

A comparative study on coping skills among psychology and non-psychology students

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ABSTRACT

Coping skills refers to a person's ability to cope with stressful events, it may vary person to person. Some deal effectively and some have difficulty to deal with the uncertainties. The current study explores the difference between the levels of coping skills among UG Psychology and Non psychology students. The sample encompasses of 200 Undergraduate students equally distributed as 100 psychology and 100 non psychology background. Researcher has used Coping scale of Hamby (2013). The questionnaire was used to collect the data and the collected data were analyzed with appropriate statistics. The result shows that there is a significant difference between level of coping skills between Psychology and Non psychology students on the basis of gender, birth order and family type. Psychology student have high level of coping skills than non-psychology students. This might due to the knowledge about cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of dealing with the problems. Researcher suggested that, coping mechanism may increase by re-experiencing the difficult situations, establishing healthy boundaries, rather denial, venting of emotions, developing sense of humor, increase problem solving abilities, adopting relaxations techniques and physical recreations. Researcher concluded that, Coping skills are helping us to process and deal life stressors, struggles, and emotions effectively.

Keywords: Coping, Re-Experiencing, Coping Mechanism, Healthy Boundaries, Emotions, Denial, Venting, Relaxation.

Coping skills are psychological patterns that individuals use to manage thoughts, feelings, and actions encountered during various stages of ill health and treatments. It refers to specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. It can be conceptualized as a combination of coping styles and range of implementable coping strategies.

Coping skills is a mixture of attributional styles (which includes perceived source of stress, locus of control, optimistic or pessimistic outlook on finding a solution) and personality characteristics (includes risk tolerance, sense of self efficacy, and introvert or extrovert)

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The psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed as coping strategies which is referred as Adaptive strategies which reduce stress. The effectiveness of the coping strategies depends on the type of stress, the individual, and the circumstances. Coping response are partly influenced by habitual behaviour (i.e. personality) and also by the ambiance, particularly the stressful environment.

Men and women are differing in managing their psychological stress. There is a study by Davis and Mathew (1999) evidenced that male often develop stress due to their careers whereas female often encounter stress due to issues in interpersonal relationships. Another study proposed by Andrews and Rudolf (1981) indicates that there was a gender difference in the source of stressors but gender differences in coping were relatively small. As above study, a most recent work by Brannon and Jess (2009) revealed that there is a small difference between men's and women's coping skills which was studying individual in similar situation.

These differences in general exist indicates that women tend to employ emotional focused coping response to stress whereas men tend to use problem focused coping response. This is because of the societal standards encourage men to be more individualistic while women are expected to be interpersonal. This difference also involves genetic factors and social conditioning influence behaviour.

Some of the important types of coping strategies are as follows:

Appraisal focused coping- This strategy occurs when the person modifies the way they think. For example, experiencing denial, altering their goals and values etc.,

Adaptive Behavioural coping strategies- This involves finding new information on the problems and learning new skills to manage their problem.

Emotional-focused coping strategies- This involves releasing pent up emotions, distracting oneself, managing hostile feelings, meditation, using systematic relaxation techniques and procedures.

Reactive & Proactive coping- Anticipation and reacting to future stressor.

Social coping- It recognizes that individuals are bedded within a social environment, which can be stressful but also in source of coping resources such as seeking social support from others.

Humour- It is used as a positive coping method may have useful benefits to both physical and mental well being. Having humorous outlook on life, stressful experience can be and are often minimized.

Coping skills are important because they facilitate a person's handling of a stressful experience. For example, someone is going through a tough time, positive coping patterns provide extra resources that can help that person deal with the demand of stressor.

Psychology students and non psychology students are differing in every single trait includes the way of handling the stressful events. Psychology students have study about the positive emotions and the way of promoting coping skills in their stressful events. But non psychology students (i.e. other department students) have lack of knowledge in handling

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stressful situations and negative emotions. This will reduce the positive thought process to overcome the stressful events.

Need and importance

Coping skills are very important to students of today because they are experiencing lot of opportunities, competition and problems that required a skill to cope these issues. Coping skills can be nurtured only when we know that the students are having it not. If they have coping skills, it is important to understand the level of coping i.e. mild, moderate and high level. Once, the level of coping among students is known, it is the duty of the trainer, teachers and psychological professionals should take necessary initiative and strategies to develop it among the students. The findings of the present study will help to understand the importance of coping skills and suggest suitable intervention strategies to develop coping skills. Coping skills are important because they facilitate a person's handling of a stressful experience. Therefore, the present study has high need and importance.

Objectives

1. To compare the level of coping skills among psychology and non- psychology students.
2. To study the significance of the difference between psychology and non-psychology students with respect to coping skills
3. To study if there is any association between education and coping skills of students

Hypotheses

1. The coping skills among psychology may be higher than non- psychology students.
2. There will be no significance of the difference between selected sub samples with respect to coping skills

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The investigators of the study decided to select 200 students as a sample for the study. It was decided to adopt stratified random sampling technique to select 200 student sample from Madurai city. Due importance was given to Psychology and Non-Psychology students.

Material

The investigators found a Coping Scale, which was developed in the year 2013 by Hamby, Grych, & Banyard. This scale consists of 13 questions which will help to measure individual level of coping skills. Each question in the scale was set against four responses Viz. Mostly true about me (4), somewhat true about me (3), A little true about me (2) and Not true about me (1). Higher scores indicate higher level of coping skills.

Statistical Technique

In this study, the investigators adopted the following statistical techniques to meet the objectives. Descriptive statistics like Frequency, Percentage, Mean and standard deviation were used to find the level of coping skills among study students. Mean difference analyses i.e't' test was used to study the significance of the difference between means.

Procedure

The investigators of the study got permission letter from Heads of the institutions in Madurai for data collection. Participants of the study are provided with questionnaire consist of consent form, demographic information and Coping scale. Participants were asked to read the

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instructions in the questionnaire and give their response in the given space in the questionnaire. Stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the data from 200 students (100 Psychology and 100 Non-Psychology).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the important objectives of the study is to find out the level of coping skills of Psychology and Non-Psychology students. For this, the investigators of the study calculated the frequency and percentage analysis. And presented in the given table. Cross tabulation analysis also done to compare the coping skills of selected sub samples in this study.

Table -1 showing the cross-tabulation data of Non-Psychology and Psychology students in their coping skills.

Crosstabulation of Coping Skills and Education			Education		Total
			Non-Psychology	Psychology	
Coping Skills	Low Level of Coping	Count	3	1	4
		% of Total	1.5%	0.5%	2.0%
	Average Level of Coping	Count	69	60	129
		% of Total	34.5%	30.0%	64.5%
	High Level of Coping	Count	28	39	67
		% of Total	14.0%	19.5%	33.5%
Total		Count	100	100	200
		% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Chi-square value is 3.43, P= 0.18, which is not significant

It is observed from the table -1 that among Non-psychology students 1.5% of them are having low level of coping skills, 34.5% of them having average level and 14% of them having high level. It indicates that majority of the non-psychology students are possess average level of coping skills. The coping skill of Psychology students are found to be 0.5%, 30% and 19.5% respectively for low, average and high level. Among Psychology student's majority of them are having average level of coping skills.

When we compare the Psychology and Non-Psychology students in their coping skills indicates that a Psychology student has better coping skills in high level. It may be due to exposure of different coping skills in their course of study. The calculated chi-square value is found to be 3.43, which is not significant. Therefore, it concluded that there is no association between education and levels of coping skills in this study.

Table -2 showing the mean difference analysis of Psychology and Non-Psychology students in their coping skills

Education		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	Level of Significance
Coping Skills	Non-Psychology	100	36.83	5.01	1.13	Not Significant
	Psychology	100	37.65	5.20		

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It is observed from the table that the calculated 't' value is found to be 1.13, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between Psychology and Non-psychology students in their coping skills. Further, when we look into the mean value of Psychology students is little higher than the non-psychology students. It may be exposure of coping strategies in their course of study.

Findings

1. The coping skills of Psychology students is better than non-psychology students.
2. There is no association between coping skills and education of college students.
3. There is no significant difference found between psychology and non-psychology students in their coping skills.

Suggestions to developing coping skills of students

1. The investigators of the study suggested few strategies to develop coping skills among the students.
2. Relaxation techniques should be given to them.
3. Life skills training should be given to them.
4. Physical activity and exercise should be done for better coping skills.
5. Positive emotions and its importance should be trained in both formal and informal education.
6. Mindfulness and positive proactive skills training should be given to them.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the psychology students are having better coping skills than the non-psychology students. So, the students of psychology and non-psychology should be given training on coping skills to manage their cognitive, emotional and behavioural problems in effective manner.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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