



Validation of Scale Measuring Coping Strategies of Adults

KEYWORDS

Coping, adults

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ABSTRACT A multidimensional scale on coping was constructed and developed to assess the different ways in which adults respond to a challenging situation. The scale consists of 62 items on various types of coping (confronting, denial, acceptance, problem solving, hired help). The standardization of the tool was conducted on 60 subjects between the age of 35 to 55 years. The content of the structured scale was validated by a panel of experts. The reliability and validity of the tool was computed and was found to be acceptable. The constructed scale hence was found to be an acceptable instrument to assess coping strategies used by middle age working adults.

INTRODUCTION

In psychology, coping is referred as a constantly changing cognitive and behavioural effort to manage specific external and/or internal demands. Coping in simple terms may be defined as a person's efforts to "manage demands". Thus it may be said that coping is an expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or a challenging situation.

Miceli and Castelfranchi (2001) state that coping behaviours involve conscious modification of cognitive and emotional appraisal, which eventually modify the reactions to the stressful event rather than distort the perception of the event. The individual has full control of the coping strategies used (Cramer, 2000). The individual can choose to stop a certain coping style and choose another strategy. A choice of a certain coping strategy implies intent and full awareness of the operation. Folkman and Lazarus (1986) identified five emotion-focused coping strategies and three problem-focused coping strategies based on distancing, controlling, confronting, positive appraisal, accepting responsibility, escape avoidance and seeking social support. The choice of coping mechanisms is perceived more as dependent on timing, situational and personality factors. Different situations lead after all to different coping strategies. People use most of the factor analytic strategies of coping in every stressful encounter (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

There is a conviction that the ways people cope with stress affect their psychological, physical and social well being. An extensive work has been done on coping but most of the coping research has been concerned with unusual populations or specific events (example- injuries, physical or psychological disorders). Attention has not been given on how people cope with ordinary stressful events in their day to day lives. Measures devised to assess coping have been inadequate for this task. Keeping in mind the above mentioned, an attempt was made to construct an instrument which is capable of measuring the coping patterns exhibited by urban adults in a situation where they face physical, financial and socio-emotional problems. The developed scale is neither a modified nor an adapted scale. Each item of the scale was formulated focusing on the areas which bring about a challenging situation for an adult in Indian context.

METHODOLOGY

Construction of the scale: A thorough review of literature provided for the construction of the scale. The aspects identified for the development of the scale is depicted in the table 1. In all twelve coping strategies were identified and were in-

cluded in the scale.

Table 1: Coping strategies and their constituent items

S.No.	Coping	No. Of items
1	Confronting	6
2	Acceptance	3
3	Denial	3
4	Confiding	3
5	Distancing	5
6	Displacement	4
7	Escape- Avoidance	9
8	Problem solving	9
9	Problem Appraisal	6
10	Hired help	5
11	Tension reduction	3
12	Religious coping	5
Total		62

The coping strategies covered in the scale were further divided into negative and positive coping. Table 2 lists different strategies which fall under positive and negative coping.

Table 2: Positive and negative coping and their constituent strategies

S. No.	Positive Coping	Negative coping
1	Confronting	Acceptance
2	Confiding	Denial
3	Problem Solving	Distancing
4	Problem Appraisal	Displacement
5	Hired help	Escape-Avoidance
6	Tension Reduction	Religious Coping

The tool has been developed in English language. In total 62 items are incorporated in tool. Two response options have been provided for each question viz. Yes/no, which are assigned 1, 0 marks respectively. On the basis of scoring, three level criteria namely high, moderate and low are formulated which will be used for analyses of the data. The sum of marks obtained for the entire scale, reflect various level of challenges in such a way that the higher the scores, higher is the challenge.

Table 3: Scoring of the scale and level of coping

S. No.	Total no of items	Minimum score	Maximum score	Level		
				Low	Mod-erate	High
1	62	62X0	62X1	0-20	21-41	42-62

Standardization: 60 urban working adults were selected from Udaipur city between the age range of 35 to 55 years. Three different occupations (doctors, teachers and bank employees) from both government and private sectors were covered. The subjects were personally contacted for administration of the tool. The scale is self administered and was filled by the respondents themselves.

Content validity of scale: To establish the content validity, the tool was given to specialists from various disciplines (Dept of Human Development & Family Studies, Dept. of Psychology, Dept. of Family Resource Management and Dept. of Foods & Nutrition) for their judicious and critical evaluation. Each item of the tool was evaluated on a four point rating scale- highly suitable, fairly suitable, moderately suitable and ambiguous. The tool was also evaluated for its overall format in terms of instructions given, categorisation of questions, relevancy, content coverage, language, format, suitability & sequence of questions, length of sentence and clarity of the scale on a two point rating scale- appropriate and not appropriate.

Assessment of reliability: Split half method was used to calculate the reliability of the tool.

RESULTS

Content validation of the scale: The results of content validation are presented in table 4. The table clearly indicates that the calculated mean scores of the complete scale was obtained as 2.66 which shows that the scale was good indicator for measuring coping. Validity scores for each strategy were also calculated.

Table 5: Validity scores for coping and its constituent strategies n=8 experts

S. No.	Coping	No of items	Scoring
1	Confronting	6	2.80
2	Acceptance	3	2.75
3	Denial	3	2.63
4	Confiding	3	2.63
5	Distancing	5	2.63
6	Displacement	4	2.63
7	Escape- Avoidance	9	2.58
8	Problem solving	9	2.58
9	Problem Appraisal	6	2.68
10	Hired help	5	3.00
11	Tension reduction	3	2.75
12	Religious coping	5	3.00
Total		62	2.66

*Range of rating: 1.00-1.70= ambiguous, 1.71-2.40= fairly suitable, 2.41-3.00= highly suitable

Reliability coefficient of the tool: Reliability of the scale was drawn by split half method. In split half technique, the scale was first divided into two equal halves with odd and even items. Spearman Brown prophecy formula was used for calculating reliability.

Table 6 and table 7 depict the reliability index of the tool. It is evident that the tool is reliable as the Split-Half (odd-even) Correlation is coming out to be 0.95 for the total sample. Reliability was also calculated considering the gender (30 males, 30 females) of the subjects. Reliability for each constituent strategy of the scale was also calculated.

Table 6: Reliability index

Research tool	Reliability regarding gender		Reliability score of the scale
	Males	Females	
Scale on coping strategies of adults	.96	.93	.95

Table 7: Reliability index of different coping strategies

S. No.	Coping	No of items	Reliability
1	Confronting	6	0.88
2	Acceptance	3	0.96
3	Denial	3	0.69
4	Confiding	3	0.86
5	Distancing	5	0.92
6	Displacement	4	0.77
7	Escape- Avoidance	9	0.80
8	Problem solving	9	0.84
9	Problem Appraisal	6	0.72
10	Hired help	5	0.91
11	Tension reduction	3	0.85
12	Religious coping	5	0.92

CONCLUSION

The reliability and validity index of the scale suggest that the scale is an acceptable instrument to measure the coping strategies used by urban adults. It is hoped that this scale will help in understanding the degree and level of coping strategies used by urban middle aged adults regarding their present life in a rapidly changing urban environment. This scale will prove to be useful for specialists and scholars of Social sciences and allied fields.

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