

Impact of Emotional Intelligence, Nature of Course and Gender on Problem Focused Coping Style among College Students

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Abstract- The aim of the present investigation is to assess the impact of emotional intelligence, nature of course and gender on problem focused coping style among college students. Sample of the present study consists of 560 professional and non-professional college students, both male and female in Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh State. To measure emotional intelligence and Coping styles, "Emotional intelligence scale" developed by Nutankumar Thingujam and Usha Ram (1999); Coping styles questionnaire developed by Dr. B.S. Kumar Reddy (1999) were administered to the subjects. Results revealed that students with high emotional intelligence; students perusing non professional courses and female students frequently use problem focused coping style to overcome stress.

Index Terms- Emotional intelligence, Coping styles, Professionals and Non-Professionals.

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thoughts, understand emotions, and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor our own and other's feeling and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this to guide our thinking and actions (*Falco Salovey and Mayer 1990*). Emotional intelligence is "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures", (*Baron, 1997*). Emotional Intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing well in ourselves and our relationships (*Goleman D.1998*). Emotional intelligence as the mental liability we are born with which gives us our emotional. Sensitivity and our potential for emotional learning, management skill which can help us maximize our long term happiness and survival (*Hien, S., 2004*).

Coping is thus expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict Psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed ways of coping or coping skills. Unconscious or non-conscious strategies are generally excluded. The term coping generally refers to adaptive or constructive ways of coping, i.e., the strategies reduce stress levels. However, some ways of coping can be considered maladaptive, i.e., stress levels increase. Maladaptive coping can thus be described, in effect, as

non-coping. Furthermore, the term coping generally refers to reactive coping, i.e., the coping response follows the stressor. This contrasts with proactive coping, in which a coping response aims to head off a future stressor.

Problem-focused strategies try to deal with the cause of their problem. They do this by finding out information on the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem. Problem-focused coping is aimed at changing or eliminating the source of the stress. The three problem-focused coping strategies identified by Folkman and Lazarus (1988) are taking control, information seeking, and evaluating the pros and cons.

Ptacek, Smith and *Dodge*, (1994); Supe (1998) ; Taylor (2001); Vanderbijlpark (2004); Folkman and Moskowitz, (2004); Sirin (2007); Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck, (2007); Mukti Shah and Nutankumar S. Thingujam (2008) Phillip and Carlos (2009); Carolyn Mac Cann et al., (2011); Song and Chae (2014); Onyedibe Maria Chidi et al., (2015) investigated that individuals high in emotional intelligence may adapt well to stressful events and those with low emotional intelligence may adapt poorly, which would include responding with depression, hopelessness and other negative behaviours. However, little empirical research has explored the relationship among emotional intelligence, coping and mental health in adolescents.

II. OBJECTIVE

1. To assess the influence of emotional intelligence, nature of course and gender on Problem focused coping style among college students.

III. HYPOTHESES

1. There would be significant impact of emotional intelligence on problem focused coping style among college students.
2. There would be significant impact of nature of course on problem focused coping style among college students.
3. There would be significant impact of gender on problem focused coping style among college students.

IV. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The Students studying Professional and Non-Professional courses in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh State in India constituted the Population of the Study. Students of Professional courses like Medicine and Engineering from NIMS, Kadapa; S.V.Medical College, and S.V.University College of Engineering, Tirupati and Students of Non-professional courses (B.A., B.Sc.,B.Com) from S.V.Arts College and S.P.W.Degree College, Tirupati were selected using stratified random sampling technique.

The two Psychological tools namely 1.Emotional intelligence developed by Nutankumar Thingujam, and Usha Ram (1999); 2.Coping styles developed and standardized by Kumar Reddy B.S (1999) were administered to 1200 Professional and Non-Professional Students, both Male and Female. Only the high and low Scorers on these Scales were considered and finally 560 constituted the sample of the present

study and a 2X2X2 Factorial Design was adapted to analyze the results.

Variables Studied

Independent Variables: (1). Emotional Intelligence (2). Nature of Course (3).Gender

Dependent Variable: (1). Coping Styles

Tools: (1). Emotional Intelligence Scale: The Emotional Intelligence of the Subjects was assessed by using Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Nutankumar Thingujam, and Usha Ram (1999). (2). Coping styles (Adjustment Styles) Questionnaire: Coping styles (Adjustment Styles) Questionnaire was developed and standardized by Kumar Reddy B.S (1999).

Statistical Analysis: The obtained data were subjected to statistical analysis such as Means, SDs, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-II: Means and SDs of scores on Problem Focused Coping Styles.

Emotional Intelligence		Nature of Course			
		Professionals		Non- Professionals	
		Gender		Gender	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Low	Mean	41.40	42.58	46.15	44.55
	SD	7.30	6.64	7.54	8.69
High	Mean	43.27	46.80	45.15	47.04
	SD	8.65	7.63	6.13	8.15

Grand Means

Professionals = 43.51
Non-Professionals =45.72

Male =43.98
Female =45.24

Low Emotional Intelligence = 43.67
High Emotional Intelligence = 45.56

A close observation of table-II shows that the female students studying non-professional courses with high emotional intelligence obtained a high score of M=47.04 indicate they frequently use problem focused coping styles compared with other groups. Male students studying professional courses with low emotional intelligence obtained a low score of M=41.40 indicate they use problem focused coping styles less frequently compared to other groups.

In terms of comparisons, non-professional students (M=45.72) frequently use problem focused coping styles than professional students (M=45.72). Female students (M=45.24)

frequently use problem focused coping styles than male students (M=43.98). Students with high emotional intelligence (M=45.56) frequently use problem focused coping styles than the students with low emotional intelligence (M=43.67).

There are differences in mean scores of different groups of students related to problem focused coping styles. However, in order to test whether emotional intelligence, nature of course and gender on problem focused coping style of the students, the data were further subjected to factorial analysis of variance and the results are presented in table-III.

Table-III: Summary of ANOVA for scores on Problem Focused Coping Style.

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	MSS	'F'
Emotional Intelligence (A)	2550.045	1	2550.045	42.63**

Nature of Course (B)	1662.902	1	1662.902	27.80**
Gender (C)	2499.088	1	2499.088	41.78**
(A x B)	2316.645	1	2316.645	38.73**
(A x C)	949.002	1	949.002	15.86**
(B x C)	331.716	1	331.716	5.54*
(A x B x C)	322.545	1	322.545	5.39*
Within	33015.414	552	59.811	-
Corrected total	43647.355	559	-	-

**-Significant at 0.01 level

*-Significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis-1. There would be significant influence of emotional intelligence on problem focused coping style among college students.

It is evident from table-III that the obtained ‘F’ value of 42.63 is significant at 0.01 level implying that emotional intelligence has significant influence on problem focused coping style among college students. As the ‘F’ value is significant, the hypothesis-1, which stated that emotional intelligence has significant influence on problem focused coping styles among college students is accepted as warranted by the results. Students with high emotional intelligence (M=45.56) frequently use appraisal focused coping style than the students with low emotional intelligence (M=43.67).

The results of the present study corroborate with the findings of Ozge Hacifazlioglu and Melahat Halat (2010) and Einollah Mollaei et al., (2012) which states that emotional intelligence was positively associate with problem-focused coping style.

Hypothesis-2. There would be significant influence of nature of course on problem focused coping style among college students.

It is evident from table-III that the obtained ‘F’ value of 27.80 is significant at 0.01 level implying that nature of course has significant influence on problem focused coping style among college students. As the ‘F’ value is significant, the hypothesis-2, which stated that nature of course would significantly influence the problem focused coping style among college students, is accepted as warranted by the results. Non-professional students (M=45.72) frequently use problem focused coping style than professional students (M=45.72).

In Indian academic institutions, students pursuing different courses experience academic stress, because of heavy work load, competition, high parental expectations, and practical work, seminars, etc. It is natural that when the intensity of academic stress is more, students generally try to seek directions from others, asking someone to provide a specific kind of help, approaching the problem with suitable skills, negotiate and compromise to resolve the issue. In the same way in the present study it is found that students of non-professional courses use

problem focused coping more frequently to overcome academic stress than professional students.

The most important observation in the present study is non-professional college students experience little academic stress compared to professional college students. It is found that non-professional college students are frequently using all the three coping styles namely appraisal focused, emotional focused and problem focused coping styles equally compared to professional college students. It indicates that it is because of the usage of all three coping styles by non-professional college students lead to experience little stress compared to their counterparts.

Hypothesis-3. There would be significant influence of gender on problem focused coping style among college students.

It is evident from table-III that the obtained ‘F’ value of 41.78 is significant at 0.01 level implying that gender has significant influence on problem focused coping style among college students. As the ‘F’ value is significant, the hypothesis-3, which stated that gender would significantly influence the problem focused coping style among college students is accepted as warranted by the results. Female students (M=45.24) frequently use emotional focused coping style than male students (M=43.98).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

1. Students with high emotional intelligence use problem focused coping style to overcome stress.
2. Non-professional course students frequently use problem focused coping style than professional course students.
3. Female students frequently use problem focused adjustment style only to reduce or eliminate a stressor.
4. There is significant interaction among emotional intelligence, nature of course and gender in causing the effect on problem focused coping style.

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