

Exam Anxiety in Students: Efficacy of Coping Strategies

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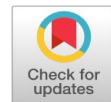
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Abstract: The present study was conducted to examine the efficacy of coping strategies on exam anxiety in students and determine the gender differences in the study variables. The cross-sectional study was conducted in District Haripur from March to July 2021. Data was collected through a questionnaire, and the instruments used were The Brief Cope Scale and the Exam anxiety Scale. The sample consists of 150 university students. Psychometric properties, Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis, and t-test were applied for data analysis. The results exposed that active avoidance coping and religious/denial coping will positively predict the exam anxiety, problem-focused coping and positive coping will negatively predict exam anxiety, and female students slightly exhibited higher mean scores on active avoidance coping, religious/denial coping, and exam anxiety as compared to male students, male students, slightly exhibited higher mean score on problem-focused coping and positive coping as compared to female students. However, the mean differences are significant and thus appreciable. The findings have theoretical and applied significance in terms of the role of coping strategies on exam anxiety among University students.

Keywords: Active averting coping, Exam anxiety, Problem-focused coping, Positive coping, Religious/denial coping

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INTRODUCTION

Tension is seen as a holding on the human experience. As indicated by Larson, El Ramahi, Conn, Estes, and Ghibellini (2010), it is among the most common and inescapable human feelings, with an extensive area of the total populace enduring serious levels of anxiety. Anxiety can be depicted as an apparent thought of mental misery that happens because of the desire for a perturbing and conceivably undermining occasion. Broad research has concentrated on the idea of anxiety, yet it can't be clarified just by its target introduction or manifestations (Rachman, 2004; Minahan & Rappaport, 2012; Harris & Coy, 2013; Anwar & Batool, 2019; Waheed, 2011). Because of the inescapable way of anxiety, it has also been built and classified into various subtypes (for example, social anxiety and state-quality tension). The concentration of the present review is on one other subtype, in particular, exam tension.

The idea of exam anxiety has discharged diverse clarifications in writing due to the multimodal way of its development. The perspectives of exam anxiety prevalently included the physiological, passionate, behavioral, and subjective parts. Toward the starting, exam anxiety was seen to be an individual's response to tests and execution. According to Grove (2016), exam anxiety is the extreme form of fear or pain felt before or during the exam/test. Anwar and Batool (2019) conceptualized exam anxiety as a particular circumstance attribute, in particular as a demeanor to respond with increased tension even with circumstances that are particularly identified with tests and execution. Ergene (2003) and Spielberger's (1972) generally acknowledged the definition that "exam anxiety is an obnoxious state described by sentiments of pressure and misgiving, troubling contemplations and the enactment of the autonomic sensory system when an individual appearance evaluative accomplishment requesting circumstances." These perspectives considered the physiological viewpoints on the meaning of exam anxiety.

Exam anxiety was early recognized by Stober and Pekrun (2004) without its particular idea until 1952. Concentrates that investigated the pervasiveness and effect of exam nervousness started at Yale College in the

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Assembled Conditions of America (Hembree, 1988). Sarason and Mandler (1952) helped with the Exam uneasiness Poll, which was allocated to members intended to assess their level of exam anxiety. The discoveries showed that those observed to be low-test on edge showed improvement over the high-test-on edge understudies in a test given amid a test where piece configuration was utilized. Exam anxiety was conceptualized, and appraisals were created for legitimate treatment. In 1960 the conceptualization of exam anxiety kept on being expansive and included stress and emotionality as focal elements of exam tension (Liebert & Morris, 1967; Sanni, 2013). Cherry (2022) mentioned that there is a wide range of symptoms of exam anxiety-like physical, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional symptoms:

- Physical symptoms are nausea, diarrhea, or vomiting
 - Behavioral-cognitive symptoms are weak memory, difficulty in concentration, and self-talk
 - Emotional symptoms are depression, anger, low self-esteem, and lack of hope
- Adapting techniques allude to the particular endeavors, both behavioral and mental, that individuals utilize to top, endure, decrease, or limit distressing occasions. Two general adapting procedures have been recognized: critical thinking systems are endeavors to accomplish something dynamic to ease unpleasant conditions, though feeling-centered adapting techniques include endeavors to manage the passionate results of upsetting or conceivably distressing occasions. Inquire about reveal that individuals utilize both sorts of techniques to clash most unpleasant happening (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; KHan et al., 2012; Waheed et al., 2012). The power of one sort of system over another is resolved, to some extent, by individual style (e.g., a few people adapt more effectively than others) and furthermore by the sort of unpleasant occasion; for instance, individuals normally utilize issue centered adapting to an arrangement to potential controllable issues, for example, business-related issues and family-related issues, while stressors saw as less controllable, for example, certain sorts of physical medical issues, incite more feeling centered adapting.

As for gender differences in scientific execution, Felson and Trudeau (1991) reasoned that lower scholastic execution by female understudies was all the more unequivocally connected with elevated amounts of exam anxiety than with abnormal amounts of dread of science. This finding was vital in view of the propensity to accuse poor scientific execution by female understudies of either a dread of science or a poor bent for the subject. While these discoveries archive the presence of a relationship between elevated amounts of exam uneasiness and execution on science tests, be that as it may, the discoveries don't give an indisputable contention that exam tension is the causal element of poor execution. Such a contention suggests to the point that subjects are completely equipped to play out the science assignments on which they are tried and that an inability to perform such errands acceptably is inferable just to a dream of being tried. A similarly objective contention might be made that the reason for exam uneasiness in such occurrences is learning with respect to subjects that they don't have the required level of competency to perform in an agreeable way the assignments on which they are to be tried.

H1: Coping strategies will positively predict exam anxiety among university students.

H2: Female students will get higher on coping strategies than male students.

H3: Female students will get higher exam anxiety than male students.

METHODS

The present review depended on a cross-sectional technique for the overview inquiries. The test of the present review included university students ($N = 150$). Both male ($n = 75, 50\%$) and female understudies ($n = 75, 50\%$) were a piece of test. The information was gathered from College understudies. Two colleges were incorporated, the University of Haripur and Com wave University Haripur. The purposive sampling method was connected to gathering the information from members.

Brief Cope (Carver, 1997) is a self-report survey that applies to evaluate various diverse adapting practices and considerations a man may have because of a particular circumstance. The scale contained 28 things. It is comprised of 14 subscales: self-distraction, dynamic coping, disagreement, and substance use, use of expressive support, use of instrumental support, behavioral detachment, declaring, positive re-framing, forecast, humor, acceptance, faith, and self-blame. Subsequent to perusing a particular situational situation, 28 adapting practices and musings (2 things for each subscale) are evaluated on recurrence of utilization by the member with a size of 1 (I haven't been

doing this by any means) to 4 = 0.57-0.90 (I've been doing this a great deal). Inside reliabilities for the 14 subscales run from (Carver 1997), and comparative outcomes have been found with a populace of guardians of youngsters with = 0.54-0.93) (Benson, 2009). The dependability of the first scale was .40 and .49. Past examines in Pakistan show that it is a solid and legitimate instrument to gauge the adapting systems Folkman and Lazarus (1980).

The West side Test Anxiety Scale is a concise, ten thing instrument intended to distinguish understudies with tension hindrances who could profit by an uneasiness diminished intercession. The scale things cover self-evaluated tension impedance also perceptions that can impede execution. The scale included 10 things. The scale depends on 5 point Likert-type scale. The reaction classes extend from 1 for not in any way or never consistent with 5 to a great degree or constantly genuine. The least and Greatest scores on the scale are 5 and 50 individually. An aggregate score is acquired by including the scores and partitioning by 10, where higher scores demonstrate a more prominent level of exam nervousness (Driscoll, 2004). The mean purpose of the scale is two point five (2.5). Past examines in Pakistan show that it is a dependable and legitimate instrument to quantify the exam tension (Driscoll, 2004).

The researcher personally approached the participants to collect the information. The specialist got formal composed consent from the concerned experts of focused establishments to gather the information. The members were educated with respect to the nature, reason and significance of the examination. Members were guaranteed that all the data would stay classified and just be utilized for research reasons. Subsequent to presenting the review, the composed educated assent was taken from members. Organized rules were given to the members with respect to the fulfillment of the scales. After finishing the scales, the specialist checked the scales to guarantee that every one of the things was effectively reacted. The scientist asked to finish the thing which left clears by the respondent either purposefully or un-deliberately. Around 15 to 20 minutes were devoured by the respondents to fill the scales. The reaction rate was 90%.

RESULTS

Table 1: Psychometric Properties of Study Variables

Variables	n	M	SD	α	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
					Potential	Actual		
AAC	150	23.73	4	0.71	10-40	15-34	0.26	0.29
PFC	150	22.17	3.84	0.75	8-32	13-31	0.08	0.35
PC	150	15.88	3.54	0.70	4-16	8-23	0.04	0.67
R/DC	150	10.82	1.96	0.72	6-24	7-15	0.07	0.14
EA	150	27.49	6.52	0.82	10-50	14-43	0.24	0.06

AAC = Avoidance Active Coping, PFC = Problem Focused Coping, PC = Positive Coping, R/DC = Religious/Denial Coping, EA = Exam Anxiety

Table 1 proves the psychometric properties of learning variables. The reliability study indicates that the consistency coefficient of active deterrence coping, problem vigilant coping, positive coping, consecrated/dis-agreement coping, and exam unease are .71, .75, .70, .72, .82, respectively, which indicates satisfactory internal consistency. The values of skewness and kurtosis for active averting coping, problem responsive coping, positive coping, religious/denial coping, and exam anxiety are less than 1, which indicates that univariate regularity is not challenging.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation among Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
AAC	-	.12	.31**	.07	.44**
PFC		-	.45**	.43**	-.22*
Positive coping			-	.40**	-.24*
R/DC				-	.20*
Exam anxiety					-

AAC = Active Avoidance Coping, PFC = Problem Focused Coping, R/DC = Religious/Denial coping, **p < .001, *p < .01

Table 2 proves Pearson correlation among study variables. The findings indicate that active avoidance coping has considerable positive correlation with positive coping ($r = .31, p < .001$) and exam anxiety ($r = .44, p < .001$). And has non significant correlation with problem aware coping ($r = .12, p > .05$) and sacred/rejection coping ($r = .07, p > .05$). Problem focused coping has considerable positive correlation with helpful coping ($r = .45, p < .001$), religious/denial coping ($r = .43, p < .001$) and has significant negative correlation with exam anxiety ($r = -.22, p < .01$). Positive coping has major positive correspondence with religious/denial coping ($r = .40, p < .001$) and has considerable negative correlation with exam anxiety ($r = -.24, p < .01$). Religious/denial coping has considerable positive correlation with exam anxiety ($r = .20, p > .05$)

Table 3: Means Standard Deviation and *t*-values for Females and Males Internalizing Psychological Problems

Variables	Male(<i>n</i> = 75)		Female(<i>n</i> = 75)		<i>t</i> (148)	<i>P</i>	95% CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			LL	UL
AAC	22.48	3.51	24.98	4.11	3.27	.001	.983	4.01
PFC	22.36	3.95	17.98	3.76	.49	.023	-1.15	1.91
PC	16.12	3.54	13.64	3.58	.67	.025	-.932	1.89
R/DC	10.82	1.86	12.82	3.08	.02	.001	-.782	.783
EA	26.23	6.58	28.36	6.33	1.74	.084	-.305	4.82

AAC = Avoidance Active Coping, PFC = Problem Focused Coping, PC = Positive Coping,

R/DC = Religious/Denial Coping, EA = Exam Anxiety

Table 3 proves mean standard deviation and *t*-values for male and female students on active averting coping, difficulty focused coping, optimistic coping, spiritual/defiance coping and exam tension. Results indicate significant mean differences on active avoidance coping $t(148) = 3.27, p < .001$. The findings show that female students significantly scored high on active avoidance coping ($M = 24.98, p < .001$) as compared to male students ($M = 22.48, p < .001$). Results indicate significant mean differences on problem focused coping $t(148) = .49, p < .01$. The findings show that male students significantly scored high on problem focused coping ($M = 22.36, p < .01$) as compared to female students ($M = 17.98, p < .01$). Results indicate significant mean differences on positive coping $t(148) = .67, p < .01$. The findings show that male students significantly scored high on positive coping ($M = 16.12, p < .01$) as compared to female students ($M = 13.64, p < .01$). Results indicate significant mean differences on religious/denial coping $t(148) = .02, p < .001$. The findings show that male students significantly scored high on religious/denial coping ($M = 12.82, p < .001$) as compared to female students ($M = 10.82, p < .001$). Results indicate significant mean differences on exam anxiety $t(148) = 1.74, p < .01$. The findings show that female students significantly scored high on exam anxiety ($M = 28.36, p < .01$) as compared to male students ($M = 26.23, p < .01$).

Table 4: Pearson correlation of each scale

Predictors	Outcome: Exam anxiety		
	B	LL	UL
(Constant)	2.49		[-7.44, 12.43]
AAC	.68**		[.39, .99]
PFC	-.20*		[-.16, .55]
Positive coping	-.03*		[-.37, .43]
R/DC	.37*		[-.31, 1.05]
<i>R</i> ²		.20	
<i>F</i>		7.33	

AAC = Avoidance Active Coping, PFC = Problem Focused Coping,

R/DC = Religious/Denial Coping, EA = Exam Anxiety, ** $p < .001$, * $p < .01$

Multiple Regression analysis is computed with active evading coping, problem attentive coping, activist coping and devoted/defiance coping as predictor variables and exam anxiety as conclusion variable. The R^2 value of .20 be

a sign of 2.0% discrepancy in the reliant variable can be accounted for, by the predictors with $F(4, 145) = 7.33$, $p > .05$. The findings specify that active avoidance coping has considerable positive effect on exam anxiety ($B = .68$, $p < .001$) and religious/denial coping ($B = .37$, $p < .01$). And problem focused coping has negative significant correlation with exam anxiety ($B = -.20$, $p < .01$) and positive coping ($B = -.03$, $p < .01$)

DISCUSSION

The present study observes the effect of coping strategies on the prediction of exam anxiety among University students. Moreover, the study also investigated the gender differences in all study variables. Hypotheses were carried out in the current research.

The first hypothesis coping strategies positively predict exam anxiety among students was maintained in the present study. The existing findings are predictable with the past research by Seelay, Andrade, and Miller (2018), demonstrating adapting techniques is a critical indicator of exam tension. This review gave basic data concerning levels of tension, adapting methodologies utilized, and connections that exist between uneasiness and adapting procedures.

The second hypothesis, Problem-focused coping and positive coping, which negatively predicts exam anxiety among students, was supported in the present study. Thus, the results verified the assumption. As well sustaining via Ejaz (2008) that a problem-focused coping approach is negatively correlated with uneasiness. Correspondingly, as per Whatley, Richard, and Foreman (1998), the issue centered on the adapting system was related to lesser levels of nervousness in upsetting circumstances. Fatima and Tahir (2013) also reported the same findings. Lewensohn, Roth and Sagy (2011) directed a review which likewise uncovered those young people who utilize issue centered adapting methodologies revealed moderately bring down the level of mental trouble that demonstrating that issue centered adapting procedures are contrarily connected with mental misery, for example, tension and stress. The discoveries of the present research are reliable to past explorers. Like as indicated by Sabih, Siddique, and Babur (2013), positive adapting is related to a lesser level of tension.

The recent study also investigates gender differences in exam anxiety. The outcomes demonstrate that female understudies marginally showed higher mean scores on adapting procedures and exam tension when contrasted with male understudies. The momentum discoveries are predictable with the past research (Aysan, Thompson, & Hamarat, 2002; Endler, Kantor & Parker, 1994; Tamres, Janlcki & Helgeson, 2002). However, the mean contrasts are noteworthy and approvable.

The essential exertion of this review was to discover the relationship between adapting techniques and exam anxiety among University students in a Pakistani setting. However, regardless of noteworthy discoveries, there are certain impediments that must be considered for future research.

In the first place and clear confinement is that the review was simply quantitative, that is, utilizing scales to gauge tension and investigate adapting procedures. It would have been more valuable if adapting systems were investigated subjectively, and in addition, it may have given data about other conceivable methods for dealing with stress.

Another constraint of the review is that exclusive self-regulated scales were utilized to gather information about all factors from the members of the review. This may bring about the relationship among factors because of basic strategy fluctuation. Past writing recommends that this issue can be overcome by gathering data from numerous sources. Along these lines, for future research, it is suitable to gather subjective information from many sources to measure the biasness of a single source and to make the triangulation conceivable. This review is the accumulation of information from just a single culture because of time deficiency and constrained assets. Future research must be founded on cross culture settings and furthermore incorporate other statistic contrasts in a worldwide setting.

This may bring about social attractive quality issues and make it as a forward impediment to this work. The members may be prone to react in socially attractive conduct. This requires painstakingly treatment of such social allure related issues to make a sound in future research. The present study provides an insight into understanding about the effects of coping strategies on exam anxiety. This research will contribute to existing literature and be fruitful for future studies.

The present discoveries make an important commitment to earlier writing. It guarantees that the result of the adapting systems is exam uneasiness. Adapting methodologies are extremely useful to adapt to issues, for example, nervousness, and go about as a flexibility counter for the restless individual.

CONCLUSION

The core aim of the current study was to investigate the association between coping strategies with exam anxiety among University students. The research also investigated gender differences in all study variables. The results revealed that coping strategies positively predict exam anxiety. The results show that female students slightly exhibited higher mean scores on coping strategies and exam anxiety as compared to male students. So the study shows that people know better about exam anxiety and are able to cope with problems in a meaningful ways.

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