

Proactive coping skills and life satisfaction among adults in Haryana across two regions

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ABSTRACT

The present study intended to compare the proactive coping skills and life satisfaction of male adults in different residential area. A sample of 120 males, belonging to NCR (Gurgaon) and Non-NCR (Hisar) were selected in the age range 35-40 years. Proactive coping skills were measured using Hindi Adaptation of Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) developed by Bhushan *et al.* (2010) and levels of life satisfaction among adults using Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Alam and Srivastava (2001). Results indicate that non-NCR respondents were using better proactive coping skills than their counterparts and perceived better life satisfaction. Significant differences existed in proactive coping skills and life satisfaction in corporate sector across two regions. Results regarding to correlation data revealed that proactive coping skills and sub aspects had strong positive correlation with sub aspects of life satisfaction and composite life satisfaction.

Key Words : Proactive coping skills, Life satisfaction, Health satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

A feeling of satisfaction with life is an important factor for a general sense of well-being (Neugarten, 1982) and has been emphasized in research related to subjective well-being. Life satisfaction often refers to the attitudes that individuals have about their past, present as well as future in relation to their psychological well-being (Chadha and Willigen, 1995). Life satisfaction is defined as an individual's global assessment of his or her life in positive terms (Diener *et al.*, 1999). Life satisfaction can be assessed specific to a particular domain of life (e.g. work, family) or globally. The domains-of-life literature states that life can be approached as a general construct of many specific domains, and that life satisfaction can be understood as the result of satisfaction in the domains of life (Cummins, 2003; Salvatore and Sastre, 2001). Consequently, a relationship between life satisfaction and satisfaction in domains of life is assumed. Praag *et al.* (2003) studied the relationship of satisfaction in

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different domains of life (health, financial situation, job, housing, leisure, and environment) and satisfaction with life as a whole. They stated that “satisfaction with life as a whole can be seen as an aggregate concept, which can be unfolded into its domain components”.

Proactive coping is gaining popularity in the coping literature and involves a somewhat different approach than the traditional way we considered coping skills. Greenglass (2001) describes proactive coping as being multidimensional and forward-looking and an approach that incorporates a confirmatory and positive approach to dealing with stressors. Proactive coping is mind set or way of thinking about the future that consists of building up and accumulating resources that will assist the individual in meeting and facing challenging goals and developing more fully as a person. What contributes to or generates life satisfaction is a multi-faceted concept. People who use proactive coping skills are motivated in achieving personal and professional growth. If an individual wants to increase his or her life satisfaction, then you could expect a person who uses proactive coping skills to use strategically plan ways in advance to achieve that goal.

It is known that the nature of issues, socioeconomic and cultural background of adults in NCR and Non-NCR are different. There is a long-standing interest of researchers in the impact of proactive coping skills on individual's life satisfaction. Only comparative studies carried out in different social and ecological settings could help to understand the similarities and differences of human behavior against these backgrounds and to come up with innovative strategies for human welfare while learning from each other. The present cross regional study attempts to realize the same and is highly valuable to balance the gap between a developed and a developing region because greater possibilities for evolving novel ideas for improvement could be explored through such efforts. It is hoped that present research on life satisfaction would open new vistas to workers engaged in guidance, counselling, social work and researchers in the area of human development and family studies, personality, clinical psychology, and sociology. Thus present study was planned with the following specific objectives:

1. To compare the proactive coping skills and life satisfaction in two regions among adults
2. To examine the comparison of proactive coping skills and life satisfaction in two service status across two regions

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The total sample for the study consisted of 120 male adults' selected using stratified random sampling technique from NCR (National Capital Region) and non-NCR (Non-National Capital Region) age ranged 35-40 years. Gurgaon city was randomly selected from NCR as it has corporate culture and Hisar city was randomly selected from non-NCR, as it has non-corporate culture. 60 male adults from Gurgaon city and 60 male adults from Hisar city were randomly selected working in government and corporate sector.

Measures:

The Hindi Adaptation of the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI) developed by Bhushan

et al. (2010) was used to measure proactive coping skills. The scale consisted of 41 items based on Likert's four point scale ranging from "not at all true", "barely true", "somewhat true", and "completely true" assigning a score of 1,2,3,4 respectively. The minimum and maximum scores were 41 and 164 respectively. A high score indicates high proactive coping skills. Responses were added to obtain a summed score for each of the 6 subscales *i.e.* reflective coping, strategic planning, preventive coping, instrumental support seeking, emotional support seeking and avoidance coping. The inventory of the scale indicates external criterion reliability ranging from 0.71 to 0.85 at 0.1 level.

Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) developed by Alam and Srivastava (2001) was used to measure life satisfaction in male adults. The Life Satisfaction Scale comprises of 60 items related to six areas of life satisfaction *viz.*, health, personal, economic, marital, social and job satisfaction. The maximum possible score for this scale is 60 and minimum score is 15. The scale has 60 items, 10 each for health, personal, economic, marital, social, and job satisfaction. Every item is to be responded either in Yes or No. Every 'Yes' responses were assigned 1 score and 'No' response was given 'Zero'. The sum of scores for each item was obtained for the entire scale. The test retest reliability of the scale is 0.84 and validity is 0.74 and 0.84 at 0.1 level.

Procedure:

Heads of the institutes were contacted personally to get permission for conducting the research and requested to identify the sample of married male adults of 35-40 years old having at least 5 years of work experience. Date and time of visits were finalized with each respondent well in advance.

The adults were explained about importance and objectives of the study in the beginning of interview. The data for predictors and dependent variables were collected individually with the help of standardized tools. They were asked to read the instructions given in the inventory carefully before filling it.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of proactive coping skills as per residential area :

Table 1 reflects region wise comparison of proactive coping skills of respondents. The results disclosed that significant difference ($z=2.04$, $p<0.05$) existed between the composite proactive coping skills of NCR and Non NCR adults. Mean scores determined that the adults of Non-NCR had significantly better composite proactive coping skills ($M=157.10$) against NCR adults ($M=145.25$). While, significant differences subsisted for reflective coping and instrumental support seeking ($z=2.54$, 1.97 , $p<0.05$, respectively) between adults of Non-NCR and NCR.

Non-significant difference were also observed between adults belonging to two regions for the strategic planning, preventive coping, emotional support seeking and avoidance coping, which indicates that adults of both the areas were nearly equivalent in using these skills. However, mean scores disclosed that adults of Non-NCR possessed slightly better reflective coping, strategic planning, preventive coping, instrumental support seeking and emotional support seeking ($M=32.25$, 11.85 , 29.10 , 22.01 and 13.10 , respectively) except avoidance

Table 1: Comparison of proactive coping skills as per residential area

Sr. No.	Residential area	NCR (Mean ± S.D.) (n=60)	Non-NCR (Mean ± S.D.) (n=60)	Z- Calculated
I. Aspects of proactive coping skills				
1.	Reflective coping	29.18 ± 6.60	32.25 ± 6.58	2.54*
2.	Strategic planning	11.36 ± 2.68	11.85 ± 2.60	1.00
3.	Preventive coping	27.48 ± 5.91	29.10 ± 6.08	1.47
4.	Instrumental support seeking	20.08 ± 5.47	22.01 ± 5.27	1.97*
5.	Emotional support seeking	12.00 ± 3.39	13.10 ± 3.80	1.67
6.	Avoidance coping	7.38 ± 2.08	7.08 ± 2.31	0.74
II	Composite proactive coping skills	145.25 ± 32.21	157.10 ± 31.12	2.04*

*Significant at 0.05 level

coping (M=7.08) as that of NCR adults (M=29.18, 11.36, 27.48, 20.08, 12.00, 7.38, respectively). In crux, data revealed that Non-NCR adults had relatively better proactive coping skills than their counterparts.

Table 2 shows comparison of proactive coping skills across region and service status. Comparison within the government sector employees under two regions had non-significant differences for composite proactive coping skills as well as on all the sub-aspects except avoidance coping skills (z=2.40, p<0.05) having significant difference. But examination of mean scores established that adults from Non-NCR had slightly higher composite proactive coping skills (M=157.66) than their counterparts from NCR (M=152.50). Same trend of result was seen in all sub aspects of proactive coping skills while adults from NCR had slightly higher avoidance coping skills (M=7.63) against adults from Non-NCR (M=6.23).

Table 2 further, unveils comparison of proactive coping skills within respondents of

Table 2 : Comparison of proactive coping skills by service status and residential area

Sr. No.	Service status	Government sector		Z- calculated	Corporate sector		Z- calculated
		NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)	Non-NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)		NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)	Non-NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)	
I. Aspects of proactive coping skills							
1.	Reflective coping	31.63±7.00	32.86±7.46	0.66	26.73±5.23	31.63±5.62	3.49*
2.	Strategic planning	11.56±2.56	11.83±2.87	0.37	11.16±2.81	11.86±2.35	1.04
3.	Preventive coping	28.83±6.63	28.73±6.72	0.05	26.13±4.84	29.46±5.45	2.50*
4.	Instrumental support seeking	20.33±5.96	22.43±5.48	1.42	19.83±5.02	21.60±5.10	1.35
5.	Emotional support seeking	12.43±3.30	13.33±4.20	0.92	11.56±3.48	12.86±3.41	1.46
6.	Avoidance coping	7.63±2.32	6.23±2.17	2.40*	7.93±2.16	7.13±1.81	1.55
II	Composite proactive coping skills	152.50±34.17	157.66±32.94	0.59	138.00±28.88	156.53±29.75	2.44*

*Significant at 0.05 level

corporate sector of NCR and Non-NCR and it was found that significant differences existed for composite proactive coping skills ($z=2.44, p<0.05$). Adults working in corporate sector from Non-NCR had better composite proactive coping skills ($M=156.53$) than adults engaged in corporate sector in NCR ($M=138.00$). A cursory look over mean scores of adults with regard to strategic planning, instrumental support seeking, emotional support seeking, and avoidance coping aspects revealed non-significant differences between corporate sectors' job holders of NCR and Non-NCR, whilst significant differences existed within rest of the two aspects *i.e.* reflective coping ($z=3.49$), preventive coping ($z=2.50$) significance at 0.05 level. Inspection of mean scores depicts that use of reflective coping ($M=26.73$) preventive coping ($M=26.13$) was less prevalent in NCR respondents than adults from corporate sector of Non-NCR ($M=31.63$ and 29.46 , respectively).

Comparison of life satisfaction as per residential area :

Table 3 reflects comparison of life satisfaction among males on the basis of their residential area. Significant differences were observed between respondents from NCR and Non-NCR for composite life satisfaction ($z= 2.34$) and satisfaction on health ($z=1.99$), personal ($z=2.02$) and social life ($z=3.89$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance. Comparison of mean scores further revealed that males of Non-NCR were more satisfied with their life ($M=44.58$), personal ($M=7.33$) and social life ($M=7.01$) than males of NCR ($M=40.86, 6.61$ and 5.73 , respectively). Whereas, data related to economic, marital and job satisfaction highlighted non-significant differences on the basis of area of residence. However, mean scores comparison showed that Non-NCR residents were slightly more satisfied on economic ($M=7.46$), marital ($M=7.21$), and job component ($M=6.86$) than males of NCR ($M= 7.38, 6.73$ and 6.56 , respectively). Thus from aforementioned illustration, it is inferred that Non-NCR males experienced more life satisfaction than NCR males.

Table 3: Comparison of life satisfaction as per residential area				
Sr. No.	Residential area	NCR (Mean ± S.D.) (n=60)	Non-NCR (Mean ± S.D.) (n=60)	Z- Calculated
I.	Aspects of life satisfaction			
1.	Health	8.01 ± 1.15	7.83 ± 1.16	1.99*
2.	Personal	6.61 ± 1.96	7.33 ± 1.91	2.02*
3.	Economic	7.38 ± 1.57	7.46 ± 1.56	0.29
4.	Marital	6.73 ± 1.65	7.21 ± 1.97	1.45
5.	Social	5.73 ± 1.92	7.01 ± 1.68	3.89*
6.	Job	6.56 ± 1.12	6.86 ± 1.25	1.37
II.	Composite life satisfaction	40.86 ± 8.74	44.58 ± 8.63	2.34*

*Significant at 0.05 level

Comparison of respondents having the same service status against area of residence has been presented in Table 4. Non-significant differences subsisted between males of Non-NCR and NCR working in government sector on composite life satisfaction and all its sub aspects *i.e.* health, personal, economic, marital, social and job satisfaction. A close observation of mean values depicted that Non-NCR males working in government sectors experienced

slightly more satisfaction on composite ($M=43.86$) and sub aspects *i.e.* personal ($M=7.33$), economic ($M=7.50$), marital ($M=7.26$), social ($M=6.73$) and job satisfaction ($M=7.06$) than NCR males ($M=42.63, 6.90, 7.40, 6.76, 6.46$ and 6.86 , respectively).

On the other hand comparison of respondents from corporate sector in two regions depicted significant differences with regard to composite life ($z=4.19$) and satisfaction in personal ($z=4.37$), marital ($z=3.51$), social ($z=4.97$) and job ($z=2.75$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance. Non-NCR males engaged in corporate sectors experienced significantly higher satisfaction on composite, personal, marital, social and job satisfaction ($M=46.53, 7.76, 7.66, 7.30$ and 6.86 , respectively) as compared NCR males ($M=37.86, 5.90, 6.20, 5.00$ and 6.06 , respectively). Further the data in table also revealed that differences in respondents of corporate sector on health and economic satisfaction were statistically non-significant.

Sr. No.	Service status	Government sector		Z-Calculated	Corporate sector		Z-Calculated
		NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)	Non-NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)		NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)	Non-NCR (Mean±S.D.) (n=30)	
I.	Aspects of life satisfaction						
1.	Health	7.63 ± 1.44	7.20 ± 0.55	1.53	7.63 ± 1.12	7.06 ± 1.11	1.95
2.	Personal	6.90 ± 2.23	7.33 ± 1.84	0.81	5.90 ± 1.84	7.76 ± 1.43	4.37*
3.	Economic	7.40 ± 1.47	7.50 ± 1.90	0.22	7.26 ± 1.17	7.53 ± 1.67	0.71
4.	Marital	6.76 ± 2.09	7.26 ± 1.70	1.01	6.20 ± 1.44	7.66 ± 1.76	3.51*
5.	Social	6.46 ± 1.43	6.73 ± 1.87	0.61	5.00 ± 2.08	7.30 ± 1.44	4.97*
6.	Job	6.86 ± 1.43	7.06 ± 0.82	0.66	6.06 ± 1.17	6.86 ± 1.07	2.75*
II.	Composite life satisfaction	42.63 ± 9.53	43.86 ± 7.85	0.54	37.86±8.68	46.53±7.26	4.19*

*Significant at 0.05 level

Relationship of proactive coping skills and life satisfaction :

Results of correlation between life satisfaction and proactive coping skills of respondents have been exhibited in Table 5. Pearson coefficient correlation analysis disclosed that statistically strong positive and significant correlations existed between composite proactive coping skills and composite life satisfaction ($r=0.80$) as well as its sub aspects *viz.*, health ($r=0.43$), personal ($r=0.81$), economic ($r=0.83$), marital ($r=0.79$), social ($r=0.73$) and job ($r=0.75$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance. This shows that respondents who efficiently utilized composite proactive coping skills are more satisfied with their life as compared to those, who are low on utilization of these skills. Positive and significant strong correlations were also observed between reflective coping skills and life satisfaction, *viz.*, composite life ($r=0.77$), health ($r=0.39$), personal ($r=0.79$), economic ($r=0.77$), marital ($r=0.79$), social ($r=0.76$), and job ($r=0.73$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance. Moving to strategic planning, it was seen that strategic planning also had a strong positive significant correlation with composite life ($r=0.74$), health ($r=0.48$), personal ($r=0.76$), economic ($r=0.78$), marital ($r=0.72$), social ($r=0.73$) and job satisfaction ($r=0.69$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance. Data in table further pinpointed strong positive and significant correlations of preventive coping with

composite life satisfaction ($r=0.71$) and sub aspects of life satisfaction viz., health, personal, economic, marital, social and job satisfaction ($r=0.33, 0.76, 0.75, 0.71, 0.70$, and $0.65, p<0.05$, respectively). The present findings indicate that with an increase in utilization of proactive, reflective, strategic planning and prevent coping skills against life stressors there is also an increase in positive perception regarding satisfaction with health, personal, economic, marital, social ad job on responsibilities. Contrary to above findings, strong negative yet significant correlation coefficients were observed between instrumental support seeking and life satisfaction (composite, $r=-0.69$; health, $r=-0.38$; personal, $r=-0.71$; economic, $r=-0.77$; marital, $r=-0.66$; social, $r=-0.69$ and job satisfaction, $r=-0.61$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance.

Inspecting the data in the table related to correlation of emotional support seeking with other aspects of life satisfaction, a negative significantly strong correlation of emotional support seeking with composite life satisfaction ($r=-0.73$) and sub aspects viz., health ($r=-0.43$), personal ($r=-0.76$), economic ($r=-0.77$), marital ($r=-0.75$), social ($r=-0.72$) and job ($r=-0.69$) at 0.05 per cent level significance was seen.

Further, regarding avoidance coping, data observed significant and negative strong correlation with life satisfaction and its sub aspects i.e. composite life ($r=-0.60$), health ($r=-0.18$), personal ($r=-0.64$), economic ($r=-0.70$), marital ($r=-0.63$), social ($r=-0.60$) and job satisfaction ($r=-0.54$) at 0.05 per cent level of significance. Since, high scores on instrumental support seeking, emotional support seeking and avoidance coping indicate low levels of satisfaction on different life aspects, these findings indicate that more dependency on later coping skills leads to lower satisfaction in life.

Table 5: Correlation of proactive coping skills with life satisfaction

Sr. No.	Proactive coping skills	RC	SP	PR	ISS	ESS	AC	CMPC
Life satisfaction								
I.	Aspects of life satisfaction							
1.	Health	0.39*	0.48*	0.33*	-0.38*	-0.43*	-0.18*	0.43*
2.	Personal	0.79*	0.76*	0.76*	-0.71*	-0.76*	-0.64*	0.81*
3.	Economic	0.77*	0.78*	0.75*	-0.77*	-0.77*	-0.70*	0.83*
4.	Marital	0.79*	0.72*	0.71*	-0.66*	-0.75*	-0.63*	0.79*
5.	Social	0.76*	0.73*	0.70*	-0.69*	-0.72*	-0.60*	0.73*
6.	Job	0.73*	0.69*	0.65*	-0.61*	-0.69*	-0.54*	0.75*
II.	Composite life satisfaction	0.77*	0.74*	0.71*	-0.69*	-0.73*	-0.60*	0.80*

*Significant at 0.05 level

Note: RC (Reflective coping), SP (Strategic planning), PR (Preventive coping), ISS (Instrumental Support seeking), ESS (Emotional support seeking), AC (Avoidance coping) and CMPC (Composite proactive coping skills)

Results of the present study disclosed that males from non-NCR were better in their proactive coping skills as well as on sub aspects except avoidance coping where NCR male possessed higher avoidance coping. Results of comparison illustrated significant differences in proactive coping skills as well as sub aspects on the basis of service status and residential area. The plausible reason for this lays behind that NCR is a developed city and having busy life style where adults trying to adopt to thus life style by engaging in corporate sector to earn

much better income. In contrast, non-NCR is a developing and small city where everything available within some decided area, not having a fast life style and also having deep rooted traditional values so they use proactive coping skills in a proper way whether working in government and corporate sector. The adults in the non-NCR get social support as the society where they live is close knitted and care for each other. It can be said that culture and environment are a very big agent to develop a proactive coping skills in adults. The results get supported from the views of (Settersten, 2007) that young adults endure a great sense of instability because of these new, different, and unclear experiences in changing scenario; they are taking new pathways into adulthood, and they are doing so in a world that has changed considerably.

NCR has a big difference in culture, environment, and work proficiency as well as competition and mostly is IT based, however both types of organization/institutions are available there for getting job. Most of the adults engaged in corporate sector want to make career in that field to have high social and economic status. Whereas, if we look to the non-NCR, it is developing city and socially close knitted having very few institutions related to government and corporate sector. It can be said that adults of non-NCR have time for their family and discuss problem with elders and neighbor develop hence positive attitudes and proactive coping skills. But NCR' adults can't do same because they cannot give time to himself or family and no social support leading to poor proactive coping skills and negative attitude. Individuals who possess the ability to adjust and cope to the demands of the environment are able to adapt to various challenges in life (Cheng, 2001). According to previous research (Greenglass, 2002; Schwarzer and Taubert, 2002), there is an integral relationship between proactive coping and social support. Resources such as social support lead to the development of proactive coping (Greenglass, 2002). Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) also indicated that type of social support had positive influence of proactive coping and environmental factors in terms of burden concurred demand and busyness had negative influence of proactive coping skills of individuals. Proactive coping encompasses and uses social and non-social resources including visions about aspirations, positive emotional strategies, and goal setting (Greenglass, 2001). Fogarty *et al.* (1999) reported a significant amount of self-reported strain can be predicted on the basis of personal dispositions, coping skills and environmental factors. Aslam *et al.* (2011) reported that both public and private sector employees were neutral regarding psychological well-being but employees of public sectors enjoy more than private sectors' employee.

Significant differences were observed in life satisfaction on the basis of service status by residential area. Respondents from non-NCR had relatively better count in good level regarding different aspects of life satisfaction. Results regarding to correlation data revealed that proactive coping skills and sub aspects had strong positive correlation with sub aspects of life satisfaction and composite life satisfaction. Similarly results reported by Jain and Sharma (2004) indicating that productive engagement in work plays a vital role in the quality of life of Indian people. Phinney and Ong (2002) reported significant ethnic group differences in life satisfaction. Borg and Blomquist (2006) reported that life satisfaction was determined by several factors and financial condition, social support and health of person. Social support has been shown to mediate stressful life events (Cohler and Lieberman, 1980; and Cohen

and McKay, 1984) and to be an indicator of social integration (House *et al.*, 1988), thereby contributing to well-being. Having someone to turn to (e.g. close friend or confidante) can be beneficial in reducing the effects of a stressful event or situation.

The results indicate that there is a need for offering programmes / workshops in institution to develop proactive skills in their employees so that their life satisfaction improves and hence work efficiency is also enhanced.

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