SELF-ESTEEM AND STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS OF UNIVERSITY

STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

SELF-ESTEEM AND STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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This study examined the frequency of university students with self-esteem level at first. Moreover, the difference between male and female and the difference between achiever and non-achiever students were examined with respect to self-esteem. Also the relationship between self-esteem score of university students and stressful life events was examined. Three hundred thirty one university students from different grades and departments of Middle East Technical University have been participated in this study. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES), Life Events Inventory for University Students (LEIU) and four-question demographic information form were used for this study. Factor analysis for LEIU was made for this study. At the end of the factor-analysis, three factors were identified. These were

called as self-related anxiety/problems; environmental, adjustment, family events/problems; and academic events/problems. To examine the percentage of students with high and low self-esteem, frequency of the participant was calculated. In addition, independent samples t-test was applied to investigate the difference between male-female and achiever-non-achiever students on self-esteem, while Pearson product moment correlation was applied to examine the relationship between self-esteem and stressful life events. It was found that there were 302 students (88.6 %) with high self-esteem level, while there were 39 students (11.4 %) with low self-esteem level. According to independent samples t-test results, it was found that achiever students' self-esteem score was higher than non-achiever students whereas there is no significant difference between male and female on the self-esteem score. Finally, it was found that there is a significant relationship between self-related anxiety/problems, environmental, adjustment, family problems and academic events/problems and self-esteem.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Stressful Life Events

ÖZ

ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖZ BENLİK SAYGISI VE STRESLİ YAŞAM OLAYLARI

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Bu çalışmada öncelikle üniversite öğrencilerinin öz benlik saygısı düzeyleri, daha sonra kız-erkek, başarılı-başarısız öğrenciler arasındaki öz benlik saygısı farklılığı incelenmiştir. Son olarak, öz benlik saygısının stresli yaşam olayları ile ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Çalışmaya Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ)'nin farklı bölüm ve sınıf düzeylerinden toplam üç yüz kırk bir öğrenci katılmıştır. Çalışmada öğrencilere Rosenberg Öz Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği (SES), Üniversite Öğrencilerine Yönelik Yaşam Olayları Ölçeği (ÜÖYO) ve 4 soruluk demografik bilgi formu uygulanmıştır. Bu araştırma için ÜÖYO ölçeğinin faktör analizi yapılmıştır. Faktör analizi

sonucunda üç faktör belirlenmiştir. Bunlar sırasıyla benlik ile ilgili kaygı/problemler; çevresel, uyum ve aile ile ilgili olay/problemler; akademik olayproblemlerdir. Öz benlik saygısı yüksek ve düşük olan öğrencilerin frekansı hesaplanmıştır. Ayrıca, öz benlik saygısı açısından kız ve erkek öğrenciler ile başarılı ve başarısız öğrenciler arasındaki farkılılığın anlamlılığı Bağımsız t-testi ile test edilmiştir. Stresli yaşam olayları ile öz benlik saygısı arasındaki ilişki Pearson korelasyon katsayısı analizi kullanılarak saptanmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda ilk olarak, 302 öğrencinin (% 88.6) öz benlik saygısı yüksek bulunurken, 39 öğrencinin (%11.4) öz benlik saygısının düşük olduğu görülmüştür. Bağımsız t-testi sonucunda başarılı öğrencilerin öz benlik saygısının başarısız olanlarınkinden anlamlı düzeyde daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Ancak öz benlik saygısı açısından kız ve erkek öğrenciler arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunamamıştır. Son olarak, benlik ile ilgili kaygı/problemler; çevresel, uyum ve aile ile ilgili olay/problemler; akademik olaylar/problemler ile öz benlik saygısı arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz benlik saygısı, Stresli yaşam olayları

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

Personality is basically defined as "consistent behavior patterns originating within the individual" (Burger, 1990, p.3). Four aspects of personality can be considered with this definition. First aspect of personality is *consistency* that one's behavior patterns show some stability. This consistency exists across time and situations. Second aspect is that personality originates *within* the individual. Third, the definition focuses on the *individual's* behavior. Not only given to the situation is observed but also understanding the reasons of behavior changing for every person. Finally *behavior* is emphasized on (Burger, 1990).

According to Sullivan (1953), personality is defined as "relatively enduring pattern of recurrent interpersonal situations which characterize a human life" (pp.15). Fromm (1947) has defined personality with respect to sociological approach, as "the totality of inherited and acquired psychic qualities which are characteristic of one individual and which make

individual unique" (pp.9). For Allport (1961) personality is the dynamic organization placing within the individual psychophysical systems. These psychophysical systems determine his/her characteristics, behavior and thought.

As the first emphasis of this study, self-esteem has shown to be a significant personality variable in determining human behavior. To understand a man psychologically, one must understand the nature and degree of one's self-esteem, and the standards that one judges oneself. One experiences one's desire for self-esteem as an urgent, imperative and a basic need. One feels so intensely the need of a positive view of oneself (Branden, 1970). That explains the reason that self-esteem level of university students was analyzed firstly in the present study.

Self-esteem is confidence in one's capacity to achieve values (Branden, 1970). It is subjective and enduring sense of realistic self-approval. It reflects how the individual views and values the self at the most fundamental levels of psychological experiencing (Bednar & Peterson, 1995).

Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem as "the evaluation, which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regards to him/herself." Campbell and Lavallee (1993) define self-esteem as "a self-reflexive attitude that is the product of viewing the self as an object of evaluation". In addition, Hales (1989) defines self-esteem as the evaluative function of the self-

concept. Self-esteem, thus, is the affective, or emotional experience of the evaluations one makes in the frame of one's personal worth. On the other hand, a social psychology text defines self-esteem as an affective component of the self, that is person's positive and negative self-evaluations about him/herself (Brehm & Kassin, 1993). Nozick (1974) defined self-esteem as an essentially comparative notion that is one evaluates him/herself how well he/she does something with respect to how others can do or by comparing his/her performance to others.

The California State Task Force on Self-Esteem (1990) defines self-esteem as "appreciating my own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for myself and to act responsibly towards others" (p.1)

Osborne (1993) defined self-esteem as a relatively permanent positive or negative feeling about self that may become more or less positives and negatives as individuals encounter and interpret success and failures in their daily lives. For James (1890), self-esteem couldn't simply be reduced to the aggregate of perceived success. Rather, it derived from the ratio of successes to one's pretensions. Thus, if the individual evaluates the self positively in domains where he/she aims to excel -high self-esteem will result. That means perceived successes are equal to one's pretensions or aspiration for success results in high self-esteem. Conversely, if the pretensions exceed successes- that is, if an individual feels unsuccessful in domains believed in important- he/she would experience low self-esteem.

Self-esteem is an intrinsic and universal part of human experience and it is a key concept for explaining the "inherent secrets" of human behavior as a cure for social and individual problems (Ward, 1996). Harter (1985) has defined self-esteem as "the level of global regard that one has for the self as a person".

Erikson (1968) identified self-esteem as a function of identity development that results from successfully addressing the tasks associated with each of the developmental stages of life. Thus one's sense of developing, growing, and confronting lives tasks leads to feelings of worth. To him, one with healthy personality actively masters his/her environments showing a certain unity of personality and one can perceive the world and himself/herself in a correct way. Self-esteem is focused upon feelings of personal worth and the level of satisfaction regarding one's self (Garry, 1999). Another approach to defining self-esteem is to identify the almost universally accepted components of self-esteem. They are a cognitive element, or the characterizing of self in descriptive terms (e.g., power, confidence); an effective element or a degree of positiveness or negativeness (e.g., high or low self-esteem); an evaluative element related to some ideal standard (e.g., what a high school graduate should be able to do) (Mecca, Smelser & Vasconcellos, 1989). According to Secord and Backman (1964), self-esteem is "convenient to think of advantage person's attitudes toward himself as having three aspects—the cognitive, the affective and the behavioral".

Maslow's (1971) work in the field of self-esteem was emphasized on the notion of self-actualization. He assumed that the biological side determined inner nature of human consists of basic needs, emotions and capacities that are either neutral or positively good. Human behavior is motivated primarily by the individual's seeking to fulfill a series of needs. Each person has basic needs, which are ordered from the most basic to the highest as follows: physiological needs, safety and security needs, need for love and belonging, esteem needs and need for self-actualization. Basic needs of human being are physiological ones that include sleeping, water, oxygen, proteins, vitamins, sex, hunger etc. Then safety need comes including security, protection, stability, law and order. After satisfying safety needs, need for love and belonging direct the person toward affectionate relations with people and sense of place in family and groups. Before the ultimate goal of human being that is self-actualization the establishment of self-esteem is required. According to Maslow (1954), esteem needs are of two kinds one of them is personal desires for adequacy; mastery, competence, achievement, confidence, independence and freedom. The other one is desires for respect from other people including attention, recognition, appreciation, status, prestige, fame, dominance, importance and dignity. Satisfaction of esteem needs results in feeling of personal worth, self-confidence, psychological strength, capability and a sense of being useful and necessary. But preventing from these needs produces feelings of inferiority weaknesses and helplessness. At the end, these feelings cause discouragement, compensation or neurosis.

It may also help us in better understanding self-esteem to differentiate self-concept from self-esteem. Self-concept is the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his/her personal existence (Purkey, 1988). Beane and Lipka (1984) also argued that self-esteem and self-concept clearly represents two different dimensions. They defined self-concept as "the perception(s) one has about oneself in terms of personal attributes and the various roles which are played or fulfilled by the individual." Since self-concept represents "only a description of the perceived self and does not include a value judgment," self-concept should not be displayed as positive and negative. On the other hand, self-esteem refers to the "evaluation one makes of the self-concept description and, more specifically, to the degree to which one is successful or unsuccessful with it, in whole or in part."

Whereas self-concept connotes a relatively broad definition of the construct that includes cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects, self-esteem is considered to be a more limited evaluative component of the broader, self-concept term (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991; Wells & Marwell, 1976).

For Hattie (1992) and others (e.g. Rosenberg, 1965), the key element differentiating self-concept and self-esteem was the extent to which one considered the attribute under study to be important. For example, a student may describe him/herself as not being very good at sports and thereby

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show evidence of low physical self-concept, however, if the student considers sports to be little importance, his/her self-esteem will be totally unaffected. Therefore, Hattie (1992) considered self-esteem to be closely associated with one's sense of self-worth.

A favorable self-esteem is obviously essential for personal happiness and effective functioning, through one's life. People who seek psychological and psychiatric help frequently acknowledge that they suffer from feeling of inadequacy and unworthiness. They see themselves as helpless and inferior, incapable of improving their situations and lacking their inner resources to reduce anxiety aroused by everyday events (Coopersmith, 1967). It can be understood that feeling worthy and respecting oneself could have a supporting effect on coping strategy with daily life events.

The other variable of the present study was given as "stressful life events". Before defining stressful life events, stress should be defined clarified. Actually, there is no agreement among researchers about the definition of stress. Because stress can have a different meaning for every person dependent on one's life styles, personality and situations that he/she is in. Therefore, the present study tries to evaluate stressors specific to university students.

It is defined in the Collins Concise Dictionary and Thesaurus (1999) as mental, emotional and physical strain or tension. In the biomedical sciences, stress is mainly understood as an organism's response to adverse

stimulation. In psychology, stress is usually understood as the process where a person and the environment interact (Schwarzer & Schulz, 2001). In health psychology, joint effects of the person and environment on pathology are studied, along with mediating and moderating factors, such as coping and social support (Hobfoll, Schwarzer & Chon, 1998).

It can be defined as "the wear and tear that body produce as a result of any exposure" or 'the non-specific response of the body to any demand' (Selye, 1974). Kagan (1983) defined stress as the physiological state that prepares the organism for action. It can be stated as a combination of physical, mental & emotional feelings that results from pressure, worry and anxiety (Edwards, 2003).

In addition, Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend (1974) share two sets of concerns about stress. First, they focus mainly on a class of stressful stimuli or situations to which every one is exposed to a greater or lesser extent in the natural course of life. These stimuli or situations, which they call "life events", include experiences such as marriage, divorce, birth of a child, and death of a loved one. The second focus shared by Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend (1974) is the general hypothesis that stressful life events play a role in the etiology of various somatic and psychiatric disorders.

There are some theoretical orientations that were associated with the measurement of stress in adolescents. These can be classified as reflecting

either a stimulus-orientation or a cognitive-orientation (Mullis, Youngs & George, 1993).

In the stimulus-orientation model, stress is seen as the result of experiencing any of a number of situations that are threatening or that place excessive demands on the individual. From this view, stress is defined in terms of forces-either within the individual or within the environment that affect the individual. Thus all major life changes are stressful because they require the social readjustment. The greater the number of events experienced within a given period of time, the greater the stress experienced (Johnson, 1986).

In contrast, the cognitive–orientation model explains stressfulness of environmental events as heavily dependent on as person's perception of those events (Johnson & McCutcheon, 1980; Swearingen & Cohen, 1985; Zautra & Reich, 1983). Based on this view, stress may result from experiencing a variety of pleasant and unpleasant events, including anniversaries and holidays as well as divorce or death of loved one. For the present study, daily life events could be thought as unpleasant events that students perceive as stressful with respect to its frequency.

In addition to documenting the prevalence of specific stressors, the psychological effects of those stressors need to be examined. Most studies have examined either stressors or symptomatology without assessing relations between them. Studies among college students suggest that

higher stress level generally related to greater symptomatology, including anxiety (Sarason, Johnson & Siegel, 1978) depression (Lustman, Sowa & O'Hara, 1984), lower levels of general well-being (Cole, 1985) and low self-esteem (Guinn & Vincent, 2002; Abouserie, 1994; Youngs & Rathge, 1990; Mullis, Youngs & George, 1993; Marcotte et al., 2002). While the literature was searched, it was found that there isn't such a study in Turkey that examines the relationship between self-esteem and stressful life events. Therefore, the present study could be perceived as an initial step of this subject, which may help to understand university students' daily life anxieties, events or problems and the effect of self-esteem on dealing with those stressful life events. This focus reflects a concern with the importance maintaining good self-esteem among youth. Positive self-esteem is a key factor in developing good mental health, social relations and a productive lifestyle (Walker & Greene, 1986). If having high self-esteem has a positive impact on perceiving daily life events as less stressful, it becomes important concern for parents and counselors who deal or work with adolescents.

Indeed, factors that are both internal and external in adolescent life contribute to the development of the adolescent's sense of self. As it is known, adolescence is a period of development and it is a transition period through the adulthood in one's life (Freidrichsen, 1997). During this transitional period, a new kind of life course may challenge self-image, especially individuals' self-evaluations, as one attempts to new tasks; when one is successful or not, as one changes his/her self-values and the areas which are important for self-esteem, as one faces with new significant

others against ones rate him/herself and about whose judgments he/she cares (Simmons, 1987). Consequently, daily life events that were used for the present study may give a clue about students' development of sense of self. Those stressful life events can be used as guidelines, while studying with university students' and its effect on self-esteem or vice versa.

1.2 The Purpose and the Problem Statements of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine self-esteem level of university students. Then self-esteem level of students was analyzed with respect to gender and academic achievement. Finally, the relationship between self-esteem level and stressful life events was investigated. The problem statements of the research can be summarized as follow:

1) What is the self-esteem level of university students?

2) Is there a significant difference between male and female university students' self-esteem level?

3) Is there a significant difference between achievers and non-achievers university students' self-esteem level?

4) Is there any relationship between self-esteem and stressful life events of university students?

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1.3 Significance of the Study

The importance of self-esteem can be considered from several perspectives. First of all, it is important to normal psychological development. One should believe in selves in terms of capacity to achieve what they need and want to do. As a result, one could adequately cope with challenges of growing and daily life. Lacking a belief in selves, one may be productive in an external sense, but he/she will probably less effective and creative than they would be if they possessed high self-esteem.

As Garry (1991) states that the effects of self-esteem may also be seen in career planning and decision-making. For a person to make a nontraditional career choice, e.g., a female entering engineering, or to go against family desires or pressures requires someone to have a belief in their ability to make appropriate plans and decisions. Registering for advanced placement classes or applying to a highly competitive college may also challenge the self-esteem of an individual. Most people can attest to having experienced times when they were on top, when they were at their "peak performance." These "peaks" in our performance curve illustrate that when people believe in themselves (have high self-efficacy) and believe they can accomplish almost anything; they are expressing a self-esteem, which motivates, excites and empowers them. It is this expression of strong self-esteem at a critical juncture in their lives, which can help a person to become more of what they are capable of becoming.

It has also been suggested, "high self-esteem imparts to a person an immunity to the downturns in the roller coaster of life". As it is known, rejections, disappointments and failure are a part of daily life. Life is not always fair or equitable and even our best efforts are not always successful. But high esteem can assist a person in "weathering the storm," to look beyond immediate solutions for these difficult situations (Garry, 1991).

Currently, incidence and causes of stress are attracting attention among researchers and professional organizations. Research findings show that the adverse effects of stress can cost society with respect to individual suffering, economic burden of medical expenses, absenteeism and occupational injuries (Abouserie, 1994).

In summary, many counseling psychologists are employed in college and university counseling centers. They need to have depth knowledge about self-esteem level of university students and the kinds of stressful life events experienced by students. Moreover, the relationship of those stressors with self-esteem, which could be used as coping strategy in dealing with stressful life events, should be analyzed to understand their university students' daily life events. Despite this need, there is little information on specific problems experienced by students. Accurate information on the kinds of stressors would allow counseling centers to target specific need areas more effectively (Fitzgerald & Osipow, 1986).

1.4 Definition of Terms

Self-Esteem: Confidence in one's capacity to achieve values (Branden, 1970). It reflects how the individual views and values the self at the most fundamental levels of psychological experiencing (Bednar & Peterson, 1995).

Stressful Life Events: Stressful stimuli or situations to which everyone is exposed to a greater or lesser extent in the natural course of life (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, firstly self / self-esteem theories was displayed. Beginning from the origins of self-studies, self-esteem was discussed later with respect to different theories. Secondly, stressful life events theories/background and histories were given. As a third part, the related studies to the present study were presented.

2.1 Self / Self-Esteem Theories

Theoretical work in the area of self-esteem began a century ago with seminal works by James (1892) and Cooley (1902), whose theories continue to guide and influence present work on the subject. James (1892) contended that self-esteem was based on one's perceived competency in valued domains, whereas Cooley (1902) focused on the importance of social acceptance and the reflected appraisals of others.

For James (1890), who is the father of American psychology and credited with the initial formal study of self-esteem, the self is "part of me" that is one's body, abilities, reputation, strengths and weaknesses, and possessions. If any of those components is diminished or enhanced, people can react as they were diminished or enhanced because they have indeed defined the part as the self. Therefore, each person emphasis on what James called self-feeling or self-love on the successes and failures what has been chosen as being the most true self. All the other possible selves not chosen become irrelevant to the one's self-esteem. Whatever one choose to identify as a goal for oneself – a reputation by which one would like to be known or an attribute that one would like to have- become one of one's pretensions. The degree determines one's self-esteem in that particular sphere of experience.

According to James (1890) three major elements of the self from which pretensions are chosen: the material self, the social self and the spiritual self. The *material self* refers to objects and pretensions that are considered as one's personal property or one's identification: body, clothes, family, home, car etc. If the material realm prospers, the individual feels enlarged on the contrary, if one's possessions are damaged or lost, the person feels smaller.

The *social self* is connected with a person's reputation or share of recognition. Person may have many social selves – being son or daughter to parents, being students in school, or friend of someone and so forth. The

individual's pretensions or goals will depend on age and personality. For preschool children, recognition from parents will be dominant while for adolescents, peers affirmation will be weighted heavily.

Finally, the *spiritual self* is the inner or subjective being of individual. One's recognition is related to what he/she thinks about things and those thoughts have continuity over time. It may be defined as "the innermost center of one's being". James (1890) referred the self as two elements: the portion that is *me*, the actor, the doer or the performer of the self; and the *I,* which is the seat of consciousness, the observer and the evaluator of the *me*. As the observer, the spiritual self is not exposed to the successes/pretensions parallel to self-esteem. Indeed, the spiritual self is the interpreter of any experiences that is it is the determiner of sense of self-esteem.

According to Bednar and Peterson (1995), James recognized that self-esteem in terms of a general and a specific aspect. Although there are some individual fluctuations caused by daily encounters, there is an average expression of self-esteem that one develops over time. If a person has succeeded consistently over a period or has experienced repeated failures, the general level of self-trust or distrust may shift.

Cooley's conceptualization from more sociological perspective than James, about self in which function to unify and stimulate behavior, was an innate or instinctual. It was motivated toward self-appreciation and

promoting survival (Wells & Marwell, 1976). To Cooley (1902), the self has several aspects and the most dominant one is social self. This social self arises from the one's observations of how others react to the self. That is, people learn to identify themselves by the perceptions of others, termed as the looking-glass self.

The social self is a way of defining and refining the sense of self. There are three basic elements while gathering positive and negative feedback from the others' mind (Cooley, 1902). First one is the imagination of our appearance to the other person (How do I appear to other person?), second one is his/her imagination of his/her judgment of that appearance (What does other person think about me?) and thirdly, some sort of self-feeling (How do I feel toward myself as a result of encountering?)

In terms of self-feeling, Cooley wrote "A formal definition of self-feeling must be as hollow as a formal definition of the taste of salt, or the color red; we can know what it is only by experiencing it. There can be no final test of self except the way we feel; it is that toward which we have the 'my' attitude" (1902, p.40). According to Fisher (1996), Cooley's ideas reflect a binary focus on self-esteem as attitudinal and phenomenological

For Cooley (1902) the self and self-feeling was not entirely a social process especially for the adult. He highlighted the importance of balancing individuals' way of thinking about the self and reactions of others. Therefore,

people can evaluate themselves more positively and they can be more self-confident during the interactions with others.

As a sociologist, to Mead (1934), the development of self is related to the process of one's becoming an integrated part of a social group. He concerned on the description of appropriate socialization, not self-esteem and focused on consciousness through differentiating conscious and preconscious behaviors (Wells & Marwell, 1976).

Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self is extended in Mead's work. According to Mead (1934), language and society are essential elements in the development of self. Because, individuals would have a chance to see themselves in which others see them by interaction with others. Therefore, significant others in one's life have a determining influence on self-esteem. The socialization process was described as learning values about all other aspects of the world that give information about how others see themselves. Observation of actions and attitudes of significant others can help individual to adopt them and internalize them as one's own (Bednar & Peterson, 1995).

These early theorists struggled with the question of "What is the self?" Studies were made to explain its importance in existence, its level of consciousness, its location in individual and social processes and its development. Within each perspective, each theorist described some self-

evaluative subtopics that are fundamental of theory and research about self-esteem.

With regard to psychoanalytic/psychodynamic perspectives, Freud and others like Adler, Sullivan and Horney who were influenced by Freud and psychoanalysis have discussed concepts relevant to psychodynamic perspectives on self-esteem. What is common to all psychodynamic perspectives including unconscious, preconscious and conscious processes within the self, beginning with Freud (Fisher, 1996).

Freud's psychoanalytic theory contributed to the widespread concern with the self. Although Freud never used the term self or self-esteem directly, the concept of *ego* in Freudian theory had much in common with the notion of self as viewed by a number of other theorists. In psychoanalytic theory, conscious awareness was largely considered under the concept of ego. Therefore, the defense mechanism, the relationship of consciousness to the external world and the inculcation of moral values – all of them are figured in Freudian theory – became topics of interest for the self-theorist (Gergen, 1971).

Although Adler did not discuss self-esteem directly like Freud, he explained a universal tendency toward an inferiority feeling apparently innate. Finally he found that major goal of the individual was a striving for superiority (Wells & Marwell, 1976). He believed that each person has a unique view of reality through the *creative self*. This creative self tries to

make sense of life and to plan for achieving goal of completeness and perfection. The motivation of this creative self was named as striving for superiority. In other words, the creative self lives within a style of life or a way of interpreting reality consistent with one's life goals chosen early in life. Each of us is engaged in striving for superiority toward a goal of completeness or perfection (Bednar, & Peterson, 1995).

The positive responds of significant others, with acceptance and encouragement, or negative responds of significant others including excess, either support or undermine the development of self-esteem in the child. To Adler, development of the one's social interest or involvement in society allows a person to achieve self-acceptance (Coopersmith, 1967).

As mentioned above, Adler (1964) did not emphasized on the concept of self-esteem. Indeed, he considered self-esteem as a source of neurosis to the degree that it became a self-absorbing goal. Probably, a more appropriate Adlerian term for self-esteem would be self-acceptance. Therefore, appropriate self-esteem requires a one's acceptance of the right for belonging to humanity and willingness to contribute to the social interest of group (Bednar & Peterson, 1995).

Sullivan (1953) considered self-process with respect to social psychology as an unusual dimension of psychoanalytic perspective. He described the self interpersonally and emphasized the function of symbolization in its development.

Sullivan termed his view of self a "self-system" as a dynamic "...vast organization of experience which is considered with protecting our self-esteem..." (1953; p. 247). Sullivan found the origins of self-system in childhood. According to Sullivan (1953) the self-system organizes one's experiences into "good me", "bad me" and "not me" that are self-evaluations based on parental or significant others' reactions to the child and the child attempts to minimize anxiety caused by those reactions.

Horney (1942), as a psychodynamic theorist, conceptualized "self-realization" as an innate drive that stems from the child's position of helplessness in a potentially hostile world. This innate drive results in what Horney called "basic anxiety" and "need for security" (Wells and Marwell, 1976). The quality of relationship between the parent and the child determine the existence of this extent. For child, there can be so many disturbing influences such as, parental egocentricity, indifference, lack of respect, disparagement, lack of admiration, lack of warmth, isolation, discrimination etc. (Coopersmith, 1981).

According to Horney (1942), an individual wish to value to oneself and to be valued by others that led to either self-esteem or self-alienation. She differentiated between idealized, potential and actual states of self. The person's inherent potentialities were named the "real self", while actual qualities were termed the "actual self". The "self ideal" guides to person's actions. On the other hand, the "idealized self" is defined based on neurotically idealized image of one's capacities and goals that is considered

as a method of dealing with anxiety. This relationship is discussed by Horney between this form of false self-esteem and neurosis.

Social-psychological perspectives come from the areas of social psychology within both psychology and sociology. One of the primary theorists or researchers in self-esteem is the sociologist Rosenberg, who emphasized especially on the dynamics of the development of positive self-image during adolescence. He searched for examining the development of self-evaluative behavior within the social environment of the family and the relation of self-esteem to subsequent social behaviors (Wells and Marwell, 1976).

Rosenberg is well-known researcher with studies of adolescence in American Public schools (1965), standards measures of self-esteem such as, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which is used for measuring self-esteem level in this study, the Rosenberg-Simmons Self-Esteem Scale, and others. He also constructed a theory of self-concept and self-esteem (1979).

Rosenberg (1979) considered self-concept in two ways-as a motivational system and structurally and self-esteem is core to each conceptualization. Rosenberg viewed the self as being "maintained and enhanced" by the two very similar motives - self-esteem and self-consistency. According to him, self-concept is the individual's fundamental frame of reference that includes almost all actions that are predicated. The self-esteem, which is one of the most powerful motives in the human

development, was defined as "a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely the self". Positive self-esteem is characterized by feelings of self-respect and worthiness. Moreover, the individual recognizes his/her strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, the person with low self-esteem feels lack of respect for him / herself and seeks him/herself as unworthy and inadequate or deficient person.

Self-concept was defined as "the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to him/herself as an object" with respect to structural dimension (Rosenberg, 1979, p.7). Within self-concept, Rosenberg (1979) identified three broad regions: (1) the extant self-concept (what are we like) (2) the desired self-concept (what we wish to be like), and (3) the presenting self (how we show ourselves to others)

His motivational system was described in terms of three objectives. First one is *means and ends,* which include desiring to achieve a particular goal or attempting to win social approval. As a second objective, self-consistency and self-esteem was considered. Confirmations of the self-picture, testing self-hypotheses are the goals of the presenting self. Thirdly, conformity to norms that means presenting oneself in certain culturally proscribed ways can provide approval of society.

Coopersmith is researcher/theorist in the area of self-esteem under the scope of learning perspectives. He studied in the 1950's and 1960's with pre-high school, white, middle class, male students under the name of

"antecedents, correlates and consequents of self-esteem". According to Coopersmith (1967), self-esteem is significantly associated with personal satisfaction and effective functioning.

The self is defined as "an abstraction that the individual develops about the attributes, capacities, objects and activities one possesses and pursues". The abstraction is symbolized by 'me' that is one's idea of/to him/herself. The object of the observation and appraisal, which is called as 'the person', differs from the self, which includes the abstractions formed about the object. The fundamentals of these abstractions would be the one's observations of his/her own behavior and the way other individuals respond to him/her attitudes, appearance and performance (Coopersmith, 1967).

Coopersmith's (1967) multidimensional model of self-esteem represents an integration and expansion of the theoretical work of James (1892) and Cooley (1902). According to Coopersmith (1967), self-esteem consists of the evaluation that individual makes and maintains with regard to himself. That means it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, and worthy. In summary, self-esteem is considered as personal judgment of worthiness expressed by the attitudes of one holds toward him/herself (Coopersmith, 1967).

In determining an individual's self-esteem, Coopersmith (1967) defined four critical factors: first one is the amount of respectful, accepting and concerned treatment individual receives from 'significant others' in his life; second one is the history of an individual's success and the status that he/she holds in the community; thirdly, the way experiences are interpreted and modified in the frame of individual's values and aspirations; and finally, the manner in which the individual responds to evaluation.

Under the cognitive-behavioral perspectives, there are two theorists - Bandura and Epstein- that are presented for the combined perspective with regard to conceptualization of the self and self-esteem. While for the cognitive perspective, the acts and processes of knowing are the entire personality, for the behavioral perspective personality is an accumulation of learned responses to stimuli, sets of overt behavior or habit systems (Schultz & Schultz, 1994).

Bandura's (1982) opinion about the self is not something that determines or causes behavior. On the contrary, it is cognitive processes and structures related with thought and perception. He discussed self-reinforcement and self-efficacy as the aspects of self. Self-reinforcement is defined as one's standards for behavior or criteria using for evaluating of one's own behavior. Based on perception of results of one's performance; one's self-evaluation will increase, if one is successful. Conversely, if an individual is not successful, his/her self-evaluations will decrease. Bandura

(1982) attributes development of this capacity to be learned from the behavior of important models.

Self-efficacy, which is the closest term to self-esteem, is discussed as next step. Self-efficacy is defined as one's assessments of how well one meet internal standards. That is one's feelings of adequacy, efficiency and competence in coping with life. According to him, there are four sources of information to judge one's self-efficacy; *performance attainment* (proven past successful experience); vicarious experiences (seeing others doing successfully); verbal persuasion (encouraging someone that he/she can succeed within reasonable limits); physiological arousal (the extent of calmness that the person feels). Self-efficacy develops through the interaction of some developmental experiences such as parental responsiveness, peer responsiveness, teacher responsiveness, etc. Adolescents and adults continue to gain perceptions of self-efficacy through successes (Schultz & Schultz, 1994).

Epstein's (1980) approach is called as information processing, or cognitive-experiential. Major assumption of his theory is that human mind has a tendency to organize experience into conceptual systems. In other words, human minds make connections between events and later they develop an organized system of higher/lower order constructs. These constructs is both differentiated and integrated (Epstein, 1980). According to Epstein (1985), self-esteem is "as being a basic human need to be love

worthy". Mruk (1995) emphasizes that Epstein viewed self-esteem as a need and thus as motivational.

Epstein defines three interacting levels of self-esteem. The first level is global; the second one is the degree of self-esteem at any time in one of eight areas (competence, likeability, lovability, self-control, personal power, moral approval, bodily appearance, and bodily functioning); and the last one is visible self-esteem that is considered situation-specific (O'Brien & Epstein, 1983).

In humanistic perspective, the researchers -Allport, Maslow, Rogers, May, and Mruk- who have humanistic, existential and phenomenological perspectives are considered together (Fisher, 1996).

To Wells and Marwell (1976), Allport was one the first psychologists to turn away from behaviorism toward a psychology of the ego. He devised his own term –the proprium- that serves an organizing and integrating role and provides an incentive to psychological growth. The proprium functions are sense of body, self-identity, self-esteem, self-extension, self-image and appropriate striving (Schultz and Schultz, 1994).

According to Allport (1961), there are seven categories of the proprium. At ages 1-3, the child perceives him/herself as existing and distinct from the others. Also, child's ability helps to recognize him/her accomplishments and experiences of self-esteem at around ages 4-6, the

child recognizes the objects and people that make up his/her own world. Moreover, the child develops both real and ideal self-images and emphasizes on satisfying or not satisfying parental expectations. Between ages of 6 and 12, the child is able to apply reason and logic to the solution of problems. Adolescence is the period that Allport (1961) refers as appropriate striving, in which he/she begins to formulate long-term goals for his/her life. Adulthood is another period that one can function independent of childhood motives. Rationality and consciousness are the hallmarks of his categorization.

Maslow is probably best known with his hierarchy of needs. These needs began with physiological needs of hunger and thirst, proceed to safety needs, then to the need for love, to the need for esteem and finally to the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1939). According to Maslow (1939), all people have a need for desiring for a stable high evaluation of him/herself for self-respect or self-esteem and the esteem of others. He categorized these human needs into two parts. First one is to desire for strength, for success, for adequacy, for confidence in the society that one live in, independence and freedom. Second one is desire for recognition, attention, significance and appreciation. For him, the significance of these esteem were central for one's psychological well-being. Their lack can lead to discouragement and psychopathology (Maslow, 1939).

Rogers was a phenomenologist focused on that each one lives in a private and unique world with one's own perceptions and responds to the

world through one's own personal awareness (Bednar & Peterson, 1995). According to Rogers (1951), the growth of self can be described as "expanding of distinction between private world or me and that which is not me". Experiences are classified positively and negatively. Therefore, the self is "an interaction between the direct experience of the self and the distorted introjects from the environment". Rogers viewed the condition of self in terms of self-acceptance and the minimization of conflict as crucial for the individual 's emotional well-being (Coopersmith, 1967).

For May (1983), self is included in "being" that May defined as "one's patterns of potentialities, one's sense of one's totality as a separate and unique person". According to him, the sense of being gives the person a basis for self-esteem that is not completely the reflection of others about him/her. To May (1983), to block one's self-awareness and adjustment to it, can lead to neurosis. Moreover, repression, anxiety and guilt can be linked to low self-esteem.

Another phenomenological theorist is Mruk (1995) who defines self-esteem as "the lived status of one's individual competence and worthiness at dealing with challenges of life". Mruk (1995) stated that self-esteem relates to something that is alive in our behavior. That is, one lives self-esteem just like culture, history, or identity. One's self-esteem is lived concretely. It is embodied to one's perceptions of here and now, experienced in the mode of feeling and expressed through words and actions.

2.2 Stressful Life Events Theories/Background

Stress is a common metaphor in everyday life and "part and parcel of the human condition" (Powell & Enright, 1990, p.1). Although everyone is familiar with this term, the definition of stress remains unfulfilled. The difficulty of this definition mostly comes from the fact that stress may have variety of meaning for each person (Rosch, 1989). Selye (1956) originally defined the stress as a "nonspecific" adaptation process to any demand for change. McNamara (2000) defined as the internal state of the individual, an external event or the interaction between a person and his/her environment.

Basically three broad perspectives can be chosen when studying stress (a) the response-based perspective, (b) the stimulus-based perspective and (c) the cognitive-transactional process perspective in order to better understanding of the role of stressful life events (Schwarzer & Schulz, 2001).

The focus is on the way one's organism reacts in response-based perspective. Selye (1956) has distinguished between a stressor (the stimulus) and the stress (the response). The response to a stimulus follows the same typical three-stage pattern called the general adaptation syndrome (GAS). These three stages are, alarm, resistance and adaptation or exhaustion categorized under the GAS.

The body initially defends itself against adverse circumstances by activating the sympathetic nervous system that has been called *alarm reaction*. It mobilizes the body for the "fight or flight" response, which can be seen as an adaptive, short-term reaction to emergency situation. However, stress is often a longer encounter, and the organism moves on to the *resistance stage,* in which it adapts more or less successfully to the stressor. Although the person does not make the impression of being under stress, the organism does not function well and becomes ill. According to Selye, the immune system is compromised, and some typical "diseases of adaptation" develop under persistent stress. Finally, in the *exhaustion stage,* the organism's adaptation resources are decreased, and breakdown occurs.

The stimulus-based perspective basically focused on particular characteristics of the stressor. It is argued that each correspondence has its unique demands, physical, social, role or tasks that specifically tax the individual's coping resources. Hence, every correspondence activates a particular stress response (Schwarzer & Schulz, 2001).

The cognitive-transactional perspective theory (Lazarus; 1966) defines stress as a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is evaluated by the person as being charging or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being. There are some meta-theoretical assumptions in the theory: *transaction, process and context*. It is assumed that (a) stress occurs as a specific encounter of the

person with the environment, both of them exerting a reciprocal influence on each other, (b) stress is the subject to continuous change and, (c) the meaning of a particular transaction is derived from the underlying context.

Lazarus (1991) conceives stress as an active, unfolding process that is composed of casual antecedents, mediating processes, and effects. *Antecedents* are person variables, such as commitments and beliefs, and environmental variables, such as demands or situational constraints. *Mediating processes* refer to coping and appraisals of demands and resources. Experiencing stress and coping bring about both immediate effects, such as affect or physiological changes, and long-term effects concerning psychological well-being, somatic health and social functioning (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Process Model of the Stress/Health Relationship, based on theTransactional Stress Theory by Lazarus (1991).
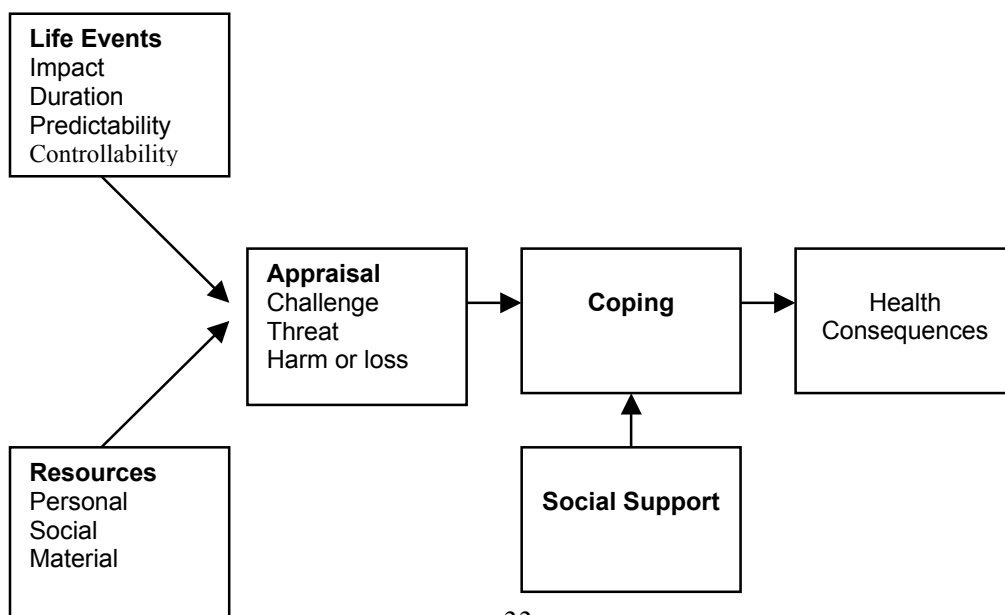
Cognitive appraisals comprise two component processes, namely primarily (demand) appraisals and secondary (resource) appraisals. Appraisal outcomes are divided into the categories challenge, threat and harm/loss. Firstly, *demand appraisal* refers to the stakes a person has in a stressful encounter. A situation is appraised as challenging when it mobilizes physical and mental activity and involvement. In the evaluation of *challenge,* a person may see an opportunity to prove her/himself, anticipating gain, or personal growth from the venture. The situation is experienced as pleasant, exciting and interesting and the person feels ardent and confident in being able to meet the demands. *Threat* occurs when the individual perceives danger, expecting physical injuries or blows one's self-esteem. In the experience of *harm/loss,* damage has already occurred. This can be the injury or loss of valued persons, important objects, self-worth, or social standing.

Secondly, *resource appraisals* refer to one's available coping options for dealing with the demands at hand. The individual evaluates his/her competence, social support, and material or other resources that can help to readapt to the circumstances and to re-establish equilibrium between person and environment (Lazarus, 1991).

The study of life events has its roots in the pioneering work of Holmes and Rahe (1967) and their development of the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS). The scale allowed for the analysis of the correlation of major life events with physical and/or psychological disorder. It also served as the foundation and impetus for countless scales and following

studies. The measure yielded estimates of the average degree of readjustment/life change subjects associated with the 43 major life events.

Following the work of Holmes and Rahe (1967), Brown, Harris and Copeland (1977) posited that stressful events might act on a continuum. That is, it ranges from "activating" events through the presence of multiple moderating variables may significantly effect the event-illness relationship. Although there is continued debate about the definition and measurement of life events and related variables, it is generally accepted that stressful life events play a significant and casual role in the etiology of psychical and psychological disorder across the life span (Meehan, 1999). There are also discussions on the existence, nature, and the strength of a connection between negative life events and illness began with the work of Andrews and Tenant (1978). They concluded that a life event-illness link accounted for as little as ten percent of the variance in the studies of illness etiology. On the other hand, Cooke and Hole (1983) said that that explained variance was an inadequate measure of the casual link between events and illness. They insisted that attributable risk was a more accurate indicator of the casual role of life events. Cooke and Hole (1983) calculated that approximately 32 percent of psychiatric cases were attributable to stressful life events.

Since the development of the SRRS, only negative life events show a relationship with psychical and psychological disorder (Meehan, 1999). As a result, the study of life events has taken on a decidedly negative life event

bias (Kanner, Feldman, Weinberger & Ford, 1987; Swearington & Cohen, 1985; Thoits, 1983). This led to a situation that while considering life events, researchers have focused on the nature of events called as negative, undesirable or distressing. There are relatively small numbers of studies, which contain both positive and negative events, effects have been combined or positive events have been assessed only with respect to illness or possible buffers of negative events (Cohen, Mcgowan, Fooskas & Rose, 1984; Compas, Wagner, Slavin & Vannatta, 1986; Miller, Wilcox & Soper, 1985).

According to Meehan (1999), it is a general rule that a link between life events and health has been examined with respect to negative events and their relationship to physical and psychological symptoms. Because physical and psychological symptoms are the ones that represent an incomplete picture of health and well-being, at best.

There are some studies exceptions to the above rule. Murrell and Norris (1983; 1984), in which positive life events were associated with increased positive affect in older adults. Likewise, in the study of Weir & Okun (1988) it is found that positive events enhanced students' satisfaction with college. Studying college students, Suh et al., (1996) found that positive events were associated with increased life satisfaction and positive affect whereas negative events correlated only with life satisfaction and negative affect. Similarly, Seidlitz, Wyer and Diener (1997) found that happy college students differed from unhappy ones in terms of nature of their

reactions to positive events. Finally, in a longitudinal study, Stallings and his colleagues (1997) found that positive events predicted subsequent positive affect; on the other hand, negative events predicted only negative affect.

Above findings are consistent with the work of Zautra and Reich (1983) who concluded that research supports the existence of a relationship between negative life events and subjective distress, and between positive life events and measures of well-being. They stated that two separate systems of people for experiencing and responding to affective life experiences matches with negative events and their impacts.

Jackson (1982) investigated the relationship between life change events and health among 1207 high school students from Grade 10, 11 and 12. She also examined the relationship of gender, grade level, grade point average and the number of days absent from the school to the life event change. Results indicated that students with the lowest grade point averages were more likely to report death of relative, illness and involvement with drugs and alcohol, being arrested and quitting school.

2.3 Studies about Self-Esteem and Stressful Life Events

Understanding self-esteem is basic to understand adolescent's behavior. It is essential to know how adolescents perceive, value and regard the self to interpret their behavior. A classic work by Coopersmith (1967) proposed that the level of self-esteem affects all aspects of a person's life.

Roy (1984) says that self-esteem profoundly affects the ability to adapt changes in one's life.

Among adolescents, it is found that there were direct paths to global self-esteem from adolescents' specific self-perceptions and mothers' positive communication (Killen & Forehand, 1998). In the study of Arbona and Power (2003), they examined the relation of mother and father attachment to self-esteem among African American, European American, and Mexican American high school students. Findings indicated that adolescents from 3 ethnic/racial groups did not differ greatly in their reported attachment to father and mother.

In the study of Verkuyten (2001), the relationship between ethnic minority identity and global self-esteem was examined among Turks and Dutch and it was found that Turks was family integrity positively related to ethnic and global self-esteem. Among both ethnic group boys had a more positive global and ethnic self-esteem than girls.

Increased attention has been given to parent education programs. One such program is Self Esteem: A Family Affair Program with families that had adolescent children aged 11-19 (Bredefort & Hey, 1995). Families were randomly assigned to treatment and control group. Each family was measured self-esteem, family adaptability, family cohesion, and family conflict. The results showed that treatment families scored significantly differently from control groups.

The study of Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) assessment of social class and self-esteem among children and adults found virtually no association between social class of parents and self-esteem among younger children, a modest association among adolescents and advantage moderate association among adults based on their own social class.

Several studies indicate that sex differences exist among adolescents' self-reports of life events (Groer, Thomas & Shoffner, 1992; Tubman & Windle, 1995; Windle & Windle, 1996). More specifically, girls tend to report significantly more negative life events than boys across all ages of adolescence as well as higher levels of stress. Consistent with this finding, Plunkett, Radmacher & Moll-Phanara (2000) studied among 207 high school students and they found that adolescent girls reported more life events, higher levels of stress due to the life events, and more use of coping strategies than boys.

Block and Robins (1993) discovered gender differences in self-esteem. They found that self-esteem was interpersonally oriented for adolescent girls, while for boys self-esteem was person-oriented. Thus, while self-esteem was related to the masculine trait of unique superiority for boys, high self-esteem was related to interconnectedness with others for adolescent girls (Joseph, Marcus & Tafarodi, 1992).

Results from a meta-analysis conducted by Kling et al., (1999) strongly supports the claim that males have higher self-esteem than females. Two analyses were conducted to examine gender differences. In Analysis I, a computerized literature search, representing 97, 217 respondents' yielded 216 effects sizes the overall effect size was 0.21, which indicated a small difference favoring males. In Analysis II, gender differences were examined using data sets from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). All of the NCES effect sizes, representing 48,000 young Americans, indicated higher self-esteem for males.

Study among adolescents from ninth, tenth and twelfth grades investigated gender differences in global self-esteem and eight domains of self-esteem. The study showed that boys achieved higher global self-esteem scores than girls did. In addition, boys scored significantly higher than girls in six domains of self-esteem (personal security, home/parents, attractiveness/physical appearance, personal mastery, psychological reactivity/permeability, and athletics) while remaining two domains (perception of peer popularity, academics) exhibited no significant differences between male and female (Quatman & Watson, 2001)

According to survey results of American Association of University Women (1991) on American girls and boys in grades 4 through 10; girls' self-esteem dropped significantly as they made transition from elementary to middle school whereas, boys' self-esteem did not drop as much. During high school, adolescent girls were less confident of their math and science

abilities, and also less interested in these courses. Moreover, they expressed lower career expectations than that of boys.

According to Sadker and Sadker (1994), the loss of self-esteem for adolescent females is directly connected to their academic achievement and career goals. This finding is corrected by Peterson, Kauchack and Yakoobi (1980) that gender differences in student self-concept toward science learning were related to their actual success in science courses. They also found that female students possessed greater feelings of inadequacy for achievement than did their male classmates. On the other hand, it was found that there are no significant differences in academic self-esteem between adolescence boys and girls (Sommers, 1994; Skaalvik, 1990).

In the longitudinal study of Chubb, Fertman and Ross (1997), it was examined that whether self-esteem and locus of control change during high school years with respect to gender and grade. They found that no significant change in the level of self-esteem during four years of high school. There was a significant main effect for gender but not for grade. Throughout high school, male self-esteem was found consistently higher than female self-esteem; that is, there is significant difference in self-esteem scores for males and females. Consistent with this finding, Smith (2002) investigated the effect on self-esteem and gender differences. No significant difference was found concerning gender or the interaction of age and gender.

There are several contradictions in the studies of gender differences that females view themselves less positively (Richman et al., 1985; Brack, Orr & Ingersoll, 1988; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975) and more positively than do males (Thornberg & Jones, 1982; Whiteside, 1976). In comprehensive review of literature (Wylie, 1979; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974 Bohan, 1973; Overholser et al., 1995), no gender difference in self-esteem was reported.

In the study of Güngör (1989) among 9th and 11th graders, no significant difference was found between boys and girls with respect self-esteem level. Several studies made in Turkey showed similar results about gender differences in level of self-esteem (Gürçay, 1989; Durmuş, 1994; Özkan, 1994; Duru, 1995; Gür, 1996). On the other hand, Çuhadaroğlu (1985) investigated self-esteem in adolescence between 15 -18 and found the decrease of self-esteem was more significant in girls. Özoğlu (1988) also reported that boys had significantly higher self-esteem than girls did.

The perception of academic success is a significant predictor of self-esteem in adolescent students (Kearney-Cooke, 1999). Gilligan (1982) and hypothesize that adolescent females' low assessment of their own competence may lie within the social environment, which applauds achievement and success in males but may react with ambivalence or negativity to female success.

Hattie (1992) obtained an average correlation of 0.34 in the relationship between self-esteem and academic results (operationalised as a person's overall average marks). That is, the relationship between self esteem and academic results is weak one then 1 year later the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. The results showed that the lower the participants' self-esteem, the more feelings of loneliness they reported 1 year later.

According to the study of Clemes and Bean (1981), children with high self-esteem are more positive, responsible, tolerable to frustration and able to influence their environment. On the other hand, children with low self-esteem can be easily manipulated by others, frustrated quickly, often blame others for their weaknesses, and they tend to avoid difficult situations.

Bloom (1977) found that achievement and self-esteem were generally related. In the study of Wiggins (1987), self-esteem scores were found to be the only significant factor that is correlated with earned grades for 483 students.

Wiggins and Schatz (1994) examined the relationship between self-esteem and earned grades, achievement test scores and other factors. They found that the most significant positive correlation was between self-esteem score and grade point average. This result was very similar to the study of Kimball (1972), Spatz and Johnston (1971) and Trowbridge (1972).

Rosenberg, Schooler and Schoenbach (1989) studied among self-esteem and academic achievement and their studies showed that there is a positive, significant relation between two variables. Although higher correlation was found between academic self-concept and grades than between global self-esteem and grades, the degree of relation between global self-esteem and grades is still significant (Rosenberg et al., 1995). Moreover, Liu, Kaplan and Risser (1992) concluded that bi-directional relations between self-esteem and academic achievement displaying reciprocal relation of two factor in a positive direction.

Alves-Martins et al. (2002) analyzed the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary-school students. Their results showed that there are significant differences in self-esteem between the successful and unsuccessful students. In seventh grades; such differences disappear in the eight and ninth grades.

Path-analytic models including measures of self-concept, attributions and grades of 198 Filipino high school students were examined in the study of Watkins and Gutierrez (1990). Attributions for successful outcomes to ability or effort were found to be mediating the casual relationship between achievement and self-esteem within specific areas of academic content.

In the study of Demo and Parker (2001), the relationship between student's grade point average and self-esteem were examined among 298 black and white college students. Self-esteem scores of blacks and whites

were not significantly different. No association was found between academic achievement and overall self-esteem for either racial group.

There are few studies examining the relation between gender, self-esteem and educational attainment. According to several studies on adolescent boys found that grades have a positive effect on self-esteem, but high self-esteem does not result in better grades (Rosenberg, et al., 1995; Rosenberg, Schooler & Schoenbach, 1989). In addition, Bachman and O'Malley (1980) indicate that the positive association between boys' self-esteem and educational attainment is caused by differences in family background, academic ability and grades.

In the study of Chapman and Mullis (1999), relations between adolescent coping strategies and self-esteem were analyzed. The results showed that adolescents with lower self-esteem utilized more avoidance coping strategies than adolescents with higher self-esteem. Moreover, males reported utilizing avoidance coping strategies more frequently than females; females were found to utilize social and spiritual supports more frequently than males.

The literature about stressful life events and self-esteem revealed a significant relationship. The study in which 675 second-year undergraduate students were included, showed a significant negative correlation between self-esteem both academic and life stress emerged indicating that students

with high self-esteem are less stressed than those are low (Abouserie, 1994).

A total of 2154 North Dakota high school students between the ages 14 and 19 participated by completing the Life Experiences Survey and the Self-Esteem Inventory. The findings indicated that as the number of life events increased, the level of self-esteem decreased (Youngs & Rathge, 1990).

Over 1740 rural high school students from Grades 9 through 12, average overall stress was the best predictor of self-esteem (Mullis, Youngs & George, 1993).

With 547 French-speaking adolescents between ages 11 to 18 years, the results support the view that body image, self-esteem and negative stressful life events mediate the relationship between gender and depressive symptoms during adolescence (Marcotte et al., 2002).

Among a 472 Mexican American adolescents aged 14 to 16 years, it was found that relatively high perceived stress, low acculturation, moderate self-esteem with no significant gender differences. Analysis revealed self-esteem as most predictive of a core effective overall coping resources. Results suggest Mexican American adolescents possessing high self-esteem are less likely to encounter damage to their sense of self when

confronted with stressors, thus allowing for productive coping (Guinn & Vincent, 2002).

Heins et al. (1984) point out that student with intense anxiety is caused by two kinds of stress, that correlated with academic expectations and performance and that related to social factors (e.g. developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships).

In the study of Stein (1991), the relationship among self-esteem, life events and powerlessness was explored with respect to gender. Findings revealed that feelings of powerlessness and an increased incidence of significant life events predicted low self-esteem.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In this chapter, methodological procedures of this study are presented. The main topics are the overall design of the study, the participants of the study, the instruments, the procedure, the data analysis and the limitations of the study.

3.1 The Overall Design of the Study

The present study is about self-esteem and stressful life events of university students. In order to obtain theories and past researches related with the present study topic, journals, books and internet resources was searched. It was a quantitative research including survey. There are two questionnaries and a four quesitoned-demographic information form to collect data about participants. The selection of participants of this study was made clustered-randomly. 341 students was participated the study voluntarily and it was made at METU in the second semester of 2002-2003 academic year. Independent t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis.

3.2 The Participants of the Study

The population of the present study included Middle East Technical University (METU) students who took English course from the Department of Modern Languages. The researcher contacted with the instructors in the Department of Modern Languages and explained the purpose of this study. Students who were taking Eng 102, Eng 211 and Eng 311 courses participated the study. They were volunteered to participate the study.

The population was approximately 3500. The sample of the study included 341 undergraduate students. One hundred twenty four of the participants (36%) were female and two hundred seventeen participants (64%) were male. Seventy three (21.4%) of the participants were non-achiever, while two hundred forty five (71.8) of them were achiever. One hundred eighty four of the participants (54%) were first, seventy nine of them (23%) were second, forty three of them (13%) were third and finally thirty five of them (10%) were senior class students. One hundred fifty six of the participants (46%) were from the Faculty of Engineering, one hundred twenty two of them (36%) were from the Faculty of Art and Science, thirty-three of them (10%) were from the Faculty of Education, twenty two of them (6%) were from the Faculty of Economic And Administrative Sciences and eight of the participants (2%) were from the Faculty of Architecture.

3.3 The Instruments

In this study, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES) was used for self-esteem and Life Events Inventory for University Students (LEIU) was used for stressful life events, in addition a four questions information sheet was used to collect demographic data such as gender, GPA, department and grade about the participants.

3.2.1 Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES):

The SES scale originally was developed by Rosenberg (1965) for the purpose of measuring global self-esteem. The SES is a one-dimensional scale designed to measure only perceptions of global self-esteem. In other words, it taps the extent to which a person is generally satisfied with his/her life, considers him/herself worthy, holds a positive attitude toward him/herself, or, alternatively, feels useless, desires more respect. Therefore, it is important to differentiate Rosenberg's aspects from that of who consider general self-esteem to represent a sum of self-judgments (Bryne, 1996).

The SES consists of 10 items with a four point Likert type scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". In the Turkish version, the scale was changed as "Totally Right" to "Totally Wrong" by the adaptation study of Çuhadaroğlu (1989). SES is scored with Guttman scoring format. Five of the items are phrased positively, e.g., "On the whole,

I am satisfied with myself" the other five are phrased negatively, e.g. "I certainly feel useless at times". "Positive" and "negative" items were presented alternately in order to reduce the effect of respondent set.

Based on Guttman scoring format Rosenberg SES follows three steps of scoring.

In the first step;

For 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 7th items:

- If the answer is "Wrong" or "Totally wrong", "1" point is recoded.

- If the answer is "Right" or "Totally right", "0" is recoded.

For 3rd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 10th items:

- If the answer is "Right" or "Totally right", 1 point is recoded.

- If the answer is "Wrong" or "Totally wrong", "0" is recoded.

In the second step;

- If sum of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd items is at least 2 or more, "1" point is recoded.

- If the sum of 4th and 5th items is 1 or 2, "1" point is recoded. If the sum is 0, then "0" point is recoded.

- For 6th, 7th, and 8th items, a total score is recoded which can be at most 3, at least 0.

- If the sum of 9th and 10th items is at least 1, then "1" is recoded.

In the third step;

- For each participant a total score of 10 items is computed. This score may change between 0 and 6.

- The score between 0-2 is recoded as "1" which means high self-esteem.

- The score between 3-6 is recoded as "2" which means low self-esteem.

The score obtained from SES scale are between 0-6 and, any score between 0-2 was accepted as indicative of having high self-esteem, and any score between 3-6 was accepted as indicative of having low self-esteem.

The adaptation of Rosenberg SES to Turkish adolescents, which included translation, reliability and validity studies, were conducted by Çuhadaroğlu (1985). The correlation between psychiatric interviews and the self-esteem scale was found to be .71. The test-retest reliability of the Turkish version of the scale was found to be 0.75. Additional validity evidence was obtained by Çankaya (1997). The significant correlation between Self-Concept Inventory and Rosenberg SES was found .26 (p< . 001).

In addition, Cronbach alpha reliability was computed for Rosenberg SES by Kartal (1996). Item-total correlation ranged between .40 and .70. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was found .85. Pearson product moment correlations of Rosenberg SES and Appearance-esteem scores

with academical performance, nature and the number of social relations, perceptions of own popularity, the frequency of dating and perceived physical fitness were calculated. Self-esteem scores correlated with all of the variables. In order to provide further evidence for the validity and reliability of Rosenberg SES, a second study was performed by Kartal (1996). The data resulted a test-retest reliability of .82. The Pearson correlation coefficient between Rosenberg SES and Semantic Differential Self-Esteem scale (Frank & Moralla, 1976) was .56. For the present study reliability and validity study was not calculated.

3.2.2 Life Events Inventory for University Students (LEIU)

LEIU is a 49-item Likert form 5-point scale ranging from "1 = Never" to "5 = Always". It was developed for the study of Oral (1999) in the pilot study. It measures the frequency of specific hassles and life events (e.g. Heavy schedules of subjects/courses, Not being able to adjust school, Not being able to participate in social activities etc.) experienced by students. Most of the items in this scale are overlapped with the stress factors special to university students found in another study (Şahin, Rugancı, Taş, Kuyucu & Sezgin, 1991). Moreover, some of the items overlapped with the items in Daily Hassles Scale developed by Kanner, Coyne, Schaffer and Lazarus (1981). The reliability of LEIU was found alpha = .90 and item total score correlation of each item ranged between .19 and .64 (Oral, 1999).

For the Life Events Inventory for University Students (LEIU) Scale factor analysis was employed in this study. Three and five factor analysis was made and three factors were used with respect to categorize items meaningfully. The result of three factors analysis was presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Three Factor Analysis Results for LEIU

Factor 1 Self-Related Anxiety or Problems			
Alpha =. 67			
Exp. Var. = 21.2			

Items	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
3. Problems with girl/boyfriend	.29	.06	.12
8. Anxiety for future	.38	.25	.30
9. Problems in relationships with friends	.44	.37	.01
18. Anxiety for loneliness	.69	.21	.05
19. Questioning myself about my personality	.69	.22	.09
22. Having difficulty in making decisions	.48	.22	.22
25. Not being able to fulfil my responsibilities	.45	.07	.35
26. Fear for being rejected	.66	.05	.06
27. Worry about my physical appearance	.56	.18	.14
39. Inability to express myself to others	.67	.18	.24
45. Sexual problems	.31	.26	.13
46. Anxiety about my weight	.53	.05	.07
48. Anxiety for making mistake	.59	.02	.36
49. Feeling uneasy about being criticized	.57	.14	.24

Factor 2 Environmental, Adjustment, Family Problems

Alpha=. 76

Exp. Var. = 6.3

Items	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
2. General health problems	.17	.28	.18
4. Accommodation problems	.05	.57	.06
5. Transportation problems	.12	.40	.19
7. Conflict with parents	.05	.37	.16
10. Negative political conditions in country	.14	.36	.02
11. Living away from loved ones (Friends, family, etc.)	.33	.40	.13
12. Problems caused by environmental conditions (Noise pollution, air pollution, etc.)	.18	.50	.05
13. Not being able to adjust school	.35	.36	.21
14. Financial problems	.08	.61	.20
15. Not being able to participate in social activities (cinema, theatre, reading etc.)	.24	.47	.37
17. Indifference of persons to one another	.35	.39	.20
21. Discomfort having addiction like alcohol, smoking etc.	.11	.30	.06
24. Nutrition problems	.30	.52	.17
29. Health problem of any family member	.15	.31	.15
36. Problems with room mate/home mate	.22	.49	.13
37. Problems with brothers/sisters	.01	.48	.20
40. Family problems	.14	.51	.13
41. Occupational problems	.09	.51	.15
42. Anxiety over job interviews)	.19	.36	.13
43. Anxiety over depressing news in mass media	.21	.52	.09
44. Problems in getting adapted to Ankara	.28	.39	.01

Factor 3 Academic Events/Problems *Alpha= .60* *Exp. Var. = 4.5*			
Items	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
1. Heavy schedules of subjects/courses	.08	.02	.67
6. Lecture schedule	.12	.07	.66
16. Problems with academic staff	.10	.26	.38
20. Fatigue	.19	.10	.53
23. Not sleeping enough	.01	.16	.49
28. Being unsuccessful in school	.43	.04	.54
30. Problems related to projects or paper	.22	.10	.57
31. Dissatisfaction with the department	.16	.16	.36
32. Difficulty due to education in English	.03	.23	.25
33. Not being able to study enough	.27	.06	.53
34. Heavy exam schedule, exam anxiety	.16	.09	.75
35. Attendance problems	.02	.20	.41
38. Problems with time management	.45	.11	.49
47. Anxiety for not being able to graduate	.24	.14	.43

Three factors solution explained 21.2% of variance for factor I, 6.3% of variance for factor II and 4.5% of variance for factor III. First factor was called as "Self-Related Anxiety/Problems", the second one named as "Environmental, Adjustment and Family Events/Problems" and the last one called as "Academic Events/Problems". Fourteen items were grouped under the first factor ranging from .29 to .69; twenty one items were grouped under the second factor ranging between .28 and .61; finally, in the third factor fourteen items were involved ranging from .25 to .75.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The application of the instruments was made by the researcher. Before application, the researcher had a short interview with the instructor about the aim, and the instruments of this study. The SES scale, the LEIU and demographic information form were administered to the students in classroom settings in four weeks in the second semester of 2002-2003 academic year. Each student has completed two questionnaires and four demographic questions approximately 10-15 minutes.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, Statistics Package for Social Sciences for Windows 10.0 program was used for data analysis.

For the academic achievement classification, Middle East Technical University Grade System (Yönetmelikler, 2001) was used therefore; point between 0 and 1.99 as a non-achiever and point between 2.00 and 4.00 as an achiever were accepted. In order to classify the departments of the participants under the faculties METU General Catalog (2002) was used. For all analysis, self-esteem score was used as ranging between 0 and 6, only for determining level of self-esteem; total point of each student was recoded as high level of self-esteem for point between 0-2 and low level of self-esteem for point between 3-6. For the LEIU scale three factor analysis

was made and total point of each of the three factors were used for all calculations.

First of all, frequency, mean and standard deviation were calculated to examine the level of self-esteem of students. Secondly, to understand the difference between male and female; achiever and non-achiever on self esteem independent samples t-test was applied. Finally, the relationship between self-esteem and three factors of life events was analysed by the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The .05 alpha levels were accepted as a sign for statistical significance for all the statistical procedures.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

The sample included only METU students. Therefore, the results of the present study could not be generalized to all students with the same age.

Because the sample was not chosen randomly, the number of female students was not equal to the number of male students, which may have an effect on gender differences on the self-esteem score.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, findings of this study were presented. First part included the result of the primary focus of the study, which was examining self-esteem level of university students. In the second part, gender difference on self-esteem was presented. Then academic achievement difference on self-esteem was displayed. Finally, the relationship between stressful life events and self-esteem was presented.

4.1 Self-Esteem Levels

First question of the present study was "What is the self-esteem level of university students?" As the first question of the study, students' self-esteem level was investigated. The overall self-esteem mean of sample was 1.03 with a 1.05 standard deviation and the score ranged between 0 and 4. Level of the self-esteem among students was calculated and result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Degree of Self-Esteem Among Students

Self-Esteem Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
High	302	88.6	88.6
Low	39	11.4	11.4
Total	341	100.0	100.0

As it is seen in Table 2, there were the 302 students (88.6 % of the sample) with high self-esteem level, while there were 39 students (11.4 % of the sample) with low self-esteem level.

4.2 Gender Differences on Self-Esteem

Second problem statement of this study was "Is there a significant difference between male and female on self-esteem level of university students?" An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine the difference of self-esteem between male and female students. There were 124 females and 217 males who participated the study. The result including means, standard deviations of female and male subjects and t-value is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations of Females and Males and t-Value

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Self-Esteem	Female	124	.90	1.05	339	1.68	0.93
	Male	217	1.10	1.04			

The t-test was not significant t (339) = 1.68, p = 0.93. There is no significant difference between male (M = .90, SD = 1.05) and female (M = 1.10, SD = 1.04) on the self-esteem scores.

4.3 Academic Achievement Differences on Self-Esteem

To examine the difference of self-esteem score between achiever and non-achiever students as the third question of the present study independent-samples t-test was conducted. There were 245 achievers and 73 non-achievers who participated the study. The result including means, standard deviations and t-value applied to self-esteem is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Means Standard Deviations and t-Value of Academic Achievement on Self-Esteem

	Academic Achievement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Self-Esteem	Non-Achiever	73	1.25	1.05	316	2.12	0.03
	Achiever	245	0.95	1.04			

The t-test was significant, t (316) = 2.12, p = 0.03. The achievers (M = 0.95; SD = 1.04) have a higher self-esteem score than the non-achievers (M = 1.25; SD = 1.05).

4.4 Stressful Life Events and Self-Esteem

The fourth question of the present study was "Is there any relationship between self-esteem and stressful life events of university students?" To investigate the relationship Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied. A significant relationship between self-esteem with factor I named as self-related anxiety/problems (r = .40; p = 0.001), factor II named as environmental, adjustment and family events/problems (r = .20; p = 0.001) and factor III named as academic events/problems (r = .19; p = 0.001) was found.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate level of self-esteem of university students. Then self-esteem scores of students were analyzed with respect to gender and academic achievement. Finally, the relationship between self-esteem and stressful life events is investigated. Self-esteem, gender and academic achievement was taken as independent variables, while stressful life events were accepted as dependent variable of the study. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Stressful life Events and demographic information form were used. The results will be discussed in the following sections.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

The first research question of the study was to examine self-esteem level of university students. It was found that 88.6 % of students have a high self-esteem, while 11.4 % of students have low self-esteem. This could be the result of studying in one of the most qualified universities of Turkey.

Because, in order to begin studying at Middle East Technical University, students have to get high points from the university entrance exam comparing with most of the universities in Turkey. Therefore, they are perceived as successful when they deserve to study at METU. This may give the students feelings of certain level of self-confidence and self-esteem. Or it could be just the opposite; because students have high level of self-esteem they are more successful in their academic life. Branden (1994) supported that individuals must have a certain level of self-esteem before they are willing to persevere long enough to succeed. However, there has been such an idea that achievement is more likely to be the result rather than the cause of self-esteem. Both are thus intimately related to one another. Moreover, some other reasons could be influential on having high self-esteem like having high socioeconomic status of their family, studying at qualified high school, and living in a big city. On the other hand, the reasons having low self-esteem could dependent on not having above conditions that is low socioeconomic status, studying at unqualified school, living in a small town.

The difference between male and female students on the scores of self-esteem was analyzed as the second question of the present study. To examine the difference between two genders with respect to self-esteem, independent samples t-test was applied. The result showed that self-esteem is not connected with gender. That is, there is no significant difference between self-esteem scores of boys and girls. This finding is not expected because; there is lots of research that supported the difference between

male and female on self-esteem score (Block & Robins, 1993, Güngör, 1989, Byrne, 2000). However, as it is mentioned in the review of literature, there are several contradictions in the studies of gender among self-esteem (Smith 2002, Growe, 1980; Fenzel & Blyth, 1986). Most of the studies that investigated the gender differences in self-esteem found that adolescent females score were lower on self-esteem than do adolescent males (Block & Robins, 1993; Kling et al., 1999; Richman, et al., 1985; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975; Chubb, Fertman & Ross, 1997; Güngör, 1989; Byrne, 2000; Allgood-Merten & Stochard, 1991).

Kearney-Cooke (2000) stated that self-esteem declines during adolescence, which may be the result of increasing cognitive ability and sensitivity to perceived social evaluation. The gap between adolescents' view of their 'real selves' compared to their 'ideal selves' widens and self-esteem declines. The research indicates that this drop is more profound for girls than for boys (Eccles, Flanagan, & et al., 1989; Rosenberg & Simmons, 1975). There are also studies that mentioned females view themselves more positively than do males (Thornberg & Jones, 1982; Whiteside, 1976; Lackovic-Girgin & Dekovic, 1990).

Consistent with the present study, Maccoby and Jacklin (1979) found that there was no difference between two genders. Smith (2002) also investigated the effect on self-esteem and gender differences and no significant difference was found between male and female. When the literature was searched, it was seen that there are many studies explaining

no significant gender difference on self-esteem (Bosacki, Innerd, & Towaon, 1979; Growe, 1980; Wylie, 1979; Bohan, 1973, Guinn & Vincent, 2002, Fenzel & Blyth, 1986).

The difference between academic achievement and self-esteem scores of students was examined as the third question of the present study. As a result of independent t-test applied between self-esteem and academic achievement, it was found that there is a significant difference between achievers and non-achievers on self-esteem. This result shows consistency with the literature. Studies that search global self-evaluation to academic achievements reveal the positive relationship between two variables (Marsh, 1990; Shunk, 1990; Hattie, 1992; Eccles, 1993; Bryne, 1996). There are also many studies that provided same results between academic achievement and self-esteem (Alves-Martins et al., 2002; Bloom, 1977; Wiggins, 1987; Kimball, 1972).

Thombs (2000) found that first-year college students with relatively low self-esteem were more likely to exhibit many problem behaviors, than those with higher self-esteem. Some examples included alcohol problems, poor time management, poor study habits, and self-defeating behavior, than those with higher self-esteem. In previous psychological studies, self-esteem has been linked to personal adjustment, physical health, and academic motivation and success among college students, through forms of social support. Based on the cognitive adaptation theory, Taylor and Brown (1988) found level of self-esteem to be directly related to seeking social

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support and indirectly to actual support, physical health and adjustment to college. Self-esteem was also found to be the best of five predictors (including SAT scores) of academic motivation, which was them linked to grade point average two years later.

Having one's academic achievement meet one's academic expectations and desires is a major key to most college students' self-esteem. Having a high self-esteem has many positive effects and benefits, especially among college students. Students who feel positive about themselves have fewer sleepless nights, cope with less easily to pressures of conformity by peers, are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, are more persistent at difficult tasks, are happier and more sociable, and most pertinent to this study is that they tend to perform better academically. On the other hand, college students with a low self-esteem tend to be unhappy, less sociable, more likely to use drugs and alcohol, and are more vulnerable to depression, which are all correlated with lower academic achievement (Wiggins & Schatz, 1994).

The research, made by Wiggins & Schatz (1994), has shown that self-esteem and academic achievement correlate directly to a moderate degree. Honors students tend to demonstrate higher academic self-esteem and competency. For them, this academic self-esteem seems to become a motivational factor (Moeller, 1994). For many college students their self-esteem is based or enforced by their academic success or achievements.

According to studies of Rosenberg & Pearlin (1978); Demo & Savin-Williams (1983) four theoretical principles -social comparisons, reflected appraisals, self-perception, and psychological centrality- have been suggested to explain the relation between academic achievement and self-esteem among children and adolescents. First of all, because of studying in competitive and grade-conscious educational institutions, one can constantly be reminded about the importance of his/her grades (psychological centrality). Secondly, one can have daily opportunities leading him/her to compare his/her performance with others (social comparisons). Next one is the reaction of others/friends that are monitored or internalized (reflected appraisals). Lastly, personal determinations of success or failure shape one's self-concept (self-perceptions).

A Factor analysis was conducted to see whether Life Events Inventory for University Students (LEIU) has a factor structure. The items converged into three factors, which are self-related events/problems, environmental, adjustment and family events/problems, and finally academic events/problems. To understand the relationship between self-esteem and stressful life events as the fourth research question, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied. Significant relationship between self-related events/problems, environmental, adjustment and family events/problems, academic events/problems and self-esteem were found in the present study.

The students with high self-esteem experience stressful events less than the students with low self-esteem in terms of self-related events/problems. With respect to environmental, adjustment and family events/problems the students with high self-esteem is less stressful than students with low self-esteem. As for factor three, which is academic events/problems, similar result was found between student with high self-esteem and low self-esteem. It can be concluded that having high self-esteem is a useful tool for coping with stressful life events, while having low self-esteem leads to percieve daily life events as more stressful. University counseling centers should consider this affect of self-esteem on stressful life events.

Abouserie (1994) found negative correlation between self-esteem and academic and life stress, which indicates that students with high self-esteem are less stressed than those with low. Zuckerman (1989) suggests that this may be because greater self-esteem reduces stress by fostering social resources and effective coping. One solution can be enhancing students' ability to cope with stress by enhancing self-esteem of students. As Abouserie (1994) indicated that self-esteem can serve as variable moderating the impact of academic and life stress and students' personality variables should be taken into account in predicting reaction to those stressful life events.

5.2 Implications

When the findings of the present study are considered with respect to self-esteem level of university students, it was found that the number of university students with high level of self-esteem is significantly more than the students with low self-esteem.

Moreover, it was found that self-esteem scores of male and female students were not different. This could be an important clue for counseling studies while enhancing self-esteem level of students. On the other hand, academic achievement has a significant effect upon university students. Students who feel themselves as having lower self-esteem have a lower academic achievement or vice versa. While designing self-esteem enhancement programs, counselors and other professionals should take into consideration this issue also.

According to Branden, (1994), there are several approaches to build self-esteem. First one is cognitive approach that places the emphasis on developing positive mental attitudes, helping students to think about their feelings, and adopt healthier ways of interpreting or relating to the events that occur in their lives.

Second one is behavioral approach which endeavors to develop specific functional behaviors in students so that they can display behaviors that command greater respect from others and self-esteem in themselves.

Such behaviors may relate to voice control, posture, eye contact, or expression of feelings. Another one is experiential approach that provides positive experiences for students to build up feelings of self-respect and self-esteem. Most of the activities rely on external sources of feedback and reinforcement. Skill development is another approach in which number of programs is used to build self-esteem by improving the functional communication skills, decision-making skills, or social skills of students. They base their programs on the concept that unless students actually function at a higher level, they are unable to sustain positive feelings about themselves. Environmental approach is more holistic approach that structures the environment and the activities students engage in to develop particular attitudes and skills that lead to self-esteem. It tends to address such aspects as discipline, social activities, goal setting, responsibility, and how adults interact with students (Branden, 1994).

With respect to self-esteem and also stressful life events, environmental approach could be beneficial because it is a holistic approach, which needs to study about students' inside world and his/her environment. Therefore, counselor should have such a holistic approach to be beneficial and effective in that area.

Stress is another subject that appears to have a negative impact on self-esteem or vice versa. In the present study, all factors under the LEIU scales revealed strong relationship with self-esteem. Adaptation to university life, staying away from family or loved ones, adaptations to

courses, managing with economical issues; all these stuff make the students' life difficult and create stressful environment. As a result of each failed action while coping with these stressful life events lead to feeling less self-esteem. They perceive themselves with lower self-esteem or because students feel less self-esteemed, they perceive daily life events as more stressful than that of students with high self-esteem. It is a kind of vicious circle that one sometimes could not way out. Therefore, counseling studies should emphasize on coping with these stressful life events and difficulties caused by university life and its extensions. Increasing awareness of students about university life will have a significant effect while considering these problems. Moreover, as Youngs and Rathge (1990) suggested that self-esteem of stressed adolescents should be carefully monitored and actively supported.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

On the basis of the findings of present study, some recommendations could be given for further studies:

1. The present study could be reapplied to larger sample by comparing different universities' students.

2. In the demographic information form, more detailed information can be asked to analyze sample characteristics (e.g. Socioeconomic status of students, family related questions, place where they live)

3. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a difficult one with respect to scoring. Because, scores between 0 and 2 is accepted as an indicator of high self-esteem while scores between 3 and 6 is accepted as an indicator of low self-esteem. This could lead to misunderstanding and mess about the result. There may be studied on different scoring format. Other researchers should take into consideration this difficulty before using Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

4. In the present study, it was seen that having high self-esteem has a supporting effect on coping with stressful life events that one experiences in daily life. As a consequence, university counselors or professionals should take into consideration this effect and they could develop programs for university students in order to enhance self-esteem and deal with stressful life events

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APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Sevgili arkadaşlar,

Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin günlük yaşamda karşılaştıkları ve strese yol açabilecek olaylar ile benlik saygısı arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaya yönelik olarak hazırlanan yüksek lisans tezi için düzenlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda toplanan bilgiler grup olarak değerlendirileceği için kimlik bilgilerinizi vermeniz gerekmemektedir.

Sizden aşağıdaki kişisel bilgileri verdikten sonra ölçekleri aklınıza gelen ilk yanıtı vererek doldurmanız beklenmektedir.

Katkılarınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim.

Serap Emil
Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü
Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

Bölümünüz:
Sınıfınız:
Cinsiyetiniz: (   ) Kız   (   ) Erkek
Genel Not Ortalamanız:

APPENDIX B

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Lütfen aşağıdaki her cümleyi dikkatle okuduktan sonra her ifadenin yanındaki seçeneklerden aklınıza ilk gelen ve **size en uygun olanı** işaretleyiniz. Her ifade için **sadece bir tane seçeneği** işaretleyiniz.

	Çok Doğru	Doğru	Yanlış	Çok Yanlış
1. Kendimi en az diğer insanlar kadar değerli buluyorum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Bazı olumlu özelliklerimin olduğunu düşünüyorum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Genelde kendimi başarısız bir kişi olarak görme eğilimindeyim.	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Ben de diğer insanların yapabildiği şeyleri yapabilirim.	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Kendimde gurur duyacak fazla birşey bulamıyorum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Kendime karşı olumlu bir tutum içindeyim.	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Genel olarak kendimden memnunum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Kendime karşı daha fazla saygı duyabilmeyi isterdim.	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Bazen, kesinlikle kendimin bir işe yaramadığını düşünüyorum.	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Bazen hiçte iyi bir insan olmadığımı düşünüyorum.	☐	☐	☐	☐

LIFE EVENTS INVENTORY FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Aşağıda günlük yaşantınızda size **sıkıntı verebilecek** bazı **olaylardan ve sorunlardan** sözedilmektedir. Her maddeyi dikkatle okuyarak hangi sıklıkla böyle bir olayla veya sorunla karşılaştığınızı düşününüz ve maddelerin karşılarında bulunan seçeneklerden **sadece** size uygun birini seçip daire içine alarak belirtiniz.

	Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
1. Derslerin ağırlığı ve yoğunluğu	1	2	3	4	5
2. Genel sağlık problemleri	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kız/erkek arkadaşımla olan problemler	1	2	3	4	5
4. Barınma ile ilgili sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5
5. Ulaşım sorunu	1	2	3	4	5
6. Zamanın sıkışıklığı	1	2	3	4	5
7. Anne ve babamla aramızdaki çatışmalar	1	2	3	4	5
8. Gelecekle ilgili kaygılar	1	2	3	4	5
9. Arkadaş ilişkilerinde yaşanan sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5
10. Ülkedeki olumsuz siyasi gelişmeler	1	2	3	4	5
11. Sevdiğim insanlardan ayrı olmak (Aile, arkadaşlar, vs.)	1	2	3	4	5
12. Çevresel koşullardan (Gürültü, havalar, kirlilik vs.) dolayı yaşanan sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5

	Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
13. Okula uyum sağlayamamak	1	2	3	4	5
14. Maddi problemler	1	2	3	4	5
15. Sosyal faaliyetlere katılamamak (spor, kitap okumak, sinemaya, tiyatroya gitmek vs.)	1	2	3	4	5
16. Öğretim görevlileri ile ilgili sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5
17. İnsanların birbirine karşı duyarsız olması	1	2	3	4	5
18. Yalnızlık kaygıları	1	2	3	4	5
19. Kişiliğimle ilgili kendimi sorgulamak	1	2	3	4	5
20. Yorgunluk	1	2	3	4	5
21. İçki, sigara ve benzeri alışkanlıkların verdiği rahatsızlıklar	1	2	3	4	5
22. Karar vermekte güçlük çekmek	1	2	3	4	5
23. Uykusuzluk	1	2	3	4	5
24. Beslenme problemi	1	2	3	4	5
25. Sorumluluklarımı yerine getirememek	1	2	3	4	5
26. Reddedilme korkusu	1	2	3	4	5
27. Fiziksel görünüşümle ilgili endişeler	1	2	3	4	5
28. Okulda başarısız olmak	1	2	3	4	5
29. Ailede birinin rahatsızlığı	1	2	3	4	5
30. Ödevler ya da projelerin verdiği sıkıntılar	1	2	3	4	5
31. Okuduğum bölümden memnun olmamak	1	2	3	4	5
32. Derslerin İngilizce olmasından dolayı zorluk çekmek	1	2	3	4	5
33. Yeterince ders çalışamamak	1	2	3	4	5
34. Sınavların sıkışıklığı, sınav kaygısı	1	2	3	4	5
35. Okula devamsızlık problemi	1	2	3	4	5
36. Yurt ya da ev arkadaşlarımla yaşadığım problemler	1	2	3	4	5
37. Kardeş(ler) imle ile ilgili sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5
38. Zamanımı yeterince iyi değerlendirememek	1	2	3	4	5
39. Kendimi insanlara yeterince ifade edememek	1	2	3	4	5
40. Ailevi problemlerim	1	2	3	4	5
41. Çalıştığım işle ilgili sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5

	Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
42. İş görüşmeleri ile ilgili kaygılar	1	2	3	4	5
43. Yayın organlarındaki kötü haberlerle ilişkili kaygılar	1	2	3	4	5
44. Ankara'ya uyum sağlayamamak	1	2	3	4	5
45. Cinsel sorunlar	1	2	3	4	5
46. Kilomla ilgili kaygılar	1	2	3	4	5
47. Mezun olamama kaygısı	1	2	3	4	5
48. Hata yapma kaygısı	1	2	3	4	5
49. Eleştirilmekten duyduğum rahatsızlık	1	2	3	4	5