

Coping with Stress among University Students: An Investigation in the Context of Transactional Analysis Ego States¹

DOI: 10.26466/opus.476576

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Abstract

In this study, coping responses were examined in terms of Transactional Analysis Approach. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between coping styles and ego states among university students. Survey method was used in this study. The sample of the study consisted of 1382 students from different faculties of Marmara University, İstanbul. "Coping Style Scale" (Şahin and Durak, 1995) and "Ego State Scale" (Ari, 1989) were used to collect data. The Ego State Scale was administered to the students and the egograms were derived for each student and then the students were also classified according to the highest scores of the egogram. Based on this classification, coping styles of students were compared with their ego states. The results indicated that the students who were in Adult ego state had the highest scores from the self-confident style. On the other hand, the students who were in Adapted Child ego state had the lowest scores from self-confident style. The students who were in Adult ego state had the highest scores from optimistic style were followed by the students who were in Nurturing Parent ego state. The students who were in Critical Parent ego state had the lowest scores from optimistic style were followed by the students who were in Adapted Child ego state. Helpless and submissive styles were mostly preferred by students in Adapted Child ego state and were least preferred by students in Adult ego state to cope with the psychological distress. The students who were in Free Child ego state had the highest scores from seeking of social support were followed by the students in Nurturing Parent ego state. The students who were in Critical Parent ego state had the lowest scores from seeking of social support were followed by the students in Adapted Child ego state. Based on the findings from the study, some suggestions were made in the context of protective and preventive mental health counseling.

Keywords: Coping with stress, Transactional Analysis, ego states, university students.

¹ Bu makale, Prof. Dr. Adnan Kulaksızoğlu'nun danışmanlığında Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge Akbağ tarafından hazırlanan doktora tezinden üretilmiştir.

Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Stresle Başa çıkma: Transaksiyonel Analiz Ego Durumları Bağlamında Bir İnceleme

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Öz

Bu araştırmada stresle başa çıkma tepkilerinin Transaksiyonel Analiz (TA) yaklaşımı açısından ele alınıp incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda araştırmanın ana amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin stresle başa çıkma tarzları ve TA ego durumları arasındaki ilişkinin sınımlanmasıdır. Araştırma tarama modeline göre hazırlanmış olup, İstanbul ilinde Marmara Üniversitesi'nin farklı fakültelerinde öğrenim görmekte olan 1382 öğrenci örneklemini oluşturmuştur. Araştırmada verileri toplamak için; "Stresle Başa çıkma Tarzları Ölçeği" (Şahin ve Durak, 1995) ve "Ego Durumları Ölçeği" (Arı, 1989) kullanılmıştır. Öğrenciler uygulanan "Ego Durumları Ölçeği"nden elde edilen egogramda en yüksek puanı aldıkları ego durumuna göre sınıflandırılmış; stresle başa çıkma tarzları ego durumlarına göre karşılaştırılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre; kendine güvenli yaklaşımı en çok benimseyen grubun Yetişkin ego durumu, en az benimseyen grubun ise Uygulu Çocuk ego durumu özelliği gösterdiği saptanırken; iyimser yaklaşımı en çok benimseyen grubun Yetişkin ego durumu özelliği gösteren öğrenciler olduğu ve onu Koruyucu Ebeveyn ego durumu özelliği gösteren öğrencilerin izlediği, en az benimseyen grubun ise Eleştirel Ebeveyn ve onu takiben Uygulu Çocuk ego durumu özelliği gösteren öğrencilerden oluştuğu tespit edilmiştir. Çaresiz ve boyuneğici yaklaşım en çok Uygulu Çocuk, en az Yetişkin ego durumu özelliği gösteren öğrenciler tarafından tercih edilmiştir. Ayrıca sosyal desteğe başvurmaya en fazla yönelen grubun Doğal Çocuk ego durumu özelliği gösterdiği onu Koruyucu Ebeveyn ego durumu özelliği gösteren grubun izlediği, en az sosyal desteğe başvuranların ise Eleştirel Ebeveyn ego durumu grubunda yer aldığı, onu Uygulu Çocuk ego durumu özelliği gösteren öğrencilerin izlediği saptanmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak koruyucu ve önleyici ruh sağlığı danışmanlığı bağlamında bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Stresle başa çıkma, Transaksiyonel Analiz, ego durumları, üniversite öğrencileri.*

Introduction

Stress is a situation that occurs when individual faces events that are perceived physically or psychologically as threat (Atkinson et al., 1999). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) identified stress as “an interaction between the individual and the environment, which endangers people’s well-being, create a reduce in individuals’ capacity and evaluated as compelling”. Stress, especially when it gets chronic, may cause physical illness by pressuring immune systems and accumulated effects of uncontrollable stress can play an important role for psychological problems arise (Ajan, 1997; Aldwin, 2000). The effect of daily life problems on our physical or psychological health also depends on the frequency of these problems, length of time and intensity as well as how individual react (Şahin, 1994). “Coping” concept was first started to be discussed (Şahin and Durak, 1995) in 1970s as not every individual who was exposed to stress would not get ill and it was highlighted that the disadvantages of stress would be diminished if coping styles were strong and effective (Aldwin, 2000; Macnab, 1986). Today, failure in coping with stress effectively provide a basis for some psychological problems such as addiction of alcohol, smoking, substance, internet and eating disorders. Hence, coping with stress becomes an issue that needs to be analyzed deeply.

Based on the description by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping is “a continuous change in cognitive and behavioral efforts to deal with specific internal and external demands which are considered as compelling and create a failure in individual’s capacity”. For this reason, coping is considered as a process, not a disposition. It was seen during literature review that most studies used classification which was grouped as problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping when they evaluated the coping styles (Scheier, Weintraub and Carver, 1986; Folkman, Lazarus et al., 1986; Richter et al., 1991; Strutton and Lumpkin, 1992). Problem-focused coping includes active, logical, calm and conscious efforts towards changing the situation while emotion-focused coping styles involves approaches such as avoidance, self-control, seeking of social support and adoption (Şahin and Durak, 1995). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) realized in their scale development process that seeking of social support is a factor that address both problem-focused and emotion-focused styles. As cited

by Cox and Ferguson (1991), Jalowiec noted that it was hard to explain coping with only two categories and concluded based on his factor analytic studies that seeking of social support is another factor. For this reason, seeking of social support which reveals itself as both seeking of emotional support and receiving information or ideas from others is decided to be handled as an another dimension.

Individual differences in coping styles lead researchers determine the source of the variation. Coping with stress effectively or in other words not experiencing stress is closely related individuals' personality characteristics and use of opportunities. Some personality characteristics that make harden to cope with stress is listed as; experiencing self-accusation in every occasion, considering the life with all or never rule, having dominant hostility feelings, being self-centered, failing in the interaction with the environment (passivity), having a way of thinking which is neither logical nor reasonable (Şahin, 1994).

According to the cognitive approach, another important factor that causes individual fail to cope with stress is not the event itself but the evaluation of it. There are three general ways of thinking in stress experiences: (1) irrational way of thinking (2) rational way of thinking (3) rationalization. Irrational way of thinking is when individuals think the worst possibilities for their lives and limit himself/herself with specific obligations. Irrational way of thinking causes an increase in anxiety levels, pessimism, a decrease in control, productivity and morale levels; and, as a result, creates an exposure to the undesired results of stress. Rational way of thinking enables benefits from cognitive abilities at the most, increase in control and productivity and, as a result, lessen stress individual feel. Rationalization, on the other hand, causes constant procrastination, avoidance, making wrong decisions and building unhealthy communication with others (Aysan, 1988). In other words, it is reported that what causes stress mostly is the incorrect and unrealistic way of thinking. This way of thinking is named in the literature as irrational beliefs/negative automatic thoughts by Albert Ellis and Aeron Beck. Irrational beliefs /negative automatic thoughts which show common characteristics are strict, inconsistent with the reality and unlogical, pose an obstacle for psychological health and detract individual from his/her personal goals which are meaningful for them. These irrational beliefs are often expressed as "I can't stand this!

This is terrible! I am worthless!'. Cognitive approaches challenge these irrational beliefs by questioning and aims to replace them with rationale one (Ellis, 1979; Dryden and Yankura, 1995). On the other hand, it is declared that intervention programs such as developing communication skills, developing assertive behaviors (self-confident behavior habits), developing flexible thinking habits and problem solving skills provide an effective basis for coping with stress (Şahin, 1994).

When it is paid attention that individuals' coping with stress is related to some personality characteristics as well as their point of views and ways of thinking when they face with stress stimulus; their coping styles can also be analyzed via ego states which is one of the main concepts of Transactional Analysis (TA) approach.

TA approach which was developed by Eric Berne in early 1950s is both an interpersonal relationships and communication theory as well as a psychotherapy and personality theory. In TA approach, ego state concept was used to express the structure and the function of the personality. Berne (1968) considers ego states as existential phenomenon rather than theoretical constructs. In his own words, ego state is an emotion and thought patterns that accompanies a behavior model. It is a phenomenological reality and different from role concept.

Ego states in TA approach are investigated on the basis of structure and function. Ego states based on structure is the classification of individuals' emotions, thoughts and experiences. It is a specific behavior pattern. Function is described as the use and the expression of ego states. Function of ego states reveals itself in individual's behaviors and way of communication. Ego states in functional analysis is classified as Critical Parent (CP), Nurturing Parent (NP), Adult (A), Free Child (FC) and Adapted Child (AC) (Akkoyun, 1998). CP ego state covers the behaviors for critical, capitious, stinging, prejudiced, dominant and tradition-oriented. NP ego state shows self-supportive, protective, affectionate, compassionate and forgiving behaviors. FC ego state reveals itself with creativity, enjoying life, being spontaneous, being dynamic and cheerful. AC ego state is related to obeying rules, limiting one's self, being shy and nervous. Common features in AC ego state for adaptation is obeying, being introvert and delaying. A ego state covers the behaviors that are reality-appropriate beha-

vivors and attitudes, being systematic, being scheduled and making logical decisions. Testing realities, evaluating probabilities, processing concrete data are functions of A ego state. In other words, A ego state stands for problem solving oriented behaviors (James and Jongeward, 1993). Individual has all these behaviors patterns in integrity. When act, individual use the most developed (with the highest psychic energy) ego state in accordance with the situation he/she is in.

Dusay and Dusay (1984) clarified that the amount of psychic energy of the five ego states mentioned above can be symbolized with egogram. In other words, it shows how much energy an individual's five ego state has in functional analysis. Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child and Adapted Child ego states are presented via bar charts in an egogram. Higher columns in the chart means that much more time and energy is spent in that ego state relative to others; while lower columns represent less energy and time spent in that ego state. In other words, one ego state's being loaded with more energy than others signal that this ego state is used more frequently. Egogram works with *constancy hypothesis*. According to this hypothesis an individual's psychic energy is constant; yet, has a fluid characteristic in different ego states. When the energy density in one ego state increase, constant psychic energy change place; so, energy density in other ego states will lessen. As long as an individual decides to actively change his/her energy balance of ego states, his/her egogram will stay still.

When the literature is studied, though there are limited number of researches, the studies revealed relationships between ego states and some other variables. Arı (1989) concluded in his research that university students with the highest adjustment and assertiveness levels showed Adult ego state characteristics; students with lowest adjustment and assertiveness levels behaved in accordance with Adapted Child ego state. Another study determined relations between ego states and some psychological problems. Based on the findings obtained from this study, there were less psychological problems as the scores of Adult ego state increases; while the scores of Adapted Child ego state increase then the psychological problems were observed more often (Emerson, Bertoch and Checketts, 1994). Some experimental studies revealed that TA education had positive effects on psychological features such as individuals' self-concept, social

adjustment (Woodward, 1974; Talob, 1994); locus of control (Knox, 1973); self-esteem (Sisson et al., 1977; Wissink, 1994) and communication skills (Çam, 1997). The main purpose of TA and psycho-education programs based on TA is that individuals can realize their own ego states, use their ego states flexibly and actively reveal Adult ego state which is characterized by problem solving oriented behaviors.

Based on this information discussed so far, it is thought that individuals' coping styles they use to cope with stress effectively is related with their problem solving skills, and thus related whether they use Adult ego state effectively or not. Literature review revealed no studies aiming to test the mentioned relationships; therefore, this study is designed to determine these relationships. As a result, the main purpose of this study is to test if university students' coping styles (self-confident style, optimism style, helpless style, submissive style, seeking of social support) change significantly based on ego states (Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child and Adapted Child).

Method

Research Design

This study is designed as a survey model research to test whether there is a significant relationship between university students' coping styles and their ego states. Survey model researches aim to describe the events, individuals or objects that are subject to the research on their own contexts, without any change or influence. Comparative based correlational survey model which is one type of survey models investigates if there is any variation on the variable (dependent variable) according to the groups formed from the variable that is aimed to be tested (independent variable) (Karasar, 2002; Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2008; Creswell, 2012). In this study, it is tested whether there is a significant relationship between university students' ego states and coping styles or not via correlational survey model based on comparative re-

search design. For this aim, ego state variable which is a continuous variable by definition is transformed to a discrete variable and constitutes the independent variable while coping styles is the dependent variable.

Population and Sample

Population of this study is consisted of university students who are educated in different faculties of Marmara University. Sample, on the other hand, was formed via proportional cluster sampling method from various departments of these faculties. Sample was formed via proportional cluster sampling because number of students from the faculties were not equal to one another and proportional cluster sampling is thought to present the population best. After the number of students of different faculties in Marmara University was obtained, proportion to these numbers to the total student number was calculated and based on the proportions calculated, 1382 students formed the sample. Sample consisted of 713 women (51.60%) and 669 men (48.80%). Distribution of students according to the faculties is as shown below.

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages Based on Faculty Type

Faculties	f	%
Medical Faculty	55	4.00
Faculty of Dentistry	76	5.50
Faculty of Pharmacy	108	7.80
Faculty of Law	116	8.40
Faculty of Science and Letters	118	8.50
Faculty of Theology	91	6.60
Faculty of Technical Training	168	12.20
Faculty of Fine Arts	60	4.30
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	209	15.10
Faculty of Engineering	73	5.30
Faculty of Atatürk Education	239	17.30
Faculty of Communication	69	5.00
Total	1382	100.00

Data Collection Tools

Ego State Scale (ESS): "Ego State Scale" was used in this study to determine students' ego states. Scale was developed by Arı (1989) as preliminary study showed that adopted scales were found to be not useful and a need to develop a scale belonging to our culture arose. ESS consists of 95 adjectives describing people. Scale evaluates five ego states which are Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child and Adapted Child. Participants were asked to mark the adjectives that describe them and consider them as one of his/her characteristics via free selection technique. Each adjective in the scale has five different value ranging from 0 to 4 for each ego state. Scores for each marked adjective for five ego state are summed and five different total scores are obtained. Later, these scores are divided by the highest score (coefficient) for each ego states that can be obtained from scale. Five ego states scores are then totalized. By dividing each division result by this total, ego state scores which show the proportions of each ego state in a whole are finally achieved. Total scores of five ego states equals to 1 and participants' egograms can be drawn using scores via bar charts (Dusay, 1972; Arı, 1989; Bacanlı, 1991). These scores that obtained as a result of intrapersonal evaluation of individuals show usage proportion or probability that ego states are used relative to each other. It is stated that ego state with the highest value in an egogram is the much more developed than others, thus individual's probability of using this ego state is greater. In this context, egogram is told to express individual's personality structure in a way (Dusay and Dusay, 1984; Bacanlı, 1991; Akkoyun, 1998).

Validity studies of scale were conducted via logical and statistical approaches. Six raters were used to score the adjectives in the scale and high consistency between these six raters' evaluation regarding these adjectives was considered an important proof for logical validity of the ESS. To control the construct validity of ESS, a comparison between the relation of five ego states of the scale and theoretical definitions of five ego states in TA were made. The results were found to be consistent when amount and direction of correlation were investigated by paying attention to theoretic-

cal definitions of ego states. Similar scale validity study of ESS was conducted by "Gough and Heilbrun Adjective Check List" which was adopted to Turkish by Akkoyun and Bacanlı (1988). Correlation coefficients obtained from similar sub-scales of these two scales are $r=0.87$ for Critical Parent ego state, $r=0.91$ for Nurturing Parent ego state, $r=0.93$ for Adult ego state, $r=0.76$ for Free Child ego state and $r=0.70$ for Adapted Child ego state (Ari, 1989). Reliability studies of the scale showed that test re-test reliability coefficient changes between .73 and .83. For the second stage of reliability studies, correlation between raters' scores for each ego states were calculated via "interclass correlation". As a result of these calculations, consistency between raters' evaluations are found as $r=0.95$ for Critical Parent, $r=0.93$ for Nurturing Parent, $r=0.96$ for Adult, $r=0.89$ Free Child and $r=0.9$ for Adapted Child. High correlation between raters' evaluations is considered a prominent proof for reliability of the scale (Ari, 1989).

Coping Styles Inventory (CSI): To evaluate students' coping styles, "Coping Styles Scale (CSI)" which was adopted to Turkish culture for university students by Şahin and Durak (1995) was used. CSI was developed for university students and originated from "Ways of Coping Inventory" by Lazarus and Folkman. CSI is short and has 30 items which are valid for various stress situations with 4 point Likert Scale. Explanatory factor analysis results that were conducted with three different sample showed that coping styles are divided in two as problem- focused/active and emotion-focused/passive. These two dimensions are resolved in five sub-dimensions which are self-confident, optimistic, helpless, submissive styles and seeking of social support behavior. For validity studies, relationship of scale with psychological distress, personality dimensions and situational variables were investigated. Significant relationships between depression, anxiety and hostility and all sub-dimensions of CSI were found except from 'seeking of social support' sub-scale. For instance, self-confident style sub-scale revealed significant and negative correlations with depression ($r=-0.26$; $p<.001$), anxiety ($r=-0.12$, $p<.001$) and hostility ($r=-0.14$, $p<.001$). Helpless style sub-scale showed significant and positive correlations with issued psychological symptoms ranging from $r=0.23$ and $r=0.53$ ($p<.001$). When life satisfaction, general optimism and hope for the future

are taken as personality dimension; as these scores rise, the usage frequency of optimistic and self-confident style increase; the usage frequency of helpless and submissive styles decrease. Besides, when sub-scales of "Stress Related Factors Scale" were considered as situational variables and the correlations with CSI sub-scales were studied, results showed that as optimistic and self-confident styles rises, problems regarding interpersonal relations, health and choice of profession decrease (between $r = -0.10$ and $r = -0.26$); and if helpless and submissive styles increase, all situational problems significantly increase (between $r = 0.11$ and $r = 0.59$). As the seeking of social support gets more frequent, decrease in all situational problems are observed except from problems regarding being away from family (between $r = -0.13$ and $r = -0.18$). In contrasted group studies, groups were divided in two according to their coping situations; one group was effective coping students while others were not. The first group was observed to use self-confident and optimistic style more often while second group used helpless and submissive style instead ($p < .001$). There found no significant differences between groups for seeking of social support sub-scale between these two groups. These findings present fundamental clues regarding the validity of the scale. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients calculated by three different studies which are conducted to test the reliability of the scale are between 0.49 and 0.68 for optimistic style sub-scale; between 0.62 and 0.80 for self-confident style sub-scale; between 0.64 and 0.73 for helpless style sub-scale; between 0.47 and 0.72 for submissive style sub-scale. For seeking of social support sub-scale, values changed between 0.45 and 0.47 (Şahin and Durak, 1995).

Procedure

Prior to data collection, official permissions needed to gather data from the faculties that are a part of the sample were obtained and were delivered to the managers of these faculties. Afterwards, location and the time of the applications were determined as a result of the pre-interviews with related people. Help from student representatives were also received for this issue. Data collection procedure was completed on the appointed day, hour and classrooms in a single session with groups. Students spent 35

minutes on average to answer data collection instruments. Short announcements regarding the general purpose of the study and answering process of the data collection instruments were made in every classroom that the application was taken place. Students' questions regarding the application were also answered. It was specifically noted for students to provide true and sincere information about themselves that personal identifying information were not necessary at all and the results would be assessed collectively, not individually. Voluntary basis was paid regard.

Scales were implemented to students in a booklet form. "Adjective List" title instead of "Ego States Scale" and "Daily Life Behaviors Scale" title instead of "Coping Styles Inventory" were used because students were not familiar with the psychological concepts that are in the names of the scales and there was not enough time to explain them as well as to minimize the social desirability factor and to provide an environment that help them reflect themselves realistically.

Data Analysis

After the completion of data collection, scoring of scales that were used as data collection instruments was began; scales with missing values or completed wrong were excluded. SPSS for WINDOWS statistical packet program was used for data analysis. Significance of statistical analyses was tested two ways at .05 significancy level. Mean values (\bar{X}) and standard deviations (sd) of all students' scores obtained from data collection instruments used were calculated before the statistical analyses. These descriptive statistics were conducted to portray the sample of this study based on the variables handled within this study. Descriptive statistics were followed by other analysis which fit the purpose and variables of the study.

As explained in research model section, whether there is a significant relationship between ego states and coping styles or not was investigated via correlational survey model based on comparative research design. Ego states were transformed to discrete variables to determine if mean scores of coping styles differs based on ego states. To do so, it was paid attention that ego state with the highest score from "Ego States Scale" is the most

developed one and has the higher possibility of usage (Dusay and Dusay, 1984; Bacanlı, 1991; Akkoyun, 1998) and sample group was divided in five groups (Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adult, Free Child and Adapted Child) according to their ego states. Thus, one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) was implemented as there were more than two groups whose mean scores were to be compared. In case there found significant differences between mean scores of groups, Scheffé post-hoc test was utilized to decide which groups caused the difference.

Results

Before findings of the analysis for statistics related to the main purpose of this study are revealed, mean and standard deviations of scores obtained from the scales were calculated to describe the sample group on the basis of variables discussed in this study and presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of Research Variables

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD
Coping Styles			
Self-Confident Style	1382	1.92	0.52
Optimistic Style	1382	1.57	0.55
Helpless Style	1382	1.24	0.53
Submissive Style	1382	0.89	0.54
Seeking of Social Support	1382	1.95	0.59
Ego States			
Critical Parent	1382	0.18	0.04
Nurturing Parent	1382	0.22	0.03
Adult	1382	0.21	0.02
Free Child	1382	0.18	0.04
Adapted Child	1382	0.21	0.03

When Table 2 is reviewed, it can be told that students perform 'seeking of social support' behavior ($\bar{X}=1.95$) more often to cope with psychological distress while self-confident style ($\bar{X}=1.92$) and optimistic style ($\bar{X}= 1.57$) followed this behavior. The least adopted styles are helpless style ($\bar{X}=1.24$) and especially submissive style ($\bar{X}=0.89$). When mean and standard devia-

tions of scores obtained from ESS which was applied to determine the distribution of students' ego states were discussed, it was revealed that students got the highest mean score from Nurturing Parent ego state ($\bar{X}=0.22$), which was followed by Adult ($\bar{X}=0.21$) and Adapted Child ($\bar{X}=0.21$) ego states. The lowest mean scores were belong to Critical Parent ($\bar{X}=0.18$) and Free child ($\bar{X}=0.18$) ego states. In the lights of these mean scores; egogram of the study group was provided in Figure 1 to observe the energy distribution of ego states.

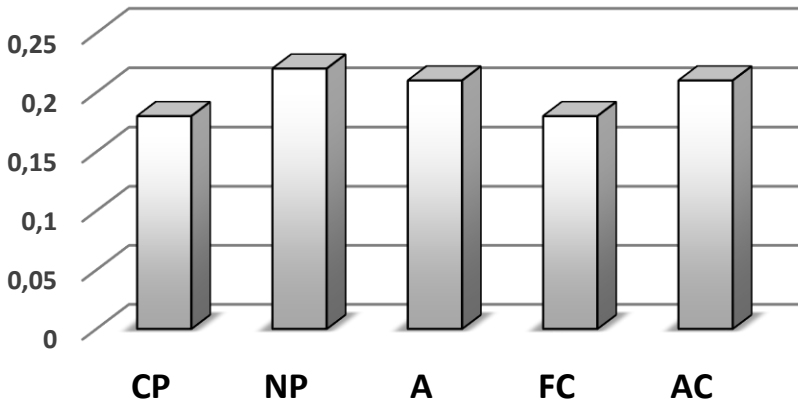


Figure 1. Egogram of Study Group

As can be understood from the egogram, Nurturing Parent ego state has the densest energy ego state. Adult and Adapted Child ego states followed it. The least dense energy ego state for this group were Critical Parent and Free Child.

In accordance with the main purpose of the study, to determine whether students' coping styles differ based on ego states, ego states variable was grouped and transformed to a discrete variable via the ego state with the highest value of each students' egogram. Later, the differences between mean scores groups obtained from each coping styles were tested via one-way variance analysis (ANOVA).

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Self-Confident Style Based on Ego States

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p
Between Group	4	107.43	26.86		
Within Group	1377	269.92	0.20	137.02	.001
Total	1381	377.35			

According to Table 3, students' mean scores of self-confident style which is one of the coping styles showed a significant difference based on their ego states ($p < .001$). Scheffé test was used to determine the source of the difference between group mean scores. When the findings were studied, group that preferred self-confident style mostly was in Adult ego state while group that least preferred the self-confident style was in Adapted Child ego state; followed by those who were in Critical Parent ego state ($p < .05$).

Table 4. ANOVA Results for Optimistic Style Based on Ego States

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p
Between Group	4	104.86	26.21		
Within Group	1377	307.48	0.22	117.40	.001
Total	1381	412.34			

According to the Table 4, students' mean scores of optimistic style which is one of the coping styles revealed a significant difference in terms of their ego states ($p < .001$). Based on the Scheffé test results which was used to state the source of the difference between group mean scores; group that preferred optimistic style often was also consisted of students in Adult ego state and followed by students in Nurturing Parent group. However, group that least preferred optimistic style was consisted of students who showed Critical Parent ego state and followed by Adapted Child ego state ($p < .05$).

The reason why students who show Adapted Child and Critical Parent ego state characteristics were included by the group who least preferred the self-confident and optimistic styles which are handled as problem-focused and effective coping style and why the problem-oriented coping styles' mean scores of the students in both ego status groups do not show

a significant difference can be explained due to the characteristics of Adapted Child and Critical Parent ego states.

Researchers who focus on TA state that individuals who behave in Adapted Child ego state easily lose their balance due to the stress, avoid facing problems, feel insufficient to deal with the necessities of adult lives and prefer not take any action and obey, as well as getting introvert and delaying work or expect others to deal with their problems (Bacanlı, 1991; James and Jongeward, 1993). It can be thought that individuals who behave in Critical Parent ego state generally are prejudiced, captious, always critical and due to the fact that they view event not objectively but evaluate them with their parents' eyes (James and Jongeward, 1993; Stewart and Joines, 1999) they will have problems dealing with stress; in other words, they can't deal with stress effectively. On the other hand, it is an expected result that individuals who take actions under the control of Adult ego state which focuses on problem solving through objective data and option evaluation (James and Jongeward, 1993; Akkoyun, 1998; Stewart and Joines, 1999; Harris, 2012) prefer problem-focused coping styles more often and hence they can deal with their psychological problems in an effective way.

The finding that students who have Nurturing Parent and Free Child ego states received higher scores from problem-focused coping styles compared to students who behave in Adapted Child and Critical Parent ego states while they received lower scores compared to student who behave in Adult ego state can be supported in the literature by descriptions regarding Integrated Adult. Integrated Adult does not exclude Parent and Child ego states; however, it expresses reactions from these ego states are controlled through Adult ego state and refers to healthy and compatible personality (Erskine, 1988; James and Jongeward, 1993; Summer and Tudor, 2005; Finlay, 2016). Therefore, it can be thought that it eases the coping with problems effectively. Emerson and colleagues (1994) emphasized that self-improvement programs based on TA is needed to aim to empower Adult ego state, to realize Nurturing Parent and Free Child ego states and develop, to notice the negative sides of Critical Parent and Adapted Child ego states and minimize them.

On the other hand, due to the fact that individuals who behave in Nurturing Parent ego state generally see events from their parents' point of

views while individuals who behave in Free Child ego state generally turn to their subjective experiences, in other words they react instinctually (James and Jongeward, 1993) when they face with problems, these individuals can be thought that they fail to deal with stress compared to individuals who behave with Adult ego state.

Findings obtained from this study is parallel with the findings of the study by Emerson and colleagues (1994) who investigated the relationship between psychological problems and ego states, and also consistent with the findings of the research by Arı (1989) who determined the effect of ego states on level of adjustment and by Çam (1995) who studied the relationship between the perception of problem solving skill and ego states.

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Helpless Style Based on Ego States

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	p
Between Group	4	124.33	31.08		
Within Group	1377	268.78	0.20	159.23	.001
Total	1381	393.11			

As shown in Table 5; students' mean scores of helpless style which is one of the coping styles showed a significant difference based on their ego states ($p < .001$). Scheffé test was used to determine the source of the difference between group mean scores. The results showed that students with Adapted Child ego state characteristics mostly preferred the helpless style while students with Adult style ego state characteristics preferred the helpless style least ($p < .05$).

Table 6. ANOVA Results for Submissive Style Based on Ego States

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Between Group	4	91.64	22.91		
Within Group	1377	314.93	0.23	100.17	.001
Total	1381	406.58			

According to Table 6, there is a significant difference between groups according to their mean scores obtained from submissive style which is one of the coping styles based on ego states ($p < .001$). Scheffé test results which

was conducted to determine the source of the difference also showed that group which adopted the submissive style most consisted of students with Adapted Child ego state characteristics while the group that adopted the submissive style less consisted of students with Adult ego state characteristics ($p < .05$).

The fact that students who present Adapted Child and Critical Parent ego state characteristics focus on emotions and embrace ineffective coping styles such as helpless and submissive styles instead of focusing on solving problems is supported by characteristics of each ego state that have already been discussed. Besides, finding which is 'students who present characteristics of Adapted Child and Critical Parent ego states are the groups that preferred problem-focused coping styles least' is a complement to this finding. Similarly, according to the characteristics of Adult ego state and the finding of this study, students with Adult ego state adopt problem-focused coping styles more to deal with problems explains why students from Adult ego state group preferred emotion-focused coping styles less.

On the other hand, students who have the characteristics of Nurturing Parent and Free Child ego states obtained lower scores from emotion-focused coping styles than students who behave in Adapted Child and Critical Parent ego state while obtained higher scores than students who generally behave in Adult ego state. This situation can be expressed with the comments for problem-focused coping styles. As can be remembered, when Nurturing Parent and Free Child ego states are controlled by Adult ego state, it is claimed that coping styles get more problem-solving oriented and effective.

These findings which are obtained for emotion-focused coping styles are supported by the research findings of Arı (1989) when coping is considered as an adjustment process. Some other findings of various studies (Emerson et al., 1994; Çam, 1995) are also consistent with these findings. Some experimental researches supporting the findings of this study identified a significant increase in scores from Nurturing Parent and Adult ego states and as well as a significant decrease in Critical Parent and Adapted Child ego states of university students who experienced some psychological problems and received therapy. This situation is considered as an indication of decrease in psychological problems and it is highlighted that

ego states can be a useful tool to measure the change during therapy (Emerson et al., 1994).

Table 7. ANOVA Results for Seeking of Social Support Based on Ego States

Source of Variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	P
Between Group	4	17.72	4.43		
Within Group	1377	463.86	0.34	13.15	.001
Total	1381	481.58			

According to Table 7, there is a significant difference between groups according to their mean scores obtained from seeking of social support behavior which is one of the coping styles based on ego states ($p < .001$). Scheffé test results which was conducted to determine the source of the difference showed that group which adopted the seeking of social support behavior most consisted of students with Free Child ego state characteristics followed by Nurturing Parent ego state while the group that adopted the seeking of social support less consisted of students with Critical Parent ego state characteristics followed by Adapted Child ego state ($p < .05$).

The reason why students with Critical Parent and Adapted Child ego states characteristics prefer seeking of social support less can be discussed on the basis of the features of these ego states. It can be thought based on this finding that individuals who behave in Critical Parent ego state avoid seeking of social support due to their prejudiced, critical, captious features while individuals who behave in Adapted Child ego state use seeking of social support less frequent because they accept the problems without questioning due to the features which are avoid facing problems, passivity, not to take any action due to feeling insufficient, to obey and being shy.

On the other hand, it can be thought that individuals who mostly react with Adult ego state need to test realities, to evaluate the probabilities and to apply for social support sometimes to gather information (James and Jongeward, 1993) as students who show Adult ego state characteristics obtained higher scores from seeking of social support behaviors than students in Critical Parent and Adapted Child ego states while they obtained lower scores than students in Free Child and Nurturing Parent ego states.

The reason why students who react with Free Child and Nurturing Parent ego states prefer seeking of social support behavior more often can be explained as Free Child refers subjective experiences to deal with problems while Nurturing Parent takes his/her parents' point of views as basis. Adult ego state is less active in these individuals; that's why, they fail to effectively solve their problems on their own. James and Jongeward (1993) stated that when people got badly hurt, Free Child inside them desires to cry, scream and ask for help; in other words, leads them to express their feeling clearly. This explanation supports the idea that students with Free Child ego state characteristics are keener to seek of social support. This finding obtained also provide a clue for the opinion by Parker and Endler (1992) that seeking of social support is evaluated as a source for coping styles rather than just being a dimension of coping styles.

There found no research findings in the literature supporting this finding. It is thought that this finding should be supported with researches which are designed to investigate the seeking of social support behavior with a measurement instrument that evaluates the variable from its various sides and in a more extensive way.

Findings discussed so far prove that ego states revealed significant relationships with coping styles. These findings are also consistent with the studies which determined the construct validity of ego states (Heyer, 1987; Arı, 1989; Emerson et al., 1994; am, 1995; Sevim, 1996; am, 1997; Deniz, 2002; amatacı, 2013; Durmaz, 2015; Torun, 2015). In other words, the findings of this study present clues regarding the construct validity of ego states.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concluded that university students' coping styles differ based on their ego states. Suggestions below can be made in the light of the findings obtained from this study:

- Based on the findings of this study, it is thought that individuals' ego states are an effective educational and therapeutic tool for individual psychological counseling and guidance interventions and psycho-education oriented group studies which aim to employ effective coping skills. Hence, individuals' ego states should

be taken into consideration in practices. Which ego states they use often and its relationship with the problems they experience should be investigated. They should be learnt to use their ego states flexible and in accordance with the situations, and empower and activate the Adult ego state. Experts from TA field stated that Beck and Ellis's approach is a tool to strengthen and activate the Adult ego state (James, 1986), and TA approach can be integrated to cognitive-behavioral and psycho-dynamic approaches (Schlegel, 1998; Finlay, 2016). Questioning the unrealistic and incorrect way of thinking provides strengthening and activation of Adult ego state in cognitive approach. Hence, cognitive approach and TA can be paired within an integrative context in coping style programs.

- There are research findings in the literature stating that when psycho-education programs and group counseling programs are solely used or used with other counselling approaches, there are positive effects on individuals' psychological features such as self-concept, self-esteem, adjustment, focus of control and cognitive emotion regulation, and communication skills (Knox, 1973; Woodward, 1975; Sisson et al., 1977; Talob, 1994, Wissink, 1994; Çam,1997; Nejadnaderi, Darehkordia, and Divsalar, 2013; Monajem and Aghayousefi, 2015). Besides, it is declared that because of its easily learnable vocabulary, its use of 'now and here' approach and being effective in short notices, TA can be used even for elementary school students as a powerful education tool (Woodward, 1975). From this point, it should be researched that the efficiency of coping programs can be tested via studies designed in experimental research models when TA is solely used or used integrated with other approaches and concluded if these approaches should be used integrated or not.
- Considering that university students may have emotional and social relations problems as well as academic one; TA based encounter groups can be arranged which are to be conducted by psycho-

- logical counselors and psychologists who received education regarding TA in universities' Psychological Counseling and Guidance units.
- Psychological Counseling and Guidance units in all universities in our country should be urgently structured to provide psychological support service to the students systematically in the context of protective and preventive mental health services. Students should be provided to learn how to use their ego states in a healthier way thanks to psycho-education programs which would be prepared according to students' age groups and problems to make students acquire problem-solving, assertiveness, flexible and positive thinking as well as coping skills.
 - Departments which provides education in psychology and psychological counseling should give a wider place to TA approach in "Psychological Counseling Theories" or similar courses in their curriculum. This approach should also be studied practically in the course environment with experiential examples.
 - It is thought that when the quality of the ego states scale was in mind, development of an ego state scale consisting of premises which reflect individuals' behaviors for specific situations can be useful to be used for further researches.

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Kaynakça Bilgisi / Citation Information

- Akbağ, M. & Kulaksızoğlu, A. (2018). Coping with stress among university students: An investigation in the context of transactional analysis ego states. *OPUS–International Journal of Society Researches*, 9(16), 53-78.
DOI: 10.26466/opus.476576