

PERCEIVED STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to assess both perceived stress and coping strategies among university students in a specific cultural context. A sample of 223 undergraduate students from Qatar University responded to self-rating questionnaires, Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Brief Cope Inventory adapted forms. Based on the Perceived Stress Scale, the results show that a majority of participants evinced a moderate stress level (76 %) followed by a high stress level (12 %) and that girls are significantly more stressed than boys are. In addition, a high academic level is correlated with more perceived stress. Based on the Brief Cope Inventory, most of the participants used religion and a positive coping strategy. These results reveal that the effect of stress depends on the way it is perceived. Coping strategies are influenced by social and cultural characteristics. Culture affects our stress perception and individual choice of coping strategies. Assessing students' problems may help prevent the bad effects of stress on health and academic performance. Results also invite further study, particularly in the form of a longitudinal follow-up.

Keywords: Perceived stress, coping strategies, Cultural context, University students.