

The Relationship between Hope and Perceived Stress in Teacher Candidates

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Abstract

The long-term and uncontrollable stress of KPSS (Personnel Selection Examination) candidates disrupts their psychology, weakens thinking and decision-making, and thus decreases academic achievement. The aim of this study is; It is the determination of the relationship between the level of hope and perceived stress of teacher candidates prepared for KPSS.

A total of 382 teacher candidates participated in a special KPSS preparatory course in Kayseri. Candidate teachers who graduated from different departments and universities are between the ages of 21-25 in 41.6%. When we look at socio-demographic characteristics; 68.4% male; 59.9% single and 51.5% were at medium income level. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and Adult Hope Scale (AHS) were administered to the participants. The mean AHS score of the teacher candidates was 27.73 ± 1.92 . This shows the high level of hope of the participants. Perceived Stress level was found to be medium at 53.6%. As a result of the analysis, a significant negative correlation was found between level of hope and perceived stress ($p < 0.01$). According to regression analysis, level of hope in teacher candidates showed a statistically significant positive effect on perceived stress ($p < 0.01$).

As a result, negative relationships were found between hope and perceived stress. It is thought that highly hopeful people perceive stress lower and life satisfaction increases. Therefore, in order to increase the level of hope and to reduce the negative effects of stress, educators should support KPSS candidates. Programs related to the high level of hope to be implemented in schools may have positive effects on individuals' low stress and examinations.

Keywords: hope, perceived stress, teacher, candidates

1. Introduction

Universities are the reflection of society with their truths and mistakes. In universities, new and basic information is produced and professional skills are gained. Universities are the pioneers in the development of ideas and alternative skills (Rosovsky, 1998). At the university, students experiencing problems experience physical or psychological pressure. Universities are very important institutions in terms of professional life. Faculties aim to provide appropriate attitudes and behaviors to students as well as professional knowledge. It is stated that there is a relationship between academic processes and stress. (Agolla and Ongori, 2009).

Students experiencing high levels of stress experience problems such as family retreat, foreign environment, housing conditions, adolescence problems, economic difficulties, new friends and regular nourishment. (Pamuk et al., 2014). In addition, problems such as passing lessons, assignments, lack of time, lack of planning, and concerns about finding a job are important sources of stress for students. (Savcı and Aysan, 2014). It has been said that stress has a detrimental effect on health and negatively affects performance. (Ünal and Ümmet, 2005). Stress, along with health, which has a comprehensive and negative impact on daily life (Kinman, 1998), arises from the forcing or threatening of the physical and psychological capacity of the organism. (Baltaş and Baltaş, 2000).

In the education system in our country, exams are very important. Students who begin their education life experience high levels of stress due to family and teacher pressure. Studies have shown that the expectation about education creates stress on students. (Akçamete, 2002). Examinations, which are a source of significant stress, are the stimulants that cause anxiety and stress, which are related to the status of the individual and provide important

decisions (Zeidner, 2004). The KPSS (Personnel Selection Examination), which is a career determinant, is an important obstacle for many people. People who perceive the exam and especially the exam result as a major obstacle to their career experience a high level of anxiety and stress (Peleg-Popko, 2004).

People who think positively about themselves exhibit attitudes that will improve their thinking (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). However, KPSS candidates may experience high levels of stress due to these negative situations. Future anxiety and fear of separation from the family, depressive mood may occur (Wohl, DeShea and Wahkinney, 2008). Because of these situational factors, the problem is that the candidates who are living, the hope decreases, and the more they perceive stress.

Human behavior is directed towards a purpose and determines the direction of mental activity. The methods of achieving the purpose are the perception of being able to produce appropriate methods for achieving the purpose of the person (Snyder, Rand & Sigmon, 2002). The hope is to make a positive and motivating plan for the purpose and to go for the purpose (Peterson et al., 2011). Hope is a positive condition for the relationship between motivation and reaching the goal. Those who have high levels of hope can try many methods to achieve their goal (Snyder, 2000).

In childhood, struggling with objective barriers improves hopeful thinking. People overcome problems with this hope. The mechanism of hope is constantly working and this is the situational stamina of hope (Snyder et al., 1997). The low level of hope disrupts the psychology of the person and, together with these negative emotions, may negatively affect the KPSS, which is a major obstacle to his career. As a matter of fact, in different studies, the positive motivation, interest, effort and positive emotions of the students in their academic lives are positive; a negative relationship was found between stress and hope (Pekrun et al., 2002; Vilaythong et al., 2003; Snyder et al., 2000; Snyder et al., 2002).

KPSS candidates, long-term and uncontrollable stress, disrupting their psychology, thinking and decision-making by weakening, academic success is considered to reduce. Fighting with stress is important for candidates to develop appropriate behaviors, to be successful and to gain a profession. In order to increase the level of hope, educators should support the candidates preparing for the KPSS and the negative effects of stress should be reduced. The aim of this study; It is the determination of the relationship between the level of hope and perceived stress of teacher candidates prepared for KPSS.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

In this study, 382 volunteer teacher candidates from different departments and universities participated in a special KPSS preparation course in Kayseri. When we look at the teacher candidates demographic information; 68.4% male; 59.9% single; 41.6% between the ages of 21-25; 51.5% were middle income level. Shows the demographic information of the teacher candidates participating in the study (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic Information of Teacher Candidates (n=382)

Variables	Categories	f	%
Gender	Female	121	31.6
	Male	261	68.4
Age (years)	21-25 years	159	41.6
	26-30 years	108	28.3
	31-35 years	74	19.4
	36 years and over	41	10.7
Marital status	Single	229	59.9
	Married	153	40.1
Revenue	Low	118	30.8
	Medium	197	51.5
	High	67	17.7

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)-10 item version was developed by Cohen et al. (1983) to measure the individual's appraisals of stressful life events (Cohen et al., 1983). Its validity and reliability studies were performed by Erci (2006) and Bilge et al. (2009) and were then adapted to Turkish society. Items were designed to reveal the degree to which respondents found their lives unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overwhelming in the last one month. The PSS-10 is a five point Likert scale ranging from (0=never to 4=very often). There are four reverse items which are written positively (items 4,5,7 and 8). Total scores range from 0 to 40 with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress. The internal consistencies of the original scale change from 0.75 to 0.86. In the present study PSS-10 had internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of $\alpha=0.71$.

2.2.2 Adult Hope Scale (AHS)

The Adult Hope Scale developed by Snyder et al. (1991) includes 12 questions for individuals aged 15 years and over. Likert type four digits (1=otally wrong and totally true=4). So, the scores range will be between 8 and 32. 4 questions are about the bus in operation, 4 questions are diversion and other questions are not scored. Total scores of subscale of the bus will constitute the overall score of hope. The higher the scores, the greater the hopes. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated to be 0.73. In the present study AHS had internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of $\alpha=0.75$.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data obtained in the research were presented as frequency (f), percentage (%), arithmetic mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SS). t-test, ANOVA test, Tukey test, Spearson Correlation Coefficient, Simple and Multiple Regression Analysis were used for the relationship between variables. The SPSS package software was utilized for analyses of collected data; and significance was determined as $p<0.05$.

3. Results

The mean "Adult Hope Scale" score of the teacher candidates was 27.73 ± 1.92 . This finding shows the high level of hope of the candidates.

Table 2. Perceived Stress Level of Teacher Candidates

Perceived Stress	N	%
High	129	33.7
Medium	205	53.6
Low	48	12.7

In addition, the stress levels of teacher candidates were 33.7% high, 53.6% medium and 12.7% low (Table 2).

Table 3. Test Results of Perceived Stress Scale Scores by Gender Variable

	Group	N	\bar{X}	SS	t Test		
					t	Sd	p
Perceived Stress	Male	312	21.348	5.372	4.269	435	0.001
	Female	173	24.281	5.905			

The perceived stress scores of teacher candidates showed a significant difference according to gender variable ($p<0.05$). Accordingly, the mean stress score of female was higher than that of male (Table 3).

Table 4. Regression Test Results Regarding The Relation Between "Hope Level" and "Perceived Stress" Variables

Variables		Model Summary		Anova		Coefficients		
Constant	Dependent	R ²	R	F	p	β	t	p
Hope	Perceived Stress	0.105	0.324	14.114	0.001	5.549	9.436	0.001
						-0.324	-3.757	0.001

Y (Perceived Stress) = 5.459 - 0.413 (Hope)

According to regression analysis, the teacher candidates level of hope is a significant predictor of perceived stress ($F=14.114$). According to this, there is a high, negative and significant relationship between hope scores and perceived stress scores ($p<0.01$) (Table 4).

Table 5. Correlation Test Results Regarding The Relation Between “Hope Level” and “Perceived Stress” Variables

Variables	\bar{X}	SS	1	2
1. Perceived Stress	22.81	0.84	1	
2. Hope Level	27.73	1.92	0.001**	1

$p<0.05^*$, $p<0.01^{**}$

As a result of the correlation analysis, there was a high, negative and significant relationship between perceived stress scores with the level of hope scores of teacher candidates ($p<0.01$) (Table 5).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Teaching is a profession that requires expertise and skills. Teaching is seen as a profession because it is a profession related to human beings. KPSS exam is very important in terms of teacher candidates career (Karataş and Güleş, 2013). Candidates who work for the exam and see the exam as a turning point, experience high stress in this period (Ceyhan, 2005; Doğan and Çoban, 2009). The aim of this examination, which aims to select the most knowledgeable among the teacher candidates, is to be more successful than the other candidates. In order to achieve this goal, teacher candidates who think that they need to work more and more are under intense stress and pressure. Many factors influence the mood of the teacher candidates, the preparation process, and ultimately the exam success.

Hope is an important way of thinking that guides human life. When we think that this thought is formed from childhood, the studies with children are considered important. Therefore, the development and acquisition of hopeful ideas will make children more ready for life. Factors such as negative thinking, social pressure and future anxiety about KPSS will increase the perceived stress level of candidate teachers. This negative thought created by high level of stress, together with the support of the family, will contribute to the hopefulness of the person. As a matter of fact, it is said that social support positively affects the psychological well-being of adolescents, and foresees hopeful thinking by improving their coping skills (Won, 2011).

When we look at the findings of the study that examined the effect of hope on perceived stress, a negative correlation was observed between the level of hope and perceived stress. This finding shows that while the level of hope of the candidates increases, the perceived stress decreases. Accordingly, we can say that people with high levels of hope experience less stress in daily life or do not feel intensely stressed. In our country, there are studies about the level of hope of students (Akman and Korkut, 1993; Denizli, 2004; Kemer, 2006; Kemer and Atik, 2005).

According to McGregor and Little (1998), achievable goals are associated with prosperity. In a study conducted in students, it was said that the low level of hope increased the education stress. (Özdemir and Özdemir, 2015). In a similar study, it was found that there was a negative relationship between self-esteem, hope and social support and stress (Lee and Hwang, 2016).

Similarly, with the stress-reducing effect of hope, it has been found that it has a positive effect on performance and job satisfaction (Youssef and Luthans, 2007). In another study, it was concluded that the perception of positive psychological capital as a support positively affects the performance of the candidates who will take the exam (Luthans, 2002). Hasnain, Wazid and Hasan (2014) emphasizes the importance of thinking with hope on preventing problems and increasing strength and emphasized that hope would have important contributions in both before and after the emergence of problems. The results of the literature support our findings.

5. Conclusion

KPSS is a difficult test that selects the most knowledgeable teacher candidates. Teachers who think that it is very difficult to win and that they need to study more, experience intense stress and pressure during this period. The only way for candidates to be successful in the exam and to be appointed is to learn the techniques of coping with stress and to be highly hopeful. As a matter of fact, it is said that those with high levels of hope experience less stress and higher quality of life. (Fitness 2001; Runcan and Iovu, 2013).

Therefore, stress factors that candidates perceive as a threat to their learning environment and social environment should be regulated according to anti-stress principles. In addition, it may be necessary for the family and teachers to

learn about the socially supported behavioral models they will show against the candidates.

On the macro level, we propose that the teaching profession be revised in order to gain the prestige of the society and the teaching programs should be arranged in a way that will ensure the supply-demand balance.

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