Chapter 11

Who Lives Healthier in a University? Faculty, Students, or Administrative Staff

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ABSTRACT

Being healthy is an important aspect in life satisfaction. The factors that affect the health status of an individual are environmental, economic, socio-cultural and genetic factors, access to health services, and lifestyle. Since it can be controlled by the individual, lifestyle is a topic with great importance. Understanding the healthy lifestyle behaviors of individuals is important for health and education institutions, companies, and governments to define their strategies accordingly. This quantitative study involves 205 respondents from a university in Istanbul. Data were obtained from self-administered questionnaires with 27 questions. The chapter examines the characteristics of the respondents regarding demographics and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Differences in the sample’s healthy lifestyle dimensions were determined according to demographic variables after T-test and ANOVA analysis. This research presents the opportunity for further qualitative research in healthy lifestyle habits especially among university students.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of health has always existed for people; because health is the human life itself. The understanding of health has shown changes between individuals and societies from time to time. Until recently, health and illness have been considered together; health has been defined as an absence of illness and illness has been defined as not being healthy.

Healthy lifestyle behaviors are healthy eating, stress management, regular exercise, spiritual wellbeing, high quality interpersonal relations and taking the health responsibility. In many countries, number of people who are adopting healthy lifestyle is increasing. In Turkey this is mostly due to the promotion of healthy lifestyle by media, the awareness campaigns held by governments and the global trend of LOHAS. LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability), is one of the latest approaches about lifestyle bringing a consumer segment who cares about health, environment, social justice and sustainable living (Cohen, 2010).

The objective of the study is to explore the healthy lifestyle behaviors of different groups at a university. In this study the healthy lifestyle behaviors of three different groups (student, faculty, administrative staff) at a university in Istanbul are researched.

Health and Well Being

World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (www.who.int). This definition is the first modern definition to be described as multi-dimensional. On the other hand, well-being reflects how one feels about life, as well as one’s ability to function effectively (Corbin, Welk, Corbin, & Welk, 2008). Like health, wellbeing is a multidimensional concept and is a dynamic balance of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of an individual’s life. Egbert (1980) summarized the central areas of wellness as “being a combination of having a strong sense of identity; a reality oriented perspective; a clear purpose in life; the recognition of a unifying force in one’s life; the ability to manage one’s affairs creatively and maintain a hopeful view; and, the capability of inspired, open relationships” (as cited in Miller & Foster, 2010). It is often emphasized that well-being is a choice, a process, a way of life; it is multidimensional but has a holistic structure; it is about balance; it is subjective, perceptual, relative and is based on the characteristics of healthy people (Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2012). Health and well-being concepts are often used interchangeably. In fact, these two concepts complement each other. While wellbeing is the positive component of health, health has a positive component led to the use of the term wellbeing (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001). Health and wellbeing consist of physical, social, emotional, intellectual and
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