

Research Paper

Neurotic Personality as a Moderator Variable between Perceived Stress and Life Satisfaction in Vocational High School Students

Firdaus Yuni Hartatik^{1*}, Nixie Devina Rahmadiani², Latipun³

ABSTRACT

Perceived stress is a feeling or thought that a person has for everything in his life that can cause stress. Stress experienced by adolescents affects the quality and life satisfaction of teenagers. Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive assessment of how well and satisfying things individuals have done in their lives as a whole. Teenagers who are satisfied with their lives will enjoy life more and more likely to make a positive contribution to their environment. Teenagers who perceive stress higher will tend to feel lower life satisfaction. Especially when the teenager has a personality type with neurotic tendencies. This study uses a quantitative non-experimental approach. The purpose of this research is to know the life satisfaction of the students through the influence of perceived stress which then presents the neurotic personality as the moderator variable. The results showed that there was a significant negative effect between perceived stress and life satisfaction with the neurotic personality type as a moderator variable (beta = -.255, sig = .008). Neurotic personality in research contributes effectively to the effect of perceived stress on life satisfaction (R square 1 = .054, R square 2 = .096).

Keywords: *Perceived Stress, Neurotic Personality, Life Satisfaction, Adolescence, Student*

Satisfaction is a form of positive emotion in which there is harmony between fulfilled desires and relief of feelings because according to what is expected. Life satisfaction is a state of well-being or satisfaction that is a pleasant condition and arises when certain needs and expectations are met (Diener, 2000). Life satisfaction is subjective so that the assessment of life satisfaction in each individual is different (Diener, et al., 1985; Diener, Ingleheart, & Tay, 2013). Life satisfaction is the hope of every human being, not least in adolescence. Life satisfaction in adolescents can be universal which is generally felt by all adolescents, but can also be individual or special, where life satisfaction is obtained based on experiences or events experienced during adolescence (Huebner, 2004).

Hearon (2015) said that adolescence is a developmental stage where self-upheaval begins and is characterized by various changes in intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects, starting from

¹ Post Graduate Program, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

² Post Graduate Program, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

³ Post Graduate Program, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

*Responding Author

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physical, cognitive, emotional, relationship with family and peers, and adaptation to school transition. Experts agree that adolescents are exposed to various changes in their lives that can cause high distress. Especially when they are at the final level of school, where they must take various decisions by considering various possibilities, such as continuing their education to the undergraduate level or starting a career. This confusion is one of the pressures which then turns into a source of distress. So, it is very important to understand the challenges faced by adolescents, because life experiences that are full of pressure can be a threat to their psychological development in the future (Civitci, 2015), also has an impact on life satisfaction.

The stress experienced by adolescents affects the life satisfaction of these teenagers. Dissatisfaction with life is considered a common symptom of the emergence of stress (Matheny et al, 2002). Various studies have suggested that increasing stress in a person's life can directly reduce the person's life satisfaction (Matheny et al, 2002; Abbas & Shah, 2017; Chaudhary, 2017). It's hard to imagine, a teenager with a high level of stress will feel life satisfaction that is also high. Stress and life satisfaction are always inversely proportional, where when stress increases, life satisfaction tends to decrease. Vice versa, when stress decreases, life satisfaction automatically increases (Civitci, 2015). However, this certainly depends on the type of stress experienced. Eustress is said to actually increase the satisfaction of one's life, where this kind of positive stress can add spirit and passion for life (Utami & Hariwibowo, 2013).

A pressure and demand from the environment can turn into stress and affect life satisfaction, of course depends on how someone perceives the environmental pressure. A number of studies show that the relationship of stress and life satisfaction can lead to positive results when for example moderated by clarity of mood (Extremera, Duran, Rey, 2009). Therefore, life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment that is realized from a person's life where the assessment criteria depend on the person's perspective (Chaudhary, 2017). In other words, a person has full power to create a stress-whether it is eustress or distress-affects the satisfaction of his life or not. Because once again, the satisfaction of one's life is the person's global judgment of his own life on the basis of his current life comparison with his ideal ideal. Tang and Chan (2017) state that a teenager with a higher level of life satisfaction is likely to initiate more adaptive behavior and experience lower stress levels.

The way a person perceives life certainly can not be separated from the characteristics of his personality. A teenager who views life in a positive way tends to positively assess various situations and considers that unpleasant events in life are opportunities or challenges, not threats. So, through these positive glasses, adolescents are expected to experience less stress in their lives and can find more effective problem solving (Tang & Chan, 2017). In the Big Five Personality theory, neurotic personality is associated with negative emotions and becomes more reactive to negative influences from the environment, such as stress. Research conducted by Garcia (2011) showed that adolescents who were lower in Neuroticism scores and higher in Extraversion scores tended to have better levels of well-being. Thus, it can be concluded that adolescents with high neurotic levels tend to be more susceptible to perceive stress in their lives.

Neurotic personality is one of the top five personality theories in the study of psychology. A person with a higher neurotic score tends to be more moody, feeling anxious, worried, scared, angry, frustrated jealousy, feeling guilty, depressed and lonely. They also tend to perceive

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stress in a negative way and tend to respond to ordinary events as small dangers that trigger stress (Thompson, 2008). Gale et al. (2013) stated that adolescents with Neuroticism personality have a direct effect on mental well-being, for example life satisfaction tends to be low. In addition, other studies also show that people with high neurotic scores are more likely to experience various health problems (Charles et al., 2008). They are more prone to be attacked by diseases associated with stress, such as hypertension, coronary heart disease and digestive disorders (Tang & Chan, 2017).

Based on this background, this study has an important contribution to the perception of stress and life satisfaction of adolescents at the end of Vocational High School (SMK). Compare that with previous studies that directly measure stress perception on life satisfaction without involving neurotic personality factors. For this reason also, it is important to know the extent of the influence of neurotic personality on adolescents and how they perceive stress and its relationship to life satisfaction.

Life Satisfaction

According to a study by Diener (2000), happiness and life satisfaction are more important than money. Satisfaction or satisfaction is a state of happiness and prosperity caused by the achievement of one's hopes and goals (Chaplin, 2006). Life satisfaction is a cognitive assessment of how well and satisfying the things an individual has done in his life as a whole (Diener, et al., 1985; Diener, Ingleheart, & Tay, 2013). Life satisfaction involves various aspects of a person's life such as health, finance, interpersonal relationships and so on. Because life satisfaction is a subjective assessment of a person towards himself, then a person's life satisfaction may be different from others. However, generally someone states that he feels satisfied with his life even though it is based on only one aspect of life.

Research by Diener et al. (1999) show that there are two things about life satisfaction where the first life satisfaction is a person's subjective evaluation of his life as a whole and the second refers to emotions, both positive and negative. To reinforce the limits of life satisfaction, life satisfaction consists of five aspects, namely the desire to change lives, feelings of satisfaction with the life of the present, the past, and the future, and how other people evaluate the individual concerned (Diener, et al., 1985; Diener, Ingleheart&Tay, 2013). Someone is said to be prosperous and achieve high life satisfaction when he has a positive global assessment of his life, has quite high positive emotions and relatively low negative emotions (Tang & Chan, 2017). Among adolescents and young adults, life satisfaction has been found to be a buffer against the effects of stress and psychological problems (Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009).

Over the past two decades interest and promotions related to youth welfare have continued to increase (Tang & Chan, 2017). Various studies on the development and importance of life satisfaction in adolescent children continue to be carried out. Development and changes in life satisfaction in youth are generally influenced by two things, namely personal and contextual factors (Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009). Personality characteristics, parenting style, self-confidence, and goal aspirations seem to influence the level of life satisfaction in adolescents (Gilman & Huebner, 2003; Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009). In addition, daily positive interaction experiences with parents, teachers, and peers and participation in structural and satisfying activities are very important for the development of adolescent life satisfaction (Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009; Valois, et al., 2009).

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Life satisfaction is the main feature of positive adolescent development (Gilman & Huebner, 2003; Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009). High satisfaction with life is associated with healthy lifestyles, academic involvement (Lewis, et al., 2011), sense of hope (Gilman & Huebner, 2006), and prosocial behavior (Froh, Bono, & Emmons, 2010). Teens who feel satisfied with their lives tend to feel happier, active in social life, have good academic achievement and positive life expectancies (Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2009). In short, life satisfaction is a concept that is considered valuable by students, and it is highly correlated with psychological aspects and some daily life events (Civitci, 2015). Therefore, life satisfaction is one of the most important indicators of psychological health.

Perceived Stress and Life Satisfaction

Various studies show that life satisfaction has the potential to relieve the stress a person feels (Tang & Chan, 2017; Civitci, 2015). Stress is an important psychological concept that can negatively affect health, well-being and performance (Mojoyinola, 2008). Because it is subjective, the level of stress experienced by an individual depends on how it is interpreted. Perceived Stress is a feeling or thought that someone has towards everything in their lives that can cause stress and how they can cope with stress (Varghese, Norman, & Thavaraj, 2015).

Lazarus & Folkman (1984) states that stress can arise when a person feels that he does not have sufficient resources to deal with current or anticipatory demands. Someone who has a positive outlook or evaluation of life is more likely to assess all situations with a positive lens and at the same time consider negative events in their lives as challenges, not as threats (Tang & Chan, 2017). So that, through these positive tendencies, someone will experience less stress and be able to deal with it more effectively.

Fredrickson (2004) argues that positive emotions can expand the repertoire of one's thoughts, which in turn can encourage someone to think more flexibly, have broader solutions, and can use more effective coping strategies. Cognitive flexibility can improve subjective well-being, which can then become stressful. Thus, someone with a high level of life satisfaction is more likely to carry out behaviors that are more adaptive and experience lower stress levels.

The level of life satisfaction seems to influence stress levels in adolescents. Previous research on adolescent life satisfaction and related psychological processes was mostly carried out with community and student samples (Proctor et al., 2009). Adolescents have a high level of need in various fields that affect their life satisfaction, including mental health, education, and social relations (Kinner et al., 2014). Current findings indicate that life satisfaction can be fostered among adolescents and that improved life satisfaction can trigger other positive changes, such as reducing perceived stress (Civitci, 2015).

Neurotic Personality Effects on Life Satisfaction

Of the five personality types or Big Five Personality, neurotic personalities generally appear as strong predictors in various studies related to the relationship between aspects of personality and life satisfaction (Diener & Lucas, 1999; Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002). Neurotic personalities predict life satisfaction because they influence a person's affective experience, wherein a person generally relies on affective experience to assess satisfaction in his life (Schimmack, et al., 2004).

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Neurotic is a type of personality with psychological instability and is prone to experiencing negative emotions (McCrae & Costa, 2007; Ignacio et al, 2012; Jhonson & Atman, 2009). Costa and Widiger (2010) say that someone with a neurotic personality tends to have unrealistic ideas, feel depressed, anxious and insecure, has a maladaptive coping strategy and easily experiences stress. Signs of neurotic personality include anxiety, fear, moodiness, worry, jealousy, frustration, jealousy and loneliness (Thompson, 2008). Someone with a high level of neurotic tend to be easier to experience feelings of anger, sadness, anxiety, feeling guilty even depressed (Matthews & Deary, 1998). They tend to respond to pressure as a distress, and interpret the situation as a threat and easily feel frustrated.

Neurotic personality is a prospective risk factor for most mental disorders (Ormel et al, 2013) which will ultimately affect the quality and satisfaction of one's life. Research by Schimmack, et al. (2004) showed that neurotic personality was a significant predictor of life satisfaction, where all aspects of personality were negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Someone who tends to experience more anxiety and anger also tends to experience more depression. The risk of experiencing more negative emotions is generally captured as the general nature of neurotic personality (Schimmack, et al., 2004).

Perceived Stress and Life Satisfaction Moderated by Neurotic Personality

Various studies show that increasing stress in one's life can directly reduce the person's life satisfaction (Matheny et al., 2002; Abbas & Shah, 2017; Chaudhary, 2017). Perceived stress contributes positively to achieving one's life satisfaction, where when stress levels are high, someone tends to experience a decrease in satisfaction with his life Vice versa.

In addition, the way a person perceives life is certainly inseparable from his personality characteristics. Among several personality types, which are strongly correlated with life satisfaction are neurotic personalities. A person with a neurotic personality type who is easily anxious and hopeless tends to always perceive the situation as a pressure that inhibits and even becomes a threat which ultimately impacts on his psychological well-being. Life satisfaction is also low.

Framework for Thinking and Hypotheses

According to some previous studies, the mindset can be shown through the chart as follows:

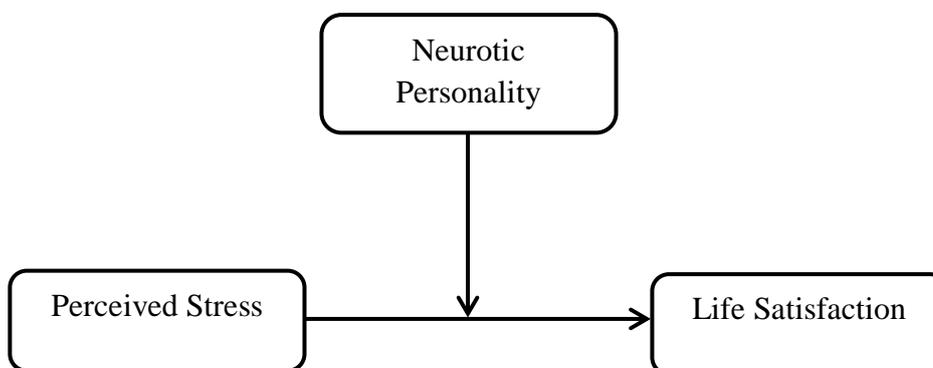


Image No. 1 Research Framework

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The hypothesis in this study are:

- H₁: There is a negative relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction
- H₂: There is a negative relationship between neurotic personality and life satisfaction
- H₃: There is a negative relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction which is moderated by neurotic personality

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study took the participants of this study amounting to 150 students and students of class XII SMK 3 PGRI Tlogomas, Malang City who came from several departments. The number of male participants was 102 people (68%) and women were 48 people (32%) with an average age of 17-20 years.

Table 1. Description of Research Subject (N=150)

Characteristics	N	%
Sex		
Male	102	68%
Female	48	32%
Age		
17	20	13.3%
18	92	61.3%
19	36	24%
20	2	1.3%

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

1. **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).** The independent variable of this study is perceived stress (X). The measurement of perceived stress in this study uses the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Sheldon Cohen in 1983 and is quite often used to measure a person's perception of a pressure. The scale consists of 10 items that include a number of direct questions about the level of stress experienced by participants. Items are easy to understand, and alternative responses are easy to understand. Questions in PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the past month. Alternative answers provided by researchers are 0 (never), 1 (almost never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (quite often) and 4 (very often). Researchers adapt to scale by translating it into Bahasa Indonesia. After testing and factor analysis, the reliability coefficient is 0.757.
2. **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).** Life satisfaction (Y) is measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale which is the most widely used measure of life satisfaction. Consists of 5 items statements of overall satisfaction with life (SWLS; Diener, et al., 1985). Respondents rated items on a 7-point Likert scale such as ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction. SWLS has been shown to have reliability, discriminant validity and strong convergent validity (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The SWLS reliability coefficient is 0.625.
3. **Big Five Inventory (BFI).** The moderate variables in this study are neurotic personality (M). Research instruments used to measure neurotic personality trends adapted from the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Goldberg in 1993. In this

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study, researchers used 8 BFI items related to neurotic personality. Items with neurotic tendencies are favorable (5 items) and unfavorable (3 items). Alternative answers using a Likert scale with answer choices 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The range of scores on this scale is 8-40, which means that the higher scores obtained show a high neurotic tendency. After testing and factor analysis, none of the items were killed. The reliability coefficient is 0.761.

Procedure

In general, procedures and data analysis are as follows: First, determine the research variables, explore the theory, and determine the right instrument. Secondly, conducting research permits at SMK PGRI 3 Malang. Third, data collected through field surveys using structured questionnaires that have been adapted into Indonesian. Data was collected in the form of paper-pencil surveys. Fourth, data analysis uses mediation regression analysis from Hayes with the IBM SPSS Statistics 23 application for Windows.

RESULTS

Based on the results of the analysis, a statistical description was obtained for perceived stress variables $M = 23.43$ with $SD = 4.630$, life satisfaction variables with $M = 17.10$ and $SD = 4.207$, and neurotic personality variables with $M = 21.33$ and $SD = 4.201$. The description of the data can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Life satisfaction	23.43	4.630	150
Perceived stress	17.10	4.207	150
Neurotic	21.33	4.201	150
Perceived stress x Neurotic	215.02	100.365	150

Based on the MRA test results, it is known that there is a significant negative relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction ($\beta = -.233$, $\text{sig} = .004$). Furthermore, the interaction between perceived stress on life satisfaction with neurotic personality as a moderator variable obtained negative and significant results ($\beta = -.255$, $\text{sig} = .008$). This shows that neurotic personality variables as moderator variables have a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction.

Table 3. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	27.806	1.549		17.950	.000					
	Perceived stress	-.256	.088	-.233	-2.910	.004	-.233	-.233	-.233	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	32.370	3.350		9.662	.000					
	Perceived stress	-.281	.324	-.255	-.866	.008	-.233	-.072	-.068	.071	14.028
	Neurotic	-.240	.093	-.218	-2.589	.011	-.268	-.210	-.204	.875	1.143
	Perceived stress x Neurotic	-.738	.014	.099	.335	.005	-.224	.028	.026	.070	14.229

a. Dependent Variable: Life satisfaction

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The results of the effect test showed that there was a negative relationship and a significant influence on perceived stress on life satisfaction ($B = -.256$, $sig = .004$), which means that the first hypothesis (H1) in this study was accepted. In the influence of the neurotic personality on life satisfaction, there is also a significant negative relationship ($B = -.240$, $sig = .011$). This suggests that the second hypothesis (H2) of the study is accepted. Whereas in the third hypothesis (H3) research, the test of the effect of perceived stress on life satisfaction moderated by the neurotic personality shows that there is a negative and significant relationship ($B = -.738$, $sig = .005$), which means that the H3 of this study was accepted. In short, the test results show that the high perception of stress a person can reduce the life satisfaction of the person, especially when someone is an individual with a neurotic personality. Neurotic personality is proven to increase the negative relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction (R square 1 = .054, R square 2 = .096).

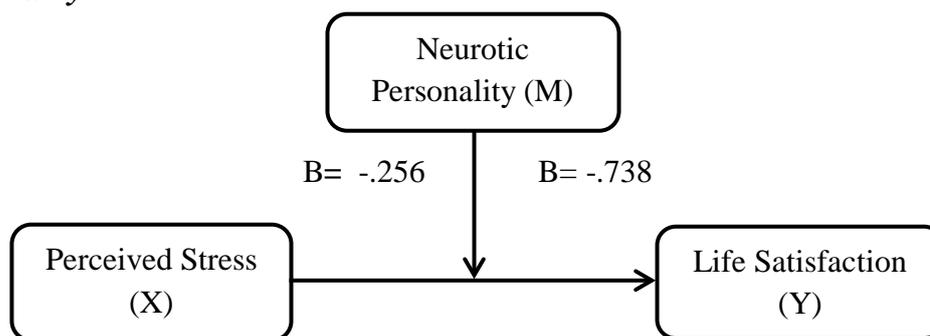
Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.233 ^a	.054	.048	4.519	.054	8.471	1	148	.004
2	.309 ^b	.096	.077	4.448	.042	3.353	2	146	.038

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived stress
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived stress, Neurotic, Perceived stress x Neurotic

Thus, related to the hypothesis of research that "neurotic personality increases the influence of perceived stress on life satisfaction", can be concluded through the following chart:

Image No 2 The Effect of Perceived Stress on Life Satisfaction Moderated by Neurotic Personality



DISCUSSION

After going through the analysis stage, the results show that there is a significant negative effect between perceived stress and life satisfaction with neurotic personality as mediator. That is, when a person's perception of high stress and accompanied by moderation by a neurotic personality, it significantly leads to a decrease in the satisfaction of the person's life. This suggests that the influence of perceived stress variables on life satisfaction in adolescents depends on the neurotic personality possessed by the adolescent. In addition, based on the results of the analysis, it has also been found that neurotic personality and life satisfaction have a negative and significant effect, which means that a person with a neurotic personality type tends to have lower life satisfaction which is consistent with previous studies.

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Research conducted by Schimmack et al. (2004) show that there are two personality types that are the strongest predictors of life satisfaction, one of which is a neurotic personality. A person who has a neurotic tendency is more likely to experience stress that causes it difficulty to get life satisfaction. The same thing is also shown by the research of Gale et al. (2013) which states that neurotic personality has a significant negative influence on well-being and one's life satisfaction with a contribution of 95%. The study also showed that psychological distress in a person affects the satisfaction of life and well-being of a person negatively and significantly.

On the other hand, perceived stress predicts significant life satisfaction (Civitci, 2015). A person with a high perception of stress has a high probability of feeling unhappy and dissatisfied with his life. Civitci (2015) says that in short, when a person's perception of stress increases, the person's life satisfaction will automatically decrease. In return, as the satisfaction of one's life increases, it is certainly accompanied by a decrease in the person's perception of stress. Associated with perceived stress and life satisfaction, by controlling for other factors that may also affect (eg, sex), there is always a negative and significant relationship between the two (Civitci, 2015).

Neurotic personality is a personality type with a tendency to negative emotions (McCrae & Costa, 2007; Ignacio et al, 2012; Jhonson & Atman, 2009). Negative emotions in a person can directly lead to a tendency to perceive everything as a higher stress (distress). The high perception of a person's stress, as well as the results of research and several previous studies significantly reduced life satisfaction. Based on the results of the study, adolescents with high levels of stress perception showed that life satisfaction tended to be low. What's more, neurotic-leaning teenagers perceive a higher level of stress which in turn reduces the life satisfaction of the teenager.

Psychological instability and susceptibility to negative emotions in adolescents that cause adolescents have a level of perception of something that tends to be negative and lead to stress which then affects the quality and satisfaction of the adolescent's life (Schimmack, et al., 2004). In line with the amount of pressure on teenagers' lives, those who have a neurotic tendency perceive stress more than teenagers who do not have a stressful tendency. Thus, the neurotic personality affects how adolescents perceive pressures on their lives by increasing the level of sensitivity of perception to a stress which then leads to a decrease in quality of life (Lillberg, 2002).

Based on the results of the study, the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter can be concluded that perceived stress has a significant negative effect on life satisfaction. Furthermore, the neurotic personality becomes a strong driver of perceived stress on life satisfaction, which means that the more neurotic a person is, the higher the level of his perceptions of stress and as a result the lower the level of life satisfaction. Further investigators who wish to examine the perceived stress and satisfaction of life in adolescents need to consider controlling for other factors that may affect the relationship between perceived stress and life satisfaction, such as gender, family and religious economic level. So that the data obtained more accommodates the influence between perceived stress and life satisfaction in adolescents.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research, analysis and discussion in the previous chapter it can be concluded that perceived stress has a significant negative effect on life satisfaction. Furthermore, neurotic personality becomes a strong enough driver of the influence of perceived stress on life satisfaction, which means that the more neurotic a person is, the higher the level of perception of stress and as a result the lower the level of satisfaction of life.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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