



Original Article

Problem-Focused Coping as a Predictor of Psychological Well-Being in Individuals with Substance Use Disorder

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ABSTRACT

The explanation of the term coping is how a person address challenging situations through different behavioral and cognitive strategies. Problem-focused coping include strategies through which a person focuses on finding the solutions to problem that leads to maintaining psychological well-being. **Objective:** To investigate the predictive association of problem-focused coping with individual's psychological well-being in people grappling with substance use disorder. **Method:** The theoretical model of the study was based on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping and Six Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being The sample size comprised of 128 participants with substance used disorder between the ages 20 to 40 years old (M=30.14; SD=6.64). The entire sample was drawn from diverse Rehabilitation Centers located in Karachi. Participants were selected by using purposive sampling technique. In this study three measures were used; semi structure interview form, Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being-Urdu Version and the locally constructed Coping Styles Scale. Descriptive statistics and Linear Regression Analyses were utilized for sample characterization and to ascertain the predictive relationship between variables. **Results:** Results revealed that in those with substance use disorder, the use of problem-focused strategies significantly predicted the psychological well-being. Moreover, the analysis highlighted that problem-focused coping significantly predicted six dimensions of psychological well-being in this population. **Conclusions:** These findings underscore the importance of coping strategies in treating individuals with substance use disorder, facilitating effective stress management, and maintaining psychological well-being. Awareness campaigns supported by research helps in maintaining insight and positive mental health.

INTRODUCTION

Coping a well-established concept in psychology [1], is recognized as a crucial element in navigating stressful situations. Coping is defined by Lazarus and Folkman [2] as efforts that are behavioral and cognitive adapting to deal with perceived internal or external challenges. They categorize coping into two major domains: emotion-focused and problem-focused. The Problem-Focused Coping involves activities directed to resolving problems, utilizing active coping, planning, and instrumental support [3]. It is considered more effective in reducing stress and maintaining psychological well-being [4, 5]. Psychological well-being encompassing effective functioning and satisfaction across all aspects of life [6], is significantly influenced by coping strategies, both positively and

negatively [7]. The six domains of psychological well-being were proposed by Ryff [8]. Autonomy pertains to independence and self-determination, while Environmental Mastery involves a sense of control over the external environment. Positive Relationships with Others emphasizes maintaining positive and strong connections with significant individuals. Purpose in Life relates to finding meaning and setting goals, while Personal Growth concerns the ongoing process of self-improvement. Lastly, Self-Acceptance involves feeling positive about oneself, contributing to a more organized and fulfilling life. Problem focused coping is a significant factor influencing psychological well-being [9, 10]. Research consistently highlights the positive relationship of psychological well-

being with problem-focused coping strategies [10-13]. The Substance Use Disorder poses a severe health challenge, with individuals often resorting to more emotion-focused coping and fewer problem-focused strategies [14]. Ineffective coping strategies have a significant role in the development of a substance use problem [15]. Substance use is considered as an unhealthy approach to deal with stressors [16]. Developing adaptive coping skills is crucial in managing substance use problems, fostering recovery, and promoting psychological well-being [16, 17].

The current study intended to investigate the predictive association of problem-focused coping with individual's psychological well-being in people grappling with substance use disorder.

METHODS

The targeted population of the study comprised people suffering from the substance use disorder, specifically poly-users. The cross-sectional study design was used. To calculate the sample size G-Power was used. A power analysis indicated the minimum sample size of 100. The sample included 128 participants from various Rehabilitation Centers located in Karachi, using the Purposive sampling technique. The inclusion/exclusion criteria of study involve the participants between the ages of 20 and 40 meeting the diagnostic criteria of substance use disorder by DSM-V and are currently under treatment. Based on the criteria of study, the semi-structured interview form was established. It included demographics of participants (gender, age, birth order, marital status, education, employment and income) and Drug-related information (type of drug, total duration of problem and onset history of substance use). A self-report questionnaire, The Coping Styles Scale developed by Zaman and Ali, was employed in this study [18]. This scale assesses an individual's coping style and consists of two major types of coping: problem-focused and emotion-focused. This questionnaire has 22 items. The Cronbach's alpha value demonstrated by scale for problem-focused coping style is .87 [18]. The Urdu-Version of Ryff scales of psychological well-being was developed in by Ansari [19] used in this study. Originally, the Psychological Well-Being Scale was generated by Ryff [8], the scale comprises 54 items. This scale involves six domains. The domains include purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, self-acceptance, personal growth and autonomy. In every domain there are nine items including some of them as reverse-scored. Additionally, individual scale scores can be combined to derive an overall score of psychological well-being. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.853 for psychological well-being. The Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales includes: 0.83 for self-acceptance, 0.84 for purpose in life, 0.83 for positive

relationships with others, 0.81 for personal growth, 0.81 for environmental mastery and 0.82 for autonomy [19]. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, Version 26.0). The Linear Regression was run to investigate the predictive association between solution-focused coping strategies and psychological well-being (purpose in life, autonomy, self-acceptance, positive relations with others and personal growth).

RESULTS

Table 1 displays the age-related descriptive data for the sample. The mean age of males is 30.3 years (SD = ± 6.67), females is 27.75 years (SD = ± 5.94) and for overall sample is 30.14 years (SD = ± 6.64).

Table 1: The Participant's Mean Age

Variable	Males (N=120)	Females (N=8)	Total (N=128)
	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD
Age	30.3 ± 6.67	27.75 ± 5.94	30.14 ± 6.64

For the Coping Styles Scale, the mean (M) problem-focused coping score was 3.54 with a standard deviation (SD) of .85, ranging from 2 to 5. The reliability of the scale, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha (α), was .76. For the Psychological Well-Being Scales, the mean (M) scores and standard deviations (SD) for each dimension were as follows: Autonomy (M = 3.92, SD = .67, range = 3-5), Environmental Mastery (M = 4.23, SD = .63, range = 3-6), Positive Relations (M = 4.20, SD = .60, range = 3-5), Personal Growth (M = 4.18, SD = .74, range = 3-6), Purpose in Life (M = 4.39, SD = .60, range = 3-6), Self-Acceptance (M = 3.71, SD = .52, range = 3-5). The composite score for overall psychological well-being had a mean (M) of 4.10 and a standard deviation (SD) of .52, ranging from 3 to 5. The reliability of the Psychological Well-Being Scales, indicated by Cronbach's alpha (α), ranged from .70 to .75 across the dimensions. The results are illustrated in table 2.

Table 2: Psychometric Properties of Coping Styles Scale and Psychological Well-Being

Scales	Mean ± SD	Range	α
Coping Styles Scale			
Problem-Focused Coping	3.54 ± 0.85	2-5	.76
Psychological Well-being Scales			
Autonomy	3.92 ± 0.67	3-5	.70
Environmental Mastery	4.23 ± 0.63	3-6	.72
Positive Relations	4.20 ± 0.60	3-5	.74
Personal Growth	4.18 ± 0.74	3-6	.70
Purpose in Life	4.39 ± 0.60	3-6	.73
Self-Acceptance	3.71 ± 0.52	3-5	.72
Psychological Well-being (composite)	4.10 ± 0.52	3-5	.75

Table 3 presents the results of Linear Regression Analyses carried out to examine the significant predictive association between Problem-Focused strategies and individual's Psychological Well-Being in people diagnosed with substance use disorder. The results of regression

analyses indicated that Problem-Focused Coping explained 10% variance in their scores of Autonomy ($R^2=.10$, $F(1,126) = 14.28$, $p < .05$) and significantly predicted Autonomy ($\beta=.31$, $p < .05$). The variance in the scores of Environmental Mastery explained by Problem-Focused Coping was 5% ($R^2=.05$, $F(1,126) = 7.55$, $p < .05$) and it significantly predicted Environmental Mastery ($\beta=.23$, $p < .05$). The Problem-Focused Coping accounted for 3% variance in their scores of Positive relationships with others ($R^2=.03$, $F(1,126) = 4.40$, $p < .05$) and turned out as having significant prediction with positive relationships with others ($\beta=.18$, $p < .05$). Further, Problem-Focused Coping explained 4% variance in their scores of Personal Growth ($R^2=.04$, $F(1,126) = 5.78$, $p < .05$) and it significantly predict Personal Growth ($\beta=.20$, $p < .05$). The 3% variance in the scores of Purpose in Life is explained by Problem-Focused Coping ($R^2=.03$, $F(1,126) = 4.51$, $p < .05$) and it significantly predicted Purpose in Life ($\beta=.18$, $p < .05$). In addition, the Problem-Focused Coping explained 8% variance in their scores of Self-Acceptance ($R^2=.08$, $F(1,126) = 11.95$, $p < .05$) and it is a significant predictor of Self-Acceptance ($\beta=.29$, $p < .05$). Lastly, Problem-Focused Coping accounted for 14% variance in their scores of Psychological Well-Being (composite) ($R^2=.14$, $F(1,126) = 20.74$, $p < .05$) and shows significant prediction with Psychological Well-Being (composite) ($\beta=.37$, $p < .05$).

Table 3: Linear Regression Analyses Summary of Problem-Focused Strategies as a Predictor of Psychological Well-Being [Self-Acceptance, Purpose in Life, Personal-Growth, Positive Relationships with others, Environmental-Mastery and Autonomy] in people diagnosed with substance use disorder.

Model	B	SE	β	R^2	F	Sig
Constant	3.03	.24	-	-	-	-
Autonomy	.25	.06	.31	.10	14.28	.00*
Constant	3.61	.23	-	-	-	-
Environmental-Mastery	.17	.06	.23	.05	7.55	.00*
Constant	3.74	.22	-	-	-	-
Personal-Relationships	.12	.06	.18	.03	4.40	.03*
Constant	3.53	.27	-	-	-	-
Personal-Growth	.18	.07	.20	.04	5.78	.01*
Constant	4.86	.22	-	-	-	-
Purpose in Life	.13	.06	.18	.03	4.51	.03*
Constant	3.07	.19	-	-	-	-
Self-Acceptance	.18	.05	.29	.08	11.95	.00*
Constant	3.64	.15	-	-	-	-
Psychological Well-being (composite)	.13	.02	.37	.14	20.74	.00*

* $p < .05$, $df=1,126$

DISCUSSION

Coping style has a pivotal role in an individual's social-emotional functioning and is considered as an essential building block of personality [2, 20]. The coping strategies

may impact negatively, even when an individual's intent is to minimizing the stress level [17]. Therefore, identifying coping strategies that provide temporary and long-term benefits is significantly important. To determine the effectiveness and long-term impact of a coping strategy, it is crucial to consider whether it enhances and strengthens psychological well-being or not [2], [21]. The present study investigated an association of problem-focused strategies with an individual's psychological well-being that are diagnosed with substance use disorder. The problem-focused coping was found as having significantly positive relationship with psychological well-being in people diagnosed with substance use disorder ($R^2 = .14$, $F(1, 126) = 20.74$, $\beta = .37$, $p < .05$). Comparing with previous study findings, this study findings align with past studies findings supporting a concept that adaptive/effective coping strategies acts as a buffer, leading to improved individual's psychological well-being [12]. A study in 2018, was conducted to discover the influence of different coping styles on the psychological well-being of individuals. It was discovered that coping strategies have a considerable impact on psychological well-being both negative as well as positive [22]. Similarly, Jurji et al., investigated the association between coping styles and one dimension of psychological well-being that is the quality of life [23]. It revealed a strong relationship of problem-focused coping with a person's quality of life. According to another study, there is a predictive relationship between distancing and lower well-being whereas the use of problem-focused coping strategies such as planning or positive is associated with greater well-being [24]. A person who used cognitive reappraisal more frequently was shown to have more positive emotions and less negative emotions. The high levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction is linked to cognitive reappraisal [25]. A meta-analysis of the influence of coping on psychological health indicated that there are benefits to employing certain coping techniques and risks to using others. It revealed a positive association regarding problem-focused coping strategies and health. Moreover, it showed a negative relationship between emotion-focused coping and health. People who employ avoidant coping techniques (such as use drugs) excessively have poor health and well-being [16]. Referencing the psychological well-being's dimension that are proposed by Ryff [8], the current study indicate that the problem-focused coping significantly positively predicts all areas of psychological well-being (self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy and positive relations with others). Literature indicates that the use of problem-solving strategies such as cognitive restructuring, planning and other problem-solving cognitive or behavioral skills lead to cost-benefit

analysis of different situations of life. The analysis assists an individual in dealing with complex situations and enhancing potential to grow via openness to new challenges in life and use the existing opportunities effectively. The use of adaptive coping strategies fosters a sense of independence and competency leading an individual to be confident about own decision-making ability. Further, the use of problem-focused coping strategies for instance planning, eventually increases the tendency to set goals in life which makes it easier for an individual to get a clear vision and directionality leading towards meaning in life. Furthermore, an individual using problem-focused coping strategies is able to accept oneself in a positive way that contribute to high self-esteem such as unconditional self-acceptance. Moreover, an individual using problem-focused coping to deal with interpersonal conflicts helps to maintain positive interpersonal relationships. Therefore, selecting an accurate and healthy coping styles i.e. cognitive or behavioral lead to improve an individual's functionality and helps in psychological adjustment [24, 26]. The findings of study are consistent with literature that individuals employing problem-focused coping exhibit a high level of autonomy [28]. Problem-focused coping has a positive impact on environmental mastery [29], increasing the sense of purpose in life [13]. The use of planning, a type of problem-focused strategy, predicts personal growth [1]. Individuals utilizing problem-solving strategies show a higher level of self-acceptance [29]. Adaptive coping can reduce the risk of conflicts in relationships and enhance positive relations with others [26].

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study findings, to enhance the psychological well-being of people diagnosed with the substance use disorder, an emphasis on developing an insight and learning of adaptive coping strategies is crucial to incorporate into their treatment plans. Additionally, learning adaptive coping strategies can assist an individual in dealing with stress and in abstaining from substance use. The awareness programs and campaigns, supported by research evidence, can contribute to developing insight into the positive and negative impacts of coping styles.

Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: TJ, SK, HI

Methodology: TJ, SK, HI

Formal analysis: TJ, SK, HI

Writing-review and editing: TJ, SK, HI

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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