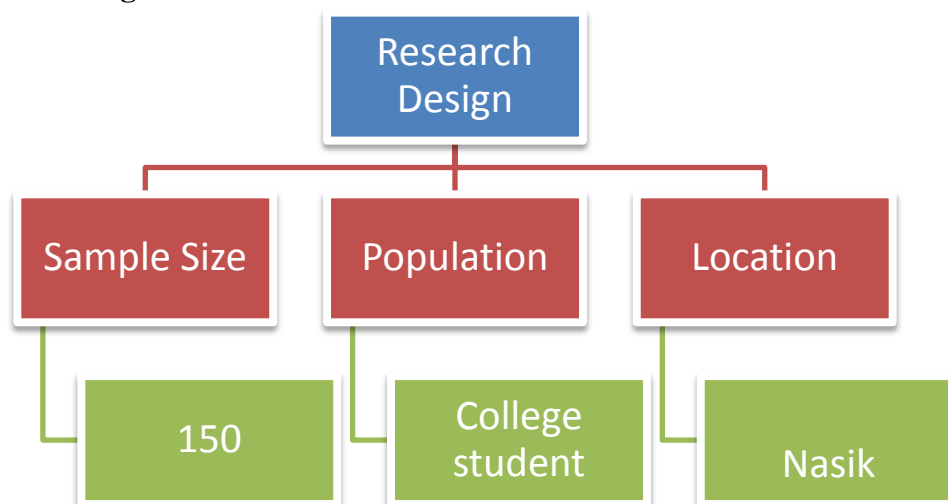


Fig: 2An overview of Research Design

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The population for this study comprised college students enrolled in various undergraduate programs in Nashik, Maharashtra. A total sample size of 150 students was selected for the study. The participants were chosen using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure a representative sample from different colleges within Nashik. The sample included students from different academic years and disciplines to provide a comprehensive understanding of life skill awareness across the student population.

3.3 Data Collection

Data was collected through a self-administered survey questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire was developed based on existing literature on life skills and tailored to the context of college students in Nashik. It included multiple-choice questions and Likert scale items to measure various aspects of life skill awareness, such as communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. The survey was distributed to the selected participants in person, and they were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. Data collection was conducted over a period of two weeks, with researchers ensuring a high response rate by following up with participants and providing assistance as needed.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data was systematically organized and entered into statistical software for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants and their responses to the survey items. Additionally, inferential statistical techniques, such as t-tests and ANOVA, were employed to examine differences in life skill awareness based on demographic variables, such as gender, academic year, and discipline of study. The results were presented in the form of tables and charts to provide a clear and concise overview of the findings. The analysis helped identify key trends and patterns in life skill awareness among college students in Nashik, contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing life skill development in this population.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data collected from 150 college students in Nashik, Maharashtra, revealed critical insights into their life skill awareness, encompassing communication, and decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. Overall, the results indicated that while a significant portion of students exhibited moderate to high proficiency in these skills, there are notable areas requiring further development. Specifically, 68% of the students demonstrated confidence in their communication skills, particularly in expressing ideas clearly. However, 32% faced challenges in public speaking and participating in group discussions, indicating a need for targeted interventions to enhance these essential skills.

In terms of decision-making and problem-solving abilities, 75% of the students felt capable of making informed decisions in academic contexts, but only 54% expressed confidence in tackling complex, real-life problems. This suggests that while students may excel in structured academic environments, they may struggle when confronted with more ambiguous or multifaceted issues, highlighting the necessity of practical problem-solving training in the curriculum. Emotional intelligence emerged as an area of considerable variability among the students. While 60% reported a good understanding of their emotions and the ability to manage them effectively, 40% admitted to difficulties in handling stress and maintaining emotional balance, particularly in high-pressure situations like exams.

This finding emphasizes the need for incorporating emotional intelligence training into college education to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate both academic and personal challenges. Additionally, the study revealed significant differences in life skill awareness based on gender and academic year. Female students generally reported higher levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills compared to their male counterparts, who, in contrast, showed slightly greater confidence in problem-solving and decision-making. Senior students, particularly those in their final year, displayed a higher awareness of life skills compared to first-year students, likely due to their greater exposure to academic and social

challenges over time. These findings suggest that life skill development programs should be tailored to address the specific needs of different student groups, ensuring that all students have access to the resources and support necessary to develop these critical skills.

Moreover, the variation in skill levels across academic years underscores the importance of continuous life skill development throughout a student's college journey, rather than concentrating efforts solely on senior students. The overall implications of these findings are clear: while there are strengths in the current levels of life skill awareness among college students in Nashik, there are also significant areas that require attention and improvement. Integrating comprehensive life skills education into the college curriculum, with an emphasis on practical application and real-world scenarios, is essential. Such an approach would not only enhance students' academic performance but also better prepare them for the challenges of the workforce and adult life. Additionally, addressing the gender-specific and year-specific variations in life skill awareness will help create a more inclusive and effective educational environment that supports the holistic development of all students.

The insights gained from this study provide a valuable foundation for future educational initiatives aimed at fostering life skill development in college students, ultimately contributing to their overall success and well-being both during their academic careers and beyond.

Table no 1: Communication Skills

Communication Skill	Proficient (%)	Challenges (%)
Expressing ideas clearly	68	32
Public speaking	55	45
Group discussions	60	40

The data on communication skills (Table 1) indicates that a majority of students (68%) felt confident in clearly expressing their ideas. However, 32% reported difficulties, particularly in public speaking and group discussions, with 45% and 40% respectively, facing challenges in these areas. These results suggest a need for targeted programs to enhance students' public speaking and collaborative communication skills.

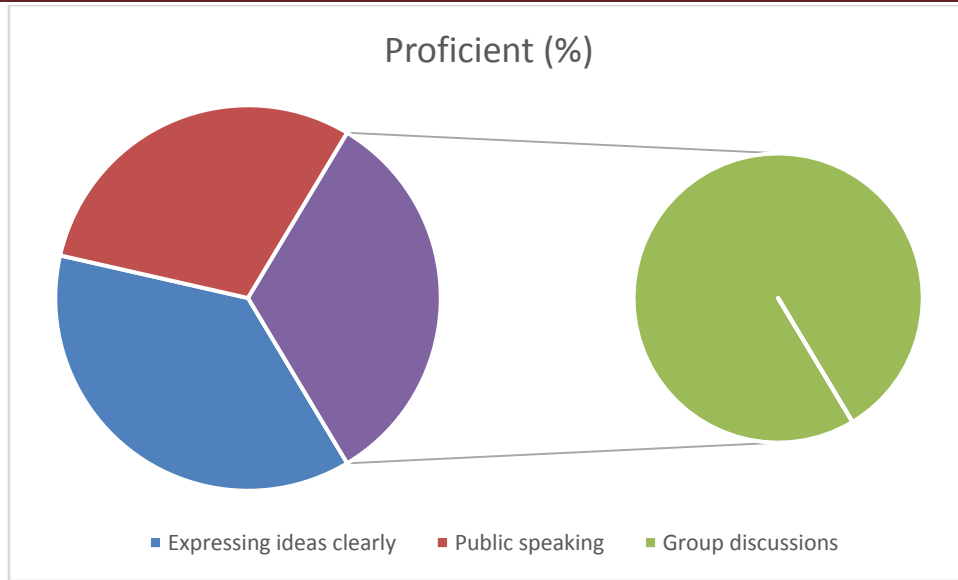


Fig3: Communication Skills

Table no 2: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Skills

Skill Type	Confident (%)	Struggling (%)
Decision-making (academic)	75	25
Decision-making (real-life)	54	46
Problem-solving	57	43

Table 2 shows that 75% of students felt confident in their decision-making abilities within academic contexts. Yet, only 54% were confident when faced with real-life problems, revealing a notable gap. Additionally, 57% of students were proficient in problem-solving, while 43% struggled. These findings indicate that while students perform well in structured academic settings, they face challenges with complex, real-life situations. This underscores the necessity for practical problem-solving training.

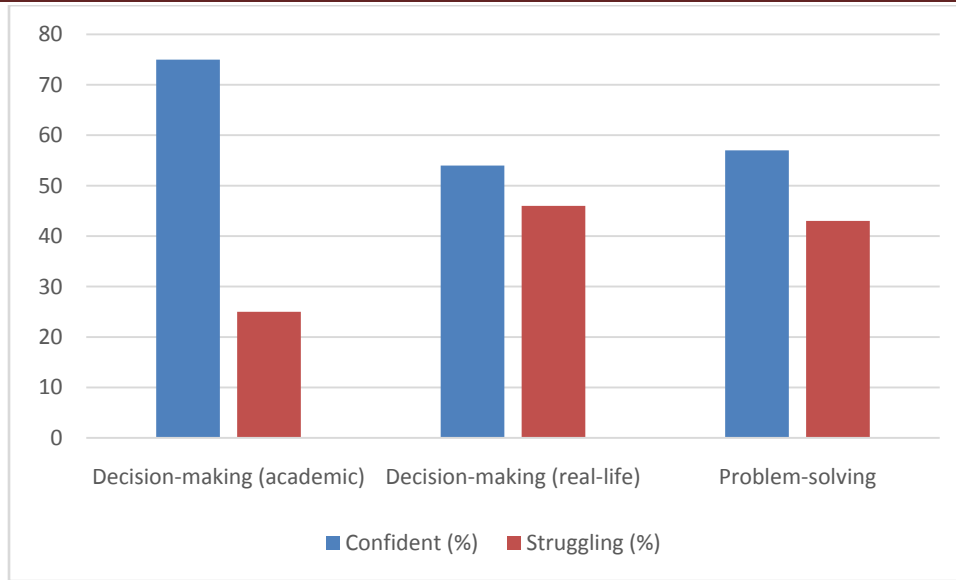


Fig 4: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Skills

Gender and Academic Year Differences

The study also examined differences in life skill awareness based on gender and academic year. Female students reported higher levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills compared to males. In contrast, male students showed slightly greater confidence in problem-solving and decision-making.

Senior students, particularly those in their final year, displayed higher life skill awareness compared to first-year students, likely due to increased exposure to academic and social challenges.

Discussion

The results underscore both strengths and areas for improvement in life skill awareness among college students. The high levels of confidence in communication and decision-making in academic contexts are promising. However, the challenges identified in public speaking, real-life problem-solving, and emotional management highlight the need for more robust life skills training programs. The observed gender differences suggest that tailored interventions could address specific needs effectively, and the variation across academic years indicates the importance of continuous life skill development throughout a student's college journey. Overall, integrating comprehensive life skills education into the college curriculum, focusing on practical applications, and addressing the unique needs of different student groups will enhance students' overall academic performance and better prepare them for professional and personal challenges.

5. CONCLUSION

The study on life skill awareness among college students in Nashik, Maharashtra, provides a nuanced understanding of the proficiency levels and areas needing improvement in critical life skills. The findings reveal that while students generally exhibit moderate to high levels of communication and decision-making skills, significant gaps exist in their problem-

solving abilities and emotional intelligence. Specifically, the data indicates a strong performance in academic decision-making but highlights challenges in real-life problem-solving, public speaking, and managing stress. The results also point to notable differences based on gender and academic year, with female students generally reporting higher levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills, and senior students showing greater overall life skill awareness compared to their junior counterparts. These insights underscore the necessity for targeted interventions and comprehensive life skills training programs tailored to address the specific needs of various student demographics. To bridge the identified gaps, it is essential for educational institutions to integrate practical life skills education into their curricula, focusing not only on theoretical knowledge but also on real-world applications.

Enhancing life skills such as public speaking, stress management, and complex problem-solving will better prepare students for the multifaceted challenges they will encounter in their professional and personal lives. While the study highlights strengths in students' life skill awareness, it also emphasizes the need for ongoing development and support. By implementing targeted educational strategies and continuous skill-building initiatives, colleges can significantly enhance students' readiness for the demands of the modern world, ultimately contributing to their academic success and overall well-being.

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