

Empowering Success: Exploring the Impact of Experiential Learning on Leadership Efficacy and Life Satisfaction Among Male and Female Management Students

Debasmita Sarkar Dhar¹, Dr. Amjad Ali², Dr. Nandita Mishra³

¹Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, SoHMS, Adamas University
Kolkata, West Bengal, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Science, National Institute of
Technology Patna, Bihar, India

³Director, Chetana's Institute of Management and Research (CIMR),
Bandra East, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

Experiential learning (EL) is gaining popularity because it allows students to “learn by doing”, improving their problem-solving and critical thinking skills. It is based on the principle that people learn best by doing, reflecting, and applying their learning in real-world situations. The actual purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of EL on the leadership abilities and life satisfaction of both male and female management students. A survey method has been employed: a questionnaire containing 16 close ended questions has been implemented to gather information. The analysis has identified a positive relationship between the EL and leadership efficacy and life satisfaction among the management students. The EL enables hands-on experience for the students, which is helpful in preparing the students for future leadership roles. Based on this learning approach, the students are developing skills such as problem-solving, communication and conflict resolution, which are crucial for business leaders, both male and female. Due to all the associated benefits, management institutions are showing interest in incorporating EL into their curriculum.

¹Corresponding Author, email: sarkar.debasmita@aim.ac.in

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²Second Author, email: amjad@nitp.ac.in

³Third Author, email: director@cimr.in

Keywords

Experiential Learning, Management Students, Leadership Capabilities, and Life Satisfaction.

Introduction

Experiential learning (EL) refers to the process of learning through direct experience and active participation in activities that include problem-solving and critical thinking. It mainly emphasises the “learning by doing” aspect, where the students gain knowledge, skills and attitudes by immersing themselves in real-world situations. EL involves understanding its dynamics and outcomes in various contexts, such as education and leadership development (Huggins et al.,2021).

EL provides opportunities to practise decision making, communication as well as conflict resolution in the real world scenarios. This learning encourages self-awareness and adaptability, which are key traits for effective leadership among male and female management students (Kong, 2021). This also helps in building confidence as the students face challenges and solve problems in a controlled environment. EL actually encourages the students to reflect on their experiences and learn from their failures, facilitating a deeper understanding of their strengths and values along with the areas for improvement. This also helps in fostering a sense of achievement and purpose, contributing to the improvement in the life satisfaction. The real-world experiences make the students feel more prepared and fulfilled, bridging the gap between education and professional aspiration (Aithal& Mishra, 2024).

Rationale of the Study

This research is important because it can inform educators about effective EL designs, confirming maximum engagement and skill development. This will also aid in understanding how EL affects life satisfaction, confirming the fact that educational institutions are prioritising students' well-being along with academic excellence (Kolb & Kolb 2017). In the prevailing literature sources, there are multiple papers which have investigated the impact of EL on leadership efficiency; however, the aspect of life satisfaction among both male and female management students is most overlooked. The rationale behind this paper is to address this gap.

Objectives

- To investigate the way in which EL impacts the leadership efficacy among male and female management students.
- To explore the impact of EL on life satisfaction among male and female management students.

Hypothesis

H1: EL has a positive impact on the leadership efficacy among male and female management students.

H2: EL has a positive impact on life satisfaction among male and female management students.

Methods:

The primary data collection method has been considered for this study as there is the need to gather first-hand data with the assistance of a survey. A survey has been conducted among 101 MBA students of Kolkata along with the nearby cities. The management students have been identified with social media platforms like LinkedIn, and all the participants have agreed to join the survey after understating the aspects of anonymity and the purpose of the study. Google Forms have been used to collect the required data because this platform is easy to use, and there is no risk of data leakage (Rahman, 2023). Additionally, the SPSS tool has been used in order to critically analysis the raw quantitative data with the assistance of a graphical representation of responses, correlation and description analysis. The in-depth assessment has assisted in reviewing the impact of EL on leadership efficacy and life satisfaction among male and female MBA students(Basias&Pollalis, 2018).

The author has implemented 3 scales, namely, Satisfaction with Life Scale, Leader Efficacy Scale and Experiential Learning scale, to collect the required data. The first scale has the purpose of measuring the individual's overall satisfaction along with commitment to their life. Whereas the second scale mainly assesses a person's confidence in their ability to lead and influence others in an effective manner. The final scale evaluates the process through which an individual learns from direct experiences. Based on this scale, 16 close-ended questions have been developed, which have shed light on the impact of the EL on the leadership and life satisfaction of the management students, both male and female(Kilubi, 2018).

The statements are presented in Table 1.

S. No.	Statements	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
1	Participating in experiential learning activities (e.g., case studies, simulations, or projects) has improved my leadership skills.					
2	Experiential learning has enhanced my ability to make decisions under pressure.					
3	Engaging in practical learning opportunities has improved my confidence in leading teams effectively.					
4	Through experiential learning, I have developed better conflict resolution and interpersonal skills.					
5	I feel more equipped to take on leadership roles as a result of hands-on learning experiences.					
6	Experiential learning has positively influenced my overall satisfaction with my academic journey.					
7	Learning through practical experiences has contributed to my personal growth and self-awareness.					
8	Learning through practical					

	experiences has contributed to my personal growth and self-awareness.					
9	Experiential learning has helped me achieve a better work-life balance by teaching effective time management and prioritisation skills.					
10	Participating in experiential learning activities has increased my sense of purpose and direction in life.					
11	In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.					
12	The conditions of my life are excellent.					
13	Develop agreements with followers to enhance their participation.					
14	Coach followers to assume greater responsibilities for leadership.					
15	Energise my followers to achieve their best					

Results and Analysis:

Table 1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	52	51.5	51.5	51.5
	2	49	48.5	48.5	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

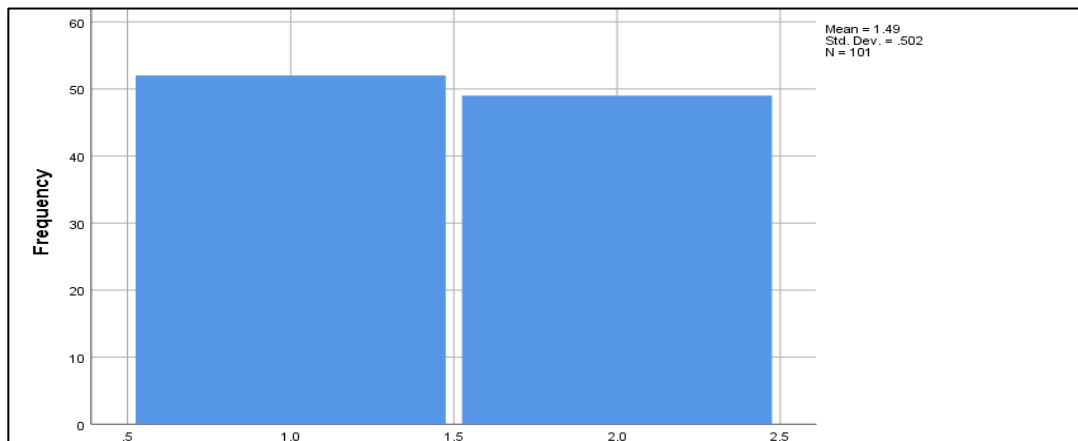


Figure 1: Gender

The survey responses have indicated that the majority of the participants (51.5%) are male and are pursuing management studies in India, mainly in Kolkata. However, the survey has demonstrated a balance which has definitely improved the credibility and relevance of the outcomes.

Table 2: EL and leadership skill

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	25	24.8	24.8	27.7
	3	10	9.9	9.9	37.6
	4	14	13.9	13.9	51.5
	5	49	48.5	48.5	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

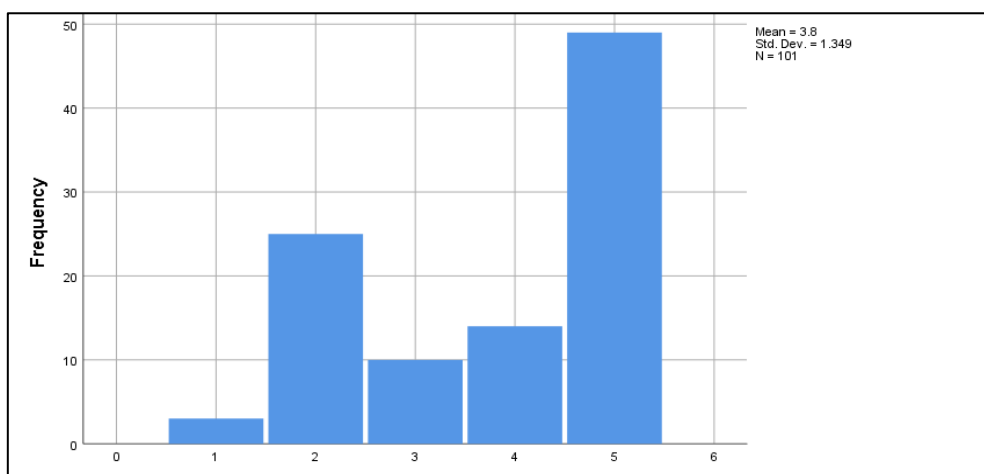


Figure 2: EL and leadership skill

In this question, the participants were asked whether taking part in EL, which includes case studies and projects, has a positive impact on their leadership skills or not. The responses have indicated that the majority of the participants (63%) have agreed with this statement, meaning they believe there is a positive correlation between EL and leadership skill development. There is no gender disparity, EL improves the leadership capabilities of both the male and female students alike.

Table 3: EL and decision making under pressure

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	30	29.7	29.7	32.7
	3	8	7.9	7.9	40.6
	4	17	16.8	16.8	57.4
	5	43	42.6	42.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

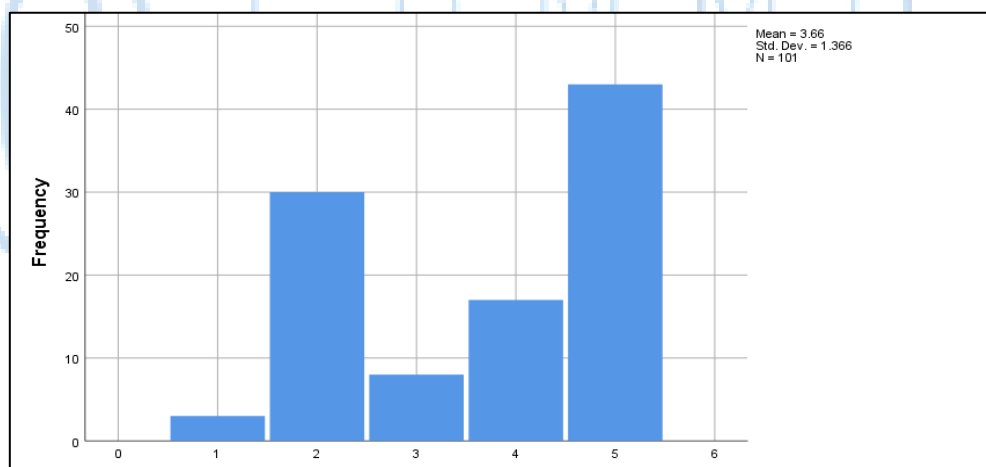


Figure 3: EL and decision-making under pressure

The management students who have taken part in the survey were enquired if they think that the EL have a positive impact on the decision making process under extreme pressure or not. On a similar note, the majority of the participants (60%) have agreed meaning they think that EL have improved their decision-making process by a large margin, even under pressure.

Table 4: EL and confidence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	28	27.7	27.7	29.7
	3	15	14.9	14.9	44.6
	4	10	9.9	9.9	54.5
	5	46	45.5	45.5	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

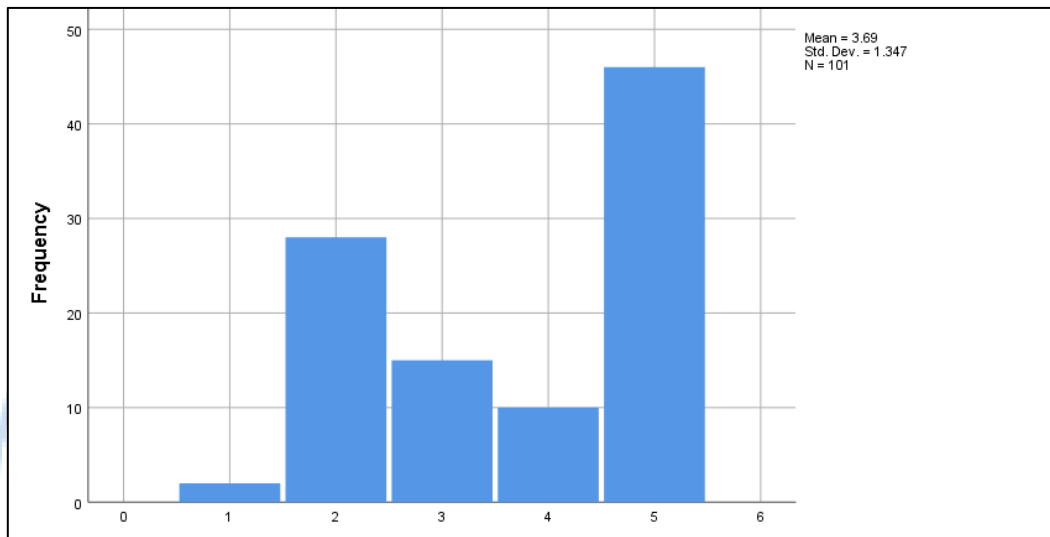


Figure 4: EL and confidence

The management students who have been recruited in the survey were asked about their perception regarding the impact of EL on the confidence of the management students regarding leadership. It is interesting to note that more than 57 per cent of the participants have approved this statement, meaning there is a positive relationship.

Table 5: EL and conflict resolution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	35	34.7	34.7	36.6
	3	7	6.9	6.9	43.6
	4	18	17.8	17.8	61.4
	5	39	38.6	38.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

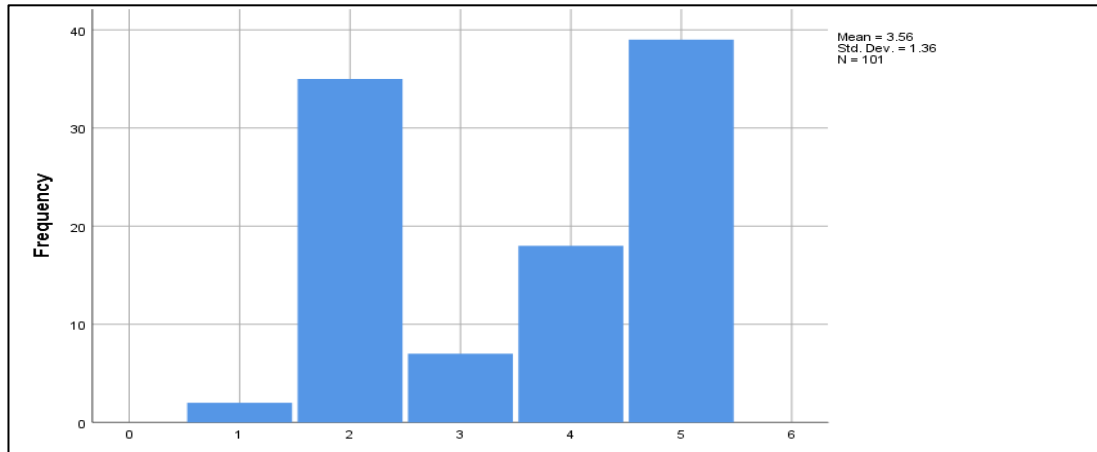


Figure 5: EL and conflict resolution

The participants were asked about the impact of EL on conflict resolution skills, and the majority of the management students (57%) agreed with this statement. This means EL have the capability of enhancing the conflict resolution skills of the student, which is a fundamental leadership skill. The responses have not identified any major gender disparity, as EL improves the conflict resolution skills of both male and female management students.

Table 6: Hands-on experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	32	31.7	31.7	34.7
	3	8	7.9	7.9	42.6
	4	18	17.8	17.8	60.4
	5	40	39.6	39.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

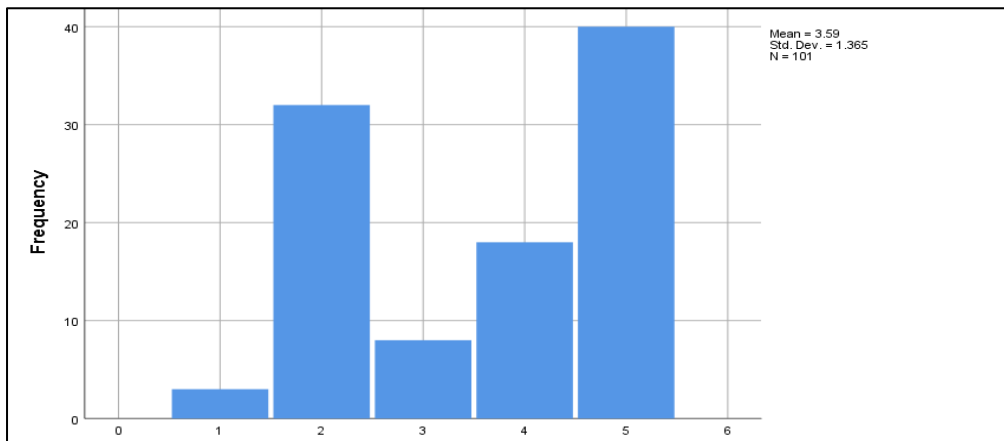


Figure 6: Hands-on experience

All the students were asked if they feel more equipped in terms of taking on leadership roles because of the hands-on learning experiences which is a key part of the EL. The majority of the students (58 per cent) have agreed that this type of learning makes them more suited in terms of taking on leadership roles. A minor gender disparity has been noticed because female students have disagreed with this statement more compared to male students, meaning they feel less equipped in terms of leadership roles.

Table 7: EL and overall satisfaction in overall satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	29	28.7	28.7	32.7
	3	15	14.9	14.9	47.5
	4	16	15.8	15.8	63.4
	5	37	36.6	36.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

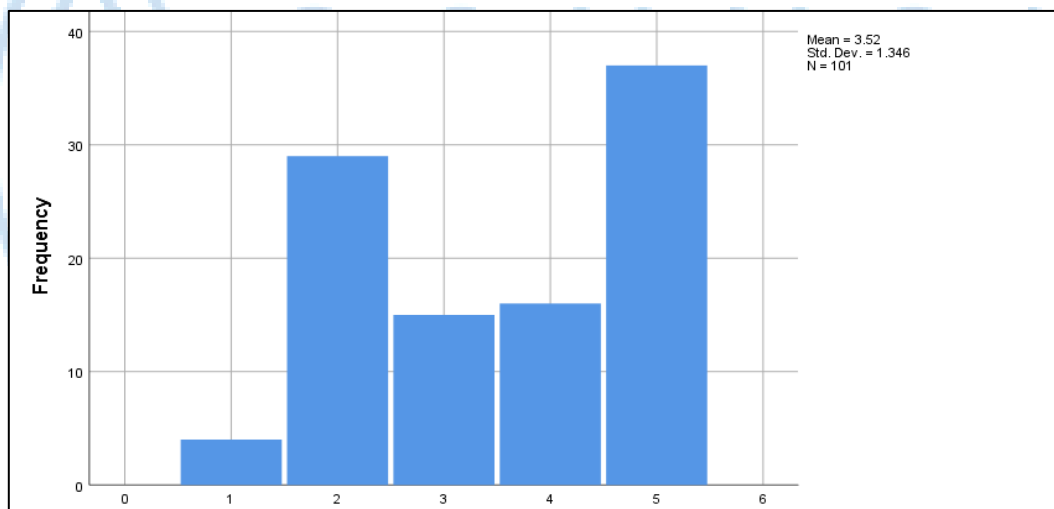


Figure 7: EL and overall satisfaction in overall satisfaction

The survey participants were inquired about the role of EL in improving the overall satisfaction with management student's academic journey. For most of the students (56%), EL has positively influenced their overall satisfaction with the academic journey. There is no major gender disparity; hence, it can be mentioned that EL improves satisfaction among both male and female management students.

Table 8: EL and personal growth

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	33	32.7	32.7	34.7
	3	8	7.9	7.9	42.6
	4	16	15.8	15.8	58.4
	5	42	41.6	41.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

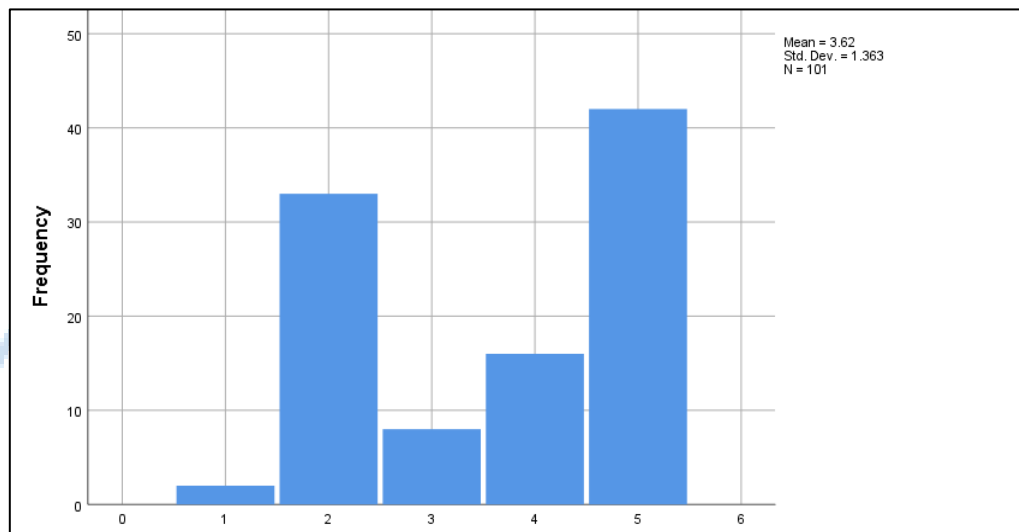


Figure 8: EL and personal growth

All the management students who agreed to take part in this survey were asked about their perceptions regarding the impact of practical experience on personal growth and self-awareness. It is interesting to note that the majority of the students (58%) have agreed that this has the capability of improving the personal growth and self-awareness of the participants. A minor gender disparity has been noticed as the number of females who have agreed to this statement is higher than the male, meaning the female students experience more personal growth and self-awareness in terms of EL.

Table 9: EI and preparedness for real-life challenges

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	30	29.7	29.7	31.7
	3	10	9.9	9.9	41.6
	4	18	17.8	17.8	59.4
	5	41	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

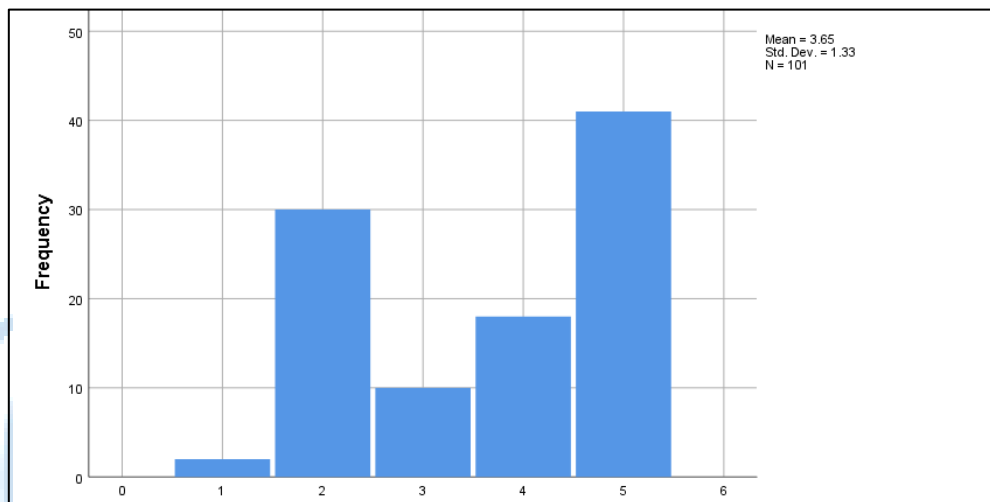


Figure 9: EI and preparedness for real-life challenges

The partakers were asked if they felt more prepared to handle real-life challenges due to their involvement in the EL. The majority of the partakers (59%) have agreed with this statement, meaning they are becoming more prepared to handle real-life challenges because of their involvement in the EL. As there is no gender disparity, it is safe to say that EL prepares both male and female students for real-life challenges.

Table 10: EI in time management and priorities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	24	23.8	23.8	26.7
	3	19	18.8	18.8	45.5
	4	8	7.9	7.9	53.5
	5	47	46.5	46.5	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

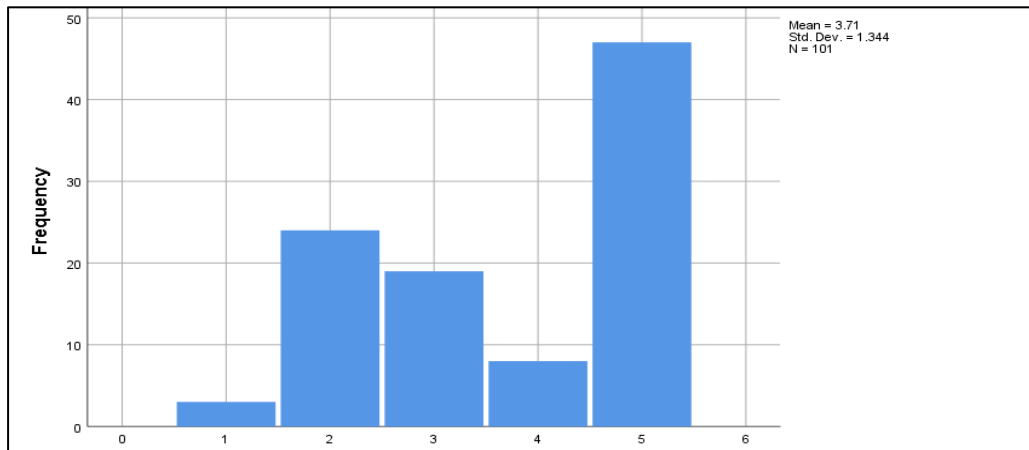


Figure 10: El time management and priorities

The participants were asked if EL have helped them achieve a better work-life balance by educating them about time management and priorities. The majority of the students (56%) have agreed to this proclamation as they have learnt about proper time management and priorities strategies, helping them to achieve work-life balance among both male and female students.

Table 11: El in time management and priorities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	31	30.7	30.7	32.7
	3	8	7.9	7.9	40.6
	4	21	20.8	20.8	61.4
	5	39	38.6	38.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

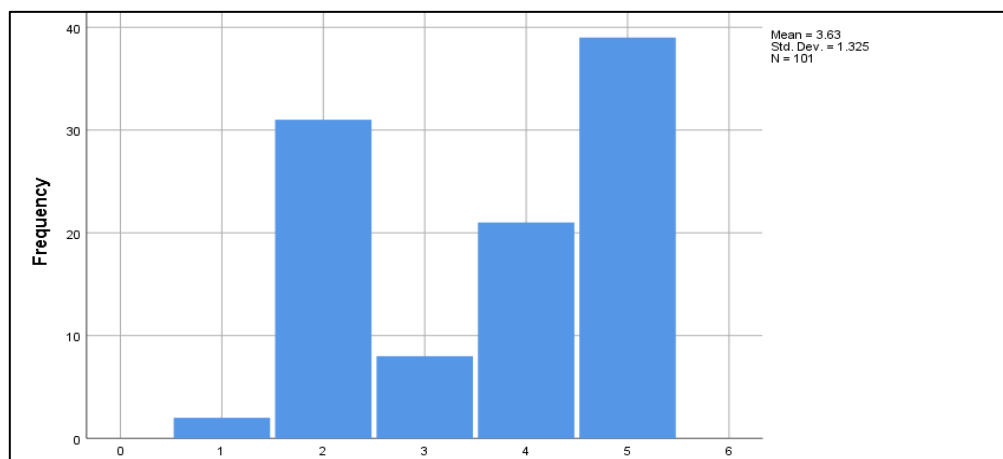


Figure 11: El time management and priorities

The survey has also enquired about the role of EL activities in improving the student's sense of purpose and direction in life. The majority of the students (60%) have accepted the fact that EL improves their sense of purpose and life. A minor disparity has been observed because the female students have supported this statement more compared to the male students.

Table 12: Ideal life

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	33	32.7	32.7	34.7
	3	8	7.9	7.9	42.6
	4	1	1.0	1.0	43.6
	5	5	5.0	5.0	48.5
	6	14	13.9	13.9	62.4
	7	38	37.6	37.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

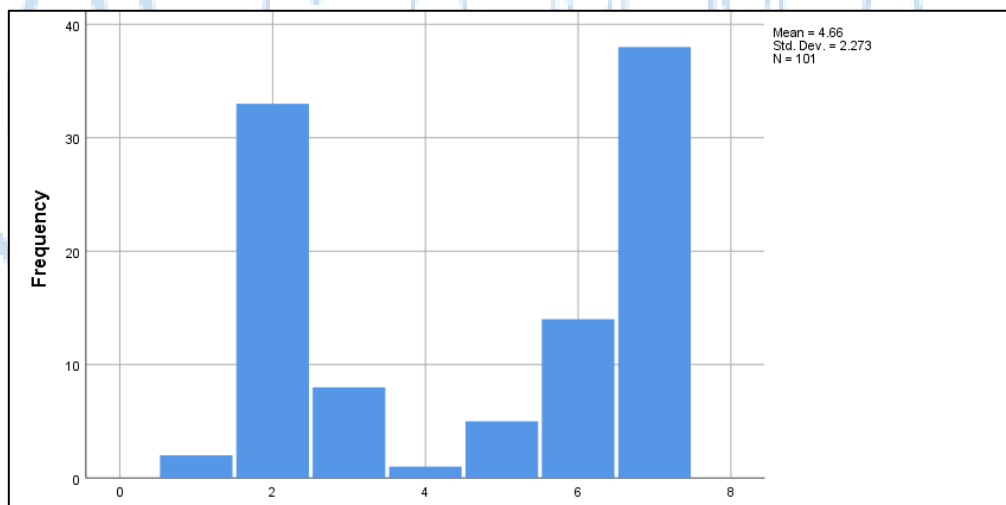


Figure 12: Ideal life

In this question, the participants were asked about if they believe their life is close to ideal, the majority of the participants have agreed to this statement. This means that a large section of MBA students, both male and female, are optimistic about their lives. However a large section have also disagreed, meaning they do not think that their lives are ideal; hence, they are focusing on education to solve their life issues.

Table 13: Life conditions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	29	28.7	28.7	30.7
	3	10	9.9	9.9	40.6
	4	1	1.0	1.0	41.6
	5	2	2.0	2.0	43.6
	6	20	19.8	19.8	63.4
	7	37	36.6	36.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

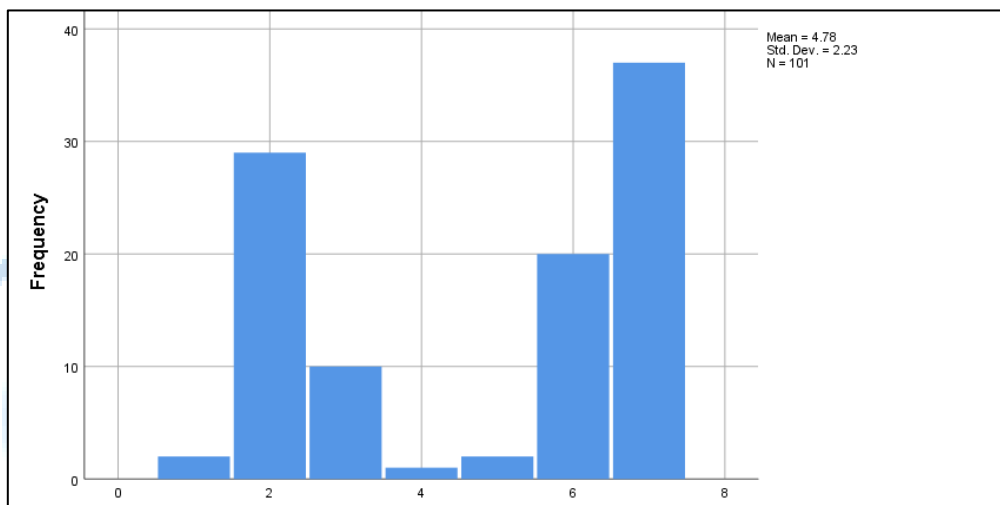


Figure 13: Life conditions

The management students were also asked if they think the conditions of their lives are excellent or not. A similar trend has been noticed, because a large section have agreed to this statement, whereas there are multiple participants who have disagreed as well. A gender disparity has been noticed because female students are more expectant compared to male students.

Table 14: Improvement in participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	29	28.7	28.7	30.7
	3	11	10.9	10.9	41.6
	5	5	5.0	5.0	46.5
	6	18	17.8	17.8	64.4
	7	36	35.6	35.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

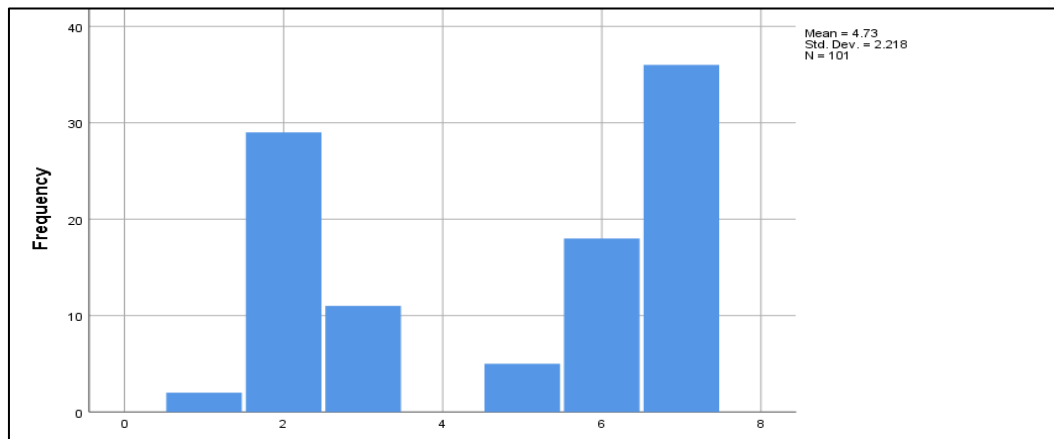


Figure 14: Improvement in participants

The participants were asked if they were able to develop agreements with followers in order to improve their participation. The majority of the partakers (54%) agreed with this statement, meaning they have the potential to become effective leaders in the upcoming years. There is no gender diversity, meaning both male and female management students hold the capability of becoming effective leaders.

Table 15: Greater leadership responsibilities

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	33	32.7	32.7	34.7
	3	5	5.0	5.0	39.6
	4	1	1.0	1.0	40.6
	5	3	3.0	3.0	43.6
	6	20	19.8	19.8	63.4
	7	37	36.6	36.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

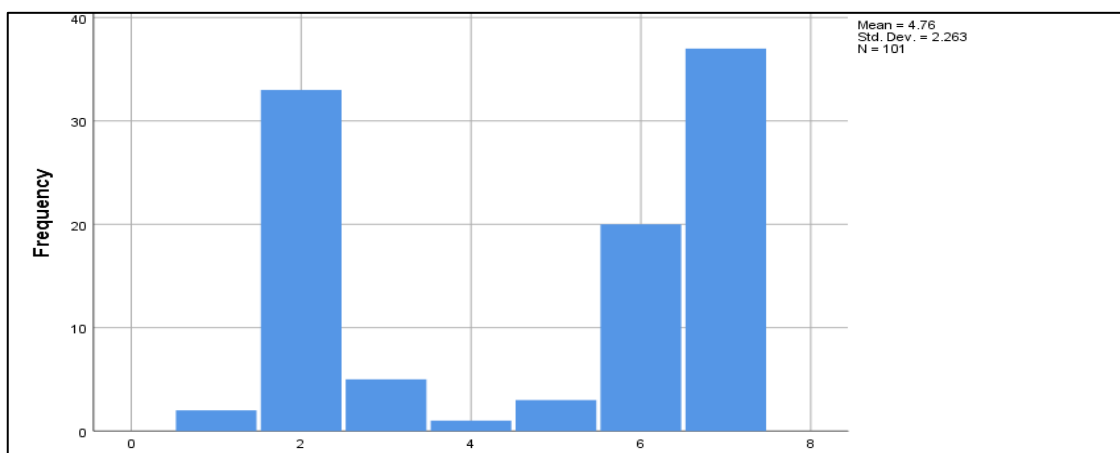


Figure 15: Greater leadership responsibilities

In this survey question, the partakers were asked about their capabilities in coaching followers to assume greater responsibilities for leadership. The majority of the contributors (57%) have agreed with this statement, meaning they have the capability of becoming effective leaders in the future.

Table 16: Energising the followers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	25	24.8	24.8	27.7
	3	9	8.9	8.9	36.6
	4	3	3.0	3.0	39.6
	5	4	4.0	4.0	43.6
	6	17	16.8	16.8	60.4
	7	40	39.6	39.6	100.0
	Total	101	100.0	100.0	

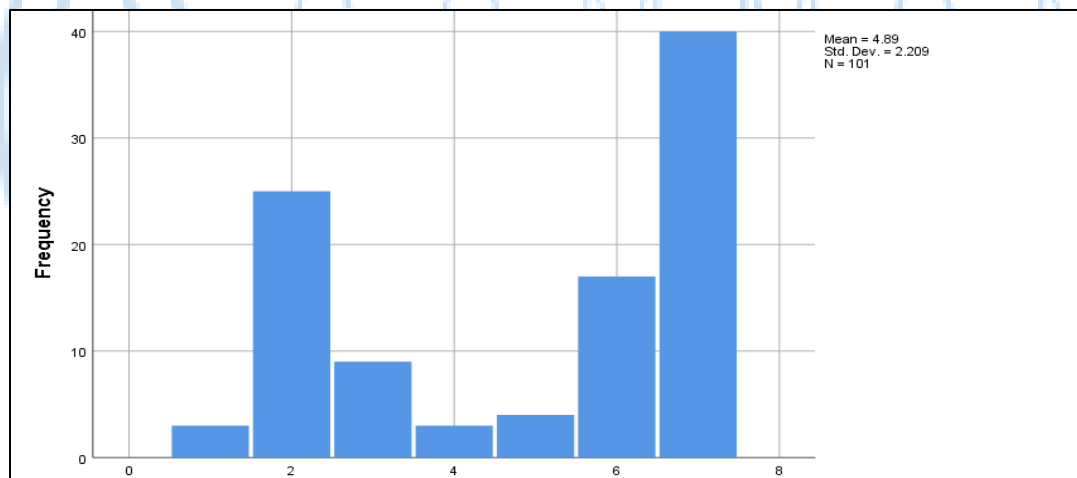


Figure 16: Energising the followers

The final question of this survey has enquired about the capability of the students to energise the followers in order to achieve their best. The majority of the participants (57%) agreed with this statement, meaning they have the capability of bringing out the best of the followers, a key quality of a leader.

Correlation analysis

The correlation analysis is generally used to evaluate the relationship between the dependent variable (leadership efficacy and life satisfaction) and the independent variable (EL, decision-

making, confidence, conflict resolution and personal growth). The relationship is estimated as .255,.280,259,.220, .218, .257, .270, .147, .211, .258, .244, .134, .170 and .132, which suggests an affirmative correlation between the independent and dependent variables. This means the outcomes of this research are credible and reliable.

Regression Analysis

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	129.067	15	8.604	13.807	.000 ^b
	Residual	52.973	85	.623		
	Total	182.040	100			

From the aforementioned graphical representation, it can be mentioned that the R-value is .842, and the standard error of the estimate is .789. Additionally, the F value is 13.807 whereas the DF is 15; from these data, the below table can be formed.

Hypothesis	Status
H1: EL has a positive impact on the leadership efficacy among male and female management students.	Accepted
H2: EL has a positive impact on life satisfaction among male and female management students.	Accepted

The F value is 13.807 which is relatively higher, and the Sig value is .000, which is lower than the standard significance levels of 0.05. This means the model's predictors, which is EL, significantly predict the dependent variables, which are leadership efficacy and life satisfaction.

Discussion

The critical assessment of the survey data has led to the identification of a positive relationship between the EL and the improvement in leadership efficacy among male and female management students. The EL generally includes case studies and projects which have a positive impact on the development of leadership skills, as the management students become capable of making decisions under pressure. Due to this kind of learning, the student also gains confidence in terms of handling leadership-related tasks, and they also get better at

conflict resolution. The EL are confirming hands-on experience to the students which will be helpful in becoming organisational leaders in the upcoming years. There is no doubt that theoretical aspects are crucial for management students, the hands-on experience prepares them to handle a wide range of tasks. The students are also developing their skills related to motivating their followers and energising them, which makes them more capable future leaders. There is no major evidence regarding gender disparity; hence, it is safe to say that EL helps in developing leadership efficacy among both male and female management students.

In addition to this, the assessment has shown that EL also has a positive impact on the life stratification of the management students. Due to the career tensions and academic pressure, the management students often feel overwhelmed; however, EL is improving satisfaction by contributing to personal growth. The EL is also empowering the students to handle real-life challenges as the students now have a sense of purpose in their lives. This also reflects on the conditions of life of the students, and they are overcoming the stress of job search and academic examinations. EL helps the students to become more aware of their own emotions, resulting in a better understanding of their needs and desires. It needs to be mentioned that self-awareness is a fundamental quality of great leaders. The assessment of the survey data has led to the understanding that EL contributes to the improvement of leadership skills and life satisfaction, which is the reason management academies are incorporating this learning style into the coursework.

Limitation and Practical Implication:

The smaller sample size can be considered as a limitation of this paper because the outcomes of this paper might not be applicable to all management students around the world. In the context of the practical implications, management universities might consider including EL in order to prepare students for leadership roles. Additionally, EL might be able to lower the academic burden and help the students tackle real-world problems with greater confidence and decision-making, resulting in better life satisfaction.

This study followed the survey method, and the insights of the management students were incorporated to draw the required conclusions. In the future, interviews might be organised among the professors because this will help in understanding the impact of EL on leadership efficacy and life satisfaction from a different perspective. On the contrary, pursuing a systematic literature review will be helpful in exploring the perception of different authors about this area of research..

Conclusion

From this paper, it can be concluded that the proper implication of the EI has the capability of augmenting the leadership efficacy of male and female management students by a large margin. Additionally, this form of learning also has the capability of improving the life satisfaction among the students, which is essential because very often, the management students feel overwhelmed because of the academic pressure and career tension. There is no doubt that the inclusion of the EL makes the students, both male and female, prepared for the future.

The management education facilities might focus on the usage of real world case studies along with simulations where the students can actively engage in solving real business problems. This will definitely help the students to develop a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics and improve their problem-solving abilities. Similarly, enabling leadership development workshops that focus on communication and emotional intelligence is important. This will help the students to build the confidence to take on leadership roles without much concern (Chan, 2023). Pairing students with experienced mentors in the field of management is beneficial because this will guide them through their overall learning journey. Mentorship will definitely allow the students to gain insights from real-life leaders, enhancing their sense of leadership potential while improving their life satisfaction through personal growth and connection. It is interesting to note that incorporating advanced technology in order to create virtual environments where all the students will be able to take part in leadership scenarios and decision-making processes will be beneficial. This will definitely allow the students to practice in a controlled environment, enhancing their leadership skills and well-being. Finally, enabling community service projects allows the students to apply management skills in the real-world context, improving life satisfaction and leadership abilities (Yan et al. 2021).

Future Research Scope

This study followed the survey method, and the insights of the management students were incorporated to draw the required conclusions. In the future, interviews might be organised among the professors because this will help in understanding the impact of EL on leadership efficacy and life satisfaction from a different perspective. On the contrary, pursuing a systematic literature review will be helpful in exploring the perception of different authors about this area of research.

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