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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HEALTHY WELLNESS LIFESTYLE: A KEY FACTOR FOR DEVELOPING BETTER COPING SKILLS AMONG HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF KERALA

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Abstract

Our life is surrounded by many problems which are not always possible to avoid. However we should have some sort of control on how to deal or cope with these problems. More or less, we could keep a balance of our own emotional state inspite of losing the balance completely. The present study investigated the effect of Lifestyle Factors on Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School students of Kerala. A sample of 100 Higher Secondary School students was selected from the two districts of Kerala through stratified random sampling technique. ANOVA, Sheffe's test of multiple comparison and Mean difference Analysis were the statistical techniques used in the present study. The analysis of the study revealed that there exists significant effect of Lifestyle Factors on coping among Higher Secondary School students. Significant difference is found in the mean scores of Lifestyle Factors and Coping Skills for the subsamples based on gender and type of institution. There occurs great danger in developing ineffective coping strategies for dealing with stress such that they may become habitual or even addictive. The present study paves way for the teachers and parents to mould wellness lifestyle among Higher Secondary School students for developing better coping strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

The adolescent is vulnerable to any increase or shift in either internal or external pressures. It is a stage when they face a lot of problems and pressures. Then the vital and crucial question arose – “whether today's education is sufficient to lead our adolescents in the right path”? In spite of facing the challenges of life our new generation is trying to skip from their problems through various ways like physical aggression, rebellion, physical separation from the problem or internalization. Farnsworth (1989) noted that most suicidal attempts are impulsive, precipitous acts, and although the intentions do not always appear to be serious, they should be considered as serious threats. Education should be best valued in helping the average adolescent with his garden variety of problems, and it can form a foundation for more aspiring future.

Coping is defined as constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person,” regardless of whether the outcomes of such efforts are positive or negative (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Several studies have investigated the coping behaviours of adolescents who are faced with extreme stressors (Compas. et al, 2001); less is known about how adolescents cope with normative and daily stress, such as stress from academic demands. Coping, in research on adults, is most commonly defined as either problem- or emotion-focused. In problem-focused coping, an individual engages in behaviours to specifically address the sources of stress, whereas in emotion-focused coping, an individual engages in activities to alleviate the emotional distress caused by a stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Although it is unclear if adolescent coping behaviours can be correctly dichotomized along these same two

dimensions (Band & Weisz, 1988), problem- and emotion-focused coping are linked to specific outcomes in adolescent populations.

In order to maximize our potential wellness lifestyle is essential. It is an active process which is continuous throughout life. Optimal well being is achieved through a determined and committed lifestyle. Developing healthy wellness life style is found to be a crucial factor for developing better Coping Skills among adolescents. A better happier outlook is the major psychological benefit of a wellness life style. To create a positive relationship with the environment it is essential to rediscover our equilibrium and being in tune with our self. Wellness lifestyle is not only beneficial for our present health but also for our future which may result in preserving maximum psychological abilities developing a foundation for happiness and health in later years.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE

There is a rapid change in our society and technology and a huge increase in what it is that we have to learn. By analyzing each and every aspect of the period of adolescence, it is clear that our young generation is put under pressure one or the other way. Identity formation “meets its crises in adolescence” (Erickson, 1968). Stressed situations cause much severe side effects both physiologically and psychologically. It may result in a definitive illness, or even there may be a reduction in achievement of the adolescents. There is no doubt about the fact that stress do not grow in vacuum and stress in adolescents cannot be investigated without understanding the most intricate and intimate social fabric of family and parents in particular. As our society become increasingly anomic and fragmented, there is a corresponding weakening of family cohesiveness, loss of authority and shared value systems, and the rise of alternative life-styles exemplified by cults and communes. This motivated the investigators to find out the importance of healthy Life Style in the life of adolescents.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out whether there exist significant effect of Lifestyle Factors on Coping Skills among
- To find out whether there exist significant difference in the Lifestyle Factors for the subsamples based on gender and type of institutions.
- To find out whether there exist significant difference in the Coping Skills for the subsamples based on gender and type of institutions.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- There exists significant effect of Lifestyle Factors on Coping Skills among Higher Secondary School students
- There exist significant difference in Lifestyle Factors for the subsamples based on gender and type of institutions
- There exist significant difference in the Coping Skills for the subsamples based on gender and type of institutions.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

The survey was conducted on a sample of 100 secondary school students from the districts of Malappuram, Thrissur and Kozhikode in Kerala. The data was collected from the aided and government schools of Kerala through stratified random sampling technique. The sample comprised of 53 girls and 47 boys. Among this 48 students were from aided school and 52 from government schools.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

1. Test of significance of difference between means of large independent sample.
2. One way ANOVA (Best & Khan, 1996)
3. Scheffe test of multiple comparison (Ferguson, 1996)

TOOLS USED

- Life Style Inventory
- Coping style inventory

ANALYSIS

INVESTIGATION OF EFFECT OF LIFESTYLE FACTORS ON COPING SKILLS OF SCHOOL

This section of the analysis deals with the investigation of the effect of Life Style Factors on Coping Skills.

Data and result of the effect of Life Style Factors on Coping Skills for the total samples and subsamples is given in the Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that 'F' value for between group and within group of the life style factors on Coping Skills of is 34.53, which is greater than the value for corresponding degrees of freedom at 0.01 level. The F value for 2df (2, 97) is 4.83. This implies that Lifestyle Factors have significant effect on the Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School students.

The calculated F- values are 12.486 and 17.976 which is greater than the tabled F- value for (2, 44) df, and (2, 50) df that is 5.04 and 5.15 at 0.01 level of significance. This indicates that the Effect due to life style factors on Coping Skills is significant and varies with regard to the coping strategies adopted by Higher Secondary School students based on the subsamples gender.

The calculated F- value is 28.321 and 30.143, which is greater than the table value for (2, 49) and (2, 45) df, and that is 5.09 at 0.01 level of significance for both the subsamples. The result indicated that students of government and aided schools have significant influence by the life style factors they receive. For better Coping Skills the students should follow healthy life style.

POST-HOC ANALYSIS – MULTIPLE COMPARISONS

This part of analysis was done as a post hoc comparison of mean scores of relevant groups of the independent variable showing significant main effect on the dependent variable.

As per the table, the F ratio obtained for the groups of average healthy life style – high healthy life style, low healthy life style group – high healthy life style group and low healthy life style group – high healthy life style group for the total sample are 10.89, 15.45 and 38.76 respectively which is greater than the F' values obtained required for the significance at 0.01 level of significance. Hence significant difference exists at 0.01 levels between all the groups with regard to their Coping Skills.

As per the Table it is revealed that there exist significant difference among three pairs of Life Style for the subsamples gender and type of management as evident from the F values of these groups which are far above the F' value set for significance at 0.01 level. Coping Skills of students based on gender and type of management among these pairs of groups of Life Style Factors are dissimilar and their mean scores vary with difference in Coping Skills.

COMPARISON OF THE MEAN SCORES OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY OF SCHOOL TEACHERS BETWEEN THE SUB SAMPLES

Investigates whether there is any significant difference exists in the mean scores of Life Style Factors and Coping Skills for the sub samples, Government – Aided and Boys- Girls. The computed critical ratios are listed in a tabular form in the Table 3.

When the mean scores of the Lifestyle Factors of Higher Secondary School students for the subsample type of institution and gender were compared the critical ratio obtained were 4.19 and 5.90. When the mean scores of the Coping Skills of Higher Secondary School students, were compared based on the sub samples type of institution and gender, the critical ratio obtained were 7.41 and 3.33. Since the values obtained are greater than the table values; it is revealed that there exists significant difference in the mean scores of life style factors and Coping Skills of school teachers at 0.01 level of significance for all the subsamples.

DISCUSSION

When the investigators combined the mean scores of Life Style Factors based on the sub samples for type of schools and gender significant difference were found. It is revealed from the study that problems related to maintaining healthy life style factors exist in both government and aided Higher Secondary School students and it is more for government school students compared to aided school students. While considered the sub samples gender it is also analyzed that boys have low healthy life style compared to girls. Again when the investigators compared the mean scores of Coping Skills of Government students for the sub samples gender and type of schools, they came to the conclusion that the performance of Coping Skills is poor for boys than girls and it is poor for aided school students compared to government school students. The investigators conducted one way ANOVA to study the effect

of Life Style Factors on Coping Skills of school teachers and found significant effect between the independent and dependent variable. Better Lifestyle Factors will lead to better Coping Skills.

Emotional wellness: Emotional wellness is the ability of the person to laugh, enjoy life, adjust to change, cope with stress, and maintain intimate relationships. Awareness, acceptance and management are the three areas included in emotional wellness. Emotional awareness involves recognizing your feelings, as well as the feelings of others. It is analysed from the study that healthy emotional wellness helps the adolescents for emotional acceptance understanding human emotion and in addition to that it help to control and cope with personal feelings and develop adequate coping mechanisms.

Physical wellness: The physical dimension deals with the functional operation of the body. Physical fitness muscular strength, muscular endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, flexibility, and body composition are the health related components. A healthy physical wellness life style helps in developing good tolerance and well being for developing good Coping Skills as revealed from the study.

Social wellness: Interacting with people is a major component of daily life. Ability to get along with others, appreciate the uniqueness of others, and feel connected to others are the major dimensions included in social wellness. A genuine sense of belonging to a social unit is achieved through social wellness. A person becomes under stress when there is a feeling of isolation and loneliness. The situation can be handled by involvement of good friends, close family ties, volunteerism, community involvement, and trusting relationships. From the present study it is inferred that good social wellness life style helps in developing better Coping Skills. And this feeling of connection can yield positive benefits.

Intellectual: Using of mind is involved in the intellectual dimension. Maintaining an active mind contributes to total well-being. Intellectual growth is not restricted to formal education that is, school learning. Intellectual wellness involves a continuous acquisition of knowledge throughout life, engaging your mind in creative and stimulating mental activities, and opening your mind to new ideas. Identifying the problems and developing proper coping strategies can be attained by good intellectual wellness life style as revealed from the analysis by the investigator.

Spiritual: Personal search for meaning and direction in life is the major dimension in the spiritual dimension. It is not only meant for identifying a creator, a god, or a specific religion and is not always synonymous with religion. In its clear sense, cultivating beliefs, principles, and values that provide guidance and strength throughout all of life's experiences are the major dimensions of spiritual wellness. The investigator concluded from the present study that good spiritual wellness life style has significant effects on Coping Skills of adolescents.

CONCLUSION

Wellness encompasses more than physical health. It is a state of being several interrelated dimensions. Better Lifestyle Factors have found to be better in dealing with academic stress of Higher Secondary School students (Abdulkader, 2013). Coping Skills are essential in the daily life of each and every citizen, especially in this twenty first Century. The students should develop various coping strategies to deal with several situations in their life instead of getting frustrated or skipping from those situations. The study paves a leading light to teachers, parents and other stake holders of the society for developing wellness lifestyle among our future generation to develop better Coping Skills.

Table 1. Effect of Life Style Factors on Coping Skills for the Total Samples and relevant sub samples

Nature of sample	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square of variation	F value	Level of significance
Total Sample (N=100)	Between group	3758.88	2	1762.58	34.53	0.01
	Within group	9002.62	97	49.345		
	Total	12761.05	99			
Boys (N= 47)	Between group	987.342	2	389.637	12.486	0.01
	Within group	9745.321	44	47.223		
	Total	1962.663	46			
Girls (N= 53)	Between group	1223.622	2	667.211	17.976	0.01
	Within group	1005.666	50	48.755		
	Total	2229.288	52			

Government (N=52)	Between group	2365.769	2	1263.587	28.321	0.01
	Within group	989.673	49	39.325		
	Total	3355.542	51			
Aided (N=48)	Between group	2367.465	2	1143.793	30.143	0.01
	Within group	999.123	45	41.962		
	Total	3366.588	47			

Table 2. Scheffe's Test of Multiple Comparison of Lifestyle Factors on Coping Skills On Three Groups of Life Style factors for Total Sample and relevant sub samples

Sample (N)	Group compared	F	Mean		Value of F'	Level of significance
			M 1	M 2		
Total Sample (N=100)	A.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	10.89	35.80	38.30	9.66	0.01
	L.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	15.45	25.85	38.30	9.66	0.01
	L.H.L.S – A.H.L.S	38.76	25.85	35.80	9.66	0.01
Boys (N=47)	A.H.L.S– H.H.L.S	10.81	33.62	39.50	10.22	0.05
	L.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	9.582	24.55	39.50	10.22	0.05
	L.H.L.S – A.H.L.S	12.23	24.55	33.62	10.22	0.01
Girls (N=53)	A.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	9.956	33.578	38.286	10.14	0.05
	L.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	12.63	29.832	38.286	10.14	0.01
	L.H.L.S– A.H.L.S	13.623	29.832	33.578	10.14	0.01
Government (N= 52)	A.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	16.56	32.567	37.897	10.18	0.01
	L.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	17.83	27.546	37.897	10.18	0.01
	L.H.L.S – A.H.L.S	24.18	27.546	32.567	10.18	0.01
Aided (N= 48)	A.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	17.48	33.090	39.345	10.18	0.01
	L.H.L.S – H.H.L.S	21.44	25.786	39.345	10.18	0.01
	L.H.L.S – A.H.L.S	23.49	25.786	33.090	10.18	0.01

TABLE 3. DATA AND RESULT OF THE COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES OF LIFESTYLE FACTORS AND COPING SKILLS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BETWEEN THE SUB SAMPLES

Variable	Nature of sample	Sub sample	N	Mean	SD	Critical ratio
Life Style Factors	Type of Institution	Government	52	6.86	1.76	4.19
		Aided	48	5.54	1.39	
	Gender	Boys	47	6.32	1.58	5.90
		Girls	53	4.55	1.42	
Coping Skills	Type of institution	Government	52	6.32	1.65	7.41
		Aided	48	4.02	1.49	
	Gender	Boys	47	4.89	1.50	3.33
		Girls	53	5.98	1.60	

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