

## Coping strategies and Family environment as predictors of Depression among Adolescents

Saima Hafiz<sup>[1]</sup>

### **Abstract:**

*The present study is aimed at predicting the coping strategies used by adolescents and the influence of family environment on depressive symptoms among adolescents. As depression is becoming a common problem face by adolescents in day to day paradigm due to complexity of adverse life style circumstances and complex relationships. Adolescence is a period of storm and stress and the phase through which they are passing is the most vulnerable period of harsh conditions. A sample of 200 adolescents was taken with equal number of males and females. For the attainment of the objectives following scales are used: ways of coping questionnaire, Family environment scale and Beck depression inventory. Step wise regression has been used. Coping has a great role to play in evaluating our psychological health. On the other hand, family is the most important factor in the realm of socialization. Keeping in view the present era, the following variables play a great role in influencing the psychological health of individuals. Researchers, clinicians and counselors can use it as an intervention program for promoting subjective well being. The implications of the study are further elucidated.*

**Keywords:** coping styles, family environment, adolescents, depression, step wise regression.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Depression is becoming a major problem especially for adolescents because of interim range of experiences. The spectrum of psycho-social variables is responsible for the genesis of depressive symptoms. It is seen that various risk factors like social factors and personal factors have been linked to depression in adolescents. Depression is an emotional state of dejection, feeling of worthlessness and guilt accompanied by apprehension (Pestonjee, 1999). Depression is a state of psychoneurotic disorder or psychotic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significance increase or decrease in appetite, and time spent sleeping, feeling of dejection and hopelessness and sometimes suicidal tendencies, a lowering of vitality or functional activity (Hornby, 2005). Depressive syndrome is further characterized as a constellation of emotions and behaviors that occurs together (Compas et al., 1993; Reinemann and Swearer, 2005). It reflects the manner that our tendency to come up with the problem and our socializing agent are the key sources that act either as risk factors or protective factors against depressive symptoms. It was reported by researchers that those adolescents who are depressed showed a high amount of stressful life events and privileged in using maladaptive coping strategies (Selfge-Krenke, 2000). It was also illustrated by researchers that there is a positive relation between maladaptive coping strategies and different disorders (Endler and Parker, 1990; Holahan, Moos and Schaefer, 1996). SelfgeKrenke (2000) affirmed that children and adolescents who make use of maladaptive coping strategies develop some kind of pathological behavior.

Coping evaluate our actions to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize the effect of stressors and include both behavioral and psychological strategies. Coping refers to the cognitive

and behavioral efforts used by human beings to handle the demands of a person-environment relationship (Frydenberg, 2008). Coping constitutes continually changing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional efforts to handle particular internal and external demands that are exceeding the resources of the individual (Carson, Butcher and Mineka, 2003). Coping skills are characteristics or ways of dealing with difficulties. It refers to a person's ability to deal with different types of situations (Sarason and Sarason, 2002). Hence we can say the way we make effort towards stressful situation reflect our liability in dealing with depressive symptoms. Similarly family environment is an eternal source of support that we get from our family members which make us more prone to the changing situations and help us in attaining a state of well being. Family environment has an important role to play throughout adolescence and young adulthood (Vanwel, 2000). It was believed that perception of family environment like family disorganization, conflict, lack of control and cohesion and expressiveness is a greater contributor of depression among adolescents (Campbell et al, 1993; Schwartz et al., 2012). Family is the unit of socialization. Various studies quoted that adolescents who have low levels of family cohesion and support and conflictive environment are more inclined to depression and suicidal ideation (Lee et al, 2006; Wong et al., 2002). Gotlib et al.,(2014) formalized that those adolescents who have family history of depression is significantly associated with depression on the other hand a cohesive, orderly, and achieving family environment is contributing to constructive development in adolescents, in way of lower depression and higher self concept (Lau et al., 2000). Thus family environment and coping processes are important contributor in combating with depression.

<sup>[1]</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, Email: saimahafiz21@gmail.com, saimapsy.rsh@gndu.ac.in.

## II. OBJECTIVES

To study the various indices of coping styles as predictors of depression among adolescent females and males.

To find out the various dimensions of family environment as predictor of depression among adolescent females and males.

## III. HYPOTHESES

The problem focused coping like Confrontive coping, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, and self controlling and emotion focused coping like distancing, seeking social support, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal will be significant predictors of depression.

The indices of family environment like cohesion, expressiveness, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, moral religious emphasis, organization, and control will be significant predictors of depression.

## IV. METHODOLOGY

### Sample:

A sample of 200 adolescents is taken with equal number of males and females in the age group 14-18 years. The sampling technique employed was incidental. The sample was collected from various schools only those subjects are taken who is impending 10+2 and intermediate and from those who are in the first semester of their courses. The sample is collected from Jammu area. Keeping in view the changing ways of life styles and the importance of coping and support from family as significant desire, the following sample is collected.

### Measures:

The following measures were used to assess the coping strategies, family environment and depression among adolescents:

### Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman and Lazarus, 1988)

This scale can be used in order to identify the thoughts and actions an individual uses to cope with stressful situations. It consisted of 66 items and measures eight types of coping namely confrontive coping, distancing, self controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance, planful problem solving, and positive reappraisal. The respondents have to respond on a 4 point likert scale. The reliability and alpha coefficient of the test ranges from .61 to .79 for each dimension.

### Family Environment Scale: (Moos and Moss, 1986)

It is designed to measure social and environmental characteristics of families. There are 90 item in a scale which measures factors like cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation, active recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, organization and control. This scale also includes three dimensions of family environment: relationship dimension, personal growth and system maintenance. The relationship dimensions include cohesion, expressiveness, conflict which indicates the degree of commitment, liability

to express their feelings and conflict among family members. The relationship dimension exhibit the assertiveness, self efficacious nature, degree of commitment towards their school or work environment, interest in other streams of life like in political, social, intellectual and cultural activities, belief in ethical and religious issues also contribute to psychological distress. Similarly, the structure in organizing various activities in the family and proper procedures to maintain the equilibrium are the framework of family which mark a degree of favorable environment. There is right or wrong responses for each item and the participant has to respond accordingly. The scale internal consistency reliability ranges from .61 to .78.

### Becks Depression Inventory: (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock and Erbaugh, 1961)

This scale is a self report rating inventory consists of 21 items in order to assess attitude and symptoms of depression. The score between 0-13 is considered as normal. The individuals with higher score are considered as depressive. The internal consistency of scale ranges between .73- .93 with alpha coefficient of .86 to .81 for both psychiatric and non psychiatric population.

### Results and Discussion:

Step wise regression has been used in order to find out the predictors of depression among adolescents separately for females and males.

**Table 1.1** Result of step wise regression for various dimensions of coping strategies and family environment for depression among females

#### Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R
Positive reappraisal	.63	.401	.394
Positive reappraisal Intellectual cultural orientation	.67	.448	.437
PR; ICO; Distancing	.71	.497	.481
PR; ICO; D; Organization	.72	.518	.498

**Table 1.2** coefficients of regression

Variables	B	Beta	F	Significance
PR	25.75 -.99	-.63	65.49	0.01
PR ICO	27.61 -.77 -.79	-.49 -.26	39.35	0.01
PR ICO D	30.42 -.59 -.86 -.42	-.38 -.28 -.24	31.58	0.01
PR ICO D O	31.82 -.51 -.73 -.39 -.56	-.33 -.24 -.22 -.17	25.55	0.01

Here, PR- Positive reappraisal, ICO- Intellectual cultural orientation, D- Distancing, O- organization.

It is clearly illustrate from the table that positive reappraisal, intellectual cultural orientation; distancing and organization

are good predictors of depression. This led us to form an idea that those female adolescents who are expressing their emotions more positively and keep distancing from the stressful situation are better in combating with depression similarly in families where the degree of interest is more in intellectual, social and cultural activities and those families which set norms and rules to run their families are more psychologically well being than their counterparts. We can see from the table 1.1 that R represents a good level of prediction with a variance of 40.1 in model 1 i.e. positive reappraisal. Further glance at the table make us to form an idea that in model 2 positive reappraisal and intellectual cultural orientation together make a total variation of 44.8. Moreover in step 3 there is further adding on the individuals i.e. distancing, they together make a total variance of 49.7 and model 4 is making variance of 51.8. Researchers inscribed that depressed children/adolescents portray about their families as less cohesive and understanding, more controlling, more conflicting, less able to communicate effectively, and as having higher levels of expressed emotions than do their non-depressed peers (Birmaher et al., 2004; Kaslow et al., 1994; Stein et al., 2000).

**Table-1.3** Step wise regression analysis between predictor variables and criterion variable Depression among males:

**Model summary**

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R
AR	.70	.494	.49
AR, D	.75	.558	.55
AR, D, ICO	.77	.587	.57

Here: AR- Accepting responsibility, D- Distancing, ICO- Intellectual cultural orientation.

**Coefficient of step wise regression**

Variables	B	Beta	F	Sig.
Constant	24.34			
AR	-1.34	-.70	95.62	.001
Constant	25.49			
AR	-.92	-.48	61.31	.001
D	-.41	-.34		
Constant	27.59			
AR	-.74	-.39	45.47	.001
D	-.39	-.33		
ICO	-.56	-.19		

Results of regression analysis show that accepting responsibility, distancing and intellectual cultural orientation are predictors of depression among males. Perusal of the table leads us to form an idea that accepting responsibility is the potential predictor of depression in males with a variance of 49.4%. Then distancing shows a variance of 55.8% and intellectual cultural orientation shows a variance of 58.7%. This means that those males who make cognitive efforts to detach themselves from the stressful events tend to minimize the significance of the situation. Similarly those who have intellectual and cultural activities and have well organized rules in the family are less depressed. Family environment is an important predictor of depression among adolescents (Sheeber et al. 2001, 2009). The results from the study reveal that intellectual cultural orientation and distancing are common predictors among male and female adolescents.

**V. CONCLUSION**

The study is aimed at investigating the predictors of depression among adolescents and it was found from the results that positive reappraisal, intellectual cultural orientation, distancing and organization are predictors of depression among females. Similarly, in males accepting responsibility, distancing and intellectual cultural orientation are predictors of depression. One interesting finding is that the distancing and intellectual cultural significantly contributed to depression in males and females. Those families who are high in intellectual cultural orientation and organization are providing their children with a comfortable atmosphere in which they are feeling more inclined towards their parents which help them in combating with depression. Moreover those children’s who can make use of distancing, accepting responsibility and positive reappraisal as a techniques of coping with the stressful situations are better in adjusting to the demands of life and can utilize these processes for their healthy being. Depression is a vicious cycle of negative events which corrupts person’s thinking processes, emotional reactions and day-to-day behaviors (Williams, 1984)

**VI. IMPLICATIONS**

The psychosocial variables are pertained to well being of the individuals both from the prevention and intervention perspective. The coping processes we utilize help us in developing our tendency towards harsh conditions of the environment and the support from the family help us to retain stability in life. The findings of the study are useful for mental health professionals, counselors work at community and society level as it reveal the coping strategies used by adolescents to assist with the phase of depression and highlight those dimensions of family environment that provide flexibility in relieving from depression among adolescents.

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