

# Problem Based Coping on Negative Emotion among Higher Secondary Students

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**Abstract:** *The study aims to find out the level of Problem based coping, state and trait anxiety among the higher secondary school students. Sampling techniques that was used for the selection of the sample in this case was random sampling technique. A total of 300 school students were selected from three different schools in Madurai city. The investigator selected 100 students from government school, 100 students from Government Aided School and 100 students from Private school. Personal data sheet developed by the investigator, Problem based coping is developed by Patricia Zuritaona and Matthew Mckay, (2011). State and Trait anxiety is developed by Charles D. Speilberger, (1983) were used to collect data. Results were statistically analyzed through 't' test, correlation coefficient. Gender has an impact on problem based coping and state and trait anxiety. Problem based coping and state and trait anxiety are related to each other.*

**Keywords:** Problem Based Coping, State Anxiety, Trait Anxiety, Coping Behavior, Higher Secondary Students.

## 1. Introduction

Early adolescence is a period of rapid cognitive, social, emotional and physical changes. During this period, early adolescents usually lack the ability to cope when they experience stress, which is usually family and school-related. If they cannot cope with such stress, they may fail to develop in a healthy manner and may develop habits harmful to their health such as substance abuse. Hundreds of coping strategies have been identified. Coping refers to the thoughts and actions we use to deal with stress. In large part, feeling stressed or not depends on whether we believe we have the coping resources to deal with the challenges facing us. Coping refers to behavior that protects people from being psychologically harmed by problematic social experience, a behavior that importantly mediates the impact that societies have on their members. The protective function of coping behavior can be exercised in three ways: by eliminating or modifying conditions giving rise to problems; by perceptually controlling the meaning of experience in a manner that neutralizes its problematic character; and by keeping the emotional consequences of problems within manageable bounds. The efficacy of a number of concrete coping behaviors representing these three functions was evaluated. Results indicate that individuals' coping interventions are most effective when dealing with problems within the close interpersonal role areas of marriage and child-rearing and least effective when dealing with the more impersonal problems found in occupation. The effective coping modes are unequally distributed in society, with men, the educated, and the affluent making greater use of the efficacious mechanisms.

Coping behavior operates in difficult circumstances, example 'Tax or exceed' (Burke & Weir, 1980) a matter of capacity. In the cognitive style it is defined as behaving (problem solving) outside one's preferred style by the minimum amount for the last time. Actual behavior is a blend of behaving in one's preferred style and coping behavior.

**Problem based coping** any coping behavior that is directed at reducing or eliminating a stressor, adaptive behavioral seeking social support and "taking action to try to get rid of the problem is a problem-based strategy, but so is making a list of the steps to take". Anxiety is defined as a psychological and physiological condition that includes various components (behavioral, cognitive, emotional and genetic/somatic), which merge and result in feelings such as nervousness, panic and discomfort. Anxiety can also be categorized as being "state" or "trait," depending on its duration.

**State anxiety** refers to a temporary condition of dread or uneasiness stemming from a specific situation. State anxiety is an emotional reaction to a situation that from one situation to the next. Moreover, State anxiety is defined as an unpleasant emotional arousal in face of threatening demands or dangers. A cognitive appraisal of threat is a prerequisite for the experience of this emotion (Lazarus, 1991). State anxiety is also known as A-State which refers to a temporary condition of dread or uneasiness stemming from a specific situation. A mental or emotional reaction characterized by apprehension, uncertainty, and irrational fear. Anxiety states may be accompanied by physiologic changes such as diaphoresis, tremors, rapid heartbeat, dilated pupils, and xerostomia. **Trait anxiety**— It is defined as the tendency to experience anxiety. Trait anxiety is considered to be a characteristic of personality that endures over time and is manifest across a variety of situation. Anxiety can be either a short term 'state' or a long term "trait." Trait anxiety reflects a stable tendency to respond with state anxiety in the anticipation of threatening situations. It is closely related to the personality trait of neuroticism. Such anxiety may be conscious or unconscious. Common distinctions are often made between various contrasting strategies, for example: problem-focused versus emotion-focused; engagement versus disengagement; cognitive versus behavioral.

- Problem-focused: Any coping behavior that is directed at reducing or eliminating a stressor, adaptive behavioral
- Appraisal-focused strategies occur when the person modifies the way they think, for example denial or distancing oneself from the problem. People may alter the way they think about a problem by altering their goals and values, such as by seeing the humor in a situation: "some have suggested that humor may play a greater role as a stress moderator among women than men".

People using problem-focused strategies try to deal with the cause of their problem. They do this by finding out information on the problem and learning new skills to manage the problem. Problem-focused coping is aimed at changing or eliminating the source of the stress. Problem-based coping is the category of coping strategies that change stressful situations. In contrast, emotion-based coping is aimed at changing our negative feelings about stressful situations, and meaning-based coping is aimed at drawing positive emotion out of stressful circumstances.

Adolescence is a period in which there is a preoccupation with the search for identity (Collins, 1991). In terms of classical theory, it is a time of turmoil. It is also a time when the individual is developing psychosocial competence, including strategies for coping. Understanding how adolescents cope with stress is an area that is too little understood (Compas, 1987). Frydenberg and Lewis (1994) suggested that adolescents have a hierarchy of coping strategies, none of which is used exclusively. However, it is not known whether these strategies are dispositions or learned behaviors that remain fairly stable over time. Furthermore, other factors, such as gender, ethnicity, age, family circumstances, and the extent or intensity of the concern, may contribute to how the coping strategies are employed. In the light of this context the present study is entitled as “**problem based coping on negative emotion among higher secondary students**” for the present research has been taken up.

The focus for this study is on higher secondary school students. Sampling techniques that was used for the selection of the sample in this case was random sampling technique. A total of 300 school students were selected from three different schools in Madurai city. The investigator selected 100 students from Government school, 100 students from Government Aided School and 100 students from Private school.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- To find out the level of Problem based coping, state and trait anxiety among the higher secondary school students.
- To find out the significant difference between male and female of higher secondary school students on their Problem based coping, state and trait anxiety.
- To find out the significant difference on the Problem based coping of higher secondary school students based on type of school.

- To find out the significant difference on the Negative emotion of higher secondary school students based on type of school.

## 3. Hypotheses of the Study

- Gender has no impact on problem based coping, state and trait anxiety.
- Problem based coping of students has no relationship with State and Trait anxiety.

## 4. Research Tools Selected for the Present Study

The following tools have been used by the investigator to carry out this study.

- Personal data sheet developed by the investigator.
- Problem based coping author **Patricia Zuritaona and Matthew Mckay, (2011)**.
- State and Trait author **Charles D.Speilberger, (1983)**.

**Table 1:** Differentiation of Problem Based Coping scores of boys and girls from Government School

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
Problem based coping	Boys	50	23.26	4.11	0.667	N.S
	Girls	50	23.72	4.21		

N.S - Not Significant

**Table 2:** Differentiation of Problem Based Coping scores of boys and girl from Government Aided School

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
Problem based coping	Boys	50	23.63	3.94	0.84	NS
	Girls	50	24.15	3.96		

N.S - Not Significant

**Table 3:** Differentiation of Problem Based Coping scores of boys and girls from Private school

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
Problem based coping	Boys	50	23.57	4.38	0.77	N.S
	Girls	50	23.06	3.77		

N.S - Not Significant

From the table 1, 2 and 3, it is understood that the calculated ‘Critical Ratio’ values are not significantly greater than that the table CR values in the case of boys and girls from the total of sample. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and proved that there are no significant differences between problem based coping behavior of boys and girls from the total of the sample.

**Table 4:** Differentiation of State Anxiety scores of boys and girls from Government school

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
State Anxiety	Boys	50	19.38	4.63	0.256	NS
	Girls	50	19.60	4.63		

N.S - Not Significant

**Table 5:** Differentiation of State Anxiety scores of boys and girls from Government Aided School

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
State Anxiety	Boys	50	19.78	5.21	0.02	NS
	Girls	50	19.76	4.49		

N.S - Not Significant

From the table 4 and 5, it is understood that the calculated 'Critical Ratio' values are not significantly greater than that of the table CR values in the case of boys and girls from the Government and Government Aided school sample. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and proved that there are no significant differences between state anxiety behavior of boys and girls from the Government and Government Aided school sample.

**Table 6:** Differentiation of State Anxiety scores of boys and girls from Private school

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
State Anxiety	Boys	50	19.06	3.93	2.66	0.01
	Girls	50	20.90	4.39		

From the table 6, it is clearly understood that the calculated 'Critical Ratio' values are significantly greater than that of the table CR values ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $N=50$ ) in the case of boys and girls from the private school sample. Hence the hypothesis is rejected and proved that there is significant difference between state anxiety behavior of boys and girls from private school sample.

**Table 7:** Differentiation of Trait Anxiety scores of boys and girls from Government school

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
Trait Anxiety	Boys	50	20.76	3.59	0.304	NS
	Girls	50	20.62	3.14		

N.S - Not Significant

**Table 8:** Differentiation of Trait Anxiety scores of boys and girls from Government Aided School

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
Trait Anxiety	Boys	50	21.34	4.59	1.22	NS
	Girls	50	20.52	3.71		

N.S - Not Significant

From the table 7 and 8, it is understood that the calculated 'Critical Ratio' values are not significantly greater than that of the table CR values in the case of boys and girls from the Government and Government Aided School sample. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and proved that there are no significant differences between trait anxiety behavior of boys and girls from the Government and Government Aided school sample.

**Table 9:** Differentiation of Trait Anxiety scores of boys and girls from Private school

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	C.R	L.S
Trait Anxiety	Boys	50	20.04	3.02	3.63	0.01
	Girls	50	21.42	3.18		

N.S - Not Significant

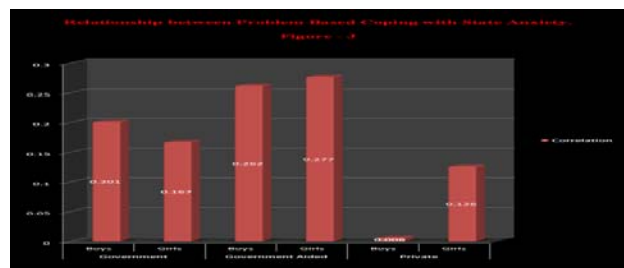
From the table 9, it is clearly understood that the calculated 'Critical Ratio' values are significantly greater than that of the table CR values ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $N=50$ ) in the case of boys and girls from the private school sample. Hence the hypothesis is rejected and proved that there is significant difference between trait anxiety behavior of boys and girls from private school sample.

**Table 10:** Relationships between Problem Based Coping with State Anxiety

Variable	Type of management	Gender	N	Correlation	T-test	L.S
Problem Based Coping and State Anxiety	Government	Boys	50	0.201	1.420	NS
		Girls	50	0.167	1.173	NS
	Government Aided	Boys	50	0.262	1.880	NS
		Girls	50	0.277	1.998	0.05
	Private	Boys	50	0.006	0.041	NS
		Girls	50	0.126	0.880	NS

N.S - Not Significant

From table 10 and also from figure J, it is understood that calculated correlation coefficient values is more than that of table correlation coefficient values ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $N=50$ ). Hence hypothesis is rejected and proved that there is significant relationship between problem based coping and state anxiety in the case of girls of Government Aided School. In the case of boys and girls of Government, Private and boys of Government Aided School, the calculated coefficient values were less than that table of correlation coefficient values. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and proved that there are no significant relationships between problem based coping and state anxiety of the sample.

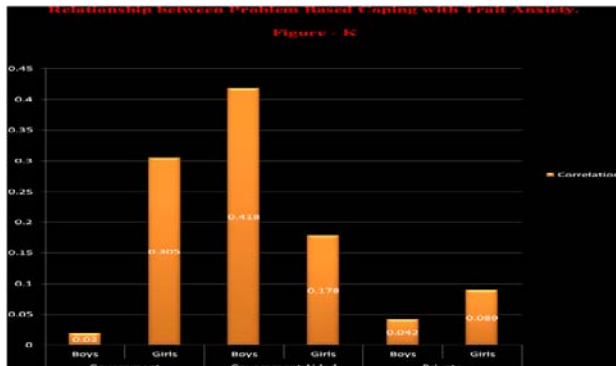


**Figure J:** Relationship between problem based coping with state anxiety

**Table 11:** Relationships between Problem Based Coping with Trait Anxiety

Variable	Type of management	Gender	N	Correlation	T-test	L.S
Problem Based Coping and Trait Anxiety	Government	Boys	50	0.020	0.139	NS
		Girls	50	0.305	2.220	0.05
	Government Aided	Boys	50	0.418	3.190	0.01
		Girls	50	0.178	1.253	NS
	Private	Boys	50	0.042	0.291	NS
		Girls	50	0.089	0.619	NS

N.S - Not Significant



**Figure K:** Relationship between problem based coping with trait anxiety

From table 11 and also from figure K, it is understood that calculated correlation coefficient values is more than that of table correlation coefficient values ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $N = 50$ ), ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $N = 50$ ). Hence hypothesis is rejected and proved that there are significant relationships between problems based coping and trait anxiety in the case of girls of Government and boys of Government Aided School of the sample.

In the case of boys and girls of Private school and boys of Government, girls of Government Aided School, the calculated correlation coefficient values were less than that table of correlation coefficient values. Hence the hypothesis is accepted and proved that there are no significant relationship between problems based coping and trait anxiety of the sample.

### 5. Discussion

The prevalence of psychological morbidity and mean GHQ-12 scores increased significantly between term 1 and term 3, with no significant gender differences. Principal stressors were related to medical training rather than to personal problems, in particular uncertainty about individual study 4 behavior, progress and aptitude, with specific concerns about assessment and the availability of learning materials. The group learning environment, including tutor performance, and interactions with peers and patients caused little stress. Students generally used active coping strategies. Both stressor group scoring and coping strategies showed some variation with gender and GHQ casernes. Increased student

feedback and guidance about progress throughout the year and the provision of adequate learning resources may reduce student stress. Educational or pastoral intervention regarding effective coping strategies may also be beneficial. Continued follow-up of this cohort could provide information to inform further curriculum development and, if appropriate, aid the design of programmes for the prevention of stress-related problems (Moffet.,k.j et al (2004)) Broidy and Agnew suggest that gender differences in the emotional response to strain help explain gender differences in deviant coping behavioral response to strain. Of special relevance here are Agnew’s conceptual distinction between other- and self-directed emotions and their systematic relationships with other- and self-directed deviance and crime. That is, other-directed, angry emotions tend to have stronger effects on confrontational, other-directed than self-directed deviance and crime, whereas self-directed emotions, such as depression and anxiety, tend to have larger effects on self-than other-directed deviance and crime. While the gendered-response thesis postulates that men and women respond to strain with different emotions (i.e., men get angry and hostile, whereas women feel anxious and depressed), prior research provides only limited support for the thesis. In fact, it was found that women report higher levels of anger as well as depression and anxiety than men, controlling for gender differences in emotional expressiveness (Mirowsky & Ross, (1995)). In other words, while women with social support are likely to employ legitimate coping strategies, if they end up using illegitimate ones, they are likely to engage in self-directed, ineffective, deviant coping behaviors, such as alcohol or drug use. In addition, women are more religiously involved and more deeply embedded in religious networks of social support than men (Ellison & Taylor, 1996; Jang & Johnson, 2003; Sherkat & Ellison, 1999), and thus more likely to use legitimate strategies and avoid confrontational illegitimate coping behaviors than men. The prevalence of psychological morbidity and mean GHQ-12 scores increased significantly between term 1 and term 3, with no significant gender differences. Principal stressors were related to medical training rather than to personal problems, in particular uncertainty about individual study behavior, progress and aptitude, with specific concerns about assessment and the availability of learning materials. The group learning environment, including tutor performance, and interactions with peers and patients caused little stress. Students generally used active coping strategies. Both stressor group scoring and coping strategies showed some variation with gender and GHQ casernes. Increased student feedback and guidance about progress throughout the year and the provision of adequate learning resources may reduce student stress. Educational or pastoral intervention regarding effective coping strategies may also be beneficial. Continued follow-up of this cohort could provide information to inform further curriculum development and, if appropriate, aid the design of programmes for the prevention of stress-related problems(Moffet.,k.j et al (2004)) Broidy and Agnew suggest that gender differences in the emotional response to strain help explain gender differences in deviant coping behavioral response to strain. Of special relevance here are Agnew’s conceptual distinction between other- and self-directed emotions and their systematic relationships with other- and self-directed deviance and crime. That is, other-directed, angry emotions tend to have stronger effects on confrontational, other-directed than self-directed deviance



and crime, whereas self-directed motions, such as depression and anxiety, tend to have larger effects on self- than other-directed deviance and crime. Ross in his study investigates that men and women respond to strain with different emotions (i.e., men get angry and hostile, whereas women feel anxious and stressed) and the prior research provides only limited support for this idea. It was found that women report higher levels of anger as well as depression and anxiety than men, controlling for gender. Frances in emotional expressiveness (Mirowsky & Ross, 1995).

## 6. Conclusion

Gender has an impact on problem based coping and state and trait anxiety. Problem based coping and state and trait anxiety are related to each other.

## 7. Educational Implications

Over the past few decades there has been increasing pressure on the students especially in the adolescent age group. The complexity of the society which is characterized by dynamic and changing mass of information, mass use of internet, multimedia and educational technology and change in the expectation of the labor market has compelled the student community to enhance their performance. This has brought in more anxiety and stress in the life of the students. Anxiety takes the form of state or trait anxiety. Situations such as anxiety towards examination, facing an interview, writing competitive exams and so on are related to state anxiety.

Communication skills, phobia (social and agoraphobia) are the major components of trait anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most common psychological disorders in school-aged children and adolescents worldwide. Anxiety is associated with substantial negative effects on children's social, emotional and academic success. Specific effects include poor social and coping skills, often leading to avoidance of social interactions. Importantly, school avoidance, decreased problem-solving abilities, and lower academic achievement have also been observed. Anxiety is considered to be a universal phenomenon existing across cultures, although its contexts and manifestations are influenced by cultural beliefs and practices. In India, the main documented cause of anxiety among schoolchildren and adolescents is parents' high educational expectations and pressure for academic achievement. After the Secondary Examination, all students appear in the Class XII Final Board Examination known as the Higher Secondary Examination. Competition is again ferocious as performance in this examination determines university entrance. Admission to courses in Medicine, Engineering and Management are the most preferred choices for parents because these qualifications are seen to guarantee future job prospects. It is relevant to mention here that in one year alone in India, 2320 children, or more than six children per day, committed suicide because of failure in examinations.

Problem based coping gives the students a long term solution. Enhancing or developing resources which are components of problem based coping are pro active approaches to coping. The development of emotional resources, such as a belief in one's own competence, worth,

and purpose, can contribute to one's coping capacity. In such a situation problem based coping helps in changing stressful situation. Problem based coping promotes high order thinking as students gather information regarding their problem and access their credibility. Problem based coping helps in meta-cognition and self regulated learning. Students become active programme solvers. Problem based coping integrates knowledge with practice. Problem based coping enables more effective and enjoyable learning.

Since a very limited number of studies have addressed anxiety among school-aged children and adolescents in India, and because of the seriousness of its adverse consequences, it was considered important to explore this issue further.

## 8. Suggestion for Further Research

Some suggestions with regard to possibilities of the research in the field of education are offered with a view of stimulate prospective research workers in this area.

- The study could be extended to College Students.
- The present study has done only in some schools at Madurai District; similar study comprising different districts can be attempted.
- The sample size is restricted to 300 School Students in the present study. It can be done by including more number of schools students.

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