



THE STYLES OF COPING WITH STRESS AMONG THE STUDENTS STUDYING AT THE SCHOOLS WHICH ADMIT THE STUDENTS WITH A SPECIAL TALENT EXAM

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Abstract:

The purpose of the research was to determine the styles of coping with stress among the students studying at the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam. The scope of the research involved the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam, the sample group included total 413 students; 226 males, 187 females, having education at the Faculty of Sport Sciences (SBF), the Dilek Sabancı Conservatory (DSK) and the Faculty of Fine Arts (GSF) in Selçuk University. Firstly, a personal information form and the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1980) and created as a short form by Şahin and Durak (1995) were used. By testing the homogeneity and variance of data, the Independent Sample t-test for the gender factor, the One Way Anova for multiple comparisons, the Tukey test for the resources of differences were applied. The Cronbach alpha value was determined to be 0,76 for the Coping Questionnaire. Depending on the gender factor; statistically significant differences were observed in all of sub-dimensions to cope with stress among the SBF, DSK and GSF students ($P<0.05$). Given the school types, there was a lower point in the SBF student averages concerning the desperation dimension rather than the other two schools as there was a higher average in the Conservatory students' optimism dimension rather than the other two schools, a lower average in their social support points, these differences were regarded to be statistically significant ($P<0.05$). In accordance with the school type, differences between active and passive coping strategies did not have stable changes and any specific situation was not

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observed in the school type. This situation can result from the specific exam criteria and the ability and measurement techniques of the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam.

Keywords: special talent, exam, stress, reasons of stress, university student

1. Introduction

Nowadays stress has kept on affecting all livings without losing its effects and with heavier results based on developing technology and life conditions. Intensity and effects of stress may depend on individuals and structures of societies; furthermore, they may depend on many social, cultural, economic, psychological, physiological factors. Even though stress is defined in various ways under different fields and disciplines, it is obvious that stress creates same effects on individuals and societies. The efforts for overcoming with stress, taking stress under control, turning stress on individuals and societies' favor are among current issues of recent times. Stress can be evaluated in unusual structures and situations by individuals and societies.

Since it is related with distinctive scientific fields, there is a common definition about stress, so researchers interested in stress reveal stress definitions in various ways (Akgemci, 2001; Güney, 2001; Ekinci and Ekici, 2003). As an athlete may become under a lot of strain at last seconds of a competition, an artist may feel stressed when completing one's own picture with a last brush. Like the stress concept, another substantial factor is of skills to overcome with stress.

The word stress originates from the words "estrece" in French, "estrica" in Latin. Stress is a reaction of an organism to new conditions in order to manage (Erkuş, 1994). As the stress concept was presented as a disaster, a nuisance, a calamity, a trouble, a sorrow, a grief in 17th century, this concept was used as power, pressure oriented at objects, persons, organs and psychological structures in the 18th and 19th centuries (Batlaş and Baltaş 2008). As stress was generally defined as a psychological tension in literature, Selye (1973) described stress as an unspecific reaction by an organism to any demand which put an organism under pressure, the capability of avoidance from stress represented the moment for death. Literature is highly full of explanations in terms of the stress concept, and lots of different fields and disciplines concentrates on many distinctive topics such as stress, concept of stress, reasons of stress, types of stress. Steinberg and Ritzmann (1990) adopted A Living Systems Approach and paid attention to some necessary concepts (Strain, Exertion, Distress, Resistance, Resilience, Adjustment Process). In this approach, stress is an indicator with existential values by

the system to adjust the disrupted balance and re-adapt to the process if an element, information or energy which enter in the system or exists from the system, are not enough or are excessive or are not compatible with ones in the system.

Stress represents a danger and a warning in individuals in general terms and when becoming aware of it or becoming involved in this process, stress-related results are clearly seen. It causes many emotional situations such as happiness, trouble, anger, aggressiveness, and negative situations in individuals, the most importantly, even if they are short-term. Literature does not only mention about the negative effects of stress. As it is a threat risk affecting all livings, it is dealt as a case making individuals active and providing them motivation depending on the individual-environment interaction (Aydın, 2004; Tutar et al. 2006).

Stress has a specific structure peculiar to individuals; it comes into existence in each second of life cycle when possible but not clear when to occur. It is not true to say that it only occurs in work life or under difficult professional conditions. Managing stress factor-oriented situations and feelings rightly will be motivational acquirements of stress.

Even if stress definitions and classifications ranging from each other are seen in literature, there are two common types of stress including positive and negative ones. Barutçugil (2004) stated that when stress had suitable features and details, it was changed into a case which made contributions to individuals' development, strength and experiences. Rowshan (2003) emphasized that it would be incorrect to describe stress as a negative result only with disadvantages but as a motivation instrument which presented colors to life. Selye (1977) suggested that any environment without stress would not be appropriate and even if just a bit, stress was necessary for individuals' lives.

It is an incontrovertible truth that negative stress causes many destructive and permanent cases. Şimşek et al. (2008) informed that situations such as dying, becoming unemployed, not complying with work requirements, not fulfilling social roles, not having necessary progress in profession, having communication handicaps served as examples for negative stress. Most of the studies show that high and negative levels of stress cause physical and psychological uneasiness, loss of power in individuals (Baltaş and Baltaş, 2008; Barutçugil, 2004).

Intensity of stress and efficiency of coping mechanisms affect psychological and physical situations (Farley et al. 2005). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) mentioned about two main titles as problem-based and emotion-based coping skills in overcoming with stress. The problem-based coping style involves both relevant steady, rational, planned efforts for solving the problem and relevant efforts between aggressive persons for

changing the situation. The emotion-based coping style also involves estrangement, establishment of self-control, search for social support, escape-avoidance, responsibility-taking and positive reassessment (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).

Whatever type, resource and reason of stress are, when negative characteristics such as uneasiness, unhappiness, tension, anger, anxiety, aggressiveness, failure which affect life quality, are allowed to have forms which can be checked and directed, their harmful effects may be turned into motivational factors in our daily lives. Most of university students try to adapt to concepts and life styles varying from their families given the educational issues and so they become familiar with stress. In addition to their cares of life, factors such as expectations of high points, intensive homeworks, limited time, inefficient environments for studying, friends and family relations are among other variables causing stress (Savcı and Aysan, 2014).

University students are involved in a critical life cycle by themselves when they step from adolescence into adulthood. Adaptation efforts for both education life at university and social roles give rise to increasing resources of stress. The schools which admit the students with a special talent exam have specific criteria and specific capability measurement techniques. In all of musical, sportive and artistic activities, the stress concept is experienced at different levels and in various depths. Skills for coping with stress have great importance to reveal how our university students involved in the last stage of adolescence period experience the stress factor and how educational factors in different capability fields affect the stress factor. Depending on the sportive, musical and artistic factors, original researches about coping ways with stress will bring a stress case which provides motivation at a positive level.

2. Material and Method

The aim of the research was to reveal the styles of coping with stress among the students studying at the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam. The research scope consisted of the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam, the sample group also consisted of total 413 students including 226 males, 187 females having education at the Faculty of Sport Sciences (SBF), the Dilek Sabancı Conservatory (DSK) and the Faculty of Fine Arts (GSF) in Selçuk University.

At first, “the Ways of Coping Questionnaire” (WCQ) developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1980), created as a short form by Şahin and Durak (1995) and a personal information form were used in this study. The last form of the questionnaire with 30 items consisted of 5 factors including an self-confidence approach, a desperation approach, an obedience approach, an optimism approach and a social support search

approach. From the sub-dimensions, these were assessed as a self-confidence approach with the items numbered (8, 10, 14, 16, 20, 23, 26), as an optimism approach with the items numbered (2, 4, 6, 12, 18) as a desperation approach with the items numbered (3, 7, 11, 19, 22, 25, 27, 28), as an obedience approach with the items numbered (5, 13, 15, 17, 21, 24) and as a social support search approach with the items numbered 1 (inverse), 9 (inverse), 29, 30. Among these factors, when the points from the self-confidence, optimism and social support search approaches increase, persons use active strategies of coping with stress; when the points from the desperation and obedience approaches increase, they use passive strategies of coping with stress.

By testing the homogeneity and variance of data, the independent Sample t-test for the gender factor, the One Way Anova for multiple comparisons, the Tukey test for the resources of differences were used herein. The Cronbach alpha value was estimated to be 0,76 for the Coping Questionnaire.

3. Findings

Table 1: Gender based differences

Gender	n	Self-Confidence		Optimism		Desperation		Obedience		Social Support	
		X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss
Male	226	18,65	2,08	13,26	1,84	17,52	2,39	14,36	1,87	10,87	1,61
Female	187	20,04	2,02	14,34	1,81	16,89	2,28	10,07	1,99	13,14	1,49
	P		,000*		,000*		,007*		,000*		,000*

* Intergroup significant difference.

The female students' self-confidence averages ($20,04 \pm 2,02$) were higher than the male students' average values ($18,65 \pm 2,08$) and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). In the optimism sub-dimension, the female students' averages ($14,34 \pm 1,81$) were regarded to be higher than the male students' averages ($13,26 \pm 1,84$) and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). In the desperation sub-dimension, the male students' averages ($17,52 \pm 2,39$) were estimated to be higher rather than the female students' values and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). In the obedience sub-dimension, the female students' averages ($10,07 \pm 1,99$) were found to be lower than the male students' averages ($14,36 \pm 1,87$) and the difference was regarded to be statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). In the social support sub-dimension, the female students' averages ($13,14 \pm 1,49$) were lower than the male students' averages ($10,87 \pm 1,61$) and the difference was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$).

Table 2: School type based differences

School Type	n	Self-Confidence		Optimism		Desperation		Obedience		Social Support	
		X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss
		Faculty of Sport Sciences	148	19,01	2,09	13,29	1,99 ^a	16,79	2,35 ^a	12,63	2,34
Conservatory	112	19,52	2,14	14,06	1,64 ^b	17,13	2,18	12,35	3,17	11,65	1,83 ^b
Fine Arts	153	19,37	2,24	13,95	1,93 ^b	17,74	2,41 ^b	12,27	3,11	11,73	1,88 ^b
	P		,139		,001*		,002*		,529		,017*

^{a,b} "Intergroup significant difference.

As seen Table 2; there were not any statistical differences in the self-confidence and obedience sub-dimensions among the SBF, DSK and GSF students. In the optimism sub-dimension, the SBF students (13,26 ± 1,99) had lower averages than the DSK (14,06 ± 1,64) and GSF (13,95 ± 1,93) students and the differences were considered to be statistically significant (P<0.05). In the desperation sub-dimension, there was a difference between the SBF students' averages (16,79 ± 2,35) and the GSF students' averages (17,74 ± 2,41) and the difference was statistically significant (P<0.05). In the social support sub-dimension, the SBF students' values (12,26 ± 2,00) were higher than the DSK (11,65 ± 1,83) and GSF (11,73 ± 1,88) students' averages and the differences were regarded to be statistically significant (P<0.05).

Table 3: Age factor based differences

Age	n	Self-Confidence		Optimism		Desperation		Obedience		Social Support	
		X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss	X	Ss
		Age 20-23	59	19,25	2,21	13,63	1,88	16,98	2,54	13,02	2,71 ^b
Age 24-27	258	19,24	2,18	13,67	1,92	17,27	2,34	12,57	2,89 ^b	11,91	1,87 ^b
Age 28-31	96	19,39	2,11	14,02	1,86	17,29	2,30	11,64	2,79 ^a	12,38	1,83 ^a
	P		,859		,268		,674		,005*		,000*

^{a,b} Intergroup significant difference.

When examined Table 3, any statistical differences were not seen in the sub-dimensions of self-confidence, optimism and desperation due to the age factor. In the obedience sub-dimension, the averages of the students included in the age group 28-31 (11,64 ± 2,79) were lower than the averages of the age group 20-23 (13,02 ± 2,71) and the age group 24-27 (12,57 ± 2,89) and the difference was determined to be statistically significant (P<0.05). In the social support sub-dimension, the averages of the age group 28-31 (12,38 ± 1,83) were estimated to be higher than the averages of the age group 20-23

(11,05 ± 2,05) and the age group 24-27 (11,91 ± 1,87) and the difference was considered to be statistically significant ($P < 0.05$).

4. Discussion and Results

In this paper focused on the determination of differences in the styles of coping with stress among the students having education at the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam, statistically significant differences were observed in all of coping sub-dimensions given the gender factor ($P < 0.05$; Table 1). In literature some researches showed that the females were more affective in terms of the strategies of managing stress than the males, our research findings were parallel to these ones as well (Altundağ, 2011; Çavdarlı, 2013; Çelik, 2008; Kara and Koç, 2009; Üzümlü, 2010; Balık, 2017; Cengiz et al. 2016). Cengiz et al. (2016) informed that when the female students' perceived stress levels went up, they trusted in themselves more and made efforts actively, cognitively and logically in order to assess the solution ways, change the solution-related situations carefully and schemingly. According to Savcı and Aysan (2014), the perception of stress varied in terms of gender, thus the ways of coping with stress differed from each other, some researches failed to explain the nature of differences between the males and the females about the ways of coping with stress clearly (Matud, 2004). It is important that the relevant differences and changes based on the gender factor in our study are similar to these studies. Leastwise, some literature researches show that there is no difference in gender (Hosseinalipour, 2015; Turna, 2014).

From the sub-dimensions of stress in our study; the self-confidence, optimism, social support values were statistically higher in the females rather than the males on average ($P < 0.05$; Table 1), the sub-dimensions of desperation and obedience were statistically higher in the males rather than the females ($P < 0.05$; Table 1), the female students were more successful at determining the strategies of coping with stress than the male students. Also, the females had higher averages in the sub-dimension of social support-taking, the findings of this research were similar to these researches (Aysan and Bozkurt, 2000; Flynn et al. 2009; Şahin and Durak, 1995; Türküm, 1999). As the emotion-focused strategy of coping with stress, search behaviours for social support were more efficient in the females.

Depending on the age factor, from the sub-dimensions of stress, in the sub-dimensions of self-confidence, optimism and desperation there were no statistically significant differences, in the sub-dimensions of obedience and social support there were statistically significant differences ($P < 0.05$; Table 3). In literature it is possible to

find different research results based on age; there are researches (Erkmen and Çetin, 2008; Çelik, 2008; Kara and Koç, 2009) suggesting that the strategies of coping with stress are positively affected by increasing ages as well as researches (Üzüm, 2010; Özgan et al. 2008; Özkaya et al. 2008; Yurtsever, 2009) showing that there are not differences in terms of age. Our research has similar features with the researches presenting the positive effects of age on the styles of managing stress. Here, the points associated with obedient behaviours were lower and the points associated with social support were higher, this can be called when the students get older, they reach at a better level about the ways of coping with stress.

Among the SBF, DSK and GSF students, there were no statistically significant differences in the sub-dimensions of self-confidence and obedience, there were statistically significant differences in the sub-dimensions of optimism, desperation and social support ($P < 0.05$; Table 2). Experiencing stress at different ways and dimensions by the students studying at different fields and schools can be perceived as a normal situation. Alaskan et al. (2015) determined that stress levels lowered among the university students included in the case group listening to the shaman drum and they could control their anger by expressing it well rather than the control group. Our research results are similar to that one and this may clarify that educational factors included in the artistic structure leave positive marks on stress rather than physical capability education-oriented factors.

The resources of differences in the sub-dimensions of stress at the schools which admit the students with a special talent exam may be considered as the special talent exam criteria of schools, capability differences, affective, cognitive and psychomotor field differences and their own specific structures. The conservatory students had a higher average in the optimism sub-dimension and this difference was regarded to be statistically significant ($P < 0.05$; Table 2). Due to this result, the students who study at music and music related education fields, can be considered to more optimistic for life. The desperation points were lower among the students having sportive education rather than the other two schools, this gives an idea that ones interested in sportive activities and education have desperation at lower sub-dimensions rather than artistic activities. The SBF students' social support points were higher than the other two schools, because they participate in sportive activities actively and passively and give more places to the social support concept due to sport related education factors.

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