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Short Communication

On what Resources can the Students Rely on: Satisfaction with Life, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

Summary: The primary objective is to analyze the level of mental health within the university student population; the secondary objective is to gain an understanding of certain important factors which may be used to improve mental health.

Method: In order to achieve these objectives, four internet questionnaires were used; SWLS: Life Scale satisfaction; RSE: Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale; GSE: General Self-Efficacy Scale; GHQ-28: General Health Questionnaire.

Results: Of the 431 university students surveyed, 73.09% had symptoms of psychological distress, 58.24% had a low Self-Esteem and 52.20% had a low Self-Efficacy. There is a significant correlation between the four variables of the study. Women have a higher level of Psychological Distress and a lower level of Self-Efficacy than men. The Self-Esteem and the Satisfaction with Life predict the Self-Efficacy and the General Health of the university students.

Conclusion: These results shed light on the importance of taking Satisfaction with Life, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy into consideration when dealing with University student's mental health, and the prevention of mental illnesses.

ABBREVIATIONS

SWLS: Satisfaction with Life Scale; RSE: Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale; GSE: General Self-Efficacy Scale; GHQ-28: General Health Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

University students have more problems with psychological issues (such as depression, anxiety, stress, etc.) than any other population [1-3]. This is generated by the new responsibilities of young adults and the difficulties in adapting to university [4]. These psychological issues, which have been studied by various investigations, manifest in different ways, such as trouble sleeping [5-9], and fatigue problems [9-13]. Also, these can lead to more serious and worrying problems such as higher levels of psychological distress [2,14-18]. Furthermore, the prevalence of academic overload represents the highest source of stress among nursing students [19]. Additionally, it has been shown that depression, anxiety and eating disorders are associated with lower academic success and a higher probability of dropping out [20].

However, some studies show that there is a correlation between positive psychological variables, like Self-Esteem [18,21-24] and Self-Efficacy [25-27], and mental health in University students. Additionally, positive variables like Satisfaction with Life have a significant and a positive correlation with students' academic performance [28], although, this research is still scarce.

This vicious circle of influences especially between mental health and academic performance increases the importance of focusing on this demographic. The objective of this study is to explore the positive resources that can help students to cope.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data was collected during an exploratory survey conducted by the research laboratory in clinical psychology of the Paris West University in Nanterre La Défense (EA Clipsyd 4430) on the mental health of university students.

Data has been collected with four online questionnaires; the duration of the test was about 10 minutes. Subjects completed a self-administered questionnaire including socio-demographic

questions of (age, sex, level of study, etc). All the participants were clearly informed about the study. Participation was anonymous and voluntary. 630 University students were surveyed between February and May 2014 in Ile de France, all of whom agreed to participate in the research.

The recruitment was performed mainly on the site of Paris West University, which advertised the research, helping to spread it in the student newsletter and on social networks within university. Posters were also distributed on campus, although it is noted that the dissemination in the newsletter was the most effective. The research follows the instructions of the Ethics Group UFR EDS and students could apply for a copy of the research results.

Instruments

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale "RSE": developed by Morris Rosenberg, translated and validated in French by Vallieres and his team. The results support the validity and reliability (Cronbach's alpha: 0.70) of this scale in French. It consists of 10 items which the subject responds to on a Likert scale from "1" Strongly disagree, to "4" Strongly agree [29]. A score lower than 30 shows low self-esteem and a score greater than or equal to 30 is for a good self-esteem [30].

General Self-Efficacy Scale "GSE": developed by Matthias Jerusalem and Rolf Schwarze, translated and validated in French by Dumont and his team. The psychometric data is satisfactory and the average, internal consistency is high and there is a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 [31]. It is composed of ten items, which are answered on a Likert scale from "1" not at all true, to "4" totally true. It aims to estimate the feeling of self-efficacy [32]. There is no threshold given by Schwarzer, but we can use the median as the threshold of our sample [33], the average is 28.

Satisfaction With Life Scale "SWLS": developed by Ed Diener, Robert A. Emmons, Randy J. Larsen and Sharon Griffin, translated and validated in French by Blais and his team. The psychometric characteristics are acceptable and also similar to the English versions, the scale has excellent internal consistency, acceptable test-retest and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 [34]. It comprises 5 items, which are answered on a Likert scale of 7 points. It aims to estimate the satisfaction with life [34]. The scores are categorized as follows: Extremely satisfied [31-35], Satisfied [26-30], Slightly satisfied [21-25], Neutral [20], Slightly dissatisfied [15-19], Dissatisfied [10-14] and [5 – 9] Extremely dissatisfied [35,36].

General Health Questionnaire "GHQ-28": a tool described for the first time by Goldberg in 1972 [37], it has been translated and validated in French by Bolognini and his team in 1989,GHQ had the best correlation with clinical assessment, with a specificity of 91.1 and a sensitivity of 49.1 [38]. It is comprised of 28 items [37], which are answered on a Likert scale of 4 points. It aims to estimate psychological distress [38]. A score greater than or equal to 5 indicates psychological distress [39,40].

Data analyses

All statistical analyses were performed with the STATISTICA 10 software. Statistical analyses were carried out according to the following procedures; descriptive analyses using Basic statistics test and t-test to evaluate differences based on sex. The correlations between the scores of the variables were tested with the Bravais Pearson correlations test. Moreover, path analysis was conducted by repeating multiple regression analysis (stepwise method), firstly to examine self-efficacy as dependent variable, and secondly to examine psychological distress as dependent variable. A value of $p<.05$ was considered statistically significant for t-test and regression analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive and exploratory analyses: The sample consists of 431 students from the Paris region (93.74% coming from Paris West University), a majority of whom were women (75.17%). The average age was 19.9 years old (SD: 1.77). The majority of students (72.62%) live with their parents and 94.43% do not have children. The sample was comprised of students at varying levels of progress through their bachelor's degree (49.42% were first year students, 25.29% second year students and 25.29% third year students) and from differing fields of study. The majority of who hadn't repeated a grade (78.19%).

Prevalence and frequencies for each of the recorded variables (Self-Esteem, General Self-Efficacy, Satisfaction with Life, and General Health) are reported in Table 1. On the one hand, low self-esteem is observed in 58.24% of the students, on the other hand, scores of life satisfaction indicate that 24.59% of students were "Slightly satisfied", 10.44% were "Dissatisfied", 2.87% were "Extremely dissatisfied", and 30.16% were "Satisfied". 52.20% of students have a total score indicating poor self-efficacy. Finally, 73.09% of students reported psychological distress according to their score on the GHQ-28. The results show that male students have a sense of self-efficacy significantly higher than that of women who have a higher level of psychological distress (Table 1).

Correlations Between the study variables: As one can see from Figure 1 the study variables (Self-Esteem, General Self-Efficacy, Satisfaction with Life, and General Health) were all significantly correlated.

Multiple Linear Regressions: First, a linear regression model was tested to explain the score of GSE (dependent variable) by the scores of RSE, SWLS and GHQ-28. This regression model explained 29.85% ($R2 = 0.2985$) of the GSE score variability. The significant descriptive variables in this model are RSE ($b^* = 0.434$; $p = 0.000$), and SWLS ($b^* = 0.132$; $p = 0.005$), (Table 2).

Secondly, a linear regression model was tested to explain the score of GHQ-28 (dependent variable) by the scores of RSE, SWLS and GSE. This regression model explained 17.97% ($R2 = 0.1797$) of the variability of the GHQ-28 score. The significant descriptive variables in this model are also SWLS ($b^* = -0.216$; $p = 0.00003$) and RSE ($b^* = 0.215$; $p = 0.0001$) (Table 2).

Discussion

Amongst the students (N = 431), it is found that University students have high levels of psychological distress (73.09%) and low level of self-esteem (58.24%). The problematic psychological state of this sample is slightly higher than that found in other

Table 1: Descriptive statistic for the study variables (N=431).

Variables	n	(%)	Female		Male		t-value
			M	SD	M	SD	
Age			19.87	1,74	19.98	1.86	-0.52
Self-Esteem			28.04	5.55	28.95	5.22	-1.49
Low Self-Esteem	251	58.24					
High Self-Esteem	180	41.76					
Satisfaction With Life			22.59	6.35	28.71	6.08	1.26
Extremely satisfied	33	7.66					
Satisfied	130	30.16					
Slightly satisfied	106	24.59					
Neutral	20	4.64					
Slightly dissatisfied	85	19.72					
Dissatisfied	45	10.44					
Extremely dissatisfied	12	2.87					
General Self-Efficacy			27.64	4.71	29.42	3.69	-3.57
Law Self-Efficacy	225	52.20					
High Self-Efficacy	206	47.80					
General Health			8.99	5.39	6.79	4.9	3.47
Psychological distress	315	73.09					
No psychological distress	116	26.91					
Abbreviations: [M : Average, SD : standard deviation.t-value:t-test]							

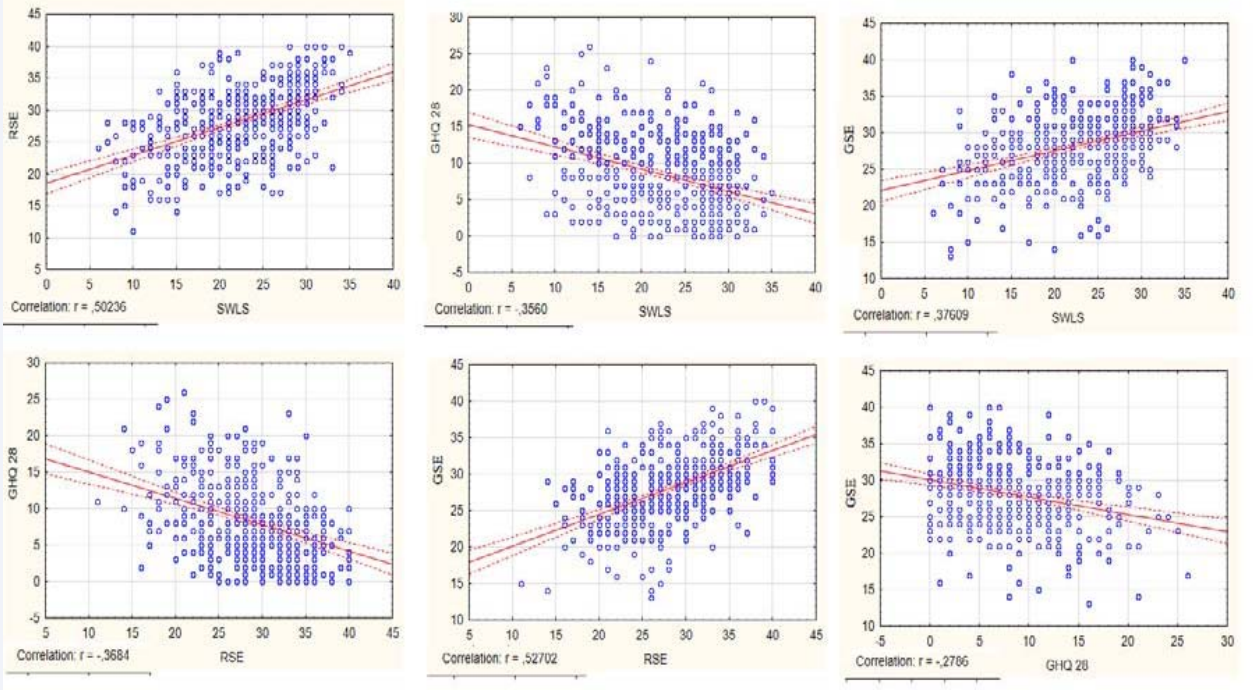

Figure 1 Bravais Pearson correlations between the study variables.

similar samples within France [13,18,41].

There is a significant correlation between all the recorded variables: RSE, SWLS and GSE have significant negative correlation with GHQ-28.Additionally, RSE, SWLS and GSE have been significantly correlated with GHQ-28, however these correlate in a positive fashion (Figure 1).This result is consistent with those of previous studies which have shown a positive correlation between Self-Efficacy and better health [25].

Table 2: Multiple regressions with model 1 (GSE score dependent variable) and model 2 (GHQ-28 scores dependent variable).

N° Model	b*	P	Regression Summary for
Model 1	**GSE score dependent variable**		
RSE	0.43	0.000000	R= ,54639761 R^2= ,29855034 .Adjusted **R^2= ,29362213** .F(3,427)=60,580 p<0,0000 Std. Error of estimate: 3,8186
GHQ-28	-0 .07	0 .01	
SWLS	0.13	0 .005	
Model 2	**GHQ-28 scores dependent variable**		
SWLS	-0.21	0.00003	R=, 42395869 R^2=, 17974097. Adjusted **R^2= ,17397802.**F(3,427)=31,189 p<,00000 Std. Error of estimate: 4,8654
RSE	-0.21	0.000133	
GSE	-0.08	0.1	

Abbreviations: SWLS: Satisfaction With Life Scale; RSE: Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale; GSE: General Self-Efficacy Scale; GHQ-28: General Health Questionnaire.

In this study, it is remarkable that women are more at risk than men; women have a significantly higher level of GHQ-28 than men, however, they have a GSE level which is significantly less than men. These results are consistent with those from the literature review [2].

However, according to the previous study, the sense of self-efficacy is the most powerful predictor of stress symptoms among university students (26). In the regression analysis results, the two positive variables (self-esteem and life satisfaction) positively predicted self-efficacy (model 1), but negatively predicted psychological distress (model 2), (Table 2).

This research has a number of limitations, such as convenience sample, no control group, cross-sectional study and a majority of women. This study should be extended to other types of students (High schools, colleges, IUT, Vocational schools, etc.), and its notable results investigated further.

CONCLUSION

This survey indicates that the resources that the way to improve psychological health is to foster and maintain self-esteem, life satisfaction and self-efficacy.

The absence of a direct correlation between self-efficacy and psychological distress, will be the subject of future research in order to study the mediation and the moderation between these two variables.

This survey also highlights the strong importance of including positive variables (introduced in this study) in the prevention of mental health issues in student populations, and hopes to aid universities in the creation of mental health programs. There is need for further studies into this subject, to continue improving the mental health of university students.

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