



# Investigation of the Relationship between Coping with Humor and Perceived Stress Levels of Faculty of Sport Sciences Students

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between university students' levels of coping with humor and their perceived stress levels. As a data collection tool in the research, the Coping Humor Scale (CHS) and The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used. The participants of the research are N=135 university students studying at Dumlupınar University Faculty of Sport Sciences. Correlation analyses were performed in order to answer the research question "Is there a significant relationship between the levels of coping with humor and perceived stress levels of the students studying at the Faculty of Sport Sciences?" Pearson correlation coefficients were examined in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the students' total scores on the scale of coping with humor and the perceived stress scale. As a result of the research; there is a significant negative correlation between students' levels of coping with humor and their perceived stress levels. According to that as the level of coping with humor increases, perceived stress decreases. Then, linear regression analysis was applied to get an answer to the research question "Is perceived stress a significant predictor of the level of coping with humor among the students of the faculty of sports sciences?" Analysis results showed that the perceived stress level is a significant negative predictor of students' coping with humor. It's shown that 3.9% of the total variance in coping with humor is explained by the students' perceived stress levels. When the perceived stress level rises to 1, the level of coping with humor decreases by 0.12. As a result, it can be thought that as the skills of coping with humor increase, the stress levels perceived by the students in their daily lives decrease, thus helping the students to be less negatively affected by stressful situations.

**Keywords:** Humor, Perceived Stress, Student

## Özet

### Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Mizahla Başa Çıkma ile Algıladıkları Stres Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin mizahla başa çıkma düzeyleri ile algıladıkları stres düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Mizah Yoluyla Başa Çıkma Ölçeği (MYBÇÖ) ve Algılanan Stres Ölçeği (ASÖ) kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi'nde öğrenim gören N=135 üniversite öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. "Spor Bilimleri Fakültesinde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin mizahla baş etme düzeyleri ile algılanan stres düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki var mıdır?" araştırma sorusunu yanıtlamak amacıyla korelasyon analizleri yapılmıştır. Öğrencilerin mizahla başa çıkma ölçeği toplam puanları ile algılanan stres ölçeği toplam puanları arasında ilişki olup olmadığını belirlemek amacıyla Pearson korelasyon katsayılarına bakılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda; öğrencilerin mizahla başa çıkma düzeyleri ile algıladıkları stres düzeyleri arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki vardır. Buna göre mizahla baş etme düzeyi arttıkça algılanan stres azalmaktadır. Daha sonra "Algılanan stres, spor bilimleri fakültesi öğrencilerinin mizahla baş etme düzeylerinin anlamlı bir yordayıcısı mıdır?" araştırma sorusuna yanıt bulmak amacıyla doğrusal regresyon analizi uygulanmıştır. Analiz sonuçları, algılanan stres düzeyinin öğrencilerin mizahla başa çıkmalarının anlamlı bir negatif yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermiştir. Mizahla başa çıkma konusundaki toplam varyansın %3,9'unun öğrencilerin algılanan stres düzeyleri ile açıklandığı görülmektedir. Algılanan stres düzeyi 1'e yükseldiğinde mizahla başa çıkma düzeyi 0,12 azalmaktadır. Sonuç olarak mizahla baş etme becerileri arttıkça öğrencilerin günlük yaşamda algıladıkları stres düzeylerinin azaldığı, dolayısıyla öğrencilerin stresli durumlardan daha az olumsuz etkilenmelerine yardımcı olduğu düşünülebilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mizah, Algılanan Stres, Öğrenci

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of humor carries out human employment for many years, and carrying the burden of historical people carries the burden of transmission until the early times. When they experience people's nerves and stress, they can alleviate this situation through humor (6). Sense of humor has a multidimensional character (7;15;16). Humor is accepted as an important tool in the explanations of relations in today's world order. Dialogues between individuals can be transmitted both in writing and verbally (4). On the other hand, coping with humor as a tool for coping with stressful life conditions is examined (9). People with a strong sense of humor are successful in coping with nervousness and stress. However, they are less exposed to psychological disorders such as anxiety and lead a healthier life. According to the recent studies shows that visualization of humor movies improves the levels of subjective happiness, and sense of humor. In addition to that decreases the perception of depressive symptoms (16).

There are 4 different humor styles: humor, self-destructive humor, self-enhancing humor and offensive humor. (8). Offensive humor style; It is a humor style that is preferred in line with the individual's own interests without respecting the people in front of him and is not suitable for social relations. Self-destructive humor; It is a style of humor that includes parts such as ignoring individuals, making fun of himself or making fun of himself to amuse people. participatory humor style; It is a humor style that is structured in the awareness of the characteristics towards them, since they respect the people in front of them. Self-enhancing humor style; It is a humor style that aims to prevent negative feelings in the environment where individuals are aware of their characteristics and personal characteristics (11). Stress is a phenomenon that we are exposed to in our daily life. Individuals feel the need to struggle with the stress created by their working situations (12). It is possible for disorders such as burnout to occur in stressful environments (3). Apart from this, focusing and attention deficit have negative effects on thoughts (14). Considering all these negative effects, physical vitality and activities can be effective in reducing stress (1). Perceived stress; It is a necessity related to the level of stress that individuals feel. It may increase or decrease due to stress in parallel with the intensity of the negative effects that individuals are exposed to (13). In this context, the study aims to investigate the relationship between coping with humor and the stress in our perception of faculty students of the faculties of work sports science.

## **METHOD**

In this study, the relational screening model was used, which aims to determine the relationships between students' levels of coping with humor and their perceived stress levels. The study group of the research consists of N = 135 university students studying at Dumlupınar University, Faculty of Sports Sciences. Is there is a significant relationship between students' levels of coping with humor and their perceived stress levels? Pearson correlation coefficients were examined to determine whether there was a relationship between the students' total scores of the coping with humor scale and the total scores of the perceived stress scale. Is the subsequent stress perceived by sports science faculty students a significant predictor of their level of coping with humor? Linear regression analysis was applied to answer the research question.

### **Data Collection Tools**

#### **Coping with Humor Scale**

The Coping Humor Scale (The Coping Humor Scale), developed by Martin (10) and adapted into Turkish by Yerlikaya (18), is a 4-point Likert-type scale consisting of 7 items. The scale was developed to measure the use of humor as a coping strategy in stressful situations. The scores that can be obtained from the scale range from 7 to 28, while a high score indicates that humor is used more as a coping strategy. In the internal consistency studies of the scale, Cronbach Alpha coefficients ranged between .60 and .70 in its original form Martin (10), while the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the Turkish version was .67 Yerlikaya (18). In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .52.

#### **Perceived Stress Scale**

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is a measurement tool developed by Cohen (5) and widely used in studies conducted on different groups in the United States, Canada and Europe. PSS is a self-assessment scale developed to measure the level of stress experienced, depending on how unpredictable, uncontrollable and overloaded the respondent evaluates his life. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Yerlikaya and Inanc (19). In this scale, which is frequently used in studies examining the relationships between sense of humor and stress, individuals are asked to rate how often they have experienced certain feelings or thoughts in the past month, from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). The stress level perceived by the respondent is determined by adding the scores obtained from the items, and a high score indicates a high level of perceived stress. The scale of perceived stress, developed as a five-point Likert-type rating scale, has 10 items. The scale consists of "never (0), almost never" (1), "sometimes" (2), "often" (3) "very often" (4). In this 10-item form, items 4-5-7 and 8 are scored in reverse. The lowest and highest scores a participant can obtain from this scale are 0 and 40, respectively. A high total score indicates a high Perceived Stress level. The internal consistency Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was reported to be .84 Yerlikaya and Inanc (19). In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .77.

#### **Ethical approval and institutional permission**

The ethics permission to do this research was obtained with decision number 09 at the Dumlupınar University Ethics Committee meeting on 25.05.2023.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1.** The mean and standard deviations of the scores of the measurement tools

	N	X	Ss	Min	Max
<b>Coping with Humor</b>	135	18,78	3,582	10	27
<b>Perceived Stress</b>	135	24,47	5,63	16	37

According to the table, it is seen that the participants' average score for coping with humor was  $18.78 \pm 3.58$  points and the highest score that can be obtained from this scale is 27 points. It can be said that the participants' levels of coping with humor are above average. In addition, the average perceived stress score of the participants was  $24.47 \pm 5.63$  points and the highest score that can be obtained from this scale is 37 points. It can be said that the perceived stress levels of the participants were above average.

**Table 2.** Correlation Analysis Results

	Pearson Correlation	Perceived Stress
<b>Coping with Humor</b>		<b>-,196*</b>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,022
	N	135

As a result of the correlation analysis, it was revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between coping with humor and perceived stress.  $\alpha = -.196; p < 0.05$ . In other words, as the participants' level of coping with humor increases, their perceived stress levels decrease.

**Table 3.** Linear Regression Analysis Results

Model		B	St. Error	Beta	t	Sig
1	<b>Constant</b>	21,836	1,358		16,082	,000
	<b>Perceived Stress Total</b>	-,125	,054	-,196	-2,311	,022

R=0.196, R2=.039, F(1,133)=5,341, p<0.05.

As a result of the regression analysis, it was revealed that there was a significant negative predictor of students' coping with humor  $R=0.196$ ,  $R^2=.039$ ,  $F(1.133)=5.341$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . It is shown that 3.9% of the total variance in coping with humor is explained by the students' perceived stress levels  $\beta = -0.125$ . When the perceived stress level rises to 1, the level of coping with humor decreases by 0.12  $t(133) = -2.31$ ,  $p < 0.05$

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As a result of the research; It is seen that there is a negative significant relationship between students' levels of coping with Humor and their perceived stress levels. Accordingly, it can be said that as the level of coping with Humor increases, perceived stress decreases. Similar to the findings of our study, Abel (2) conducted a study in which undergraduate students' sense of humor had a reducing and regulating effect on the effects of stress, and concluded that students with high sense of humor were less stressed than students with low sense of humor. In a study conducted by Yerlikaya (18) on university students, he determined that there was a negative relationship between the students' coping with humor and their perceived stress, and he concluded that the stress and anxiety levels of the students who used humor as a strategy were lower. It can be thought that the reason why the findings obtained in these studies are similar to our study is due to the fact that the sample groups are students. Again, similar to the findings obtained in our study, when some studies conducted in different study groups were examined, it was stated in a study conducted by Tümkaya (17) on university lecturers that those with a high sense of humor experienced less negative emotional states related

to stress. Despite the differences in the sample groups in this study, the reason for showing similar results can be considered as the fact that the sense of humor can have a wide-ranging effect on reducing the feeling of stress. In addition, it is stated that humor is an alternative way that can be used to cope with stress situations, and it has been stated that individuals who use humor actively have less psychological disorders. The findings obtained in our study generally show similar results with the studies in the literature. The concept of humor and stress appears in every phase of our lives. When humor is used effectively in the awareness and importance of this situation, it can be used as an effective strategy in coping with stress. Accordingly, programs for students can be organized about how humor can be used as an effective strategy. Developing their skills for humor will increase their happiness levels.

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