

Social Skills and Coping with Stress

**Manju Mishra**

Associate Professor,
Deptt. of Psychology,
H.R.P.G. College,
Khalilabad,
Santkabir Nagar

Abstract

This paper examines the role of social skills in working with stressful life conditions. Social skills make one more competent and capable of successfully coping with stressful life conditions. When one effectively copes with the stressor, he experiences more well being too. With this hypothesis the study was framed to investigate the role of social skills in coping and well being of women. 210 women between 25— 45 age range participated in the study. Among them half woman were working woman and half were homemakers. It was hypothesized that social skilled subjects will do more effective coping and subsequently they will experience better being. Six social skills, Eight coping styles and two aspects of wellbeing namely satisfaction with life and happiness were measured by using questionnaire and interviews.

Results revealed social skills were positively correlated with coping styles and with well being. Social sensitivity skill, emotional sensitivity skill and emotional control skill were found to be positively correlated with three out of eight coping styles investigated. Two social skills, namely social sensitivity and emotional control were found to be positively correlated with two aspects of well being ie satisfactions with life and happiness. Thus, the findings suggest that development of some social skills can facilitates in effective coping and can enhance once well being too. It is just because of social skills that Savitri could fetch her husband satyawan back from cruel hands of death.

Keywords: Social Skills, Coping Style, Well Being.

Introduction

Stress has become inevitable in our fast and competitive life style. This competition, tension, frustration and anger is affecting our physical and psychological well- being. Although we can not totally avoid stress in our lives, but we can do something to decrease its negative effects. We can not remain in a continuous state of tension. We can successfully face the stress by using appropriate coping strategies and social skills. Coping has been defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Lazarus (1966) as the behavioural and cognitive efforts on uses to manage the internal and external demands of a stressful situation. Two form of coping have described by Lazarus and his colleagues (1984) are problem focused coping and emotion focused coping. Problem focused coping strategies are directed towards the management of a problem while emotion focused coping strategies are directed towards amelioration of the association level of emotional stress. Problem focused coping strategies have been reported to have positive association with measures psychological well being (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen and DeLongis (1986). While emotion focused coping strategies tend to be associated with poor mental health (Aldwin and Revenson 1987, Terry 1991 c). Coping strategies are also classified: as approach coping and avoidance coping strategies. According to Suls and Fletcher (1985) approach coping refers to the use of strategies that focus on both source of stress and reactions to it, whereas avoidance coping refers to the use of strategies which focus away from both source of stress and reactions to it. According to Pestonjee (1999) coping can have effect on three kinds of outcomes psychological, social and physiological. From a psychological perspective, coping can have an effect on person's moral emotional reaction e.g. level of depression or anxiety, or the balance between positive trend and negative feelings (Bradburn, 1969). From a social perspective it influences one's functional effectiveness, such as employability, sociability' (Penne 1974), the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships or to the degree to much useful social roles are tilled. From a physiological perspective, outcome includes short terms consequences such as the development of certain disease.

Review of Literature

Social skills are related with this social outcome of the stress. Social skills facilitate in effective coping with the stressful situation. People come out of difficult situation by using their skills. Importance of social skills in effective social functioning of the individual is evident in researches.

There is no single perfect definition of social skills. Researches argue that basic sending receiving of information represents key social skills. Riggio (1986) has emphasized the basic social skill component that underlie global social skills in sending. Skills in receiving and skills in controlling the communication of interpersonal behavior. These three basic communication skills operate in two years i.e no verbal or emotional communication or social communication. Studies have shown that social skills facilitate in coping with stressful life condition. Socially competent individual successfully their difficulties and they successful come out the problem. Therefore they are more happier too. Thus social skills not only facilitate in effective coping but also enhance individual's well being. Segrin, C et.al (2007) have found in a study on 500 university students that social skills were positively associated with to indicators of psychological well-being: reduced symptoms of depression and life-satisfaction. Social skills were also predicted to be associated with a reduction in the experience of stress. This reduced stress experience was hypothesized to explain the social skills-well-being association. Vanessa, et.al (2015) have found in a study on 454 adolescents 13-17 years that social skills were positively correlated with adolescents psychological well being. The social skills of empathy, self control, civility, social resourcefulness and affective approach as well as social support, appraisal from friends and family were the best predictors of adolescents' psychological well- being. Similar result have been found by many researchers Durlak etal (2011) have found in their study on school children that social skills influence in personal well-being of students. DeRosier, M. E. (2004) has found that lack of social skills is linked to bullying and severe problems in life at all ages.

Significances of the study

The present study investigates the relationship of six social skills with seven coping styles and two aspects of well being. Six social were (i) Emotional Expressively (ii) Social Sensitivity (iii) Emotional Control (iv) Social Expressively (v) Social Sensitivity and (vi) Social Control. Eight coping styles are (i) Active coping (ii) Planning and Restraint coping (iii) Social Emotional Support (iv) Mental Behavior Disengagement (v) Positive Reinterpretations and Growth (vi) Religion (vii) Alcohol/ Drug use (viii) Humor. Two aspects of well being were (i) Satisfaction with life (ii) Happiness

Objectives of the Study

Present study has two objectives.

1. To investigation the role os social skills in coping with stress in women.
2. To investigate the role of social skills in enhancing well-being in women.

Hypothesis

Two hypotheses were framed for the study.

1. Social Skills will be positively correlated with coping with stress.
2. Social Skills will be positively correlated with well-being.

Method**Sample**

210 women between the age of 25 to 45 years participated in this investigation as subject. They were selected from three districts of eastern UP i.e .Gorakhpur, Basti and Sant Kabir Nagar. Half of the subject, i.e. one hundred and five subjects were working outside home and the other half inside their homes. Subjects were selected by stratified random sampling strategy on the basis of their socio-economic and working Status.

Measures**Social Skills**

Social Skills were measured by social skills inventory developed by Riggio (1986)

Coping Style

Coping was assessed by the 'COPE' developed by Carver. Scheier and Weintraub, (1989).

Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being was assessed by two measures.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)

The satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, (1985); Pavot and Diener, (1993).

Fordyce Sixty Second Measure of happiness

Second Measure of subjective well-being 'The Fordyce Sixty Second Measure of happiness' was developed by Fordyce in 1977..

Procedure

In first phase data was collected on middle class. In the second phase data was collected on higher class and in the last phase data was collected on lower class.

In the very first phase data was collected on middle class working subjects. Prior permission of officers was taken before contacting the participants. When the participants agreed to participate., all the measure were administered and instructions were communicate properly.

Results

Results have been presented in table 1 and table 2. As the table I shows social skills—are found to be positively correlated with coping styles.

Social Expressivity (SE)

Social expressivity was positively correlated with one coping style, planning and Restraint coping style.

Social Sensitivity (SS)

Social sensitivity was positively correlated with three coping styles that were planning and restraint coping, religion and humor. It is nateworthy that social sensitivity was negatively correlated with coping style of religion.

Social Control (SC)

Social control skills was not found to be significantly correlated with any coping style.

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Emotional Expressivity (EE)

Emotional Expressivity was positively correlated with one coping style, humor.

Emotional Sensitivity (ES)

Emotional sensitivity was positively correlated with four coping styles, namely Instrumental Social and Emotional Support, Mental and Behavioural Disengagement, positive reinterpretations and growth and coping style of religion.

Emotional Control (EC)

Emotional control was significantly correlated with three coping styles. It was positively correlated

with one coping styles planning and restraint coping style and it was negatively correlated with coping style of instrumental social emotional support and religion.

Total Score on Social Skills (TSS)

Total score on social skills was positively correlated with planning and restraint coping style.

Social Skills anal Well-Being

Table 2 shows the correlations between the six social skills and two aspects of well being. It is evident from the table that two social skills namely social sensitivity and emotional control were positively correlated with satisfaction with life and happiness.

Table No. 1

Correlations between Social Skills and Coping Styles

Social Skills	Active coping	Planing	Social Emotional support	Mental and behavioural disengagement	Positive Reinterpretation and growth	Religion	Humor
S.E.	0.10	15* P=0.02	-0.06	-0.11	-0.01	-0.10	0.007
S.S.	0.10	0.17** P=0.01	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.14* P=0.03	0.14* P=0.03
S.C.	0.007	-0.01	-0.09	0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.03
E.E.	-0.03	0.07	-0.03	-0.04	0.07	-0.04	0.13* P=0.05
E.S.	0.01	-0.06	0.14* P=0.04	0.14* P=0.04	0.13* P=0.05	0.14* P=0.04	-0.09
E.C.	0.10	0.16** P=0.01	-0.13* P=0.06	-0.12	0.06	0.15* P=0.02	0.09
T.S.S.	0.10	0.14* P=0.03	-0.06	-0.05	0.04	-0.11	0.09

Table No. 2

Correlations between Social Skills and Well-Being

Social Skills	Well being	
	Satisfaction with life	Happiness
Social Expressivity	-0.01	-0.002
Social Sensitivity	0.13* P=0.04	0.19*** P=0.005
Social Control	0.02	0.02
Emotional Expressivity	0.10	0.11
Emotional Sensitivity	-0.05	-0.03
Emotional Control	0.13* P=0.04	0.19*** P=0.005
Total Score on Social Skills	0.10	0.12

Discussion

It is evident from the results that social skills significantly influence one's coping style and well being. Particularly three social skills namely social sensitivity, emotional sensitivity and emotional control significantly influenced women's coping style and two aspects of well-being. Socially sensitive individuals are attentive to others. They know the social norms and expectations, they are over concerned about the appropriateness of their actions. This social sensitivity helps one to effectively face the stressor. While emotional sensitivity skill is the skill of receiving and interpreting the nonverbal communications of others. Emotionally sensitive individual are sensitive to others emotional expressions.

This skill also facilitate in coping and well being of individuals. Emotional control skill is the

ability to control and regulate emotional and nonverbal behaviour. Such individuals can control their emotional expressions. This skill too, helps one to tactfully handle the stressful life conditions. Emotionally controlled individuals do not easily loose patience and express their tensions. They do not loose their emotional control easily and that is why they cope more effectively. They systematically plan and patiently wait for appropriate time of action.

Psychologists have found that social skills play significant role in coping with stressful life conditions. Social skills moderate the relationship between social support and coping. Cohen and Syme (1985), Gottlieb (1985) Heller and Swindle (1983). Possession of well-developed social skills is related with social adjustment and psychological well-being. Possession of social skills is also related to feeling of competence over the social environment and psychological health and well-being (Riggio, 1986). Riggio (1987) says that individuals who are extremely socially skilled may be viewed at times charismatic. Such individuals possess such high levels of social skills across all dimensions that they are impressive and successful in social life. Riggio (1987) calls them "The Charisma Quotient".

Social skills contribute in both types of coping style approach and avoidance as per demand of the situation. For example social sensitivity skill is negatively correlated with coping style of religion. It means socially sensitivity women the ability to interpret verbal communication of other. They were sensitivity to social norms and expectations. SS women did not use religion as a coping style. Instead

they try to face the stressful condition in socially desirable ways. Perhaps they found religion as a avoidance coping style. So, they instead of sticking to religion, they tried to cope with other approach focused coping style.

Emotional control skill was also negatively correlated with coping style of religion. This means that the women also had emotional control, they were able to control and regulate emotional and nonverbal displays. Such women had ability to express or hide their emotional expression. They do not go for religious help. Perhaps religion as a coping style seemed escape or avoidance from the situation. They might hard faith in God but did not completely become depend on God's help in difficult situations. As for as psychological well being of the women as concerned, here too, two social skills, social sensitivity and emotional control were positively correlated with satisfaction with life and happiness. This means that the- women who were socially sensitive are conversant with social norms and expectation, they try to behave in socially desirable way. Therefore they are more happy and satisfied with their lives. In the same way emotionally controlled women are also more happy and satisfied with their lives.

Segrin C (2007) has also found social skills to be associated with two indicators of psychological well-being: reduced symptoms of depression and life satisfaction social skills were also found to be related with a reduction in the experience of stress. Nair A.R, Ravindranath, S. and Thomas. J (2013) have also focused social skills contribution in enhancing well being. In another study on adolescents, Leme V.B.R. Prette Z.A.P.D. and Coimbra. S. (2015) found that social skills were associated with adolescents' well-being. Particularly the social skill of empathy, self control, civility, social resourcefulness and affective approach and social support from family and friends to be best predictors of adolescents well-being in the study founded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation a link between children's social skills in kinder garden and their well-being adulthood.

Durlak etal (2011) have found in their study on school children that social skills influence in personal well-being of students. DeRosier, M. E. (2004) has found that lack of social skills is linked to bullying and severe problems in life at all ages. That is why attaining good social skills is necessary. Zin, J.E (2004) has found that in addition to personal well-being, social skills have an impact on personal success by enabling better academic and cognitive skills.

In sum, the finding suggests that development of social skill is helpful in one's coping behavior and it also positively influences one's psychological well-being. So, program for development of social skill should be launched. The person becomes socially skilled; he can successfully cope with his life problems and will experience more psychological well-being too. Stress is inevitable, no doubt, but we can counteract its negative consequences by using our social skills tactfully.

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