Abstract

The current study was aimed to determine the relationship among personality traits, perceived social support, and mental health problems in university students. For this purpose, an indigenous scale of Perceived Social Support for university students was developed. Initially, the manifestation and expression of perceived social support was explored from 20 university students (10 male 10 female) using a semi-structured interview. After excluding repetition, a list of 35 items (Perceived Social Support Scale, PSS) was converted into a self report measure (0-3). In the main study, 425 university students (male 195, female 229) selected through stratified random sampling were given, a demographic Performa, PSS, adapted version of NEO Five-Factor Inventory and Student Problem Checklist. Factor analysis of PSS showed a two factor solution namely as Perceived Support from the Family and Perceived Support from the Friends. PSS was found to have acceptable psychometric properties. Regression analysis revealed that personality trait Agreeableness was found to be the strong negative predictor of the perceived social support, whereas Extroversion, Conscientiousness and Openness were the strong positive predictors of perceived social support. Perceived social support was also negatively associated with mental health problems. Moreover, Neuroticism and Agreeableness were the strong positive predictors of mental health problems, whereas Extroversion and Openness were the strong negative predictors of mental health problems in university students. Results are discussed in terms of other socio-demographic variables with relation to personality traits, perceived social support and mental health problems.