Stress and Coping with Nursing College Students

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between stress levels and the coping style of nursing college students. And to find and provide effective stress-coping strategies. Data were collected from 257 nursing college students and analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. Nursing college students were more stressed at lower economic, pocket money and significant satisfaction levels. The coping strategies of nursing college students were mainly related to avoidance centering stress coping style and were not associated with coping style through problem-solving and social support seeking. In conclusion, nursing college students lack coping behavior to find their willingness to solve problems themselves and their coping resources in dealing with stress, mainly related to passive coping methods to avoid stressful situations. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a stress-coping intervention program to develop strategies and abilities to relieve and mediate stress.

Keywords: Stress, Coping, Nursing, College, Students

1. Introduction

College students generally have a relatively low mortality or morbidity rate and are an excellent group to maintain better health conditions through continuous management of erroneous lifestyles or stress [1]. However, it is also an unstable group that is exposed to various stressful environments such as new college culture and human relations. It needs to study the uncertainty of the future and independence from parents [2].

Stress is a tense state that manifests as an individual's physical or mental behavior response to a stressor; it is also a cause of mental illness [3]. Gradually, as the intensity of stress perceived by college students increases, serious problems such as school maladjustment, interpersonal issues, and anxiety about career and employment may be accompanied. The need for management and intervention in the stress they are experiencing has been raised [4].

Nursing college students may be more stressed due to the specificity of the nursing department. Unlike other college students, there are two types of stress sources simultaneously working on heavy learning and clinical practice [2].

If these stresses persist and are not effectively managed, they can experience various physical health problems and psychological difficulties such as anxiety, tension, frustration,

and depression [5]. Ineffective coping and inadequate management of stress can lead to academic abandonment [6]. Therefore, it is necessary to precisely assess, manage, and resolve the stress level and stress factors of nursing college students in the education field.

Until recently, nursing college students' stress-related studies have mainly dealt with the stress caused by the clinical practice of nursing college students [7][8] and other research on academic stress and job stress [9][10]. However, there is little research related to college life stress and coping styles of nursing college students.

In this study, we try to understand the stress level experienced by nursing college students and analyze the relationship with coping strategies. This study attempted to find out how to cope with the effective stress of nursing college students.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Participants

A questionnaire survey considering ethical aspects was distributed to 260 nursing college students selected from three universities. Of the 260 questionnaires, 257 were selected for final analysis. Three questionnaires with some incomplete responses were excluded.

2.2. Measurements

2.2.1. Questionnaire on stress

The stress instrument is the life stress scale that corrects and supplements the college student stress scale of Kyum and Kyo [11]. This tool comprises eight areas and 50 questions, with each response ranked on a 5-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate more significant stress. It covers four areas of interpersonal stress (opposite-sex friends, same-sex friends, family, professors) and four problem stress areas (academic, economic, future, value) in college students. Cronbach's α value was .85.

2.2.2. Questionnaire on coping

The Korean version of the Stress Coping Strategic Instrument (K-CSI) tool developed by Shin [12] was used to measure coping strategies for stress. The total of 18 questions consists of three areas (social support seeking, problem-solving, and avoidance centering). Each item has a 3-point scale, meaning that the higher the score, the higher the degree of coping strategy use. Cronbach's α value was .76.

2.3. Data collection and analyses

Trained research interviewers individually met 260 nursing college students. The interviewers explained the mobile survey and asked participants to complete the questions using their own mobile devices. All participants provided informed written consent before participating and were assured that the information would never be used for any other purpose. Data were analyzed using the SPSS/WIN 22.0 program. ANOVA, t-test, and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient were used.

3. Results

3.1. General characteristics

Of the 257 respondents, 229 (89.1%) were female, 154 (59.9%) were 20~21 years of age, and 121 (47.1%) were sophomore students. 182 (70.8%) respondents were medium economic level.

3.2. Differences in stress level according to general characteristics

In nursing students, the less interpersonal stress with the professor, the higher their satisfaction with the major. The stress of interpersonal relationships with same-sex friends, opposite-sex friends, and family differed according to pocket money level [Table 1].

Table 1. Differences in interpersonal stress level according to general characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	Interpersonal stress							
		family		same-sex friends		opposite-sex friends		professors	
		M±SD	t/F(p)	M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)
Sex	Male	0.31±0.37	-1.79 (.075)	0.22±0.34	0.51 (.609)	0.67±0.92	1.86 (.064)	0.38±0.60	-2.62 (.009)
	Female	0.52±0.54		0.27±0.44		0.40±0.60		0.75±0.63	
Age(years)	<19	0.22±0.31	1.81 (.145)	0.08±0.11	1.08 (.360)	0.37±0.53	0.26 (.853)	0.55±0.45	1.74 (.158)
	20-21	0.56±0.57		0.30±0.48		0.41±0.61		0.73±0.66	
	22-23	0.47±0.45		0.24±0.36		0.48±0.70		0.66±0.55	
	≥24	0.44±0.53		0.27±0.44		0.38±0.53		1.01±0.82	
Grade	Freshman	0.41±0.54	0.28 (.840)	0.14±0.19	1.62 (.184)	0.38±0.49	0.60 (.617)	0.62±0.65	0.33 (.803)
	Sophomore	0.51±0.41		0.19±0.19		0.30±0.58		0.64±0.56	
	Junior	0.53±0.57		0.31±0.49		0.47±0.62		0.73±0.65	
	Senior	0.48±0.46		0.21±0.38		0.48±0.72		0.75±0.64	
Major satisfaction	: very unsatisfied	0.72±0.54	14.50 (.204)	0.31±0.46	0.35 (.842)	0.54±0.96	0.40 (.807)	0.92±0.63	5.59 (.000)
	unsatisfied	0.55±0.64		0.32±0.53		0.47±0.61		1.04±0.71	
	mediocre	0.55±0.54		0.25±0.44		0.36±0.56		0.74±0.63	
	satisfied	0.48±0.46		0.27±0.41		0.44±0.63		0.62±0.58	
	very satisfied	0.30±0.49		0.19±0.22		0.48±0.74		0.35±0.50	
Economic level	Under the average	0.68±0.61	2.40 (.526)	0.29±0.45	0.64 (.526)	0.80±0.69	1.68 (.189)	0.54±0.72	0.51 (.598)
	medium	0.49±0.50		0.25±0.40		0.69±0.62		0.38±0.57	
	Above average	0.44±0.55		0.33±0.53		0.76±0.65		0.53±0.77	
School performance	Above A	0.44±0.48	2.44 (.089)	0.26±0.40	0.05 (.956)	0.42±0.57	0.55 (.578)	0.65±0.57	0.54 (.582)
Pocket money	Very low	0.71±0.62	3.03 (.018)	0.29±0.39	1.87 (.116)	0.72±0.90	2.99 (.020)	0.67±0.88	0.10 (.410)
	low	0.54±0.54		0.22±0.32		0.75±0.58		0.30±0.44	
	mediocre	0.57±0.56		0.35±0.52		0.75±0.68		0.44±0.67	
	affordable	0.38±0.45		0.23±0.42		0.70±0.56		0.38±0.52	
	Very affordable	0.23±0.30		0.08±0.12		0.41±0.54		0.83±0.95	

School performance	Above A	0.44±0.48	2.44 (.089)	0.26±0.40	0.05 (.956)	0.42±0.57	0.55 (.578)	0.65±0.57	0.54 (.582)
	B	0.49±0.52		0.27±0.43		0.40±0.62		0.74±0.61	
	Under C	0.63±0.60		0.28±0.49		0.50±0.76		0.76±0.76	

Table 2. Differences in problem stress level according to general characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	Problem stress								Total stress	
		Value		Economic		Academic		Future			
		M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)	M±SD	t/F (p)
Sex	Male	0.70±0.53	-1.28 (.201)	0.46±0.46	-1.08 (.283)	1.06±0.51	-2.81 (.005)	1.10±0.58	-1.93 (.055)	0.58±0.33	-1.72 (.087)
	Female	0.87±0.60		0.59±0.55		1.37±0.49		1.35±0.59		0.73±0.38	
Age (years)	<19	0.85±0.64	0.72 (.539)	0.26±0.35	2.27 (.081)	1.41±0.31	0.30 (.823)	1.06±0.76	2.08 (.104)	0.56±0.25	1.07 (.363)
	20-21	0.88±0.60		0.63±0.56		1.36±0.46		1.38±0.54		0.74±0.40	
	22-23	0.84±0.56		0.56±0.53		1.30±0.56		1.31±0.64		0.70±0.34	
	≥24	0.66±0.60		0.42±0.47		1.31±0.59		1.11±0.54		0.66±0.41	
Grade	Freshman	0.82±0.59	1.17 (.323)	0.33±0.37	2.90 (.036)	1.39±0.35	0.82 (.483)	1.11±0.70	2.91 (.035)	0.62±0.29	1.05 (.370)
	Sophomore	0.95±0.49		0.67±0.48		1.31±0.48		1.31±0.45		0.70±0.25	
	Junior	0.88±0.61		0.62±0.57		1.37±0.50		1.40±0.60		0.74±0.40	
	Senior	0.73±0.60		0.44±0.51		1.26±0.53		1.17±0.59		0.66±0.36	
Major satisfaction	: very unsatisfied	0.85±0.55	1.26 (.286)	0.61±0.53	1.40 (.234)	1.76±0.47	2.49 (.044)	1.56±0.52	2.34 (.055)	0.85±0.31	2.09 (.083)
	unsatisfied	1.00±0.59		0.71±0.59		1.38±0.47		1.39±0.51		0.82±0.44	
	mediocre	0.88±0.60		0.62±0.58		1.36±0.54		1.40±0.66		0.72±0.40	
	satisfied	0.80±0.60		0.50±0.48		1.28±0.48		1.28±0.58		0.67±0.34	
	very satisfied	0.70±0.52		0.48±0.57		1.27±0.40		1.03±0.50		0.59±0.26	
Economic level	Under the average	0.99±0.66	1.51 (.223)	0.94±0.61	11.83 (.000)	1.49±0.45	1.89 (.154)	1.36±0.68	0.23 (.799)	0.86±0.42	3.50 (.032)
	medium	0.81±0.55		0.54±0.49		1.31±0.51		1.33±0.58		0.68±0.35	
	Above average	0.90±0.69		0.55±0.41		1.33±0.46		1.27±0.55		0.71±0.42	
pocket money	Very low	0.85±0.69	1.95 (.103)	0.83±0.63	6.82 (.000)	1.37±0.47	2.91 (.022)	1.25±0.57	1.75 (.139)	0.79±0.44	2.68 (.032)
	low	0.87±0.56		0.69±0.55		1.42±0.54		1.37±0.59		0.74±0.32	
	mediocre	0.95±0.58		0.62±0.52		1.41±0.47		1.39±0.62		0.77±0.41	
	affordable	0.71±0.63		0.42±0.51		1.16±0.46		1.27±0.52		0.62±0.35	
	Very affordable	0.65±0.43		0.07±0.11		1.28±0.52		1.00±0.66		0.52±0.26	
School	Above A	0.84±0.52	0.18 (.839)	0.48±0.50	1.72 (.182)	1.20±0.44	5.64 (.004)	1.18±0.56	3.64 (.028)	0.65±0.32	2.06 (.130)

perfo rman ce	B	0.84±0.59		0.60±0.56	)	1.36±0.52	)	1.42±0.54	)	0.72±0.36	)
	Under C	0.89±0.68		0.58±0.55		1.48±0.49		1.32±0.70		0.78±0.45	

The economic stresses varied depending on grade, economic level, and pocket money. The school-related stresses differed according to satisfaction, performance, and pocket money. Stress in the future varies depending on the grade and school performance [Table 2].

3.3. Correlation among stress, coping, general characteristics

The stress level of nursing college students correlated with avoidance centering stress coping style. The stress level was high when the foremost satisfaction, economic, and pocket money levels were low.

The stresses of the eight stress areas were also correlated with avoidance-centering coping strategies, including economic, friends, professors, value, family, academic, and future problems—also, stress related to same-sex friendships correlated with social support-seeking and avoidance-centering coping styles.

Table 3. Correlation among stress, coping, general characteristics

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Stress	1. Total	1.00																	
	2. Economic	.796**	1.00																
	3. Same-sex friends	.783**	.618**	1.00															
	4. Professor	.665**	.380**	.471**	1.00														
	5. Opposite-sex friends	.526**	.321**	.502**	.159*	1.00													
	6. Value	.747**	.526**	.431**	.511**	.212**	1.00												
	7. Family	.766**	.737**	.650**	.405**	.377**	.449**	1.00											
	8. Academic	.633**	.397**	.255**	.399**	.094	.568**	.380**	1.00										
	9. Future	.556**	.330**	.259**	.325**	.110	.464**	.292**	.480**	1.00									
Coping	10. Total	.030	-.026	-.081	.052	.046	.067	-.021	.012	.114	1.00								
	11. Problem-solving	.065	.005	-.047	.100	.068	.052	.001	.050	.108	.881**	1.00							
	12. Social support seeking	-.089	-.115	-.148*	-.048	-.022	-.011	-.105	-.074	.033	.882**	.590**	1.00						
	13. Avoidance-centering stress	.249**	.197**	.130*	.149*	.118	.270**	.209**	.137*	.236**	.306**	.133**	.148*	1.00					
Characteristics	14. Age	-.013	-.037	.011	.065	.027	-.030	-.018	-.017	-.059	0.33	0.53	0.30	-0.74	1.00				
	15. Major satisfaction	-.180**	-.129*	-.059	-.278**	-.019	-.121	-.136*	-.163**	-.162**	.125*	.111	.142*	-.083	.066	1.00			
	16. Economic level	-.125*	-.291**	.009	-.027	.008	-.052	-.132*	-.104	-.048	.135*	.115	.152*	-.062	.023	.159*	1.00		
	17. Pocket money	-.159*	-.295**	-.053	-.079	.066	-.102	-.184**	-.147*	-.090	.154*	.159*	.138*	-.034	.036	.100	.350**	1.00	
	18. School performance	.115	.103	.004	.059	.044	.036	.105	.184**	.085	-.131*	-.127*	-.104	-.038	.121	-.247**	-.205**	-.123*	1.00

Stress coping levels were higher when the primary satisfaction, economic, and pocket money levels were high. However, the higher the school grades, the lower the stress coping level. [Table 3] shows that the problem-solving and social support-seeking coping methods of the sub-domain coping methods correlate with pocket money.

4. Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the stress level experienced by nursing students and to understand the relationship with coping style. This was done to find and provide effective stress coping.

The nursing students were more stressed when their economic level, pocket money level, and significant satisfaction were lower.

Coping with stress was mainly related to an avoidance-focused stress coping style. It was not associated with coping style through problem-solving and seeking social support. In addition, among the stresses of the eight sub-area, the seven stress areas (economics, friends, professors, values, family, academic studies, and future problems), except for stressful heterosexual interpersonal stress, were mainly related to avoidance-focused stress coping strategies.

In conclusion, the nursing students showed that economic, pocket money, and, foremost, satisfaction correlated with stress levels. In addition, the stress coping method was mainly used to avoid stress. In other words, nursing students had difficulty finding the active will to solve problems themselves and the coping resources to cope with stressful situations, such as encountering challenges in the adaptation process, and mainly related to passive coping methods to avoid stressful situations.

Therefore, nursing college students must use more effective coping rather than unconditionally avoiding stressful situations. For this, there is a need to develop and intervene stress coping nursing intervention programs that can develop methods and abilities to relieve stress.

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