

How to Cite:

Senad, R. R. (2022). Gender differences in coping strategies (ego defense mechanisms) among professional and non- professional degree courses of students. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S1), 5829–5836. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS1.6187>

Gender differences in coping strategies (ego defense mechanisms) among professional and non- professional degree courses of students

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Abstract---Efforts have taken by an individual to reduce stress is coping. Ego defense mechanism play a very important role in our day to day life. The purpose of present study was to assess the coping strategies (Ego defense mechanism) on the basis of Gender (Male and Female) among professional and non professional degree courses of students. The present study deals with assessing the level of coping among 400 students in Aurangabad city. The Defense Mechanism Inventory (DMI) by Dr. N. R. Mrinal and Dr. (Mrs) Uma Mrinal (1971). Data were analysed by using mean, standard deviation and 'f' test. The result revealed that the male students and the female students differ significantly in coping strategies. There is no significant difference between Professional and Non professional degree courses by students with respect to coping styles. There is significant interaction effects on Gender (Male and Female) and courses (Professional, (LL.B, B.E., B.Ed.) and Non professional degree (B.A., B.Com., B.Sc.) Courses of Students) with respect to coping.

Keywords---Coping strategies, Ego defense Mechanism i.e. TAO (Turning Against Object), PRO (Projection), PRN (Principalization), TAS (Turning Against Self) and REV (Reversal).

Introduction

Efforts have taken by an individual to reduce stress is coping. Coping mechanism denotes the way of dealing with stress or the effort to master condition of harm threat or challenges when a routine or automatic response is not readily available. Use of coping mechanism generally involves cognitive and behavioural factors to manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts affecting a person which exceed a person coping.

According to Pareek (1983), coping may either take the form of avoiding the situation i.e. dysfunctional or confronting and approaching the problem i.e. functional style. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as, "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and / or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resource of the person."

Being able to effectively cope with stress can be the first step to preventing psychological distress and development of a serious illness. Talking with friends and family, exercising, praying or actively addressing the causes of stress have been identified as adaptive coping strategies. That may enhance overall well being. (Andre-petersson, Hedblad Janzon & Osttergen, 2006; Tyler & Ellison 1994; Wang & Patten, 2002) on the other hand, maladaptive and avoidance strategies, such as drinking or denying the existence of stressful situation, have been found to be associated with depression. (Gore-Felton, Koopaman, Spiegel, Vosvick, Brodino & Winningham, 2006) Significant gender differences have been found for stress coping strategies. (Matheny, Ashby & Cupp 2005)

Coping strategies are of two types, "Problem Focused" and "Emotion Focused" coping which was proposed by Richard Lazarus (1993, 2000). Emotion focused coping is Lazarus term for responding to stress in an Emotional manner, especially by using defensive mechanism. Glesser and Ihlevichs 1969, worked on classification of defense mechanism. They grouped the defenses into five categories as are as following:

- 1] Tuning Against Object (TAO)
This class of defenses deals with conflict through attacking a real or presumes external frustrating object. Such classical defense as identification with the aggressor and displacement can be placed in this category.
- 2] Projection (PRO)
This includes defenses which justify the expression of aggression towards an external object through 1st attributing to it, without unequivocal evidence, negative intent or characteristics it refers to Attributing one's thoughts or impulses to another person. In common use, this is limited certain operations that allow for empathy.
- 3] Principalization (PRN)
This class of defenses deals with conflict through invoking a general principals that "Splits off" affects from Eonknt and represses the former. Defenses such as intellectualization, isolation and retionalization falls into this category.
- 4] Turning Against Self (TAS)
In this class are those defenses that handle conflict through directing aggressive behavior towards himself / herself. Masochism and autosadism are examples of defensive solution in this category. It also implies redirecting towards oneself that were originally directed towards someone else.
- 5] Reversal (REV)
This class includes defenses that deal with conflict by responding in a positive or neutral way to a frustrating object which might be expected to

evoke a negative reaction it consists of converting what is passive into active. Defenses such as negation, denial, reaction formation and repression come under this.

Review of literature

Matheny, Ashby and Cupp (2005), also found that woman used more adaptive coping strategies than men. However, despite having better coping resources than males, they found that women were more likely to report illnesses. This suggest that stress might manifest itself differently in men and women. Women might be more likely to develop depressive or anxiety disorders, when overwhelmed with stress, while men may be more prone to developing substance abuse problems or physical illnesses. (Andre-Peterson, Hedblad, Janzon & Ostergren, 2006) Verma et al (1995), conducted a study to examine the coping strategies among college students. Two groups of (20 males and 85 females students (aged 19-20 years) from different colleges of Punjab University, Chandigarh. Gender differences were observed males occasionally sought refuge in alcohol or drug to escape from their problems and females resorted to prayer and hoped for better. Females became more emotionally upset as compared to males who confronted the upset as compared to males who confronted the Problem and made an attempt to solve it.

Mohammad Ayoob, Tarasingh and Maryam Tam (2011) conducted a study on gender stress and coping among Kashmiri College students. The finding of the study revealed that female participants reported higher stress in comparison to their male counterparts. There were gender differences in reported coping strategies. Focused on the positive coping and tension reduction Coping was the most frequently used Coping strategies for male students where for female students, self-blame coping was most frequently employed coping strategy. They also observed Gender differences in trauma symptoms, perceived stress and coping strategies in Kashmiri migrants. In a meta-analytic review of gender differences in coping, Tamers, Janicki and Welgeson (2002). Found that women tended to use social support and help-seeking behaviours to cope with stress, which may be protective factors against the incidence of depression and anxiety disorders.

Statement of problem

To study the coping strategies on the basis of Gender (Male and Female) among Professional and Non-professional courses of students.

Objectives

To assess the Coping strategies (Ego defense mechanism, i.e. TAO (Turning Against Object), PRO (Projection), Principalization (PRN), Turning Against Self (TAS) and Reversal (REV) on the basis of Gender (Male and Female) among professional and Non Professional degree courses of students.

Hypothesis

- The Male students and the female students differ significantly in coping strategies.
- There is significant difference between Professional and Non professional degree courses of students with respect to coping style.
- There is significant interaction effects on Gender (Male and Female) and courses (Professional and Non professional degree courses of students) with respect to coping.

Methodology

Sample

The sample was drawn from the population of student taking collegiate education in Aurangabad city. The sample size was 400 (200 male and 200 female). It was chosen from the students belonging to professional degree courses (LL.B., B.E., B.Ed.) and Non professional courses (B.A., B.Com, B.Sc.) of undergraduate students, age between (18-21).

Table No.1

(N=400)

Degree courses	Professional	Non Professional
Male	100	100
Female	100	100
Total	200	200

- Variables :
Independent Variable (IV)
1) Gender (Male and Female)
2) Courses (Professional and Non Professional Courses of Students)
Dependent Variable (DV)
1) Coping strategies (Ego defense mechanism)
 - TAO (Turning against object)
 - PRO (Projection)
 - PRN (Principalization)
 - TAS (Turning Against Self)
 - REV (Reversal)
- Research Design :
2 x 2 (2 levels of Gender (Male and Female) and (2 level of Courses (LL.B., B.E., B.Ed.) (Professional and Non professional degree courses) (B.A., B.Com, B.Sc.) between subject factorial design was employed.

Tool

To measure the coping mechanism, Defense Mechanism Inventory (DMI) developed by Dr. N. R. Mrinal and Dr. (Mrs) Uma Mrinal (1971) was used. There are two version of this inventory one for the males and others for the females. Each version contain 10 (Ten) stories. After reading each story the S (subject) is

asked to respond to four questions. Corresponding to four types of behaviour five responses are provided for each question, each response representing one of the five defense mechanism (TAO, PRO, PRN, TAS and REV). The S makes a plus (+) for the response most representative of his reaction and a (-) for that least representative. The test retest reliabilities for the five defenses range from 80 to 92 for a week.

Procedure

The data was collected from professional degree courses (LL.B., B.E., B.Ed.) and Non Professional courses (B.A., B.Com, B.Sc.) students on various colleges. According a schedule was fixed in each college and then student were approached. The student were provided Defense Mechanism Inventory (DMI), This procedure was followed for getting questionnaire filled by students.

Result and Discussion

Table No.2

Showing Mean and F ratio of coping strategies according to Gender and Degree courses (Professional and Non Professional)

Variable

IV	Gender (A)			Professional and Non Professional Course Students (B)			
DV	Male	Female	F	Non Professional course student	Professional course student	F	Interaction effect (AxB) F
Coping (DMI)	(Mean) 204.02	(Mean) 200.68	4.995*	(Mean) 200.84	(Mean) 200.87	.039	4.701*
a) TAO	38.26	38.53	0.295	36.74	40.05	45.895**	0.273
b) PRO	39.74	39.99	0.371	39.59	40.13	1.771	0.130
c) PRN	41.12	41.08	0.007	41.58	40.62	5.038*	1.246
d) TAS	39.78	39.69	0.57	39.46	40.01	2.147	4.306*
e) REV	42.15	41.13	2.101	43.39	40.09	47.137**	2.280

N = 400

F = 95 (1,399) = 3.86

F = 99 (1,339) = 6.70

Discussion

The term 'coping' is usually applied to strategies that individuals use to manage the distressing problems and emotion in their lives. Psychologist have identified two major ways in which people cope with stress. In the first approach, a person may decide to suffer or deny the experienced stress, this is the passive approach or a person may decide to face the realities of experienced stress and clarify the problem through negotiations with other members, this is the active approach. (Pareek, 183b)

The purpose of the present study was to study coping strategies among Non professional and Professional degree courses of students on the basis of Gender. On the basis of Table No.2, it was observed that $F=4.95^*$, $P<.05$ is significant for the factor of Gender. So, First hypothesis was proved that the Male students and the female students differ significantly in coping strategies.

The mean score of Male on coping ($M=204.02$) is comparatively larger than the Mean score of Female ($M=200.68$) on the basis of those value coping in Male had significantly more than female. Regarding coping, it is always said that there is significant difference among male and females. The reason for this might be, women and men may cope-up with stress in different ways partly because women and men tend to encounter different sources of courses of stress. Prateek Smith and Dodge (1994) Proposed that gender differences in coping strategies could arise from early socialization, that promotes stereotypes of women as emotional, supportive, and dependent, compared to men who are portrayed as independent, instrument and rational. Evidence, however, shows that females tend to use behavioural coping (e.g. taking direct and positive actions to deals with problems) more actively than males. (Fieldmand and Davidson 2001)

The second hypothesis of the present study assumed that there is significant differences between professional and non professional degree courses of students with respect to coping style. This hypothesis could not get support from the result of the study. It was seen that $F=.039$ which is not significant at .05 and 0.01 level which means that there is no significant difference between professional degree courses and non professional degree courses of students with respect to coping. Professional and Non professional students cope with stress in same manner because human tendencies are same. In the present study coping strategies i.e. defense mechanism, e.g. Projection, Reversal, Turning against object, turning against self and principalisation was used. These coping defense mechanism were used by professional and non professional students in almost same manner to face different levels of stress. But it was keenly observed that professional and non professional degree courses of student are significantly differ on TAO ($F=45.895$, $P<.05$, $P<.01$) and PRN ($F=5.038$, $P<0.5$). On the basis of mean value professional courses of student ($M=40.05$) more used Turning against Object coping strategies i.e. identification and displacement than Non professional courses of student ($M=36.74$). It was also observed that on the basis of coping strategies (PRN) principalization, Non professional degree courses of student used ($M=41.58$) more principalization i.e. Intellectualization, Isolation and Rationalization than professional degree courses of students ($M=40.62$)

On the basis of interaction effect, it was assumed that there is significant interaction effect on Gender (Male and Female) and courses (professional and non professional degree courses & students). The effect of above saying is observe in the form of interaction among Gender (A) and Courses of student (B) as found significant ($F=4.701$, $P<.05$) that shows interdependency among Gender and courses. Interdependency means they effect each other. It indicates that factor A i.e. Gender and factor B i.e. courses acts upon coping dependently. It was also observed that the coping strategies TAS (Turn Against Self) ($F=4.306$, $P<.05$), it indicates that factor A and B acts upon TAS dependently.

Conclusion

The Male students and the female students differ significantly in coping strategies. There is no significant difference between professional and non professional degree courses of students with respect to coping style. There is significant interaction effects on Gender (Male and Female) and courses (Professional and Non Professional courses of student) with respect to coping.

Limitation

The present research study deals with only one Aurangabad city only. The sample was chosen from Aurangabad city only. In the present study we have used self reported techniques only.

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