

Chapter 15

PERCEIVED STRESS IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS RESIDING AT DORMITORIES IN İSTANBUL: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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1. INTRODUCTION

During higher education years, adolescents are often separated from their families and, as such, must adapt to an entirely new physical, biological and social environment. They are, therefore, exposed to physical and social stressors at this period and are confronted with life uncertainties ranging from the thought of finding career paths to balancing academic engagements with usual family and social disengagement. Stress has been observed to be prevalent among university students all over the world in a number of studies (1-6) and as such Rehmani, Khan and Fatima (7) reported that students exhibited some level of stress, anxiety and depression in a study conducted among medical students, nursing and dentistry students at a private university in Saudi Arabia. Stress impacts negatively on individuals' concentration ability, problem-solving ability and decision-making skills (8).

Many factors have been attributed to stress in individuals, including physical and psycho-social factors (9, 10). Gender, room sharing, education expenses, academic performance, cell phone usage and harassment at the university

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study and a higher sample size. We also recommend the inclusion of variables such as blood pressure values, weight, technology use habits and substance use status in future study design.

5. CONCLUSION

Regardless of varying socio-demographic characteristics, the perceived stress scores of students are neither very high nor very low, which can be interpreted as manageable stress levels. Our findings, when interpreted in the light of the aforementioned literature, imply that it is not a justified generalization to assert that a certain socio-demographic factor is a definite determining factor for perceived stress. For instance, if a student has a poor financial status, this fact alone doesn't provide sufficient reason to conclude that this student is predisposed to stress. Therefore, if socio-demographic factors are evaluated to determine if a student is predisposed to stress, it is important to consider that these factors don't necessarily determine the final outcome. On the other hand, our findings don't imply that socio-demographic factors do not contribute to stress at all. The fact that no relationship was observed between perceived stress and socio-demographic characteristics in this study is likely due to other interrelated determinants of stress being absent (e.g. not being in the exam week, not having to commute to the university, not having to pay tuition fees).

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