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## *Emotion and Problem Focused Coping Strategies: A Comparative Study of Male and Female Engineering Students in Chennai City*

**S. Sharmila**

Research Scholar in Management  
Bharathiar University  
Coimbatore, Tamilnadu – India

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**Abstract:** *The present research aims to find out the difference in coping strategies of male and female engineering students. The Coping Response Inventory-Adult [CRI-A] was the instrument used to assess the difference between students stress. Nearly 450 engineering students were used as the sample for were used for the study. The study revealed that female engineering students are prone to Emotion Focused Strategies when compared to male students. The study also revealed male students are much prone to Problem Focused Strategies than Female students. The study also showed that Female students handle their stress situation easily when compared to Male students to increase their Academic Performance.*

**Keywords:** *Emotion Focused Coping, Problem Focused Coping, Depression, Anxiety, Engineering Students.*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Academic stress is the anxiety and stress that comes from schooling and education. In the present scenario, education impulse a lot of pressure and depression on the part of education to students. College students face Academic stress on each and every semester depending upon the situation such as exams, grade competition, assignments, time management etc (Absouserie, 1994). The students even face a lot of stress related to students, home work, test, reading, tuition etc. Academic stress situation arise to students those who are unable to balance their Academic, family, friends, social activities in life. Nowadays stress is very common as they are worried about career and stress level also depends a lot on attitude of teachers towards students. College students have many obstacles to overcome in their Academic career. On the other side GPA (Grade Point Average) is the ordinal scale used to measure students Academic Performance.

Coping is the most extensively and widely used in the field of contemporary psychology (Somerfield & McCrae, 2000). The Lazarus & Folkman (1984) model of stress & coping identifies cognitive appraisal & the use of coping strategies. Lazarus & Folkman (1984) also differentiate between two coping processes. Emotion Focused Coping aimed at modifying the emotional distress caused by the stressful event, while the purpose of Problem Focused Coping is to adapt oneself & to manage the event. The function of coping is to solve the daily life stressors & problems. Moos (1993) give importance on two main types of coping strategies first is Problem Focused, when individual use approaches coping response & second is Emotion Focused, where person adopts avoidance coping responses.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**Sarmany (1994)** examined the loads of stress among college students. The results showed that students with low Grade Point Average (GPA) used less effective stress coping strategies and assumed test situation as being significantly more stressful.

**Ross, Neibling & Heckert (1991)** examined the stress level of the college students. The study revealed students have to make significant adjustment to college life. It is also identified pressure of studies and strain placed on interpersonal relationship.

**Halmaandaris & power (1998)** investigated the relationship between coping with exam stress, coping & social support to college life. The study revealed Emotion Focused Coping positively correlated with neuroticism and Problem Focused Coping correlated with achievement motivation.

**Xia & Sha (2005)** examined the relationship among different stress sources, Coping strategies & female college students. The study revealed predictive effects of stress & negatively impact on coping strategies.

**Bjorkman (2008)** conducted a study on Academic stress, social support & GPA. The study revealed Academic stress is relevant construct to consider when investigating potential correlates of emotional & behavioral problems.

### III. OBJECTIVES

- Emotion Focused Coping Strategies would be adopted by Female Engineering Students than Male Students.
- Problem Focused Coping Strategies would be adopted by Male Engineering Students than Female Students.

#### Independent/ Dependent variables

Since the present study is comparative in nature. In both hypothesis Female & Male Engineering students were independent variables & their coping strategies were dependent variables.

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Participants:

The study comprised of 450 college students aged between 17-21 years. Top five Engineering colleges in Chennai were considered for the present study. Among these 225 Female Engineering students & 225 Male students were participated in this study.

#### Tools

The Tools used for the study was The Coping Response Inventory- Adult Form [CRI-A].It consisted of 48 items which comprises of eight scale to measure the Coping Response of the college students. It consists of Logical Analysis (LA), Positive Appraisal (PA), Seeking Guidance & Support (SG), Problem Solving (PS),Cognitive Avoidance (CA),Acceptance or Resignation (AR), Seeking Alternative Records (SR) & Emotional Discharge (ED).The first four scales focus on approach coping response & are Problem Focused Strategies whereas the other four scales measures Avoiding Coping Response & considered as Emotional Focus Coping Strategies.

#### Statistical Analysis

Table: 1 showing Descriptive statistics for CRI-A

VARIABLES	N	MEAN	SD
Logical Analysis	225	39.14	11.29
Positive Appraisal	225	29.19	20.16
Seeking Guidance & Support	225	36.16	14.47
Problem Solving	225	27.19	11.13
Cognitive Avoidance	225	27.01	16.67
Acceptance or Resignation	225	25.51	15.51
Seeking Alternative Records	225	44.45	62.55
Emotional Discharge	225	32.6	11.90

Table: 2 showing the difference in mean scores of Emotion &amp; Problem Focused Coping of Female &amp; Male students.

COPING STRATEGY	GENDER	N	MEAN	SD
Emotion Focused	Male	225	35.17	38.42
	Female	225	44.68	62.45
Problem Focused	Male	225	37.85	11.97
	Female	225	36.91	14.25

Table: 3 showing Reliability of individual items for Emotion Focused Strategy

VARIABLES	CRONBACHA'S ALPHA	NO OF ITEMS
Cognitive Avoidance	.526	6
Acceptance or Resignation	.412	6
Seeking Alternative Records	.721	6
Emotional Discharge	.621	6

Table: 4 showing Reliability of individual items for Problem Focused Strategy

VARIABLES	CRONBACHA'S ALPHA	NO OF ITEMS
Logical Analysis	.521	6
Positive Appraisal	.425	6
Seeking Guidance & Support	.671	6
Problem Solving	.791	6

## V. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis is regarding the difference in adopting Emotion Focused Strategies between Male & Female college students. The difference indicates the insignificant difference between scores of Emotion Focused Strategies. The Female college students have a high mean score of (44.68) when compared to Male students with a mean score of (35.17). This clearly indicates female students try to manage the stress situation taking Emotion strategy rather than Problem Focused.

The second hypothesis revealed the difference in adopting Problem Focused Coping Strategy between Male & Female college students. The study indicates there is a significant difference between scores of Problem Focused Strategies. It has a positive influence on Male students than Female with a high mean score (37.85) compared to female score (36.91).

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Coping plays a great role in the lives of individuals especially with reference to psychological well-being. There is insignificant difference in EFC used by female engineering students whereas there is a significant difference in PFC used by the male students. It is highly recommended that coping strategies can be widely used by the students to overcome stressful situation.

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