



## Coping Strategies and Demographic Variables: A Study Amongst Employees in the Banking Sector

### KEYWORDS

Coping, avoidance, attrition, maladaptive

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**ABSTRACT** *Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. The objective of this research paper is to examine coping strategies adopted by employees and how they are associated with different demographic variables. Data was collected from 132 employees of both public and private sector banks. The study shows coping strategies significantly associated with education, age and marital status and years of service of the employees in the organization.*

### Introduction:

The 1990s saw radical policy changes with regarding to fiscal deficit and structural changes in banking sector so as to prepare her to cope with the new economic world order. Globalization and privatization led policies compelled the banking sector to reform and adjust to have a competitive edge to cope with multinationals led environment. The implications of the above said transformations have affected the social, economic and psychological domains of the bank employees and their relations. Evidence from existing literature states that more than 60% of the bank employees have one or other problem directly or indirectly related to these drastic changes. All the factors discussed above are prospective attributes to cause occupational stress and related disorders among the employees. As per Gyan 2014, bankers adopt several stress coping and management to reduce stress. These strategies as revealed by the study include indulging in religious activities, exercises, share with friends, medicinal therapies, counseling and social gathering. It was found that the most of the respondents keep stressful situations to themselves while some too often indulge in religious activities.

### Literature Review:

#### Coping strategies:

Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. Two general coping strategies have been distinguished: problem-solving strategies are efforts to do something active to alleviate stressful circumstances, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful or potentially stressful events.

Devi (2012) Study conducted to identify the coping strategies used for managing role stress at commercial banks amongst 550 front line employees of commercial banks of Jammu and Kashmir, India, to identify the coping dimensions adopted by the employees. The findings indicate seven coping dimensions - submissive coping, functional coping, diversion coping, relaxation coping, third-party support coping, cognitive restructuring coping and transitory reinforcement coping. The results indicate that public and private sector commercial banks do not significantly differ on coping dimensions.

Twamley, Hami and Stein (2004) investigated the individual stress coping methods of 235 university students and

the research results divided the methods into three types: current experience mode; evasion; and negative strategic modes, such as alcohol and drug abuse

### Objectives:

1. To study most frequently adopted coping strategies.
2. To study is there a significant difference in coping strategies adopted by banking employees based on gender, age, marital status, education and years of service in the organization.
3. To study significant coping strategies that can help reduce stress.

### Hypothesis:

Reddy and Ramamurthy (1991) analyzed the influence of age on stress experience of a person. The sample consisted of 200 executives. The results revealed that executives in the age group of 41-50 experienced more stress than the age group of 51-60. Moderating variables among executives experiencing stress include not only age but also the years of service in the employment.

*Hypothesis 1: There is significant association between coping strategies and gender.*

*Hypothesis 1a: There is significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by employees based on gender.*

*Hypothesis 2: There is significant association between coping strategies and age.*

*Hypothesis 2a: There is significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by employees based on age group.*

*Hypothesis 3: There is significant association between coping strategies and marital status.*

*Hypothesis 3a: There is significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by employees based on marital status.*

*Hypothesis 4: There is significant association between coping strategies and education.*

*Hypothesis 4a: There is significant difference in the coping strategies adopted by employees based on marital status.*

### Research Methodology

In order to examine the relationship between coping strat-

egies and stress and other demographic variables survey was conducted among employees in the banking sector of Mumbai. Convenient sampling was adopted. Based on the size of the banking 30 to 50 questionnaires were provided. A total of 150 questionnaires were sent, and 140 returned questionnaires represented 77.7% respondent rate. Eight questionnaires were rejected due to insufficient information.

**Instruments**

The survey instrument consisted of three sections: general demographic information, work stress and coping strategies.

**General demographic information**

The survey included five questions covering demographics. Personal information was requested regarding gender, age, marital status, education and length of employment.

**Coping Strategy Questionnaire**

To measure coping strategies, questionnaire designed by Folkman and Lazarus was used. It is a structured questionnaire to measure coping strategies across eight factors (problem focused coping, escape-avoidance, distancing, seeking social support, positive reappraisal, self blame, tension reduction, self isolation).

**Data Analysis**

**Table 1: Description of the respondents (n=132)**

Variables	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	75	56.4
Female	57	42.9
Age		
Under 25	54	9.8
26-30	50	42.9
31-35	22	30.1
36-40	6	15.8
Above 41		
Marital Status		
Single	70	52.6
Married	51	38.3
Divorced	11	8.3
Education		
Undergraduate	77	57.9
Graduate	39	29.3
Post Graduate	16	12.0

The purpose of the study was to determine the most frequently used coping strategies and key stressors.

**Table 2 : Summary of coping strategies -Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Problem solving	132	2.33	5.00	3.7291	.75303
Wishful Thinking	132	3.00	5.00	3.8037	.54812
Detach	132	2.67	5.00	3.6522	.72288
Seeking	132	1.67	4.33	3.1752	.74993
focusing	132	2.67	5.00	3.9757	.69554
Self blame	132	2.33	5.00	3.3676	.83326
tension	132	2.33	5.00	3.2959	.64657
Self isolation	132	2.33	3.67	3.0000	.36259

The table 2 shows most frequently used coping strategies

by banking employees is Focusing (M=3.9) followed by Wishful Thinking (M=3.8) and Problem Solving (M=3.7).

**Relationship between gender and coping strategies**

**Table 3 :Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.351(b)	1	.554		
Continuity Correction(a)	.059	1	.808		
Likelihood Ratio	.359	1	.549		
Fisher's Exact Test				.731	.411
Linear-by-Linear Association	.348	1	.555		
N of Valid Cases	124				

a Computed only for a 2x2 table

b 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.85.

From the above table it could be inferred there is no association between coping strategies and gender of banking employees.as p value (p = .554) is more than .05. Thus null hypothesis H0 is accepted. And there is no association between coping strategies and gender.

**Table 4: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.002(a)	3	.012
Likelihood Ratio	10.283	3	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	.062	1	.804
N of Valid Cases	124		

a 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .44.

The above table shows as p value (p=.012) is less than .05. Hence there exist significant association between coping strategies adopted by banking employees and their age. Hence we reject the null hypothesis

**Analysis of variance for coping strategies with different age group**

**Table 5: ANOVA Coping Strategies and age**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.741	3	.247	3.895	.011
Within Groups	7.606	120	.063		
Total	8.347	123			

From the above table it could be inferred p value (.011) is less than .05. Hence ANOVA is significant. Thus, there

is significant difference in coping strategies adopted by banking employees based on their age (N=132).

#### Association between coping strategies and marital status

**Table 6: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.396(a)	2	.009
Likelihood Ratio	12.871	2	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.710	1	.005
N of Valid Cases	124		

a 3 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .80.

The above table shows relationship between coping strategies and marital status of employees is significant as p value is ( $p=.009$ ) less than .05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, that there is no significant association between coping strategies adopted and marital status of employees.

**Table 7: ANOVA**

#### Coping Strategies and marital status

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.632	2	.316	4.960	.009
Within Groups	7.714	121	.064		
Total	8.347	123			

From the above table it could be inferred p value (.009) is less than (.005). Hence ANOVA is significant. Thus, there is significant difference in coping strategies adopted by banking employees based on marital status (N=132).

#### Relationship between coping strategies and level in the organization

**Table 9: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.410(a)	2	.494
Likelihood Ratio	1.228	2	.541
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.303	1	.254
N of Valid Cases	124		

a 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.02.

The above table shows relationship between coping strategies and level of the employees (High, Medium, Low) is not significant as p value is ( $p=.494$ ) more than .05. Thus, we accept null hypothesis, that there is no significant association between coping strategies adopted and level of employees.

#### Relationship between coping strategies and education

**Table 10: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40.435(a)	2	.001
Likelihood Ratio	32.790	2	.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	25.481	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	124		

The above table shows relationship between coping strategies and education of employees is significant as p value is ( $p=.001$ ) less than .05. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, that there is no significant association between coping strategies adopted and education of employees.

#### Conclusions:

Study shows divergent strategies adopted by employees in the banking sector using to cope with stress. Key coping strategies adopted by the employees are focusing followed by wishful thinking and problem solving. The study shows problem solving, detachment, Seeking help, Focusing, Self Blame, tension are significant. Detachment, tension and self-blame are negative indicating by reducing these type of maladaptive coping strategies. Thus, reducing maladaptive coping strategies and enhancing adaptive coping strategies will help reduce stress at workplace. Also the study shows significant difference in coping strategy based on age, marital status, education and years of service. Newstrom and Davis (1998) found that when job autonomy provided to managers is high, they enjoy their work and have freedom to do the task according to their own will so that they feel less stress.

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