

Research for University Students' Levels of Dealing with Stress from Different Types of Variables

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate university students' levels of dealing with stress, from different types of variables. The study was carried out on a total of 500 individuals, including 346 female and 154 male students studying at Atatürk University Kazim Karabekir Faculty of Education in 2016/2017 academic year. In this work, Oral, Çok ve Kutlu (2005) "The Level of dealing with Stress in Educational System" scale was for the students. SPSS 21 package program was used in the analysis of the data. For the analysis of the data, and in determining the demographics, the frequency distribution was used. T test was applied to examine the relationship between two independent variables and stress coping sub-dimensions and Anova Warians analysis tests were used to examine the relationship between two and over variables and stress subscale sub-dimensions. The difference between the variables has been interpreted on the basis of p0.05 significance level. According to the findings, it was found that, there is a significant difference between individuals' stress coping sub-dimensions and gender, book reading habits and spare time activity. There was no significant difference between age, family structure and monthly income variables. It was found out that the scores of female students were higher than the average scores of male students with regard to studying from students' gender and stress coping levels subscales, preparing for an exam and affective, behavioral sub-dimensions. The students who stated that they had the habit of reading books, were found to have high scores in studying, preparing for an exam and the affective behavioral sub-dimensions. It was deduced that the students who spent their leisure time with their family got higher scores from students who spent their spare times with their friends or alone, with regard to studying, preparing for an exam and the affective behavioral sub-dimensions. In order to make students, more effective and successful in educational system, the factors that affect the stress levels should be determined and similar studies are necessary in order to have positive effects for students, which, constitutes the part of the proposal of our study.

Keywords: University student, Stress, Dealing with stress

INTRODUCTION

The word stress is originated from Latin word "estricitia" and it was used in the meanings of sorrow, grief, disaster, calamity and anguish in 17th century. In the 18th and 19th century, the word stress started to be used for people, objects, organs and mental structures to express power, pressure and difficulty (Güçlü, 2001). On the other hand, Schermerhorn defined the word stress as the feeling of tension and the intensity when the individual encounters unusual requests, restrictions or opportunities (Pehlivan, 1995). Some of the definitions of stress refer to the importance of stimulants, some others touch on the significance of physiological, behavioral, and psychological arguments. Also, a group of researchers focuses on the personal factors of interaction between stimulants and reaction, in other words solution methods of people (Balaban, 2000). Stress has a negative effect on the productivity of the individual; it is a situation resulted from where the power that provide the harmony between individuals and their settings, the system leads the attitudes and behaviours of individuals starts to threaten their physical and the mental health in response to stimulants (Gökdeniz, 2005).

Stressful events for people are generally described as "stressful life events". For example, getting fired, the death of a family member, going to a place you've never been before, starting to a new school can probably be seen as stress causing events. Many factors such as people's developmental stages, their sex, the environment they live in, the period they live can cause the individual to live a stressful life (Köknel, 1988). There are two important stress factors in everyday life that increase the stress of the individual and cause stress in advance. One of these factors is the work life of the person. When people became unable to enjoy their jobs, the daily stress level increases. Factors such as conflicts between co-workers, work intensity, communication disorders, working with low wages are important reasons of stress (Baltaş and Baltaş, 1993). The goals and expectations that have very slim chance to be actualise are the second reason of the stress. When putting goals, recognizing your own skills and capacity and trying really hard to reach that goal creates a motivational effect on individual. However, putting a goal highly above of the individual's skillset causes stress for them (Csikszentmihayli, 2005).

Stress symptoms can be categorized in 4 groups; physical symptoms (Headache, sleeping disorders, fatigue etc.), emotional symptoms (anxiety, depression, anger, sensitivity etc.), mental symptoms (attention deficiency, high forgetfulness, unproductivity, increase in making errors etc) and social symptoms (decrease in trust feelings, blaming other people, sulking etc.) (Braham, 1998). Stress causes heavy consequences for people. According to

the recent researches, it is a fact that there is a very important relation between stress and health. While production and productivity losses are being experienced as a result of stress-related diseases, on the other hand people die due to short-term and long-term diseases which are resulted from stress problems (Aydın, 2002). It can not be predicted which individuals will experience their burnout and their health will deteriorate as a result of stress when they experienced. However, it is possible to get some clues about the correct diagnosis where the symptoms of stress is observed on someone. Then, it is the vital responsibility of every individual, especially the executives, to make a good analysis of the stress and the causes of stress that people live in (Akpınar, 2006).

The Education system in Turkey is based on a highly competitive test system from first grade in school until pre-professional era which originated from Journal of Educational Sciences Research. The recent increase in information resources with the globalization makes it really difficult for students to adapt to fast changing conditions and to cope with this difficulties in a proper way.

As a result of these difficulties, academic burnout and stress are emerging in individuals (Kutsal ve Bilge, 2012).

The belief that an individual can fight through the negativities in her/his life is the most important thing in terms of stress management. The individual must believe that she/he is capable of eliminating the adverse effects of stress and that she/he must believe strongly that she/he can keep repeating this eliminating process in her/his life. By this eliminating process, people should not forget that the purpose of stress management is not to completely erase stress but to keep stress under control by creating a positive force to efficiency, energy and practicability (Arslan, 2016). As a result, it is necessary for an individual experiencing stress problem to determine the source of stress and whether it is right to use her/his will, mind, patience or adaptability to solve this problem (Barutçugil, 2002).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The purpose of this research to study the levels of stress coping by the university students in terms of different variables. On the other hand, it examines whether there is a relation between the students' level of stress coping and sex, age, family structure, family income levels differ according to their significance level. This study was carried out on a total of 500 sample individuals including 346 female and 154 male students attending Atatürk University Kazım Karabekir Education Faculty in 2016/2017 academic year. The independent variables used in the research were determined by the personal information form prepared by the researcher. In the study, the scale of "Achieving Level of Stress management in Education" developed by Oral, Çok and Kutlu (2005) was used. To measure the reliability of the scale, the internal consistency (Cronbach Alfa Reliability Coefficient, 77 for all scales, 79 for the first factor, 52 for the second factor and 38 for the third factor) and test-retest reliability ($r = .67$ for the scale, 59 for the first factor, 51 for the second factor and 50 for the third factor, $p < .000$) are checked. In the analysis of the data, to determine the demographic characteristics frequency distribution, T test to examine the relation between two independent variables, Anova variance tests to examine the relation between two variables were applied. The LSD test was used to determine the which group is the source of differences. All these tests were analyzed in the SPSS 21 package program and the level of significance was taken as $p < 0.05$. The Alpha value was calculated as 742 in the analysis of reliability and validity.

FINDINGS

This section includes findings and interpretations of those findings. In Table 1 the frequency distributions of the demographic characteristics of the students participating in the research is presented. In the study, the T test was used to compare the variables obtained from subscales of stress coping levels and sex - book reading habits. Statistical results are given in Tables 2 and 6. Anova Variance analysis test was used to compare the variables obtained from subscales of stress coping levels, age, family structure, income level and leisure time. Statistical results are given in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 7.

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Individuals Participating in the Survey

Variables	Number (N)	Percent (%)	
Sex	Male	154	30,8
	Female	346	69,2
	Total	500	100,0
Age	18 years old and under	116	23,2
	Between 19-21 ages	183	36,6
	22 years old and above	201	40,2
Family Structure	Nuclear Family	341	68,2
	Extended Family	141	28,2
	Fragmented Family	18	3,6
Income Level	0- 1000 TL and below	51	10,2
	B/w 1001- 1500TL	113	22,6
	B/w 1501- 3000 TL	232	46,4
	3001 and above	104	20,8
Book Reading Habit	Yes	364	72,8
	No	136	27,2
Whom spend time with	Family	230	46,0
	Friend	191	38,2
	Alone	79	15,8

The study was carried out on a total of 500 individuals, 154 male and 346 female under the age of 18 and above the age of 22.

Table 2: The T-values of the Differences Between the Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores Taken from Stress Coping Scale for Female and Male Students

	Sex	N	X	Sd	t	P
Studying and preparing for an exam	Male	154	32,2727	6,82103	-3,146	,002*
	Female	346	34,2746	6,45316	-3,080	
Sense of Responsibility	Male	154	14,5195	4,49869	1,379	,169
	Female	346	13,9335	4,33706	1,359	
Affective Behavioral Dimension	Male	154	11,3117	2,28527	-2,100	,036*
	Female	346	11,7746	2,27170	-2,095	

It is seen that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the students' gender and stress coping levels subscales in studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral subscale according to p: 0.05 level. When this difference is examined, it is determined that average scores of female students are higher than average scores of male students.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores Received from Stress Coping Subscales of the Students of Different Age Groups

	Age	N	X	Sd	F	P
Studying and preparing for an exam	18 years old and under	116	33,1293	6,36093	1,864	,173
	B/w age 19 and 21	183	33,2295	6,17081		
	Age 22 and above	201	34,3532	7,12949		
	Total	500	33,6580	6,62668		
Affective Behavioral Dimension	18 years old and under	116	14,4655	4,02045	,734	,427
	B/w age 19 and 21	183	13,8415	4,10066		
	Age 22 and above	201	14,1592	4,83472		
	Total	500	14,1140	4,39131		
Sense of Responsibility	18 years old and under	116	11,3879	2,56658	2,574	,083
	B/w age 19 and 21	183	11,4809	2,08564		
	Age 22 and above	201	11,9104	2,26538		
	Total	500	11,6320	2,28364		

It is seen that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students in the different age group on the stress level of success subscales compared to p: 0.05 level. Although there is no meaningful difference, it is observed that the level of stress coping increases in parallel with the point average as the age progresses in studying and preparation and responsibility subscales.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores Received from Stress Coping Subscales of Students with Different Family Structure

	Family Structure	N	X	Sd	F	P
Studying and preparing for an exam	Nuclear Family	341	34,0616	6,20287	4,221	,074
	Extended Family	141	33,1844	7,16300		
	Fragmented Family	18	29,7222	8,68268		
	Total	500	33,6580	6,62668		
Affective Behavioral Dimension	Nuclear Family	341	14,1672	4,41637	,085	,917
	Extended Family	141	13,9858	4,29116		
	Fragmented Family	18	14,1111	4,90964		
	Total	500	14,1140	4,39131		
Sense of Responsibility	Nuclear Family	341	11,6891	2,20497	3,597	,176
	Extended Family	141	11,6738	2,29439		
	Fragmented Family	18	10,2222	3,20946		
	Total	500	11,6320	2,28364		

It is seen that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students with different family structure scores of stress coping subscales according to p: 0.05 level. Although there is no significant difference, it is observed that the mean scores of the individuals in the nuclear family structure are higher than the individuals in the extended family and fragmented family structure scores of the subscales of stress coping level.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores of the Family Income Levels of the Students with Different Stressful Coping Scales

	Income Level	N	X	Sd	F	P
Studying and preparing for an exam	0- 1000 TL	51	34,0196	5,91436	,131	,935
	1001- 1500 TL	113	33,8319	6,40996		
	1501- 3000 TL	232	33,6078	6,82728		
	3001 and above	104	33,4038	6,81021		
	Total	500	33,6580	6,62668		
Affective Behavioral Dimension	0- 1000 TL	51	15,3137	4,11091	1,626	,155
	1001- 1500 TL	113	14,2566	4,13776		
	1501- 3000 TL	232	13,9009	4,51295		
	3001 and above	104	13,8462	4,47381		
	Total	500	14,1140	4,39131		
Sense of Responsibility	0- 1000 TL	51	11,4118	1,95117	,864	,451
	1001- 1500 TL	113	11,8584	2,38248		
	1501- 3000 TL	232	11,6681	2,30513		
	3001 and above	104	11,4135	2,27954		
	Total	500	11,6320	2,28364		

It is seen that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students with different levels of family income from the subscales of stress level of coping according to the p: 0.05 level. As the family income levels of the sample individuals increased with the lack of significant difference, it was observed that the mean scores of the studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral dimensions of the subscales of stress coping levels decreased.

Table 6: The T-values of the Differences Between the Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores of the Reading Status of the Students and the Scores Received from the Stress Coping Scales

	Habit of Reading	N	X	Sd	t	P
Studying and preparing for an exam	Yes	265	36,5472	5,60494	5,319	,000*
	No	235	30,4000	6,17148	5,004	
Sense of Responsibility	Yes	265	14,3094	4,91851	-1,271	,204
	No	235	13,8936	3,70628	-1,316	
Affective Behavioral Dimension	Yes	265	12,1472	2,24559	4,203	,000*
	No	235	11,0511	2,18912	4,081	

The relationship between students' reading habits and the level of stress coping subscales showed a significant difference in the course studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral subscale according to P.0.05 level. It is observed that the mean score of the students who stated that they have the habit of reading the book is also high.

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores of Students' Leisure Time and Stress Coping Scales

	Spend time /w	N	X	Sd	F	P
Studying and preparing for an exam	Family	230	34,9609	5,95348	9,994	,000*
	Friend	191	32,9843	6,77260		
	Alone	79	31,4937	7,36742		
	Total	500	33,6580	6,62668		
Affective Behavioral Dimension	Family	230	14,2522	4,51266	,238	,800
	Friend	191	14,0366	4,12613		
	Alone	79	13,8987	4,68931		
	Total	500	14,1140	4,39131		
Sense of Responsibility	Family	230	11,9478	2,20695	4,174	,015*
	Friend	191	11,3351	2,20353		
	Alone	79	11,4304	2,58538		
	Total	500	11,6320	2,28364		

It is seen that there is a significant difference in the course studying and exam preparation and responsibility sub-dimensions in the relationship between the students who spend their spare time with according to the level of P.0.05. This difference is also observed in the fact that the students who spend their free time with their family have a higher mean score than the students who spend their leisure time alone or with their friends.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the stress levels of students with different demographic characteristics were analyzed in terms of different variables.

It is seen that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the students' sex and stress coping levels subscales in the course studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral subscale according to p: 0.05 level. When this difference is examined, it is confirmed that average scores of female students are higher than average scores of male students. In Yurtsever's (2009) "Kişilik Özelliklerinin Stres Düzeyine Etkisi ve Stresle Başa Çıkma Yolları: Üniversite Öğrencileri Üzerinde Bir Araştırma" study, females are able to use their strategies to cope with stress better than men when facing of stressful events. This result is parallel to our study.

It is seen that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students in the different age group on the stress level of success subscales compared to p: 0.05 level. Although there is no meaningful difference, it is observed that the level of stress coping increases in parallel to the point average as the age progresses in course studying and exam preparation and responsibility subscales.

It is seen that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students with different family structure scores of stress coping subscales according to p: 0.05 level. Although there is no significant difference, it is also observed that the mean score of the individuals with nuclear family structure scores from the subscales of stress coping is higher than the individuals with extended family and fragmented family structures.

It is seen that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students with different levels of family income from the subscales of stress level of coping according to the p: 0.05 level. As the family income levels of the sample individuals increased with the lack of significant difference, it was observed that the mean scores of the studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral dimensions of the subscales of stress coping levels decreased. Yildirim and Ark (2011) reported that the high school students' problem solving skills and influencing factors did not have any effect on the perception of problem solving ability of the individuals by their monthly income. This result is similar to our study.

The relationship between students' reading habits and the level of stress coping subscales showed a significant difference in the course studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral subscale according to P.0.05 level. It is observed that the average score of the students who stated that they have the habit of reading the book is also high.

It is seen that there is a significant difference in the course studying and exam preparation and affective behavioral sub-dimensions in relation to the mean score of the students who spend their free time and the points they have taken from the subscales of stress level of coping. according to the level of P.0.05 This difference is also observed in the fact that the students who spend their free time with their family have a higher mean score than the students who spend their leisure time alone or with their friends.

Taking the necessary precautions to reduce stress is crucial in terms of education. Just because students' anxiety levels have an effect on learning, and when students are stressed, the brain produces a response to the stress problem and this results in decreased performance in the functioning of neural systems in connection with learning and memory. When it is thought that the situations that cause stress and stress in the students affect the learning success on the students, extensive researches should be carried out on this subject and necessary importance should be taken.

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