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# Investigation of Life Skill Levels of University Students in the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

It was aimed to reveal whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the gender, age, sportive activity status and duration of the students studying at xxx University in the 2020-2021 academic year on their life skills levels. In this study descriptive survey method was used. A personal information form was used to obtain information about the demographic characteristics of 215 students, 71 male and 144 female and "Life Skills Scale" which was developed by Bolat and Balaman (2017) was used to determine the life skills levels, who participated in the study. Independent sample T test was used to determine the significant difference between two independent variables and life skills. Anova Analysis of Variance techniques were used to determine the difference between more than two variables and life skills. Pearson correlation analysis was made to determine the relationship between Life Skills Scale and ages of students and duration of sports activities. The results were evaluated according to the  $p < .05$  significance level. It has been determined there is a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of coping with stress and emotions, empathy and self-awareness, decision making and problem solving about students gender and life skills scale according to the data obtained. It has been determined there is a significant difference in all sub-dimensions of the students' sportive activities and life skills scale. It has been determined there is a positive significant relationship in students' weekly sporting activity time and life skills scale on the sub-dimension of decision making and problem solving.

**Keywords:** University Students, Covid 19, Life Skills, Sportive Activity, Low Case, Comma, Paper Template, Abstract, Keywords, Introduction

## 1. Introduction

In late December 2019, a new type of virus (SARS-CoV-2), which had not been detected before, emerged in the city of Wuhan, China. This virus, which was later named Covid-19, spread rapidly all over the world, especially in European countries, due to its high contagious nature and caused a large number of deaths. For this reason, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared this period as a "Pandemic" (WHO, 2020). The pandemic

process includes uncertainties on various issues such as; getting an infection, whether the infection is transmitted to people, objects or surfaces around it, the type of treatment or protective measures, the stage of the pandemic or whether it has ended. Those with a high degree of uncertainty intolerance try to reduce uncertainty through controlling and reassurance-searching behaviors. In cases of health-related uncertainty, the behavior of repeatedly checking the internet for medical information and constantly searching reassurance from doctors can be seen (Taylor, 2019).

Fear and anxiety are physiologically fundamental emotions that involve activating the "fight or flight" response of the sympathetic nervous system and it allows us to react quickly when faced with an imminent threat. The most important reason why the pandemic creates fear or anxiety in both society and health workers; the infection being contagious, posing a near threat, being invisible, increasing its area of influence gradually (Pappas et al., 2009). The psychological symptoms that can be seen in quarantine and isolation are as follows; anxiety, concern, panic attacks, fear, disturbance, nervousness, desperation, alertness, muscle aches, health anxiety, feelings of worthlessness, guilty, loss of motivation, reluctance, difficulty concentrating, loss of appetite or increased appetite, insomnia, anger and intolerance, burnout syndrome.

Anxiety is an appropriate symptom in quarantine and isolation situations. People notice that their plans for the near future change suddenly and dramatically. They may be taken to an unfamiliar environment and have to leave their social relationships. Their anxiety may be increased by the inability to run their business or meet the needs of their dependents (Huremović, 2019).

The most common psychiatric disorders in the pandemic; mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD can be triggered by various stress factors associated with the pandemic, including witnessing deaths and the death of loved ones. In a study over a 2-46 month period, 44% of SARS patients developed PTSD (Huang vd. 2009).

Life can be expressed as the struggle to preserve the originality of the individual through efforts to produce and maintain freedom as well as a process that consists of the pursuit of acquiring the skills required by living together. From this perspective, life; confronts the individual with a fundamental dilemma at every stage. This dilemma can be expressed as the necessity of the individual to be able to be himself and to live together in the same life process simultaneously. Life skills are the competencies that an individual must possess in order to maintain their existence effectively in the process of change. (Erbil vd., 2000). In general, life skills focused on psychological, physical, sexual, occupational, cognitive, moral, emotional and self-aspects of development (Picklesimer, Miller, 1998). Life skills reduce the stigma and shame associated with drug use and addiction by avoiding diagnosis and labeling and training programs. Teenagers will be more interested in new experiences where they will learn how to deal with life. From this point of view, behavioral changes turn into a "journey of discovery" rather than "healing and recovery" (Hawkins, Cummins, Marlatt, 2004). Life skills facilitate the development of psychological skills needed to cope with the challenges and demands of daily life (Papacharisis, Goudas, Danish, Theodorakis, 2005). Life skills, which enable the individual to perform different roles successfully (Khalil, 2018) and consist of the skills and knowledge needed for a healthy life, help to maintain a happy and healthy life in the physical and mental sense (UNESCO, 2013).

Sport has an important role in the socialization of the individual due to its feature of being a social activity that enables the individual to participate in dynamic social environments. Considering that sport is mostly a collective activity in modern societies, individuals interested in sport engage in social relations with different groups of people through sportive activities. Sports enable the individual to get rid of her own narrow world and to be in dialogue with people from other social environments, beliefs and thoughts, to be affected by them and to influence them. With this aspect, it can be said that sports support the establishment, reinforcement and social cohesion of new friendships. Sports constitute an important conversation topic not only among those who do sports but also among the audience (Çaha, 2000). The increasing interest of today's societies in doing and watching sports is one of the distinguishing features of contemporary social life. There is no other event that can gather millions of people from all over the world at the same time in front of the stands and televisions, without discrimination of language, religion, race and gender (Yetim, 2000). On the behalf of this information, the aim of

the study is to examine the life skill levels of university students in terms of different variables (gender, age, sportive activity status) during the Covid-19 pandemic process.

## 2. Method

The Method section describes in detail how the study was conducted, including conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the study, Different types of studies will rely on different methodologies; however, a complete description of the methods used enables the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods and the reliability and the validity of your results, It also permits experienced investigators to replicate the study, If your manuscript is an update of an ongoing or earlier study and the method has been published in detail elsewhere, you may refer the reader to that source and simply give a brief synopsis of the method in this section.

### 2.1 Type of Research

In this study, the singular survey model that was used in quantitative research was used. In the survey model, in which the views of the participants included in a research are taken about the event or phenomenon that is the subject of the research, the event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined as it is in its own conditions and the current situation is tried to be described as it exists (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, et al. Demirel, 2012; Karakaya, 2012; Karasar, 2015). In order to carry out a study in accordance with the screening model, a representative sample group of the research population should exist and it is necessary to collect the data systematically by means of a data collection tool and to analyze the obtained data statistically (De Vaus, 1991; Neuman, 2016).

Include in these subsections the information essential to comprehend and replicate the study. Insufficient detail leaves the reader with questions; too much detail burdens the reader with irrelevant information. Consider using appendices and/or a supplemental website for more detailed information.

### 2.2 Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The study group of this research consists of a total of 215 students, 144 female and 71 male, studying in different departments of Ege University in the 2020-2021 academic year.

### 2.3 Data Collection Tools

The survey technique, which is frequently used in the searching method, was used for data collection in the research (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). The web-based survey forms prepared during the Covid-19 pandemic process were applied to the individuals included in the research with the relevant link, and the valid and acceptable survey data were transferred to the analysis program for evaluation. In order to collect data, apart from the "Personal Information Form" created by the researchers, the "Life Skills Scale" developed by Bolat ve Balaman (2017) was used. The life skills scale, which consists of 30 items and a total of 5 sub-dimensions, including coping with emotions and stress, empathy and self-awareness, decision making and problem-solving, creative and critical thinking, communication and interpersonal relations, is a 5-point Likert type.

### 2.4 Analysis of Data

Before proceeding to the statistical analysis, assumptions such as normality, homogeneity, stationarity, linearity, if any, related to these analyzes should be checked and statistical information should be given about which assumptions are provided. In the light of this information, the researcher should justify which analysis techniques he prefers and which he does not prefer (Tozoğlu and Dursun 2020).

In the research, firstly studies on data processing were carried out for the data obtained through scales could be analyzed. For this, first of all, the demographic information form filled by the students and the "Life Skills

Scale" was checked in detail. Incomplete or incorrectly filled surveys were not taken into consideration. Then, the scales suitable for the research were transferred to the computer and evaluated in the analysis of the data. SPSS 21.00 package program was used in the analysis of the data. While analyzing the data, primarily descriptive analysis (frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, percentile distribution) techniques were used. These are frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and percentile distribution. "T-test for Independent Samples" was conducted to determine the difference between two different independent variables and Life Skills Scale sub-dimensions, from parametric tests in normally distributed data, Pearson correlation analyzes were conducted to determine the relationship between students' ages and duration of sportive activity and the Life Skills Scale sub-dimensions and the results were evaluated according to the  $p < .05$  significance level (Bursal, 2019; Büyüköztürk et al., 2012).

### 3. Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Distribution

	<b>Coping with Stress and Emotions (CSE)</b>	<b>Empathy and Self Awareness (ESA)</b>	<b>Decision Making and Problem Solving (DMPS)</b>	<b>Creative and Critical Thinking (CCT)</b>	<b>Communication and Interpersonal Relations (CIR)</b>
<b>N</b>	215	215	215	215	215
<b>Mean</b>	25,009	29,251	29,451	21,339	17,232
<b>Median</b>	25,000	29,000	30,000	22,000	17,000
<b>Mode</b>	26,00	28,00	35,00	25,00	20,00
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	4,908	4,148	4,203	2,938	2,294
<b>Skewness</b>	-,004	-,466	-,513	-,534	-,518
<b>Kurtosis</b>	-,484	,022	-,430	-,067	-,530

Frequency distributions are given for categorical variables in the analysis of the data. In addition, mode, median and arithmetic mean values, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were taken into account in order to look at the condition that the data have a normal distribution. Coping with stress and emotions (CSE) sub-dimension of life skills scale as shown in the table Skewness -.004 and Kurtosis -.484, empathy and self-awareness (ESA) sub-dimension Skewness -.466 and Kurtosis .022, decision making and problem-solving (DMPS) Skewness -.513 and Kurtosis -.430, creative and critical thinking (CCT) Skewness -.534 and Kurtosis -.067, and communication and interpersonal relations (CIR) Skewness -.518 and Kurtosis -.530. Mode, median, arithmetic mean, skewness and kurtosis values of the sub-dimensions of the life skills scale are close to each other, within the limits specified by Büyüköztürk (2012), Tabachnik and Fidell (2015), and George and Mallery (2010); -1.5 to +1.5; -2.0 to +2.0) data set has a normal distribution. Parametric tests were used because it showed a normal distribution.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Students Participating in the Research

<b>Variable</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	71	33,0
	Female	144	67,0
	Total	215	100,0
<b>Sports Activity</b>	Yes	142	66,0
	No	73	34,0

The research was conducted on a total of 215 students, 71 male and 144 female. It was determined that 142 of the students participating in the study did sportive activities and 73 of them did not do sportive activities.

Table 3: Age and Duration of Sports Activity of the Students Participating in the Research

	Age	Weekly Total Sports Activity Time
<b>N</b>	215	142
<b>Mean</b>	21,898	5,852
<b>Median</b>	21,000	5,000
<b>Mode</b>	21,0	4,00
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	3,477	3,701

It has been determined that the average age of the students participating in the research is  $21,898 \pm 3,4774$  and the average of weekly sportive activities is  $5,852 \pm 3,701$ .

Table 4: The t-Test Results of the Levels Between the Life Skills Scale Sub-Dimensions of the Students Participating in the Study by Gender

Life Skills Sub-Dimensions	Gender	n	x	ss	t	p	Difference	
CSE	Male(1)	71	27,042	4,6581	4,447	,000	1>2	3,035
	Female (2)	144	24,006	4,729				
ESA	Male (1)	71	31,028	3,9459	4,615	,000	1>2	2,653
	Female (2)	144	28,375	3,9734				
DMPS	Male (1)	71	30,901	3,7650	3,653	,000	1>2	2,165
	Female (2)	144	28,736	4,2360				
CCT	Male (1)	71	21,816	3,1319	1,680	,095	....	
	Female (2)	144	21,104	2,8203				
CIR	Male (1)	71	17,605	2,2581	1,691	,094	....	
	Female (2)	144	17,048	2,2972				

After the t-test analysis between the genders of the students and the sub-dimensions of the life skills scale, it was found that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of coping with stress and emotions (CSE), Empathy and Self-Awareness (ESA) and Decision Making and Problem Solving (DMPS) at the  $p < .05$  level detected. It was found that the mean score of male students was higher than the mean score of female students in these three dimensions, where there was a significant difference. It was found that there was no significant difference between the genders in the sub-dimensions of Creative and Critical Thinking (CCT) and Communication and Interpersonal Relations (CIR).

Table 5: The t-Test Results of the Levels Between the Life Skills Scale Sub-Dimensions of the Students Participating in the Study According to their Sportive Activity Status

Life Skills Sub-Dimensions	Doing Sports Activity	n	x	ss	t	p	Difference	
CSE	Yes	142	25,901	4,972	3,834	,000	1>2	2,627
	No	73	23,274	4,308				
ESA	Yes	142	29,943	3,788	3,503	,001	1>2	2,039
	No	73	27,904	4,500				
DMPS	Yes	142	29,985	4,175	2,638	,009	1>2	1,574
	No	73	28,411	4,088				
CCT	Yes	142	21,802	2,783	3,297	,001	1>2	1,364
	No	73	20,438	3,041				
CIR	Yes	142	17,690	2,196	4,237	,000	1>2	1,347
	No	73	16,342	2,231				

After the t-test analysis between the students' sportive activity and life skills scale sub-dimensions, it was determined that there was a significant difference in all sub-dimensions at the  $p < .05$  level. In all sub-dimensions, it was found that the mean score of the students who do sports activities is higher than the mean scores of the students who do not do sports activities.

Table 6: The Results of the Correlation Analysis of the Ages and Weekly Sporting Activity Duration of the Students Participating in the Study and the Sub-Dimensions of the Life Skills Scale

		<b>Coping with Stress and Emotions (CSE)</b>	<b>Empathy and Self Awareness (ESA)</b>	<b>Decision Making and Problem Solving (DMPS)</b>	<b>Creative and Critical Thinking (CCT)</b>	<b>Communication and Interpersonal Relations (CIR)</b>
<b>Age</b>	r	,080	,095	,030	,038	,076
	p	,244	,166	,658	,578	,270
	n	215	215	215	215	215
<b>Sporting Activity Time</b>	r	,096	,112	,177*	,078	,084
	p	,256	,186	,035	,358	,319
	n	142	142	142	142	142

When the correlation analysis results between the sub-dimensions of the Life Skills scale of the students and their age, and the duration of weekly sportive activities were examined, it was determined that there was no significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of the life skills scale and the ages of the students. It has been determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between the students' weekly sports activities and the decision-making and problem-solving sub-dimensions of the life skills scale.

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, it was aimed to examine the life skill levels of university students during the Covid-19 pandemic process. A total of 215 students, 71 male and 144 female, studying in different departments of Ege University participated in the research. In the first finding of the study, according to the results of the t-test analysis between the gender of the students and the sub-dimensions of the life skills scale, coping with stress and emotions (CSE), it was determined that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of Empathy and Self-Awareness (ESA) and Decision Making and Problem Solving (DMPS). It was determined that the mean score of male students was higher than the mean score of female students. This can be interpreted as male students' ability to cope with stress and emotions, empathy and self-awareness, and decision-making and problem-solving skills are higher. In the study conducted by Göksoy, Arıcan, and Eriş (2015) in the literature, it was determined that female teachers experienced more stress than male teachers. In the study conducted by Tozoğlu et al. (2017) on university students, it was determined that female students had higher stress levels than male students. In the study conducted by Boysak (2020) on classroom teachers, it was determined that male teachers had a higher level of skills in coping with negative emotions and controlling their emotions. The results of these studies are consistent with our study result. On the other hand, in the study conducted by Serin (2010) on classroom teachers, it was seen that female teachers' problem-solving skills were higher than male teachers. Suleymanoglu et al. (2021), the scores of female students in the sub-dimensions of "Coping with Emotions and Stress," "Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills" and "Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills" were relatively higher. These results differ from the results of our study.

It has been determined that there is a significant difference in all sub-dimensions of the students' sportive activities and life skills scale. In all sub-dimensions, it was found that the mean score of the students who do sports activities is higher than the mean scores of the students who do not do sports activities. In studies conducted in the literature, it has been determined that individuals engaged in sports activities learn life skills related to emotional skills, social skills and leadership, decision making, problem-solving and time management (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2013; Buğan, 1999; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). When we look at the

studies that differ with our research result, Öztürk (2018) found a significant difference between the sporting variable and social skill levels in the study named "Investigation of Social Skill Levels of Secondary School Students Who Do and Don't Do Sports." A study made by Suleymanoglu et al. (2021) was found a significant difference between students' regular physical activity status and life skill levels in favor of students who do not engage in physical activity. It has been determined that there is no significant relationship in the sub-dimensions of students' lives. In the study conducted by Türk (2015), which examined how doing sports will affect the acquisition and development of life skills in young people, it was found that age has no effect on young people's acquisition and development of life skills. This result is consistent with our study result. In the last finding of the study, it was determined that there was a positive and significant relationship between the duration of weekly sports activities and the decision-making and problem-solving sub-dimensions of the life skills scale. In the study conducted by Ryan and Dzewaltowski (2002) in the literature, it was determined that doing sports contributes to the increase of self-confidence, the development of problem-solving skills and being more social in young people. In another study conducted by Girmen (2012), it was determined that doing sports activities increased decision making, problem solving skills, communication skills and quality of life. As a result, there are many variables that can affect life skills. These variables vary according to needs. Among these variables, the variable of doing sportive activity is very important. Because it is thought that the students who do not do sports activities will start doing sports activities, increase their life skills and contribute positively to their academic and social lives. In this context, it is recommended to encourage both university students and students at different levels to sports activities.

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