**Analysis of Life Skills of Students Studying in Hatay Mustafa Kemal University**

**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to investigate whether there is any difference between the life skills of students studying in different departments of Hatay Mustafa Kemal University. The scanning model was used in the research. The study group was created with the easily accessible sampling method. 210 students participated in the study voluntarily. The "Life Skills Scale" developed by Polat and Balaman (2017) was used as the data collection tool. Since the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric tests, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis Tests were used. According to the research findings, while there was a significant difference in the sub-dimension of coping with emotions and stress in favor of men in terms of gender variable, no difference was found between the total life skills score and other sub-dimensions. A significant difference was found between the departments in which the participants studied and the total life skills score in favor of the Physical Education and Sports Teaching departments. According to the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions, there was a statistically significant difference between the skills of coping with emotions and stress, empathy and self-awareness skills, creative thinking and critical thinking skills, while the difference between decision-making and problem-solving skills, communication and interpersonal relationship skills was not statistically significant. In addition, a positive significant relationship was found between the scores obtained from the life skills scale and the scores obtained from all sub-dimensions. In line with the research results, life skills should be integrated into education programs, stress coping skills should be supported, and activities that will improve teamwork and communication skills should be planned.

**Keywords:** Different departments, life skills, university students, Emotions and Stress, Physical Education and Sports Teaching

**Introduction**

Life skills are skills that help individuals cope with the challenges they face in daily life and manage their personal and social relationships. These include problem solving, communication, time management, stress management, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, leadership and teamwork. In today's conditions, schools and business life need teamwork and leaders who play an important role in the team in order to improve themselves and adapt to changing conditions within the framework of the changing management approach. The team leader plays a very important role in ensuring the team's morale and high team performance in achieving their mission. In this context, it can be said that the leader who ensures the formation and success of the team has a significant impact on the behavior and performance of individuals (Karakaya & Daşlı, 2021).

There are some life skills that individuals need to learn. These skills are important not only for children but also for adults. It is not too late to help individuals learn these life skills regardless of their age. One of these skills is perspective taking, the ability to understand others' points of view, even if it means agreeing or disagreeing with them. Another skill is communication. Good communication involves the brain’s executive functions. For example, the purpose of communicating is to think deeply while keeping our own perspective in the background in order to understand the perspectives of others (Galınsky, 2019).

Other skills include self-control, critical thinking, overcoming challenges, and making connections. Making unusual connections is the foundation of creativity. Diamond said, “The essence of creativity is taking elements apart and putting them back together in new ways.” Critical thinking is, at its core, the ongoing understanding of valid and reliable information to guide decisions, beliefs, and actions. Like other foundational skills, critical thinking develops throughout childhood and into adulthood, but its use must be supported. As is well known, life is full of challenges, and even positive ones can be stressful (Galınsky, 2019). Worrying is a very painful situation. For some, it is better to die than to live in the grip of constant stress and anxiety. When faced with real dangers, it is necessary to confront and cope with those feelings without further panic and stress. No one likes to hear the truth. It is almost impossible to make people behave the way we want them to. In cases where perfect solutions cannot be found to problems and difficulties, it is necessary to reach a compromise and produce logical solutions, in short, to accept (Ellis and Harper, 2017).

Planning/prioritization is the ability to create a roadmap to achieve a goal or complete a task. It also includes the ability to decide what is important and what is not. Adults use this skill every day for short tasks like preparing meals and longer tasks like starting a new project at work. Time management is the capacity to estimate/evaluate how much time one has, how to use one's time, and how to stay on track for a deadline. The moment also includes the ability to understand the importance of time. While some adults are good at managing time, others may not be so good. People with this skill fulfill their obligations on time and can adjust their pace according to the time left (Dawson & Guare, 2017).

Youth and adulthood are periods when physical, emotional, social and intellectual abilities are at their peak, but most young people are unable to use their potential to the maximum extent for various reasons. They face many problems such as alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, global warming, poverty, famine, suicide, harassment, anti-social actions, etc., which negatively affect them and others to a great extent. Unemployment, unfair competition, and lack of job security are the biggest concerns for university students. Education is important to support life and live better. Life skills can bridge the gap between basic functions and abilities. It strengthens the ability of individuals to meet the needs and demands of the society and can help to cope with the above-mentioned problems to make the desired behaviors practical. Providing life skills education by instilling life skills education will help the youth to overcome such difficulties in life (Prajapati, et al., 2017).

Researching the life skills of university students will help develop educational policies and strategies that will contribute to individuals and societies being healthier, more productive and more successful. Developing students' social, emotional and professional skills will support not only academic success but also students' lifelong learning processes. Therefore, life skills analysis plays an important role in the long-term development of both students and society. The analysis of life skills of university students can provide significant contributions to many fields such as education, psychology, sociology and social sciences. Such a study can shape educational policies as well as develop strategies for improving students' personal development and social adaptation.

Life skills cover a variety of skills that affect students' personal development, social adaptation and professional lives. The aim of this research, which aims to analyze the life skills of university students, is to examine the life skills of students studying in different departments of Hatay Mustafa Kemal University and to investigate whether there is any difference between the life skills of students in different departments.

**Method**

**Research Model**

The research model is the scanning model. The screening model is the entirety of the processes applied to the realization of learning and the development of desired behaviors in the individual, describing a situation in the past or present as it exists. In the general screening model, in a universe consisting of a large number of elements, a screening is performed on the entire universe or a group of examples or samples to be taken from it in order to reach a general judgment about the universe (Karasar, 2012).

**Participants**

The study group was created using the convenience sampling method. 210 students studying in different departments at Hatay Mustafa Kemal University in the 2023-2024 academic year participated in the study voluntarily. The demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the participants

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | | **n** | **%** |
| **Age** | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 49.5  50.5 |
| **Gender** | Female  Male | 114  96 | 54.3  45.7 |
| **Departments** | Turkish Language and Literature (TLL)  Physical Education and Sports Teaching (PEST)  History | 70  71  69 | 33.3  33.8  32.9 |
| **Total** | | 210 | 100.0 |

As seen in Table 1, 33.33% of the participants who participated in three different branches are studying Turkish Language and Literature, 33.8% are studying Physical Education and Sports Teaching and 32.9% are studying History. 49.5% of the students are between the ages of 18-22, 50.5% are 23 and over. 54.3% of the students are female and 45.7% are male. All three areas have the potential to help students develop personally and socially and gain skills in different aspects of life. The TLL departments helps students improve their language skills, communicate effectively, empathize and think critically. The PEST departments contributes to the development of social skills such as teamwork, leadership and motivation, along with physical skills. The history departments provides the skills to understand the past and relate this knowledge to the present. Turkish Language and Literature, History and Physical Education and Sports Teaching helps individuals develop their social skills. Turkish Language and Literature reinforces communication skills; History reinforces empathy and cultural awareness; Physical Education and Sports reinforces teamwork and leadership skills.

**Data Collection Tools**

A personal information form including age, gender and departments was prepared in the research. The "Life Skills Scale" developed by Polat and Balaman (2017) was used as the data collection tool. The scale consists of 30 items and 5 factors. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale is 0.90. The World Health Organization (WHO) has determined the life skills that a healthy individual should have as follows: problem solving, decision making, self-awareness, empathy, communication and interpersonal communication, coping with emotions and stress, creative and critical thinking skills (WHO, 1997). The sub-dimensions of the scale are as follows: Individuals with decision-making skills can make inferences about the beginning and end of the process when making a decision (Pujar and Patil, 2016). An individual's ability to be successful in the face of problems depends on their competence in problem-solving skills. An individual's problem-solving skills reflect their information processing processes (Abaan and Altıntoprak, 2005). The ability to empathize is the ability of an individual to understand the feelings and thoughts of the other person or individuals through verbal or non-verbal communication, to provide emotional support to those in need during the meaning-making process, and to establish the connection between the feelings and behaviors of others (Dökmen, 2012). Self-Awareness helps us to know ourselves, our strengths and weaknesses, our desires and dislikes. This skill of making ourselves known is a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal skills (Sreekumar, 2016). People in interpersonal communication are aware of each other and are conscious of their connection with each other. Awareness in the communication process connects individuals to each other in interpersonal communication and shapes what is said (Oğuz, 2012). Emotional Coping Skills are important not only for individuals to recognize and cope with their own emotions, but also to understand the behaviors of other individuals by identifying their emotions (Sreekumar, 2016). Coping with stress is the individual's efforts to adapt to stressful situations (Boysan, 2012). As a process, creative thinking is identified with the problem-solving process. Researchers who share this view define creativity as the ability to produce new ways, new solutions, new ideas, and new inventions for problems that do not have the right answer (Yenilmez and Çalışkan, 2011).

**Analysis**

SPSS 22 package program was used in the analysis of the data. First of all, it was checked whether the data were normally distributed or not. Since the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric tests Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis Tests were used (Table 2). These tests are used in studies with few subjects where unrelated measurements are involved and where the distribution of scores does not meet the assumption of normality (Büyüköztürk, 2012).

**Results**

**Table 2.** Mann-Whitney U test results according to the gender variable of the participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scale Sub-Dimensions** | **Variables** | **n** | **Mean Rank** | **Sum of Ranks** | **U** | **Z** | **p** |
| Life Skills Total Score | Female  Male | 114  96 | 102.82  108.68 | 11722.00  10433.00 | 5167.00 | -.695 | .487 |
| Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress | Female  Male | 114  96 | 95.45  117.44 | 10881.00  11274.00 | 4326.00 | -2.616 | **.009\*** |
| Empathy and Self-Awareness Skills | Female  Male | 114  96 | 105.99  104.92 | 12082.50  10072.50 | 5416.50 | -.127 | .899 |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Female  Male | 114  96 | 101.97  109.69 | 11624.50  10530.50 | 5069.50 | -.920 | .358 |
| Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills | Female  Male | 114  96 | 109.94  100.23 | 12533.00  9622.00 | 4966.00 | -1.158 | .247 |
| Communication Interpersonal Skills | Female  Male | 114  96 | 108.36  102.10 | 12353.00  9802.00 | 5146.00 | -.747 | .455 |

Table 2 shows the total score of the life skills scale and the results obtained from the sub-dimensions according to the gender variable of the participants. According to the analysis results, while a significant difference is observed in the “Coping with Emotions and Stress” sub-dimension, no difference is observed between the total life skills score and the other sub-dimensions. In the sub-dimension of “Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress”, the mean rank of men was found to be higher than that of women. According to this situation, it is understood that men have a greater ability to determine the causes of their negative emotions and to regulate these emotions than women.

**Table 3.** Mann-Whitney U test results according to the age variable of the participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scale Sub-Dimensions** | **Variables** | **n** | **Mean Rank** | **Sum of Ranks** | **U** | **Z** | **p** |
| Life Skills Total Score | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 102.75  108.19 | 10686.50  11468.50 | 5226.50 | -.649 | .517 |
| Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 100.49  110.42 | 10451.00  11704.00 | 4991.00 | -1.185 | **.**236 |
| Empathy and Self-Awareness Skills | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 103.07  107.88 | 10719.50  11435.50 | 5259.50 | -.575 | .565 |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 104.21  106.76 | 10838.00  11317.00 | 5378.00 | -.305 | .760 |
| Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 105.49  105.51 | 10970.50  11184.50 | 5510.50 | -.003 | .997 |
| Communication Interpersonal Skills | 18-22  23 years and over | 104  106 | 104.85  106.14 | 10904.00  11251.00 | 5444.00 | -.155 | .877 |

Table 3 shows the total score of the life skills scale and the results obtained from the sub-dimensions according to the age variable of the participants. According to the analysis results, there is no difference between the total score of the life skills scale and the sub-dimensions with age.

**Table 4.** Kruskal-Wallis test results according to the departments variable of the participants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scale Sub-Dimensions** | **Variables** | **n** | **Mean Rank** | ***X2*** | **d** | **p** |
| Life Skills Total Score | Turkish Language and Literature  Physical Education and Sports Teaching  History | 70  71  69 | 106.74  123.95  85.25 | 14.242 | 2 | **.001\*** |
| Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress | Turkish Language and Literature  Physical Education and Sports Teaching  History | 70  71  69 | 94.99  132.53  88.36 | 21.691 | 2 | **.000\*** |
| Empathy and Self-Awareness Skills | Turkish Language and Literature  Physical Education and Sports Teaching  History | 70  71  69 | 109.89  122.30  83.75 | 14.700 | 2 | **.001\*** |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Turkish Language and Literature  Physical Education and Sports Teaching  History | 70  71  69 | 108.26  117.42  90.43 | 7.148 | 2 | .028 |
| Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills | Turkish Language and Literature  Physical Education and Sports Teaching  History | 70  71  69 | 113.91  114.95  87.25 | 9.358 | 2 | **.009\*** |
| Communication Interpersonal Skills | Turkish Language and Literature  Physical Education and Sports Teaching  History | 70  71  69 | 112.59  113.77  89.80 | 6.950 | 2 | .031 |

Table 4 shows the total life skills scale score of the participants according to the departments variable and the results obtained from the sub-dimensions. According to the analysis results, there is a significant difference between the departments in which the students study and the total Life Skills score. According to the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions; while there is a statistically significant difference between “Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress, Empathy and Self-Awareness Skills, Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills”, there is no statistical difference between “Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills, Communication and Interpersonal Relationship Skills”. Accordingly, it is seen that the highest rank average is in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching departmenst. It is understood that the students of the Physical Education and Sports Teaching Departments can be aware of their own emotions and cope with these emotions, that as a physical education teacher candidate, they have the ability to understand the emotions and problems of different students, that is, to empathize, and that they can cope with professional problems thanks to their creative thinking skills.

**Table 5.** Spearman Brown correlation analysis results

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | Life Skills Total Score | Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress | Empathy and Self-Awareness Skills | Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills | Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills | Communication Interpersonal Skills |
|  | Life Skills Total Score | r | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |  |
| p | . |  |  |  |  |  |
| n | 210 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Skills for Coping with Emotions and Stress | r | **.791\*\*** | 1.000 |  |  |  |  |
| p | .000 | . |  |  |  |  |
| n | 210 | 210 |  |  |  |  |
| Empathy and Self-Awareness Skills | r | **.884\*\*** | **.605\*\*** | 1.000 |  |  |  |
| p | .000 | .000 | . |  |  |  |
| n | 210 | 210 | 210 |  |  |  |
| Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills. | r | **.885\*\*** | **.546\*\*** | **.782\*\*** | 1.000 |  |  |
| p | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |  |  |
| n | 210 | 210 | 210 | 210 |  |  |
| Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking Skills | r | **.853\*\*** | **.503\*\*** | **.751\*\*** | **.790\*\*** | 1.000 |  |
| p | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |  |
| n | 210 | 210 | 210 | 210 | 210 |  |
| Communication Interpersonal Skills | r | **.830\*\*** | **.542\*\*** | **.693\*\*** | **.744\*\*** | **.754\*\*** | 1.000 |
| p | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |
| n | 210 | 210 | 210 | 210 | 210 | 210 |

According to the correlation analysis results in Table 5, there is a positive and significant relationship between the scores obtained from the life skills scale and the scores obtained from all sub-dimensions.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In this study examining the life skills of students studying in different departments of Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, a significant difference was observed in favor of men in the sub-dimension of coping with emotions and stress according to the gender variable, while no difference was observed between the total life skills score and other sub-dimensions. According to this result, it is understood that men have the ability to determine the reasons for their higher level of negative emotions and to regulate these emotions compared to women. When looking at the literature, Altun (2023) found a significant difference in favor of men according to the life skills and gender variable. Çodur (2019) found that there was a significant difference between gender and the average score they received from the life skills scale in the sub-dimension of coping with stress and emotions. It was observed that the average score of male students in this sub-dimension was higher than that of female students. These studies support the study. When different results are examined; Turan et al. (2022) found significant differences in the teamwork sub-dimension of the effect of sports on life skills according to the gender of the participants, while they did not find significant differences in other sub-dimensions and the general average. They found that female employees had a higher level of teamwork than male employees. Islam (2022) stated that there is no statistically significant difference between the scores of the healthy living skills scale of individuals who do sports according to their gender. Çolak et al. (2022) did not find any significant difference in the life skills sub-dimensions according to the gender variable. Albay and Öçalan (2023) did not find any significant difference in the gender variable of university students doing sports. In the research of Zeze and Eren (2021), it was seen that women's emotional skills were significantly higher than men, and there was no difference between other life skill factors. Mutlu-Bozkurt et al. (2022) found no significant difference between the gender variable and the mean score of the healthy living skills scale. Men generally show less emotional expression and may develop different strategies for coping with stress. It can be observed that men use more introverted methods (such as being alone or physical activity) to cope with stress. Such strategies may present a less emotionally intense approach, which may reveal gender differences. For another, men are socially more powerful and in control, which may make them more resilient in coping with stress and emotional challenges. Women may be more open to emotional coping and seeking social support, but this may not directly impact their ability to cope with stress.

No difference was found between the total life skills score and sub-dimensions according to the age variable of the participants. When looking at the literature; Çodur (2019) stated that there was no significant difference between the ages of the individuals participating in the study and the average score they obtained from the life skills scale. Turan et al. (2022) did not find significant differences between the groups in sub-dimensions and general averages in the study comparing the effects of sports on life skills according to the ages of the participants. Çolak et al. (2022) found no significant difference in the life skills sub-dimensions of time management skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, social skills, emotional skills and goal-setting skills according to the age variable of the participants. These results support the study. When looking at different results; Taşçı (2020) stated that there is a difference in the process of acquiring and developing life skills according to the age of the children in the 10-14 age group that constitute the study group of the research. Accordingly, it was concluded that children in the 10-year-old group had higher average scores in the sub-dimensions of time management, communication, teamwork, leadership, emotional and social skills. In addition to this situation, the research results indicated that there was no difference in the process of acquiring and developing life skills of children in the 11-14 age group. Albay and Öçalan (2023) found a significant difference in the acquisition of life skills by university students who do sports according to their age. When Çimen and Akıncı (2021) examined life skills according to the age group variable in the study, they found a significant difference between teachers whose time management sub-dimension was 35 years old and under and teachers between the ages of 36-45. Although age is generally considered an indicator of individuals’ life experiences and maturity, it may not be a single determining factor for the development of life skills. Especially among university students, when the age gap is not very large (for example, between the ages of 18 and 25), the effect of age on life skills may be limited.

A significant difference was found between the participants' departments of study and their total life skills score. According to the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions, there was a statistically significant difference between the skills of coping with emotions and stress, empathy and self-awareness skills, creative thinking and critical thinking skills, while the difference between decision-making and problem-solving skills, communication and interpersonal relationship skills was not statistically significant. The highest rank average is in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching departments. Accordingly, it is understood that students of the Physical Education and Sports Teaching Departments can be aware of their own emotions and cope with these emotions, that they have the ability to understand the emotions and problems of different students, that is, to empathize, as a physical education teacher candidate, and that they can cope with professional problems thanks to their creative thinking skills. When the literature is examined; In the study of Özkarslı (2023), it was seen that the recreation departments students' healthy living skills, access to health-related resources, importance given to health, and health priority levels were higher than those in teaching departments. Çimen and Akıncı (2021) stated that the physical education teachers who participated in the study had high scores in total and sub-dimensions of life skills. Çodur (2019) found a significant difference between the departments in which individuals study and the average score they receive from the life skills level scale. It was determined that the average scores of Turkish Language and Literature and Classroom Teaching candidates in the life skills sub-dimension of communication and interpersonal communication were higher than the average scores of Music Teaching candidates. In the same sub-dimension, the mean scores of Turkish Language and Literature Teaching candidates were higher than the mean scores of psychological counseling and guidance candidates. Islam (2022) stated that individuals who do sports develop life skills along with socialization. In the Physical Education and Sports Teaching departments, students are usually trained to develop both their physical and psychological skills. Students in this departments frequently encounter situations such as physical activities, group work, leadership and team management. This can enable them to exhibit high performance in skills such as coping with emotions and stress, empathy, and self-awareness. Students in other departments often focus on more academic and theoretical studies. However, skills such as empathy or emotional awareness may be less likely to emerge from activities that require social interaction and practical applications such as group work. This may result in lower scores in these skills compared to students in the physical education and sports departments.

The most crucial factor in ensuring the sustainability of lifelong learning is for the education system to implement a method that cultivates individuals with 21st-century skills. The educational resources students need in education systems are essential for the system to achieve its objectives. In line with these objectives, students equipped with 21st-century skills and the outcomes of the education system are expected to enter the labor market or higher education, equipped with the necessary skills (Çiftçi, Sağlam & Yayla, 2021). From the faculty perspective, it appears that they understand life skills as a multifaceted concept used in every aspect of life, and that its inadequacy can lead to problems in our lives. Faculty members strive to incorporate life skills training into both in- and out-of-class activities. However, they believe that the effectiveness of these activities in developing life skills varies depending on the course content. The majority of faculty members believe that prospective teachers' life skills have developed/partially developed during their four years at the faculty of education, while a smaller number believe they have not developed sufficiently. While the extracurricular activities offered vary depending on their areas of expertise or individual interests, they have stated that extracurricular activities significantly contribute to the development of communication skills, as well as self-awareness, decision-making and problem-solving, and creative and critical thinking skills (Erduran-Avcı & Selçuk, 2021).

Skills and knowledge which increase the likelihood of university graduates finding employment is an increasingly important factor for higher education institutions. Even though subject matter expertise remains a primary objective, supporting students to build life skills that are desired by employers is essential to enhance graduate employability. Through a pre-survey and post-survey, empirically finds that experiential learning by means of a team-based business simulation has an overwhelmingly positive influence on first-year students’ self-assessed life skill development as well as their course-specific subject matter expertise. Yet, the findings show less significant results for fourth-year students. This contributes to our understanding of business simulations as a pedagogical practice and its benefits for students beyond their education (Scheuring & Thompson, 2024).

According to the correlation analysis results, a positive significant relationship was found between the scores obtained from the life skills scale and the scores obtained from all sub-dimensions. In his study conducted to determine the healthy living skill levels of individuals doing sports in Ordu province, İslam (2022) found a positive correlation between the sub-dimensions of the healthy living skill levels of individuals. When Turan et al. (2022) examined the effects of sports activities on life skills of public employees who do sports, they concluded that there was a high level of relationship. By fostering transferable life skills, sports can contribute to personal and professional development, enhancing students’ abilities to navigate various life domains (Weinberg & Gould, 2023). The correlation analysis results show that there is a positive significant relationship between the life skills scale and the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions, revealing that different dimensions of life skills are interconnected and these skills develop in harmony with each other.

Taşçı (2020) revealed that the age, gender, and sports activities of secondary school students create significant differences in the formation of life skills. Girmen (2012) argued in his research that life skills such as language and communication, decision-making, self-management, leadership, problem-solving, cooperation, and teamwork, which are expected to be taught to students in primary school programs, can be developed through traditional children's games. Akkoyunlu and Orhan (2003) stated that individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs make great efforts to accomplish a task, do not give up easily when faced with problems, and display persistent and patient behavior to achieve a successful result. Çodur (2019) found a significant difference between the average scores of individuals on the life skills level scale and their physical activity status. He concluded that the average scores of individuals who do physical activity on the self-awareness and empathy sub-dimension and the coping with stress and emotions sub-dimension are higher than the average scores of individuals who do not do sports.

As a result, the higher performance of students in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching departments in skills such as coping with emotions, empathy, self-awareness, creative thinking and critical thinking can be explained by the fact that students actively develop these skills due to the nature of this departments. In other departments, more theoretical and analytical skills may be at the forefront. However, since decision-making, problem-solving, communication and interpersonal skills are developed to a certain level in each departments, no significant differences were observed in these sub-dimensions. This may be due to the fact that these skills are generally important skills for every student in university education. Since the requirements and difficulties of each departments are different, the differences in students' life skills may also be important. It is thought that students in Social Sciences need more teamwork and communication skills. The research results emphasize the importance of educational programs that develop students' life skills. In addition, the support that the university will provide to students plays an important role in developing their life skills.

The fact that male students showed a significant difference in the sub-dimension of "coping with emotions and stress" but no difference in other life skills may be due to the effect of gender on the style of coping with stress. While men may tend to use different coping mechanisms socially, other life skills are often more equally developed. The correlation analysis results show that the sub-dimensions of life skills develop in a way that positively affects each other. This reveals that students develop their emotional intelligence, creative thinking abilities, stress coping skills and other life skills as a whole and that these skills support each other. This situation shows how important it is to handle these skills together in the educational process.

**Recommendations**

Some suggestions that can be made in line with the research results are as follows:

-Integration of Life Skills Education Programs: The high performance of Physical Education and Sports Teaching students in skills such as emotional intelligence, empathy, creative thinking and problem solving emphasizes the importance of integrating these skills into the education curriculum. More opportunities can be provided for the development of similar skills in other departments. Workshops, seminars and practical training programs on life skills can be organized throughout the university.

-Supporting Emotional Intelligence and Stress Coping Skills: Differences in emotional intelligence and stress coping skills of male students reveal the effect of gender on these skills. In this context, special trainings and group studies on emotional intelligence and stress coping strategies can be organized. These programs should provide all students with the opportunity to develop their emotional intelligence equally.

-Development of Teamwork and Communication Skills: Considering that Social Sciences students need more teamwork and communication skills, practical training and group projects can be encouraged in these areas. Practical work on teamwork, group dynamics and effective communication can contribute to students developing these skills.

These suggestions can help students develop their life skills and make university education more effective and comprehensive.

**Limitations of Study**

This study is limited to the quantitative research method and the survey application conducted with this method. It is limited to the Turkish Language and Literature, Physical Education and Sports Teaching and History departments studying at Hatay Mustafa Kemal University in the 2023-2024 academic year.

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