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Investigating of The Relationship between Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Esteem and Stress Coping Attitudes

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Abstract

This study focused on the analysis about the relationship between pre-service teachers' self-esteem and attitudes of coping with stress. The sampling was consisted of 276 pre-service teachers studying at Hacettepe University. The data were collected through "Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI)" developed by Coopersmith (1967), which was adapted to Turkish by Pişkin (1997) along with the "Inventory of Coping With Stress Attitudes (ICSA)" developed by Özbay (1993), which was adapted to Turkish by ve Şahin (1997). The ICSA was consisted of 43 items with six factors and the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.81. The SEI was consisted of 25 items and Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.86. The findings were used to evaluate the relationship between pre-service teachers' self-esteem and attitudes of coping with stress.

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1. Introduction

The stress phenomena, encountered by almost any individual, forms a part of daily life of modern human beings. Negative and oppressive situations like difficulties in meeting the expectations, preventions, and the idea of racing against time, exams, and willingness to be successful may be source of stress for people. (Avşaroğlu & Üre, 2007).

Stress is defined as situations cause emotional, psycho-motor, cognitive and psychological reactions originated from internal or external uncommon stimuli (Phares, 1988, s.442). As for coping with stress, it is defined as individual's cognitive and behavioral efforts to dispose of stress. In this definition, two important argumentations are asserted. Firstly, the coping with behavior is performed through personal knowledge. In this sense, coping with is a

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cognitive process. The next important point is that individual is actively trying to react against the stressful situation or chooses the more passive way of decreasing the threat of stress source by handling the condition as it is emotional (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Özbay & Sahin, 1997). Depending on their personal features, individuals can develop one or some types of coping with stress like taking religion as shelter, seeking help from others, avoiding source of stress or resigning themselves to the fact. Mature individuals are to adopt positive coping with stress styles. According to Allport (1961) having an extensive self-esteem is one of the features of mature individual personal traits. Coopersmith defined self-esteem as “It is a complicated notion which contains identity evaluation, defense mechanisms and different reflections of these phenomena”. Self-esteem is an inner image of an individual which specifies one’s attitudes and behaviors. It is also affected by self-evaluation of individuals and that other people’s with whom they are communicating (Coopersmith, 1967). The level of self-esteem affects one’s school and job ability and success, effectiveness of coping with stress, developing friendship and relationship with others, vitality and satisfaction of enjoy. People, who keep their self-esteem consistently on high level, are identified with vitality. Those individuals believe in themselves. On the other hand, people with low level self-esteem are individuals that lost their vitality and energy. They don’t believe in themselves, even they see themselves invaluable and inglorious, and their success and skills are decreased as a result of their feelings about their own self-belief (Cotton, 1985; Jersild, 1963; Kohut, 1971; akt. Özkan, 1994). The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between pre-service teacher’s self-esteem and stress coping attitudes.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

The sample universe of this study is 276 pre-service teachers who study in Turkey Hacettepe University between the years 2012 and 2013.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

The scales used to collect data are listed below:

2.2.1. Coopersmith self-esteem inventory (CSEI)

In order to specify student’s self-esteem levels, Coopersmith Self-esteem inventory, which was developed by Coopersmith (1986) and was adopted to Turkey context after through reliability and validity tests by Pişkin (1997) was used. Inventory is composed of 25 items. The points obtained at the end of analysis may be divided into three groups like high, middle, and low groups. Results are analyzed after individuals who aren’t in these point limits are identified. While answering question tests choose expressions like “Agree” -“Disagree” or “Yes”-“No”. Answering a negative expression with “No” and answering a positive expression with “Yes” are evaluated as 1 point and the total points are multiplied by 4 to evaluate results on the scale of 100. The result shows an individual’s self-esteem level. To classify one’s self-esteem point as low, middle and high, the average point of the group, in which one takes place, identified and the self-esteem point of this individual is evaluated according to that group average. Low points mean low self-esteem level and high points mean high self-esteem level. The reliability coefficient point is calculated as 0,76 through KR-20 and the internal consistency reliability coefficient point is calculated as 0,81.

2.2.2. Inventory of coping with stress attitudes (ICSA)

This inventory originally was a coping with stress scale which developed by Özbay (1993) for foreign national students who study in USA. Test is adopted to Turkey context by Özbay & Şahin(1997). The aim of this test to measure individual’s efforts for coping with stress in different circumstances. This is 5 point Likert scale and composes of 43 items. Items categorized under 6 factors: Active Planning Category: 10 items; Seeking for External Help: 9 items, Taking Religion as Shelter: 6 items, Avoiding- Abstraction (emotional- operational):7 items,

Avoiding-Abstraction (biochemical): 4 items and Acceptance- Cognitive Reconstruction 7 items. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the whole test is 0.81. The reliability coefficients of sub-dimensions change between 0.56 and 0.89.

3. Findings

3.1. Analysis on pre-service teachers' stress coping attitudes

In order to determine pre-service teachers' stress coping attitudes, the scores of pre-service teachers at the Inventory of Coping With Stress Attitudes were analyzed. The arithmetical averages and standard deviation values of subdimension scores were displayed on Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of pre-service teachers' ICSA scores

ICSA subdimensions	N	\bar{X}	SD
Active planning	276	3.87	0.52
Seeking external aid	276	3.60	0.69
Taking religion as shelter	276	2.85	1.04
Avoiding- isolation (emotional-operational)	276	3.04	0.74
Avoiding - isolation(bio chemical)	276	1.77	0.87
Acceptance-cognitive reconstruction	276	3.28	0.48

Table 1 shows that pre-service teachers received higher scores from "active planning" subdimension than other subdimensions, while receiving the lowest from the "avoiding - isolation(bio chemical)" subdimension.

3.2. Analysis of the relationship between pre-service teachers' self-esteem and stress coping attitudes

The research also sought answers to the question on a potential relationship between the Inventory of Coping With Stress Attitudes and Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Therefore, the numeric values obtained from the data collection tools were summarized on Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson multiplication moment correlation analysis results of the CSEI and ICSA

		Self-esteem	Stress coping attitudes
Self-esteem	r	1	0.736*
	p		0.000
Stress coping attitudes	r	0.736*	1
	p	0.000	

N= 276, * p<0.01

Table 2 shows that there was a positive significant relationship between self-esteem and stress coping attitudes of pre-service teachers, who participated in the study ($r = 0.736$, $p < 0.01$). The relationship between self-esteem scale and sub dimensions of coping with stress inventory is examined and results are showed on Table 3.

Table 3. Pearson multiplication moment correlation analysis results of the subdimensions scores of CSEI and ICSA

ICSA subdimensions		Self-esteem
Active planning	r	0.480*
	p	0.000
Seeking external aid	r	0.657*
	p	0.001
Taking religion as shelter	r	-0.177*
	p	0.000

Avoiding- isolation (emotional-operational)	r	-0.265**
	p	0.012
Avoiding - isolation(bio chemical)	r	-0.338**
	p	0.001
Acceptance-cognitive reconstruction	r	0.604*
	p	0.015

N= 276, * p<0.01, **p<0.05

Table 3 shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between pre-service teachers' self-esteem and Active Planning; Seeking External Aid; Acceptance-Cognitive Reconstruction subdimension of Inventory of Coping With Stress Attitudes, while a significant and negative relationship was observed on the expression of Taking Religion as Shelter, Avoiding-Isolation (Emotional-Operational); Avoiding-Isolation (Bio Chemical) subdimension ($r = 0.480$, $r = -0.657$, $r = 0.177$, $r = -0.338$; $p < 0.01$; $r = -0.265$, $r = 0.604$, $p < 0.05$).

4. Conclusion and Discussion

In this research, to define relationship between pre-service teacher's self-esteem and coping with stress attitudes, scales and relationship among those sub-dimensions of these scales were examined. To define pre-service teacher's coping with stress attitudes, each of these sub-dimension were analyzed with descriptive analysis. In the consideration of analysis, it can be stated that pre –service teachers show active planning attitudes while coping with stress. Active planning includes rational steps and methods like actively trying to do something, starting doing directly, increasing active efforts, creating action plans, focusing on now and taking role on within the systematic problem solving process. Pre-service teachers, who don't choose active planning, choose types of coping with stress named as seeking external help and acceptance- cognitive reconstruction respectively. Seeking for external help consists of tendencies towards social supports like external concrete solution demand and seeking for emotional external aid. On the other hand, Acceptance- cognitive reconstruction is a type of coping with stress through which pre-service teachers accept the situation and seek new ways of solution (Göçet, 2006; Lazarus, 1993). The least preferred type of coping with stress is avoidance- isolation (biochemical). This type is different from emotional-operational avoidance and isolation. It can be explained by the fact that as a passive way of coping with stress, it is a tendency to make physiological changes on metabolism. Smoking, taking alcohol, using drugs and tending to use narcotics are within the ways of this category (Göçet, 2006). It is found that there is a meaningful correlation between pre-service teachers' coping with stress attitudes and their self-esteem. In addition, the relation between sub-categories of the coping with stress attitudes inventory and self-esteem inventory is analyzed. The information driven from the findings showed that pre-service teachers' self-esteem have a relation with all the sub-categories of coping with stress attitudes scale. As for the findings, positive correlation between self-esteem and active planning, seeking for external help and acceptance cognitive reconstruction, and negative correlation between self-esteem and tending to religion, avoiding- isolation (Emotional- operational), avoiding- isolation (biochemical) are found. In view of these findings, it can be stated that pre-service teachers having high self-esteem level adopt coping with stress styles which includes positive behavior, on the other hand, pre-service teachers having low self-esteem level adopt that styles named as avoiding. In addition, in the studies conducted by D'Zurilla, Chang & Sanna (2003) and Hamarta (2009) it was found that people who have effective and positive problem solving approach have high level of self-esteem.

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