

COPING STYLES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

Sebin James

Psychologist, PranCare, Thiruvananthapuram, India.

ABSTRACT

Coping styles refer to the specific efforts, both behavioral and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. Coping is the conscious effort to reduce stress. Psychological well-being refers to inter and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one's sense of mastery and personal growth. Coping style of the students seems to impact their level of psychological well-being. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being of boys and girls studying at post-graduation level. The sample consists of 120 post-graduation students (60 female, 60 male) from different colleges in Mysore. The participants were asked to complete the Cope Inventory developed by Carver, Scheier and Weintraub, and Psychological Well-being Questionnaire developed by Sudha Bhogle and Indira Jai Prakash. The results of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being.

Key words: Coping styles, Psychological well-being, Stress, Young adults.

I. INTRODUCTION

The college is an important arena for young people, but unfortunately college can also be sources of stress. Because they provide a context in which, performance as well as relationship demands are made. In fact, a number of studies indicate that pressures and expectations within the college environment are the most frequent stressors reported by students. Specific college related stressors include testing, grades, academic failure and achievement, competition, present and future performance and expectations and future goals. Many previous researches have shown that stress is prevalent among students of higher learning institutions (Robotham, 2008, Pierceal & Keim, 2007). Students also report interpersonal college related stressors, such

as conflict with classmates and teachers. It is emphasized that for many students, and possibly an increasing number of them, the college setting may not provide a good academic learning experience it expected to. Lack of sufficient coping skill among students to deal with stressors in college may in turn underlie emotional and behavioural problems at college, which seem to have increased in prevalence. Coping strategies may help to reduce psychological distress in university students (Josep Gustems-Carnicer & Caterina Calderon, 2012).

Students often have to deal with challenges and problems that hinder the completion of their studies. They need to avoid any high stress which is becoming increasingly worrying, as it has been found that the number of psychological problems and their severity are on the rise among student population. Hence problems such as financial restrain, time constrains which limit the time left to complete their assignments and research paper due to working, classes and family affect student's psychological well-being. Poor psychological well-being and mental state may affect the positive learning and task performance of the students. How individuals cope with stressful situations such as examination, meeting deadlines, determines health and well-being of people in that situation. Efficient coping leads to good results such as happiness, personal development, life satisfaction and impacts on their daily life performance.

II. METHODOLOGY

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being.
2. To find out the gender differences in coping styles and psychological well-being.

Hypotheses

1. There is no relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being.
2. There is no gender differences in coping styles and psychological well-being.

Design

A correlational design and convenient sampling technique was used for this study to gather information from the participants.

Sample

The sample consists of 120 post-graduation students, studying in different colleges of Mysore region and were selected through a convenient sampling technique. The participants were divided into two groups based on gender (N= 120, MALE = 60 & FEMALE = 60).

Tools

Cope Inventory (Dispositional Version) by Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., and Weintraub, J. K (1989)

COPE Inventory is used to assess the coping styles used by an individual. It was developed by Carver, C. S., Scheier, M. F., and Weintraub, J. K in the year 1989. The inventory consists of 60 statements which assess the three different coping styles (problem focused coping, emotion focused coping and less useful coping) of the participant. The COPE Inventory (Dispositional Version) is a 4 point scale. Responses were given under 4 categories; I usually don't do this at all, I usually do this a little bit, I usually do this a medium amount and I usually do this a lot. 1, 2, 3, 4 scores were given to each response respectively. The statement number 4, 5, 10, 14, 15, 19, 22, 25, 30, 32, 33, 39, 41, 42, 45, 47, 49, 55, 56 and 58 are related to problem focused coping (PFC). The statement number 1,3,7,8, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 29, 36, 38, 44, 46, 48, 50, 54, 59 and 60 are related to emotion focused coping (EFC). The statement number 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 16, 23, 24, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35, 37, 40, 43, 51, 52, 53 and 57 are related to less useful coping (LUC). The reliability of the inventory obtained by alpha composite reliability score is 0.93. The test has a high validity.

Psychological Well-being Questionnaire by Sudha Bhogle and Indira Jai Prakash (1995)

Psychological Well-being Questionnaire is used to measure the psychological well-being of an individual. It was developed by Sudha Bhogle and Indira Jai Prakash in 1995. These are 28 sentences in this scale. All the sentences have two options — yes or no. Participants can choose only one option and mark it by the symbol (✓). In this questionnaire, 10 statements (4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 21 and 24) are negative and rest 18

statements are positive. For a positive sentence 1 point for yes and 0 point for no, and for a negative sentence 1 point for no and 0 point for yes. Scores are classified as (0-9) as low psychological wellbeing, (10-20) as intermediate psychological well-being and (21-28) as high psychological wellbeing. Higher the score, higher the psychological well-being. The test – retest reliability coefficient is 0.72 and internal consistency coefficient is 0.84. The test has a high validity.

Procedure

A good rapport was established with each participant, consent of each participant was taken and they were asked to fill up the socio demographic data sheet. The Cope Inventory (Dispositional Version) was administered on the participant. . Instructions were given to the participant and it was made sure that he/she understood the instructions clearly. After a rest pause of five minutes; Psychological Well-being Questionnaire was administered on the participant. Instructions were given to the participant and it was made sure that he/she understood the instructions clearly. After the completion of the tests, the answer sheets were collected back from the participant. Using the scoring key and norms, the scoring has been done. Scores were analyzed by applying appropriate statistical techniques such as Pearson product moment correlation test to determine the relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being, and Independent sample t test to measure the gender differences in coping styles and psychological well-being.

III. RESULTS

Table 1: Correlation between Coping styles (PFC, EFC and LUC) and Psychological well-being (PW).

Mean, standard deviation and correlation value between coping styles and psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being	Coping styles	Mean	sd	r value	Sig.
	PFC	52.5417	6.39839	1	0.000

PW	EFC	51.2083	7.14307	0.400**	0.000
	LUC	44.9250	7.79481	.163	0.075

As shown in table 1, the obtained 'r' value and significance for COPE subscale, problem focused coping ($r=1$, $p=0.000<.05$), emotional focused coping ($r=0.400$, $p=0.000<.05$), less useful coping ($r=-0.163$, $p=0.075>.05$) suggests that there is significant relationship between problem focused and emotional focused coping styles with psychological well-being.

Table 2: Gender differences in Coping styles.

Mean, standard deviation and t-value for gender differences in coping styles.

Coping styles	Gender	N	Mean	Sd	df	t-value	Sig.
PFC	Female	60	52.2667	6.98877	118	-0.469	0.132
	Male	60	52.8167	5.79448			
EFC	Female	60	52.0000	8.12404	118	1.217	0.076
	Male	60	50.4167	5.96967			
LUC	Female	60	43.5000	7.67010	118	-2.029	0.692
	Male	60	46.3500	7.71928			

As shown in table 2, the mean and standard deviation of female on problem focused coping is 52.26 and 6.98 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of male on problem focused coping is 52.81 and 5.79 respectively. The corresponding t-value indicate that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of problem focused coping style ($t=-0.469$, $p=0.132>.05$). Hence, the result of the test suggests that there is no gender differences in problem focused coping style.

The mean and standard deviation of female on emotion focused coping is 52.00 and 8.12 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of male on emotion focused coping is 50.41 and 5.96 respectively. The corresponding t-value indicate that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of emotion focused coping style ($t=1.217, p=0.076>.05$). Hence, the result of the test suggests that there is no gender differences in emotion focused coping style.

The mean and standard deviation of female on less useful coping is 43.50 and 7.67 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of male on less useful coping is 46.35 and 7.71 respectively. The corresponding t-value indicate that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of less useful coping style ($t=2.029, p=0.692>.05$). Hence, the result of the test suggests that there no gender differences in less useful coping style.

Table 3: Gender differences in Psychological well-being.

Mean, standard deviation and t-value for gender differences in psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being	Gender	N	Mean	Sd	df	t-value	sig.
PW	Female	60	18.7500	3.99841	118	1.379	0.651
	Male	60	17.7667	3.81063			

As shown in table 3, the mean and standard deviation of female on psychological well-being is 18.75 and 3.99 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of male on psychological well-being is 17.76 and 3.81 respectively. The corresponding t-value indicate that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of psychological well-being ($t=-1.379, p=0.651>.05$). Hence, the result of the test suggests that there is no gender differences in psychological well-being.

IV. DISCUSSION

The present study aims to study the relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being among young adults. From table 1, we can infer that there is significant relationship between problem focused coping style and emotion focused coping style with psychological well-being. Hence, the hypothesis is partially accepted. There is a significant relationship between problem focused coping style and emotion focused coping style with psychological well-being among young adults.

Coping is defined as individual's constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands appraised as taxing or exceeding their resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem focused coping is aimed at resolving the stressful situation or event or altering the source of the stress. Coping strategies that can be considered to be problem focused include, taking control of the stress, seeking information or assistance in handling the situation, and removing oneself from the stressful situation. Emotion focused coping is aimed at managing the emotions associated with the situation, rather than changing the situation itself. It includes all the regulative efforts to diminish the emotional consequences of stressful events. Psychological well-being consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, and personal growth and development (Ryff, 1989). An individual attain psychological well-being by achieving a state of balance affected by both challenging and rewarding life events.

The gender differences in coping styles and psychological well-being were tested by applying proper statistical technique. From table 2 and table 3, we can infer that there is no gender differences in coping styles and psychological well-being. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. The way an individual copes is influenced by his or her resources which include both health and energy (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Previous researches also indicates that, there is no significant difference between male and female college students on psychological well-being (Freire et al., 2016, Waghmare, 2016).

V. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the present study, it is found that there is a significant relationship between problem focused coping style and emotion focused coping style with psychological well-being among young adults. The results also indicates that there is no significant gender differences in coping styles and psychological well-being among young adults.

VI. LIMITATIONS

There is limited research in the relationship between coping styles and psychological well-being. This paper provides a humble research and an opportunity to study this important area. However, some limitations are apparent;

- The sample drawn from the study and findings are restricted to post-graduation students of different colleges in Mysore.
- The lifestyles of the participants were not considered.
- Influence of other demographic variables such as; socio economic status, type of family were not included in the present study.

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