

# **Relationship between Personality Styles and Coping Strategies in Undergraduate Males**

*Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of*

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**Psychology**



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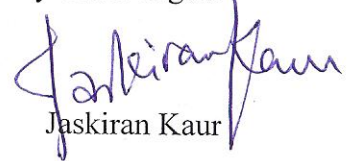
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## CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the work which is being presented in the thesis entitled “**Relationship between Personality Styles and Coping Strategies in Undergraduate Males**”, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of degree of Masters of Philosophy in *Psychology* submitted in the School of Management and Social Sciences of Thapar University, Patiala, is an authentic record of my own work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Santha Kumari, Associate Professor, and Dr. Hitashi Lomash, Lecturer, SMSS.

The matter presented in thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.

  
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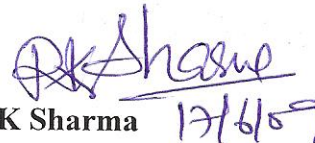
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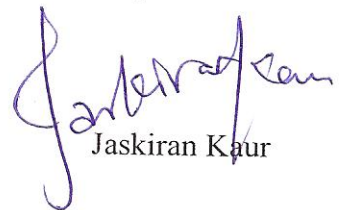
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## **Abstract**

The present study attempts to investigate the relationship between Personality Styles and Coping Strategies. The Millon Index of Personality Styles (MIPS, Millon, 1994) and the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) were administered on a sample of 146 Undergraduate males. Pearson correlation and Regression analysis were carried out to analyze the data. Interpersonal Behaviors as a sub scale of Personality Styles makes maximum contribution to the variance in coping strategies. A positive correlation between Adjustment scores and Planful problem solving has been found. Further, accepting responsibility as a prominent way of coping has been also indicated. The study has implications for the identification of the therapeutic techniques based on Personality Style and the way the individual has been coping in stressful situations.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Philosophers and psychologists have studied human behavior for centuries. People behave differently from each other and this has been the centre of attraction for psychologists to explore why it is so. Personality at times permits a prediction as to how an individual would react or behave in a particular situation and at other times it is an amazingly complex construct to explore and understand. It is not something like a crystal clear diamond, but yes, it does have many sides like it. Personality is not just what covers an individual from outside as a shell but also involves what is hidden in the shell-the covert part.

Personality derives from the Latin word for a mask - *persona*, a part of ourselves other people can see and from behind which we speak, at the same time keeping our thoughts and feelings hidden and at times projecting what is truly not a part of us.

Personality is what makes us unique- what we are, what we have been, and what we are evolving into. It is dynamic in the sense that a person may respond variedly to various situations based on his experiences and learning. But there may be constancy in the sense that his reactions and responses to a situation may reflect his predispositions to behave in a particular manner. Personality of an individual involves what one has assimilated over the years and also influences what one would be like in future. This means, assessment of personality helps in understanding and prediction of behavior, thoughts and emotional inclination of an individual. It embraces everything that an individual is- his psychological and physiological expressions- the way he tackles the demands which the environment taxes upon him- i.e., the way he manages and copes with the situations. Coping here refers typically to the efforts one makes to minimize and reduce the stress generated by the demanding circumstances. Individuals tend to implement specific ways of coping with stressful situations which they feel to be helping them produce outcomes they desire, and the ones which seem to be working in such situations. These specific ways may be termed as coping strategies that help us handle the complexities and the challenges of life.

Coping strategies involve Problem-focused and Emotion-focused strategies-the archaic classification of coping. The recent typologies include Active and Avoidant types of strategies. But classification of a strategy into such broad categories is not as important as is how well it takes on the task it is employed for. Thus comes the concept of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies that are defined in the terms of the ways they are used in response to the stressful situations. Various factors such as the appraisal of the situation, previous experiences, social interactions, support available and the predispositions, add to the variations in the types of the coping strategies that individuals may employ to deal with stress.

Personality when studied as something that involves all that an individual is implies it would, to a degree, affect the way an individual would cope and may at times, influence his choice of coping strategies. Thus, personality, apart from being a fascinating construct to explore in

itself, needs to be investigated in relation to the other variables which add important dimensions in the field of mental health and psychology, especially coping in the domain of education which places demands of performing well in academics and making relationships successful while moving a step ahead on the path of transition from adolescence to adulthood. Young adults strive to cope with such demanding situations as they try to create a niche for themselves, and take steps so that they can be independent in life and take responsibilities as they grow. Thus, how they respond, what outcomes such responses would bring, and how these outcomes would affect their tendencies to adapt and work efficiently as a balanced human being, make the study of coping in relation to personality worth exploration. While studying the relationship between personality and coping, one needs to have the basic knowledge and understanding of these constructs.

### ***1.1 Fundamentals of Personality***

There is no specific technique that would by itself provide a complete understanding of personality. But for simplification, foundations of personality involve four components (Patty & Johnson, 1953): 1) Motivation; 2) The Basic systems of the body—the psychosomatics; 3) The Social scene a culture matrix; and 4) Perception.

An understanding of these four interacting fundamentals is basic for further insight into oneself and others.

#### ***1.1.1 Motivation***

For the study of personality, either in its typical or in its deviate manifestations, the study of motivation offers the most suitable point from which to start (Patty & Johnson, 1953). Motivation is to fulfil a deficiency, a need. A need is defined as “a construct (a convenient fiction or hypothetical concept) which stands for a force.”(Murray, 1938, pp.123–124). Needs and drives give rise to motives. Motivation refers directly to the fundamental scientific concept of sequence or continuity. This basis leads us to assume that all events grow out of past and will lead on into the future. Relationship of causation occurs when one event leads to or causes another or the next in the series. The force or the push that leads to the latter event is called the motive that precedes every act.

Murray’s Theory of Motivation, also called the Need Theory of Personality (Murray, 1938) assumes needs as personality. Needs create a disequilibrium and thus to bring back and strive for homeostatic position, needs drive behaviors and actions to fulfil the deficits. Further, there are small, or “specific”, motives in an individual’s behavior in limited instances such as dating or the purchase of a pair of gloves. These smaller motives become understandable only as they can be seen to fit into the fulfilment of larger goals sought by one individual. Smaller motives contribute to the individual as he seeks to be kind of person he feels he has to be. To add on, Maslow points to the tendency of motives to form hierarchies which express levels of importance of needs (Maslow, 1970). The motivational life of each individual thus has a kind of organization of structure which provides a pattern for his personality (Patty & Johnson, 1953).

### *Motives and adjustment*

Motives are infinite—never ending in number. The management of these varieties of motives requires a balance between an individual's abilities, ideals and possibilities in this world. This management is so crucial that this forms an important task (organizing of behavior) for each personality. Sometimes, motives create confusions, blurring the lines between the reality and the wishes, so much so that the individual is engulfed into the world full of conflicts. Such disoriented individuals struggle to satisfy the impossible needs, and craving for perfection. This results in failures at times, since the striving is for the impossible and thus leading to low self-esteem and diffused self-concepts. Such individuals are forced to make unhealthy changes (so as to prevent ego-disturbances) in their own personalities, which today are commonly called as “neuroses” (Patty & Johnson, 1953).

#### *1.1.2 Psychosomatics*

Behavior could be interpreted in the terms of striving for homeostasis. Studies have been reported that indicate a relationship between the mental and the physical conditions of the individuals (Perry, 1934, 1939). Other examples may include abnormal breathing patterns during anxiety states and respiration patterns indicative of an individual's health.

#### *1.1.3 Culture*

Humans are shaped to an extent by the expectations of the communities they come from. Each step of growth introduces new developmental tasks and specialized attitudes and behaviors. Culture colors one's preferences and views. These cultural patterns become a permanent part of the personality structure. Further, exposure to a restricted way of life without experience with other patterns may result in a sort of cultural myopia (Patty et al, 1953). The after effects of this may include numerous personality difficulties that may be linked with the negation and ignorance of cultural expectations and evaluations. Thus, individual personalities must be assessed keeping in mind the cultural patterns by which they have been surrounded. Understanding of one's own personality involves an evaluation of the cultural environments in which he has grown.

#### *1.1.4 Perception*

Personality is also revealed by how a person perceives. The uniqueness of the individual's personality is outlined through the way in which he gives meanings to what he sees, hears and feels. Behavior if studied in its entirety is a herculean task, but the studies of such perceptual processes make an individual's purposes clearer than from the observation of his day-to-day behavior only and add a simplifying factor to the study of the personality. Thus, at any rate, through the study of the individual's perceptions it is possible to learn of his inner personality organization.

## ***1.2. Study of personality***

Man's greatest puzzle is indeed his own personality. Large portions of literature devote themselves to the task of putting specific acts and personalities into the perspective of understanding. Two general sources of information have been very helpful to the growth of the scientific study of personality. First, a large body of evidence has been collected and some very important concepts have been developed in the therapeutic work. Psychiatry, the treatment of psychic disorders, has made some important contributions. Further, clinical psychology has offered highly important evidence and concepts in the study of personality and related constructs. Second, personality has been subjected to the research by statistical and laboratory methods using projective techniques. Through their common interest in personality, therapeutic and scientific researchers find a basis for cooperation and agreement.

Behavioral studies, which contribute to the understanding of personality, gather various acts of an individual and put them under specific categories. Further, such series of acts are linked together to have an outline as to what the subject matter of personality is. Each act if taken in the solitary form may not reveal much about personality, just as an episode of a daily soap is not enough to provide a complete understanding to the story's plot. Thus, for the sake of simplification and clear understanding, various acts are linked and studied in relation to each other and in turn expose and reveal the underlying personality structure.

## ***1.3 Nature of Personality: Constancy and Dynamism***

This would include the organism as an active or a passive being; passive in the sense that personality remains same from day to day and even from year to year (Patty & Johnson, 1953). This constancy would involve habits, which are explained in the form of anatomy in the forms of neural pathways which unite the sense organs with effectors such as muscles or glands. Further, the physiological reactions may also explain constancies in habits and behaviors. Behavior is often thought to be best understood in the terms of individual's attempts to adjust his internal activities to his external environment. Such efforts to adjust or maintain homeostasis continue at a constant pace. These explanations assume a organism as a passive being who awaits stimulation. But on the other hand, the more recent theories are oriented to the whole individual as a dynamic and purposefully integrated organism. To further state, even the new born infant is encouraged by parents and psychologists to eat, sleep, and exercise in accordance with his own dynamics (Patty & Johnson, 1953).

### ***1.3.1 Observing the Personality***

Behavior of the individual, seen as an indication to understand individual personality, should be observed as a whole and in various situations. These observations could further lead to the formulation of the hypotheses about the varied patterns of behaviors. These patterns are unique and constitute individual personalities and help them maintain equilibrium. When such patterns are studied, the observers would first note the superficial or the overt behaviors and after that they would go on to the explorations and explanations of covert and he

underlying layers of behaviors and thus personality. Thus, personality can be understood in the terms of the previously assimilated experiences.

Most psychologists consider the concept of inheritance of all personal characteristics as a dangerous generalization (Patty & Johnson, 1953). Specifically, talking of the adjustive role of personality in the life cycle, in the stage of infancy- infants are seen as highly adaptable and modifiable beings. Further, parents and the social groups of which they are a part are mainly responsible for the personality that the organism develops.

The personality that a child develops, which would add on to the variations in the further evolving personality include the importance of the intensity of the stimulation received by the organism. How an organism adjusts to the life is also influenced by the amount of stimulation given after birth (Hurlock, 2005). Stimulation is any event that arouses an organism (Reber, 1985). This involves the concepts of understimulation and the overstimulation. These extremes play important roles in infancy and later stages as to how an organism evaluates himself and the environmental events. Forms of understimulation in infancy involve lack of or little stroking, rocking, holding and handling. Understimulation in infancy starts a trend of growth which is introspective and characterised by overconcern with internal sensations and feelings (Patty et al. 1953). Overstimulation may involve too much shifting in the immediate environment and thus, no or little demonstrations of constancy to the child. This sets the trend toward feelings of instability and insecurity and an overconcern with self-protection (Patty & Johnson, 1953).

Furthermore, learning from experiences may help in extending the limits to which an organism's personality can adapt and adjust. Learning would help explore new facets in the environment. There may be conflicts that pop up during these interactive encounters but resolutions of such conflicts guide one to assimilations of new information into the individual personality or the self. This learning enhances the feelings of self-concept and self-efficacy in the organism, further leading to the growth of personality and making it better able to deal effectively with future conflicts and adjust to the new situations, thus preserving the integrity of the personality.

#### ***1.4 Dimensions of Personality***

Personality may be described and measured in terms of types or in terms of traits, the former being popularly investigated in the field.

Cattell (1950) talks of personality types in forms of continuous types, species types, and a hybrid discontinuous type. Continuous types refer to the uniform extension of similar traits (intelligent, clever, original, reasonable, etc.) within a normal distribution of population. Distinct types refer to the types of automobiles, or breeds of dogs or horses, of male and female sexes, "between which there are few or no intermediates" (Cattell, 1950, p. 6). Such types are rare among mental characteristics, as there is a diffusion of limits as one tries to specifically categorize. But with advancements in assessing and testing procedures one may hope to have nearly specific categorizations in this type also. The concept of discontinuous

types lies midway between continuous types and species types, often described as, “the type in which the pattern is not different or discontinuous but in which there is little or no overlap on single variables” (Cattell, 1950, p. 8).

Typologies are used for the purpose of, 1) classifying personalities to categories for better understanding, and 2) to see and find the extent to which an organism belongs to a specific type on the basis of commonalities between the characteristics of that type and the characteristics of the organism. Further, every typology has its own assumptions as to how to categorize individuals. These assumptions state that coherent patterns of behavior or consistent styles of action exist, which are sufficiently well-defined, so that individuals may be classified as falling into one or more types. This assumption, “although certainly questionable, does have heuristic value and personality typing is endemic in social research and theory” (Reber, 1985, p. 537).

An example of cross-sectioning or classification of personality involves placing dimensions of personality on various scales, e.g. extraversion-introversion can be placed on a scale as follows. One extreme may include “the tendency to direct one’s energies outside”, i.e. extraversion and on the other extreme would be “the tendency to shrink from social contacts”, i.e. introversion. The distance between these two would describe the gradation of feelings from one extreme to the other. Each person would be rated as commonly fluctuating between the two extremes on the scale. Probably, most personalities will come or cluster around the central location rather than being on one of the extremes and some would come on one or the other extreme. Personality and temperament tests frequently use this scale concept of personality dimension (Patty & Johnson, 1953).

Most of the characteristics (such as competition–cooperation, social-antisocial, stable-unstable, high-low energy, and high-low intelligence) can be classified and measured and the scales used for such purposes must have a good measure of reliability and validity.

#### *1.4.1 Describing Personality through Traits and Types*

The trait is a hypothesized, theoretical entity, often serving as explanations for consistencies in behaviors of individuals (intra-individual consistencies) and the differences in the behavioral consistencies of the different persons (inter-individual consistencies). Personality trait refers to some hypothesized underlying disposition or characteristic of that person that, in principle, can be used as an explanation of the regularities and consistencies of behavior. It also refers to “the simple description of an individual’s characteristic modes of behaving, perceiving, thinking, etc.” (Reber, 1985, p. 537).

#### *Analyzing traits*

A somewhat different method of studying personality is found in the analysis of traits. A trait is a group of specific acts which have been organized into a pattern of behavior showing consistency in recurrence. Traits, as thus defined, are subjects to measurement. They serve to further understanding of personality by simplifying the endless complexity which daily

observation present and they serve to emphasize the consistency or stability of personality over relatively long period of time.

Both normal and abnormal personalities show constancy of trait behavior. Studies of intelligence also demonstrate this constancy. The study of personality by means of trait analysis, given adequate methods, holds much promise of success (Patty & Johnson, 1953, p. 194-195).

Personality from Cattell's point of view is a complex and differentiated structure of traits. Central to Cattell's point of view is the distinction between surface traits, which represent clusters of manifest, or overt variables that seem to go together, and source traits, which represent underlying variables that enter into the determination of multiple surface manifestations. Surface traits are produced by the interaction of source traits and generally can be expected to be less stable. Surface traits are likely to appeal to the commonsense observer as more valid and meaningful than source traits because they correspond to the kinds of generalizations that can be made on the basis of simple observation. However, in the long run it is the source traits that prove to have the most utility in accounting for behavior (Hall et al, 1998, p. 318)

### ***1.5 Personality Style***

Personality can be defined as a dynamic and organized set of personal traits and patterns of behavior. Though the terms personality type and personality style are used synonymously at times, personality style has been defined as "an individual's relatively consistent inclinations and preferences across contexts." (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005, p. 197). The concept of personality style is broader than and includes the concepts of "personality traits", "personality type", and "temperament" (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005, p. 197).

Personality style refers to the enduring stylistic pattern of perceiving, responding, and thinking about the world, other people, and one's self. It can be thought of as a continuum with one end characterized by healthy, flexible, and adoptive functioning and the other end by unhealthy, rigid, and maladaptive dysfunctioning. Each family member manifests a dominant personality style, often with traits and features of other styles. Personality styles can be assessed through clinical observation and developmental history, as well as through standard interview schedules and personality inventories. It is plausible that personality styles are relatively stable and trait like, whereas the behavioral styles that correspond to these personality styles only appear in specific contexts. Further, individual differences, particularly deviations, may be revealing of personality style of an individual.

According to Oldham and Morris, one's personality style is one's organizing principle. It provides the push on the path of life. It represents the orderly arrangement of all an individual's attributes, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and coping mechanisms. It is the distinctive pattern of one's psychological functioning—the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves—that makes one different from what others are (Oldham, John & Morris, 1995). The origin of personality style is in some combination of genetic inheritance and environmental

influence (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005). Style refers to the individual system dimension. "Personality styles should be recognized as constructed approximations of human experience" and should be arrayed on a continuum rather than be reified or totalized. One should be vigilant to deconstruct the uses of personality style in favor of an ongoing reflexivity about the use and misuse of such labels (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005, p. 197).

### *1.5.1 Measuring Personality Styles*

Measuring personality styles at times is a tough task, which though at times is easy as most personality tests are easily lining out various style components, but on other side, good measuring devices for these dimensions do not exist. Perhaps because few research works have attempted explicitly to devise such scales. Personality styles can refer to scientifically developed assessments of personality such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). These tests have value in that they help one understand one's own patterns of behavior and those of others. Increasing one's understanding of others' patterns of behaviour helps one to be less judgmental of patterns that differ from one's own. Knowing one's own natural preferences can help one to make more effective choices in the fields of career and relationships.

Personality style assessment can help individuals and practitioners appreciate human diversity and style assessment can also compliment the search for personality disorder (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005).

Distinctive personality styles have their own way of viewing, construing, and responding to people and events. Each style has both adaptive and non-adaptive strategies for self-maintenance and growth, for relating to others, and for coping with problems. In other words, each of these styles has an "upside" and a "downside." One's personality style is one's way of being, of becoming, and of meeting life's challenges. Most people's styles have a built-in flexibility factor that allows them to deal with the hurdles thrown in their path. They can adapt to change which makes a variety of experiences possible. Some people, however, have rigid and inflexible personality style and these may lead them to have the same troubled, bored, empty, lonely, or disruptive experiences over and over again throughout their lives.

### *1.5.2 Dimensions of Personality Styles*

According to Millon (1991), personality styles are shaped by the evolutionary mechanisms that unfold over a life-time. The personality styles include classifications of personality based on various dimensions as: 1) Pleasure-Pain polarity: Pain-Pleasure polarity relates to the attraction to life-enhancing activities and repulsion from the life-threatening ones. This polarity subsumes "sensations, motivations, feelings, emotions, moods, and affects" (Millon, 1991, p. 372). 2) Active versus Passive styles: Those who are passive tend to have few strategies that they tend to use instrumentally. "They display a seeming inertness, a phlegmatic lack of ambition or persistence, a tendency toward acquiescence, a restrained attitude in which they initiate little to modify events, waiting for circumstances of their environment to take course before making accommodations" (Millon, 1991, p. 374). Those

who are active plan strategies and are instrumental in their acts. They “are best characterized by their alertness, vigilance, liveliness, vigor, forcefulness, stimulus-seeking energy and drive” (p. 374). 3) Self-Other Orientation: Self-Oriented individuals are more oriented towards making a competitive edge over others. They tend to act in an “egotistic, insensitive, inconsiderate, uncaring and non communicative manner” (Millon, 1991, p. 378). Other-Oriented individuals are more nurturing and cooperative. They tend to act in an “affiliative, intimate, empathetic, protective and solicitous manner” (p. 378).

Some of the other types of personality styles include: introversive, inhibited, doleful, submissive, dramatizing, egotistic, unruly, forceful, conforming, oppositional, self-demeaning, borderline tendency etc.

Specific personality style theories that might be useful include Costa and McCrae's NEO PI-R personality inventory, Holland's person-environment matching theory (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005; Holland, 1985). Isabel Briggs Myers' personality type theory (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005; Myers, 1980). Oldham and Morris' derivation of personality styles from DSM personality disorders (Oldham, John & Morris, 1995) and Ivey's reconceptualization of the DSM personality disorders as a continuum of personality styles (Eriksen, Karen & Kress, 2005; Ivey, Ivey & Simek-Morgan, 1997)

When we are functioning from our natural person, our values and vision are clear and our problem-solving capacities are intact. Also, knowing one's personality style gives one useful information about how one might approach the different elements necessary in finding, building and managing a career. For example, People with personality styles characterized by quick decision making might come to closure too quickly when they really need to do some exploring. Knowing more about one's own personality style and that of others not only helps one to understand more about one's own preferences, but also enables one to have better insights about other people's way of working. Personality style and preferences play a part in the types of roles one may seek and one's career preferences. One's personality style and preferences are important in relation to work expectations and choices. People's preferences are such that they are more likely to change their work environment to match their type than to change their type to match their work environment (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

### *1.5.3 Theoretical Framework of Personality Styles*

Theodore Millon developed an integrated theory of personality and psychopathology (Millon with Davis, 1996). The two basic elements of the theory consist of (1) a system of paradigm of polarities, and (2) an integrative assessment of characteristics of various domains of personality. According to Millon (1996), three dimensions underlie personality. Each serves an adaptive function and is rooted in the organism's evolutionary history. The first dimension reflects the aims of existence: life enhancement (seeking reward/pleasure) versus life preservation (avoiding danger and threat/pain). The second dimension reflects modes of adaptation: ecological accommodation (passive adaptation) versus ecological modification (active adaptation). The third dimension refers to strategies of replication: reproductive

individuation (actualizing self) versus reproductive nurturance (constructively loving others) (Strack, 2005, p. 295).

Millon refers to personality prototypes in that his theory discusses a particular style in its purest and simplest form. However, in reality, “an individual hardly would be perfectly aligned with one style and rather would have a fusion and patterns linked with two or three of the basic patterns or prototypes described by Millon.” (Dorfman & Hersen, 2001, p. 175).

In developing a system with which to describe personality prototypes, Millon employed a clinical-domain-criteria approach, emphasizing functional criteria, that includes dynamic processes used in interpersonal relationships, and structural criteria, which includes stable internal personality characteristics. There are four essential domains to describe each personality prototype. In the behavioral domain, there are expressive acts (a functional attribute), which are observable behaviors of the person, and this is interpersonal conduct (a functional attribute) or style in relating to others. At the phenomenological domain there are cognitive styles (a functional attribute) which would describe how a person thinks, perceives, processes information, etc., and object representations (a structural attribute), or the residue imprinted in conscious and unconscious memory which acts as a substrate for how we perceive and relate to others; there is also self-image (a structural attribute), which pertains to how one thinks about oneself and then displays that perception to others. At the intrapsychic domain, there are regulatory mechanisms (a functional attribute) which represents unconscious processes, and morphologic organization (a structural attribute), which represents the overall configuration of personality related to psychic boundaries, internal conflicts, the interplay of the id-ego-superego intrapsychic system, etc. Finally, there is the biophysical domain, of which mood of temperament is the only structural attribute. This domain pertains to how mood and temperament affects one’s functioning (Dorfman & Hersen, 2001).

### ***1.6 Personality and Adjustment***

The term “adjustment” appears in diverse uses. A very general meaning is process of living itself, the dynamic equilibrium of the total organism or personality. The maintenance of homeostasis may be considered the general adjustment process. The healthy person seems to live smoothly, taking things in his stride even when the conditions are difficult. Less healthy persons become upset easily and require considerable time to get back into their stride again. A second use of the term refers to the state of being adjusted. An organism’s adjustment is poor, that is he is maladjusted, he is immature, having not yet achieved the adjustment appropriate to his age. In either case the reference is to the individual’s type or pattern of adjustment. A third use relates to the relative adequacy or efficiency of the individual adjustment techniques. When motives within the personality pull against each other and conflict, the resulting behavior remains indecisive and thus inefficient. Conflict-laden behavior illustrates inefficient adjustment simply because the individual has continued to be unable to learn his way into solving the problems he faces. He is afraid and resists at the same time that he is trying to move assimilatively into the new situation (Patty & Johnson, 1953).

In certain instances, an individual feels threatened; he experiences vulnerability and may develop a personality strategy to protect him and to compensate for characteristics he feels he is lacking. This at times leads to an overly exaggerated expression of some important quality of one's personality. It attempts to defend and maintain oneself in the face of one's critics, to have their approval, to win them to one's side, or to defeat them. Personality at times stands on repetitive thoughts, feelings, and behavioral patterns that engulf us in a distorted subjective vision with maladaptive cognitive schemas that are driven by maladaptive emotional schemas and irrational thoughts.

The questions as to can an individual face this world with confidence, or does it forever threaten to thrust him away? Can he assimilate his contacts with this world, or must he resist in self-defense its pressures? The answers to these lie at the very center of the personality structure, stemming from the earliest experiences of the individual. They are his infantile and unlimited generalization as to how the "outer world" accepts him. They are his innermost generalization as to the attitude towards himself of the world. Individual's experiences form his self-concept. This self-concept is the nucleus around which the entire personality structure revolves and strives for homeostatic process of maintaining consistency and stability within the individual and thus comes the very construct of adjustment.

### *1.7 Coping Strategies*

Knowledge about coping strategies being employed by a student is essential to predict about a person's behaviour and other related outcomes in various domains like academics, jobs, interpersonal relations, performance on cognitive tasks etc.

Coping according to Folkman (2001) is defined as "the changing thoughts and actions that an individual uses to manage the external or internal demands of stressful situations" (p.565), is a complex and ever changing process. Coping strategies refer to specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce or minimize stressful events. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have developed a theory of stress and coping based on idiographic, cognitive psychology. Lazarus reconceptualised the stressor events and proposed a multilevel model of coping and adaptation. Lazarus (1980) regards stress as a complex rubric, like emotion, motivation, or cognition rather than a simple variable. Lazarus conceptualized appraisal and coping as processes mediating between antecedent variables and outcomes, with appraisal processes and coping responses determining the long-term adaptational outcomes.

#### *1.7.1 Model*

In the conceptual model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the person and the environmental antecedent variables interact in such a way to produce a range of appraisals that regard the encounter as irrelevant, or stressful. If the encounter is appraised as stressful, then the individual engages in the various coping responses. In the process of appraisal, the variables of values and commitments the person has are integrated with environmental conditions that are faced, producing a variety of responses. Thus, appraisal affects the coping process, which

in turn has an impact on the immediate outcome of the encounter and the long term adaptational outcomes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) emphasize that no single variable accounts for stress in a multivariate, multiprocess system model. Stress occurs when the demands exceed the person's resources and the person perceives the demands as important.

### *1.7.2 Types of Coping*

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have explored the strategies that the individuals employ and also the critical functions involved in coping with stressful situations. These critical functions involved are: Problem solving and Emotional regulation and others.

#### *1.7.2.1 Problem-focused and Emotion-focused coping*

“The Problem focused coping” is preferred or used when an individual attempts to establish a semblance of control within an uncontrollable situation. The individual accomplishes this by identifying specific and attainable goals that he/she can reach by gathering information, resolving conflicts, or making plans. These behaviours provide a sense of purpose, and a method of overcoming feelings of helplessness (Lazarus & DeLongis, 1983; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). “The Emotion focused coping” involves a cognitive response to stress through denial, detachment, the reinterpretation of events, and the application of humor or religious faith. In this form, the objective event is not altered, but the individual purposefully changes his/her emotional reaction to the event (Hanson & Carpenter, 1994; Lazarus & DeLongis, 1983; Williamson & Dooley, 2001). Thus, the Problem focused coping strategies involve ways to do something active to alleviate the stressful circumstances whereas, Emotion focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of the stressful or potentially stressful events (MacArthur et al, 1998).

Historically, coping stems from the psychoanalytical concept of defense mechanisms. Defenses are unconscious methods of dealing with stressful situations. Many defenses, especially primitive, entail some degree of reality distortion. This impedes the constructive solving of conflicts and is maladaptive. Coping research stemming from this perspective has lent us the concepts such as “repressors” and repressive coping. The difference between the defenses and the coping lies in the fact that coping is conscious and intentional, and defenses are unconscious and non-intentional (Cramer, 1998).

#### *1.7.2.2 Avoidant and Active coping*

The coping literature further identifies and distinguishes the coping strategies into active and avoidant coping strategies. The active coping strategies are either behavioural or psychological responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it, whereas avoidant coping strategies lead people into activities like alcohol abuse or mental states as withdrawal that keeps an individual directly away from addressing the stressful events. Although on comparisons, Active coping strategies are considered better ways to deal with problems than avoidant types (Holahan & Moos, 1987). Avoidance-coping is sometimes considered to be a part of emotion-focused coping, but Endler and Parker

(1990), and Grove and Heard (1997) have argued that it represents a different category of coping in addition to the other two. These strategies are mainly characterized by the decision to withdraw from the task at hand or to engage in another type of the task.

Apart from these broad distinctions in types of coping strategies, numerous other coping strategies exist and can be measured via various scales and instruments. To name a few of these- coping strategies may involve confrontative coping, accepting responsibility, positive appraisal, distancing, self-control, planful problem solving, social support etc. (Folkman et al, 1986). Some other types may include blunting, vigilance and monitoring and cognitive avoidance.

### ***1.8 Critical Analysis of Coping typologies***

While many researchers use the distinction between problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies as a conceptual foundation for their work, most including Folkman and Lazarus (1985) have developed more specific typologies. The need for more detailed typologies emerged from at least two reasons (Noller & Feeney, 2002) -first, the distinction between problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies is too general (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). For instance, people may engage in a variety of coping strategies that could be termed as problem-focused (that is, strategies aimed at doing something to decrease stress). Those strategies may or may not be related to each other-and they may be associated with very different outcomes. Indeed, a number of researchers found that the responses to the measure originally developed to assess problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies form several different factors. A second reason as to why a number of typologies have emerged is that coping appears to be domain specific. That is, strategies that are relevant in one context (for example, the workplace) may be completely irrelevant in another (for example, marriage).

### ***1.9 Factors Influencing the Choice of Coping Strategies***

The preference for a particular type of coping strategy may depend on various factors as the experience of the person, the severity of the problem and age. Age related differences have also been reported frequently, and sometimes there are different patterns of variation for boys and girls. In a general sense there is some evidence that productive or functional coping decreases with age (Compas, Malcarne & Fondacaro, 1988; Frydenberg & Lewis, 1999a, 2000; Seiffge-Krenke & Shulman, 1990) while emotional coping increases with age (Compas et al, 1988). Further, older adolescents generally use more tension-reducing strategies than do younger adolescents (Compas et al, 1988; Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a, 1999a, 2000). It was also found that older students (16 year olds) were least likely to use hard work and most likely to rely on tension reduction and self-blame (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a).

Coping is influenced not only by the objective and perceived nature of the situation but also by the individual differences in gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, anxiety, depression, and self-efficacy (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993a; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Zeidner, 1994).

Also, there have been controversies on the individual differences in choice of coping strategies and the concerned role of the predispositions and personality traits that are relatively stable. The coping strategies that an individual employs depend on personal resources and lifestyle factors, the immediate environment, and the nature of the event itself.

The role of culture and religion in affecting coping in individuals is also to be considered. Culture is an important factor in determining the kind of coping strategies a person may adopt and even in determining the degrees of stress that is experienced. Religion, to add on, involves the rituals and rights that help people feel better about personal weaknesses, failures or feelings of inadequacy (Koenig et al, 2001). Rituals may involve, for example, confessions or prayer services. Culture plays an important role as: first, cultural expectations determine what is stressful; second, culture predisposes an individual to react to stress in a certain fashion; third, culture delimits resources and dictates their use; fourth, cultural knowledge of what is appropriate behavior in a given situation increases the likelihood of congruent coping; and finally, it should be noted that culture also influences the expression of coping outcomes.

### ***1.10 Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Strategies***

A question that has appealed to educators and developmental psychologists is whether youngsters become more effective in dealing with stressful situations as they get older and/or more experienced. This question is difficult to answer because it is nearly impossible to determine unequivocally when a coping strategy is effective or adaptive and when it is not. Successful adaptation to minor and major stressors requires that youngsters achieve a fit between themselves (their internal environment, including perception of personal and social resources, values, motives, and beliefs) and different physical and social environments. It is important to note that coping strategies are neither all good nor all bad, and different strategies can be adaptive in particular situations (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989; Kariv & Heiman, 2005; Livneh, 2000; Taylor et al, 1998; Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2006). For example, students tend to use problem-solving to reduce stress if and when they consider the situation is controllable. They then use emotion-focused strategies to deal with the perceived stress (Kariv & Heiman, 2005).

Emotion coping can be useful in various other situations like, dealing with medical issues as chronic pain (Austenfeld & Stanton, 2004). Emotion-coping strategies such as relaxation can be adaptive when students must deal with anxiety-producing tests. In real life complicated situations, individuals might use both the problem-focused and the emotion-focused strategies (Nezu, Nezu & Lombardo, 2001b).

Further, avoidance coping strategies can cause problems for the students, for when they avoid situations that stress them intensely, they may suffer a loss of confidence; they also prevent themselves from engaging in that may be of benefit (Zeidner et al, 2006). One complication

is that a situation is interpreted as more stressful if an individual does not feel confident in dealing with it. If a student feels that a situation can be managed, he/she is more likely to use the adaptive coping strategies. Active strategies generally produce better results, whereas avoidance coping tends to be less effective (Kariv & Heiman, 2005). Maladaptive coping results in anxiety, worry, physical symptoms, and negative feelings. Effective coping results in very few negative consequences and solving the problem decreases or eliminates the stress (Nezu, Nezu & Lombardo, 2001b).

Children and preteens learn coping strategies of all sorts, including problem-solving, seeking support from adults, and self-instruction. By the middle adolescence, students tend to cope using less effective or maladaptive strategies like self-blame, worry, keeping to self, and wishful thinking. Adolescents in general are aware of what coping strategies are effective. Too many, however, are prepared to use strategies that they recognize as unhelpful. The need is to answer the questions that as to why do these young people maintain reliance on non-productive strategies that are perceived by the young to be ineffective.

The explanations for these may be that it could be because of the power of social learning, in which youngsters are mirroring the use of the non-productive strategies. Another explanation may be the well-developed conscience or superego (Freud, 1946, 1961) or because of the heightened sense of concern and fair play regarding the world around them, and they correspondingly take responsibility for the grief or ills of others (Frydenberg & O'Mullane, 2000).

Talking of the parental stress and coping, adolescents were more likely to use maladaptive coping strategies when the mothers directed their distress towards themselves, e.g., sadness, worry, vegetative symptoms rather than when they directed their distress to others, e.g., irritability, anger (Billings & Moos, 1984).

Understanding a stressful event and having knowledge about the effectiveness of the coping strategies available in one's coping repertoire do not guarantee that less stress will be experienced or that these coping strategies will be used effectively or flexibly. Hence in case of any intervention, adolescents should be made aware of the hazards of the maladaptive coping strategies that they need to consider before applying them.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter includes the review of research that has been done in the coping and personality domains and in combining the both.

#### *2.1 Coping effectiveness*

Coping is believed to be an important predictor of adaptation. Effective behavioral or cognitive coping responses to stress are believed to lead to increased feelings of efficacy and reduced levels of stress and anxiety (Billings & Moos, 1981). There is empirical evidence that coping is associated with psychological symptoms (Catanzaro, Wasch, Kirsch, & Mearns, 2000; Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988; Ebata & Moos, 1991; Parker, Cowen, Work, & Wyman, 1990; Tennen, Affleck, Armeli, & Carney, 2000) and substance use (Wills, 1986; Windle & Davies, 1999). In particular, coping strategies such as problem solving, cognitive decision making, or other active strategies are associated with lower levels of symptoms (Causey & Dubow, 1991; Compas et al, 1988; Ebata & Moos, 1991; Wills, 1986), whereas avoidant strategies are associated with higher levels of symptoms (Armistead et al, 1990; Causey & Dubow, 1992; Wills, 1986). Thus, different coping strategies appear to be more or less adaptive ways of dealing with stress.

Numerous studies have been conducted to see the impact of use of various types of coping strategies by individuals on their achievement motivational level and cognitive functioning. Also, while applying Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theoretical model of stress and coping to adolescents, it is important to account for the changes in cognitive functioning that occur with development.

##### *2.1.1 Situational factors as coping predictors*

Much of the early research in this area tended to interpret women's coping strategies as being less effective than men's (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Generally, the effectiveness of coping strategies has not been adequately assessed so conclusions cannot be drawn as to which pattern of coping is most adaptive (Mattlin, Wethington & Kessler, 1990). For example, one can speculate that the use of avoidance coping can buy time to garner the resources and thus facilitate problem-solving (Folkman et al, 1986), or it may lead to the ever-increasing feelings of helplessness and self-defeat. In order to determine 'good' or 'bad' coping it is important to know what is at stake for the individual and what the motivation is for using the different coping strategies.

Thus, keeping a focus on both the individual and the situation in which the coping takes place, it must be acknowledged that both can also influence the coping responses individuals report (Patterson, 2000). Research has emphasized that individual differences are influential in coping responses (Coyne & Downey, 1991; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980), strategy choice, and their respective effectiveness (Suls, David & Harvey, 1996). Individual preferences and dispositions may make certain coping behaviors more attractive to certain individuals (Carver

et al, 1989; McCrae & Costa, 1986; Suls et al, 1996). Individuals' preferred coping strategies could influence outcomes, and consequently, personality factors and coping dispositions should not be treated separately in the stress process (Freguson, 2001). Dispositions may involve optimism, locus of control and self-efficacy and gender differences are often included under the individual differences in coping.

### *2.1.2 Coping and Gender*

Studies have shown that coping strategies not only differ across individuals but also over the gender. In general, men manifest more avoidant coping strategies and women show more of the vigilant coping (Krohne, Schumacher & Egloff, 1992; Weidner & Collins, 1993). Although the greater use of avoidant strategies appears to be more adaptive when handling everyday short term stressors and vigilance may be more important in severe stress situations of longer durations (Weidner & Collins, 1993). This explains why men compared to women are better protected from emotional distress and display overall lower rates of depression (cf. Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987). Gender differences have been reported in a number of studies. In general, females appear to favour social support, are more emotion-focused relative to the males (Stein & Nyamathi, 1999). There are also inconsistent findings like some suggesting that males use problem-focused strategies more often than females (Stone & Neale, 1984), some indicating that women use more of problem-focused approach (Billings & moos, 1981), where as others find no difference (Fagot et al, 1988).

Studies have found that female managers used avoidance coping and problem reappraisal coping more frequently than the male managers, indicating that they had a broader repertoire of coping strategies. The results are consistent with other studies that have found that men are more likely than women to persist with one type of coping strategy- problem solving coping (Compas et al, 1988). It was also stated that men tended to persist with a coping strategy even when it could be deemed to be situationally maladaptive.

#### *2.1.2.1 Explanations for gender differences*

At present, the evidence for explaining gender differences is mixed (Thoits, 1991). Some say women are socialized to be more expressive and therefore are more emotional. Also it is said that women face more stressors in general or more severe, persistent stressors than men and lack appropriate coping resources, such as high self- esteem, a sense of mastery, or appropriate coping strategies for handling stressors to which they are exposed (Turner & Noh, 1983).

To add, cultural imagery portrays men as rational problem solvers and women as emotional, dependent and helpless. In several studies stereotypical notions find support as in a study by Veroff et al., (1981) which indicated that men were significantly more likely to than women to report doing nothing or not thinking about it, but men were also more likely to cite problem solving efforts. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to seek help from others or to turn to prayer as a way of coping with worries and unhappiness.

It was also reported that on average women employed more strategies than men in coping with an emotionally distressing situation. Females and males also differed significantly in the likelihood of using several types of coping. Women were more likely than men to express their feelings freely, try to see the situation differently, seek social support, and write about the situation. Men were more likely than women to analyze (think through) the situation, accept the situation, and engage in the strenuous exercise. There were no gender differences in taking direct action to change the situation (a problem focused tactic). Similarly, women and men did not differ in the likelihood of leaving the situation (another problem- focused tactic).

Differential rates of depression, anxiety and well-being which emerge in adolescence between boys and girls have been largely attributed to gender differences in coping styles. Young women constantly report higher levels of depression and anxiety and poorer perceptions of well-being. An established finding is the propensity for female adolescents to seek peer and institutional social support at times of stress. Emotion venting or catharsis, acceptance, religion and positive reinterpretation, together with wishful thinking and consumptive habits, such as shopping and eating, have been indicated as more frequently used coping strategies in young women. Female adolescents have also been shown to employ a wider use of coping strategies, both active and avoidant. Male adolescents have been found to show a stronger preference for using humour, alcohol and drugs, sporting activities, hobbies and diversions as coping strategies. Male adolescents are also more likely to present themselves as stable and hard to irritate. Male coping strategies which tend towards distraction and alcohol use may in turn be associated with higher rates of aggression, alcoholism and substance abuse. Apart from this, Frydenberg and Lewis (1991) also found gender differences only for closed data (multiple-choice), with open- ended data displaying 'remarkable similarity in the relative use of different coping strategies by boys and girls' (p. 131). Other studies also report that the use of problem- focused strategies was associated with the lower levels of depression and that the use of emotion- focused strategies was related to higher levels of depression (Patrick & Hayden, 1999).

The situation is complex and it is clear that there are stereotypical differences between the genders in their choice of coping strategies. A support in line may be from a paper by Frydenberg and Lewis (1993): 'Boys play sport and girls turn to others'. Broadly speaking, males make more use of active coping strategies, being more inclined to go out and meet the problem head-on, more likely to seek further information to assist in problem solving, and more often using aggressive or confrontational techniques to deal with interpersonal difficulties. In addition, a number of studies have shown that males use denial more often than females. By contrast, it has been reported that girls are more affected by stress than are boys and are more likely to disclose a greater number of stressful events in their lives. Girls see setbacks and difficulties as more threatening than boys, and are more likely to expect the worst in stressful situations. Females often show high emotional reactivity, a predisposition to be emotional, which may in turn influence their reactions to a challenging situation (Zeidner & Ben-Zur, 1994). The general consensus seems to be that problem focused coping is used to

a similar extent by both the genders, but that females additionally use more emotion focused coping (Ingledeu et al, 1996).

### *2.1.3 Protective Effects of Coping*

Coping strategies may have differential protective effects depending on gender. For example, 'being humorous' and 'ventilating feelings' have been shown to have protective effects for girls against depression and anxiety, while the former alone showed protective effects for boys (Plancherel & Bologinni, 1995). In addition, turning to religion and friends appears to be predictive of good adaptation in girls but poorer adaptation in boys. Furthermore, the effectiveness of a chosen strategy maybe largely determined by the level of controllability of the stressful situation as appraised by the individual and the other contextual factors. Access to stable resources such as family support appears to facilitate approach coping, such as problem-solving and seeking social support. Exploring individual and contextual variables which affect adolescent coping styles and strategies is essential in order to identify those young people who are at the greater risk.

### *2.1.4 Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Strategies*

Talking about the use of cognitive and non-cognitive strategies, in the studies of adolescence, and elementary school children (Valkenburg, Cantor & Peeters, 2000), girls reported using more noncognitive coping strategies which have a tinge of emotional orientation than boys did. In contrast, two genders employ cognitive strategies with equal frequency because these strategies are less readily observable. Gamble and McHale (1989) also found that children who used more cognitive strategies were likely to have higher depression and anxiety symptoms. This may indicate that the cognitive strategies used by the children are not as effective as desired. Interventions with children, thus, should focus on teaching them active coping strategies (i.e., sharing feelings with parents) and on manipulating the environment to reinforce those strategies (i.e., encouraging parents to respond to their child when they express their feelings).

### *2.1.5 Age and Coping*

In case of aging and health, there were small but consistent gender differences in the types of coping strategies for health problems. Although females, overall, generated more clinic visits than males, they also adopted other, primarily passive tactics, including diversion, suppression of emotion, and the seeking of religious support for their own significant life events. Males were active in their choice of coping behaviors. They solicited information, advice, and social support from peers, sought either catharsis or relaxation, or used some form of stimulant (i.e., cigarettes, alcohol, chocolate, drugs), and appeared to be more accepting of their problems. Both males and females sought support and advice about seeking care. Thus, for themselves, females developed avoidance tactics whereas males took action. For coping with another person's medical needs, females were the active caretakers; males were more likely to offer social support, but offered little actual service (Ashton & Fuehrer, 1993).

### 2.1.6 *Familial factors and coping effectiveness*

In cases of intracouple coping, women using high levels of task-oriented coping are associated with highest levels of marital satisfaction (Levin et al, 1999). Also, less satisfaction may occur in the cases when the female uses less of emotion-focused coping than her partner.

Coping is affected not only by the age and gender, but also by the social support available to the individual (Seiffge-Krenke, 1990, 1995). For example, support within the family; where support from the parents is limited one might expect to see the use of more dysfunctional coping strategies. Young people growing up in families which were unstructured and in which there were high levels of conflict displayed poor coping skills, especially passivity and withdrawal. Families which were highly structured tend to have adolescents with dependent styles of coping, while adolescents in families which were oriented towards independence or the open expression of feelings demonstrated coping skills that included planning and the use of others for social support. Also, four parenting styles originating from the work of Maccoby & Martin (1983) are outlined as authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful, and permissive. Findings show that those whose parents were seen as authoritative were most likely to use social support and to employ problem-focused coping (McIntyre & Dusek, 1995).

It was also found that differences in choice of coping strategy may occur according to the ethnicity, and cultural beliefs and values. That is to say, that a strategy to cope may be adaptive in one culture and may be considered, at the same time, maladaptive in another culture.

### 2.1.7 *Coping and Health*

Active coping strategies tend to produce better emotional states and better psychosocial adjustments and effective coping in stressful situations. For example, the active coping strategies versus the avoidant coping strategies are associated with better immune status in HIV sero-positive men (Goodkin et al, 1992). The use of emotion-focused coping strategies and perceived poor health has also been associated with diminished perceptions of life satisfaction, where as task-oriented coping and avoidance oriented coping are associated with happiness (Jones et al, 2003).

A study examining the impact of relocation and the use of coping strategies on health and cognitive functioning of individuals showed that most often used strategies were the emotion-focused techniques, although the use of problem- focused predicted health and adjustment among the relocated participants (Rutman, 1988). Another factor in deciding whether individuals use appropriate coping strategies or not is how people interpret a situation as whether stressful or not.

### 2.1.8 *Emotional maturity and coping*

The use of coping strategies also has an *Emotional Aspect*. There is a relationship between people's emotional maturity and the sort of the coping methods they prefer and use. Less emotionally mature people use primitive over sophisticated coping methods and inefficient

over useful coping methods in comparison to the more mature folks (Dombek et al, 2006). Also, some authors suggest that term defensive mechanisms should be reserved for describing primitive, immature coping strategies.

The connective links between coping and affect have also been described by Folkman (1984). Specifically, she suggested that the qualitatively different ways of coping with threatening or challenging situations can influence the nature of affective responses. That is, the problem-focused coping strategies, such as the increased effort, planning and suppression of competing activities, are usually associated with positive emotions. In the other words, direct attempts to deal with a source of threat or challenge and the sense that one is an active coping agent, can produce positive emotional outcomes. In contrast, trying to divert attention away from the situation, or to change the meaning of the situation (avoidance and emotion-focused coping) are usually indicators of the lack of control and inability to take the direct action, and are often related to the negative emotional outcomes. It has to be noted here, that these emotional outcomes are irrespective of whether a coping strategy is effective or not, since Folkman (1984) has theoretically separated coping efforts from the coping outcomes. That is, even if, active or direct coping efforts do not lead to the desired performance outcomes, there is still a sense of satisfaction of “trying one’s best” (Ntoumanis et al, 1998). Crocker & Graham (1995) have provided support for this argument in the context of physical activity.

Furthermore, the positive emotional outcomes that are usually derived from the use of problem-focused coping strategies can lead to the perceptions of increased control over the situation. Compas et al (1991) and Folkman (1984) have suggested that perceptions of control may be enhanced as a result of problem-focused efforts to manage a challenging or threatening situation.

#### *2.1.9 Attachment theory: An explanation for variations in the use of coping strategies*

The preference and use of coping strategies has been explained using *Attachment Theory*. Feeney et al (1999), states that secure individuals, learn to acknowledge stressors and deal with them, such as through social support. Anxious- ambivalents, who received inconsistent care, use Rumination coping strategy (focus on distressing thoughts as a way of maintaining contact with attachment figures) and Avoidants avoid acknowledging thoughts and feelings of distress so as to minimize conflict with insensitive caregivers. Loners tend to use more of avoidance coping involving withdrawal, denial and passive actions (sleeping, eating and watching TV). The Attachment Theory tends to explain interrelations between attachment style, coping strategy and the degree of loneliness.

Apart from this, the degree of predictability about any situation can also affect the choice of coping strategy. Studies suggest that task-oriented coping is most efficacious in a controllable situation, while emotion-oriented coping is most efficacious in uncontrollable situations (Endler, 1997).

Coping with situations thus, is also linked to the stress and anxiety of being in that situation and thus in the end do affect the choice of the strategy to cope too, for example, patients with

chronic illness/injury use more emotional preoccupation coping behaviors than patients with acute illness or injuries (Endler, 1997). Further, the literature on coping suggests that personality characteristics of certain kind can help people to be more resistant to problems. In case of sales persons, Strutton et al, found that those of them who are high on challenge, self-determination and involved in surroundings were more prone to the use of problem-focused coping strategies.

## ***2.2 Personality and Coping Strategies***

Coping strategies as have been linked to numerous human behavioural variables are being studied extensively. Coping strategies as studies suggest can be predicted from personalities, achievement, SES, and health variables to name a few.

### *2.2.1 Personality predispositions*

Extensive research exists to suggest that coping and personality characteristics influence individual adaptation and the development of symptomatology. Certain personality styles have also been linked to delinquency and drug abuse in a study by Shelder & Block (1990). Adolescents who experimented were the best adjusted in the sample. Frequent users were the troubled teens, who were alienated and anti-social. However, abstainers were also problem teens: they were “relatively tense, over controlled, emotionally constricted....somewhat socially isolated and lacking in interpersonal skills” (p. 618). This personality style was not a consequence of failing to try drugs. Rather, it was an enduring personality configuration.

Personality factors may also play a part in deciding how a person copes with stress. For example, anxious children are more likely to use non-productive strategies to cope (Dacey & Fiore, 2000). However, if given the opportunity to learn about and understand their own coping, children can expand their repertoire of coping strategies and as a consequence cope effectively with their anxiety (Frydenberg, 1997). Interpersonal and/or personality styles may help explain who is most likely to show strong associations or why depressive symptoms might result in romantic problems (Davila et al, 1997, 2003). For example, adolescents whose emotional needs are not being met by their parents may seek out romantic partners for maladaptive reasons, and they may subsequently develop interpersonal tendencies that may make them vulnerable to both depression and romantic difficulties (i.e., dependent personality style, preoccupied attachment strategies).

### *2.2.2 Role of personality in individual choices for coping strategies*

Personality plays several distinct and important roles in stress and coping processes. That is, by the virtue of their personalities, people may be choosing, creating, and reacting to the stressful situations. Links between personality and coping have a long standing history in psychology. For example, psychoanalytical and ego development perspective tended to posit close connections between the two (Freud, 1964; Haan, 1977).

Contemporary approaches to understanding the role of personality in coping tend to acknowledge the merits of both perspectives and examine the role of stable dispositions in

coping processes while recognizing that coping as a process often unfolds in response to situational stressors (Suls et al, 1996). Personality seems to be playing multiple roles in coping with stress. Because personality refers to the enduring ways in which a person thinks, feels, and behaves, it stands to reason that personality may influence how a person would react to the life stressors. One such reaction is to engage in coping, for example, by attempting to eliminate or reduce the source of stress or by attempting to divert one's attention away from the stressful situation. By choice of coping mechanisms, one means the strategies a person can think of as selecting to deal with a stressful encounter and these choices are influenced by personality.

### *2.2.3 Big Five dimensions and coping*

In the field of personality and coping research, the Big Five personality dimensions have consistently predicted differential use of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies. For example, neuroticism, has positively predicted emotion-focused strategies such as emotional venting, hostile reactions, and avoidance; it has also negatively predicted problem-focused strategies like planning (Endler & Parker, 1999; McCrae & Costa, 1986; O'Brien & DeLongis, 1996; Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Also, Neuroticism shows a high negative effect on self-efficacy, together with conscientiousness (negative) and openness (positive) - an unfavourable combination of personality dimensions. Extraversion has negatively predicted emotion-focused coping strategies such as accepting responsibility (O'Brien & DeLongis, 1996); it positively predicted problem-focused coping strategies. Some evidence also suggests a positive relationship exists between openness and the use of humor (McCrae & Costa, 1986) and positive reappraisal (O'Brien & DeLongis, 1996) as coping strategies.

McCrae and Costa's (1986) findings have been replicated, although the specific patterning of the links between personality and coping mechanism choice has not always been consistent. For example, Bolger (1990) found that neuroticism was positively associated with wishful thinking, self-blame, and distancing in a sample of premedical students coping with a major exam, consistent with McCrae and Costa (1986).

### *2.2.4 Personality factors as predictors of coping strategies*

In a study by Millová, Blatný, & Kohoutek (2008), it was found out, that the most frequent coping strategy was social support and problem focused engagement strategies, highest appearance showed optimistic, loyal and willing personality style. They also investigated the relation among personality styles and coping strategies. Personality styles characterized by positive emotivity (participating on production of certain behavior) correlated with engagement (active) coping strategies. Personality styles characterized by negative emotions (dampening volition and behavior) correlated above all to disengagement (insulative, avoiding) coping strategies.

In a study by Sakado et al (1999), some personality traits such as extraversion and frustration tolerance were found to be significantly related to task-oriented coping, and

psychopathological personality traits such as neuroticism were associated with emotional-oriented coping in major depressive disorder.

Further a study of police officers by Medina (2007), reported clear indications in regards to personality and coping strategies, that is, officers who had warm personalities were likely to cope with stress by using social support or accepting responsibility. Officers who were emotionally stable coped with stress by not accepting responsibility and not avoiding the stressor. Socially bold officers coped with stress by seeking social support and not avoiding the stressor. Vigilant officers, self reliant officers and tense officers were all likely to cope with stress by avoiding it. Some researchers also think that people who exhibit Type A behaviors, codependent behaviors, and helpless-hopeless behaviors are more likely to employ a negative coping style and claim victimization by their stressors. On the other hand, people who exhibit components of hardy personality, self actualization, or sensation seeking are more likely to take calculated risks, confront rather than avoid problems, and see their stressors through peaceful resolution.

The relationship between personality and coping has rarely been evaluated using any of the personality scales. Perhaps this is because conceptual confusion exists between the two. The MCMI's (Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory) by Theodore Millon were designed to represent a theoretical model that emphasizes personality styles "as central in the determination and expression of the patterns and styles of the person in both positive coping and psychopathology" (Millon, 1997, p. 201).

Personality has been considered to be "causally prior" to coping and stressors: that is, personality represents the themes or traits that comprise the person, and coping is a method of operation in the service of these traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In a study by Hyer, McCranie, Boudewyns, & Sperr (1996) on PTSD veterans, results showed that PTSD victims cope with trauma memories in ways conceptually related to their personality style. In the detached personality only avoidant style is significantly related to any coping style, that is, escape avoidance. Whereas those with the avoidant personality are interested in avoiding stress, those with schizoid personalities choose no particular coping style and are unaffected by stress. The dependent person copes by holding himself responsible, avoiding confrontation, and, surprisingly, by the use of planful problem solving. Also, those with narcissistic personalities tend to problem solve, to be confrontative, and do not avoid. Those with anti-social personalities tend to show several styles of coping- being confrontative, actively problem solving, and being unavoidable and unaccepting of responsibilities. Thus, may be concluded that the personality of the responder rules the response to the stressor.

Research has found several personality characteristics to be related to coping (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Moos & Schaefer, 1993). For instance, optimist patients seem to cope in a more active, problem-oriented way, whereas pessimistic patients tend to show more passive or avoidant forms of coping (Carver, Scheier, & Pozo, 1992). Some of the other personality variables examined in relation to coping include learned optimism (Carver & Scheier, 1999), mastery (Dweck & Sorich, 1999), locus of control (Rotter, 1966), self-

efficacy (Bandura, 1997), self-esteem (Baumeister, 1999), perceived control (Cohen & Edwards, 1989) etc.

It has been seen that there is a significant correlation between some personality styles and concrete coping strategies, which match with basic characteristics of given personality style. There is a positive correlation between negative strategies and distrustful, self-critical, kind personality style. People who use the positive strategies have self-confident, accurate, intuitive and kind personality style.

Personality variables are also regarded as internal coping resources (Wylie, 1979) that influence coping strategy. In addition, personality factors as “hardiness” (Kobasa, Maddi & Carrington, 1981) locus of control (Rotter, 1966) self-esteem (Fleishman, 1984), and sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979) have all been identified as playing a role in stress resistance. Taking Rotter’s concept of locus of control (Rotter, 1966), it is suggested that compared with externals, internals will display a bias for action and are more likely to adopt active problem solving behaviors (Anderson, 1977). Similarly, individuals with higher levels of self-esteem have a preference for action (Holahan & Moos, 1987). Thus, the moderating relationship between stress and personality would seem to suggest that certain personalities will consistently be predisposed to adopt more effective coping methods than others. Also, because different personality types have been shown to adopt similar coping styles when placed in similar situations (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985), the limited research evidence to date, which has tended to focus on general rather than specific situation related coping, suggests that situational factors are more influential than personality in determining coping strategies. Although personality characteristics may affect appraisal and problem attitude, the interactive relationship between personality and the actual coping behavior is complex and yet not clearly understood.

On inheritance of traits, molecular genetic studies indicate which individual genes might influence personality. Genetic researchers make some surprising contributions. For example, genetic studies can make a contribution to the study of personality change, and even the genetic contributions to personality traits may change with age or over time. Since personality traits are partly heritable, so it is possible that genetic contributions to coping are mediated by the personality traits (Matthews, Deary & Whiteman, 2003). However, there is some evidence to suggest that there is a genetic basis for coping styles that is separate from personality (Kendler et al, 1991; Busjahn et al, 1999). Further, in a study, four coping factors (defence, emotion, substitution and active coping) all showed evidence of genetic variance; some of the subscales also showed evidence for shared genetic and environmental effects (Busjahn et al, 1999).

### *2.2.5 Personality correlates of coping*

There are numerous constructs that could be cited as the correlates of coping. Among personality characteristics often talked of are hope, resilience, optimism and self-esteem. It has been found that negative thoughts and emotions could block recovery and well-being and positive processes such as hope could promote it (Cousins, 1976). Moreover, hope is a

significant and unique predictor of problem related coping when controlling for negative affectivity and optimism. High-hope people focus on success rather than failure when pursuing goals and use adaptive coping strategies (Snyder et al, 1991). Furthermore, there is a positive relationship between hope and increased perceived problem-solving ability (Snyder, 1989).

Apart from this, other correlates of coping may involve locus of control, social interactions and appraisals of the situations by the individuals.

Further, in young adults, problem-focused coping plays an important role in psychological adjustment (Chang et al, 2006). Also, avoidance and self-control seemed maladaptive since they were related to personality traits with poorer outcomes (Willebrand, 2004). Gutmann (1974) reports that coping in young adulthood is characterized by active mastery as evident in studies conducted with Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). According to him, young adults tend to be full of optimism. In the comparison studies among various adulthood stages, young adults are seen to be energetic and thus, make more use of active coping strategies but they lack much of experience. Further, they may be more unrealistic in their beliefs in their ability to affect the situation.

Although many personality traits may promote greater difficulty in coping with stressors, other personality traits may promote resilience. For instance, one influential factor in the domain is uncertainty orientation. Certainty oriented persons are more comfortable when there is a great deal of clarity and little uncertainty; uncertainty oriented persons are more comfortable with uncertainty and are motivated to learn from new situations and acquire information to manage it (Neuberg, Judice & West, 1997). Research has shown that certainty oriented individuals are more likely than uncertainty individuals to have greater difficulty coping with uncertainty and avoid situations that are unpredictable (Sorrentino, Hewitt & Raso-Knott, 1992). Further, certain personality types may also be better apt to use active coping than avoidant coping. For instance, Miller (1992) noted that there are individual differences in preferences for control that determine if and when a person seeks information to reduce stress. For instance, high “monitors” tend to cope with stress by focussing on and disclosing their emotions, are less avoidant when faced with uncertainty, and are more likely to seek social support for instrumental reasons. To the contrary, “blunters” often prefer to avoid and distract from highly threatening or stressful situations and threat relevant information.

The use of different types of coping assessment strategies (e.g. interindividual versus intraindividual measures) has undoubtedly contributed to some of the contradictory research on the relationships between basic personality and coping. Further, Carver et al (1989) pointed out that the impact of personality characteristics on coping is modest and that coping preferences exist independent of personality factors. Although coping preferences can also be seen as personality characteristics, they may influence coping indirectly through their impact on appraisal. Most of the research on the relationship between personality characteristics and coping is not longitudinal in nature and thus, such studies should be conducted so as to obtain stronger relationships between the variables.

## CHAPTER 3

### FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### *3.1 Motivation for the Study*

The aim of the study is to explore coping strategies employed by the individuals in relation to the personality styles. Most of the research done in this domain explores the pathological (e.g. anxiety, PTSD) variables of personality in relation to coping. The study's focus was to explore the impact of personality styles, using MIPS by Millon, on the choice of coping strategies employed by the undergraduate male students to tackle stressful situations. The study also investigates whether personality styles can predict the nature of coping strategies, also called situational personality traits that certain personality types are inclined to adopt. Apart from prediction, the present study also attempts to see if any significant correlations exist among the coping strategies and personality style variables.

#### *3.2 Research Problem*

Literature on personality and coping points to the varied conclusions about the relationships that exist among them. Some state that personality can be used to predict types of coping strategies students use, whereas others point to the fact that personality styles have a small relation with coping skills. Both are at times regarded as the varied personality traits. Present study looks into this relationship further and attempts to find whether there are predispositions to the ways we choose to cope with stressful situations in our lives.

#### *3.3 Objectives*

1. To study the various coping strategies employed by the undergraduate males.
2. To study the contribution of active and passive personality styles in the use of coping strategies.
3. To find out the coping strategies adopted by males with motivating aims, cognitive modes and interpersonal behaviors as per in MIPS scale (Millon, 1994).
4. To study the relationship between the adjustment level of the undergraduate males and coping strategies.

#### *3.4 Hypotheses*

1. Interpersonal behaviors in personality styles may predict the variation in the coping strategies used by undergraduate males to a greater extent as compared to the motivating aims and cognitive modes.
2. Active and passive personality styles may be effective in predicting the coping strategies chosen by the undergraduate males.
3. People having high adjustment scores may use more of accepting responsibility and planful problem solving in comparison to other coping strategies.
4. Accepting responsibility may be the highest employed method of coping with stress among the undergraduate males.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the description of the design of the present study, sample, research tools, methodology and procedure.

#### *4.1 Sample*

A total of 146 undergraduate engineering male student volunteers from Thapar University, of age range 18 years to 21 years participated in the study. All the subjects were given the positive reinforcement (refreshments) for motivation on individual basis. 80 participants were selected based on the criteria of the consistency scores (3 or more) on MIPS and the rest 66 were rejected.

#### *4.2 Design*

##### *Statistical analysis-*

Data (sample of undergraduate males) was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean and standard deviation are used to describe and compare the results. Further, the graphs are plotted for the means of coping and personality styles to get a clear picture of the prevailing trends among the undergraduate males. The profile of the PS values for the personality styles is also plotted.

Linear regression analysis is also conducted using SPSS version 14.0. According to Cohen (1988), a correlation ( $r$ ) can be understood by determining its square ( $r^2$ ). A regression analysis is used to determine the proportion of the total variance of one variable that is explained by another variable (Moore, 1995). In the present study, linear regression is conducted to determine the proportion of the total variance of coping strategies that is explained by the personality styles. An adjusted measure,  $R^2_{\text{adjusted}}$ , is a modified R-squared where the addition of the independent variables does not automatically increase R. It is an improved measure of the overall fit of a regression relationship and is used to account for the degrees of freedom changes as a result of different number of model parameters.

Regression equations for estimating coping strategies from personality styles are also formulated for individual coping strategies.

The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is used to determine the relationship between the variables. In the present study the correlations (Pearson's  $r$ ) among the coping strategies and personality styles are computed so as to determine the strength of relationship between the variables. In addition, correlations among the adjustment index and the coping strategies are also computed.

### 4.3 Tools used and Procedure

Research instruments used included the measures for personality styles and coping strategies.

#### 4.3.1 Measurement of personality

##### 4.3.1.1 Description

In measurement of personality styles, the *Millon Index of Personality Styles* (MIPS) by Theodore Millon (1994) was used. The instrument is a brief, well-rounded personality measure designed to assess normal personality styles for adults and is a 180-item, true/false questionnaire. The MIPS consists of 24 scales grouped into 12 pairs. Each pair contains two juxtaposed scales. MIPS scales are organized into three major areas: Motivating Aims, Cognitive Modes, and Interpersonal Behaviors. In addition to 12 pairs of content scales, the MIPS contains three validity indicators: Positive Impression, Negative Impression, and Consistency.

MIPS scales include-

Motivating-Aims- which helps to assess the person's emotional style in dealing with his/her environment

- Enhancing (1A)– Preserving (1B)
- Modifying (2A) – Accommodating (2B)
- Individuating (3A) – Nurturing (3B)

Cognitive Modes- which helps to examine the person's mode of cognitive processing.

- Extraversing (4A) – Introversing (4B)
- Sensing (5A) – Intuiting (5B)
- Thinking (6A)– Feeling (6B)
- Systematizing (7A)– Innovating (7B)

Interpersonal Behaviors- which helps to assess the person's way of interrelating with others.

- Retiring (8A) – Outgoing (8B)
- Hesitating (9A)– Asserting (9B)
- Dissenting (10A)– Conforming (10B)
- Yielding (11A)– Controlling (11B)
- Complaining (12A)– Agreeing (12B)

##### 4.3.1.2 Administration and Scoring

The MIPS was administered in the paper-and-pencil format. The questionnaire was given in the groups of 10.

The MIPS administration is not timed. Most people take about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. College going students take about 20-25 minutes to complete it.

### *Scoring and Interpretation*

Scoring of answer sheets is done manually via the use of scoring keys. The scores are computed individually for all 24 scales.

In interpreting scores on MIPS, validity indicators must be checked before scoring. If scores are within accepted ranges, scoring can be continued. On consistency scale, scores of 4 or 5 indicate that the examinee responded to the questions in a consistent manner. Scores of less than 3 are rare and such profiles may not be valid. Raw scores are then converted into the respective Prevalence scores provided in the table in the manual. Prevalence scores that range from PS 0 to PS 100, uniquely present the way in which the proportion of individuals who score at or above PS 50 on a particular scale matches the prevalence of individuals in general population who possess that trait. Prevalence score transformations are then plotted on the graphs provided behind the answer sheet so as to make interpretations simpler.

#### *4.3.1.3 Reliability and Validity*

Internal consistency estimates for the test scales are .74 to .87 (Millon, 1994, p. 61) and test-retest reliability ranged from .74 to .90 over 2 months (Millon, 1994, p. 63). The pattern of convergent & divergent correlations of MIPS with various tests as MMPI-2, MMPI, 16 PF etc. demonstrate external validity (Millon, 2008, p. 651).

### **4.3.2 Measurement of coping**

The *Ways of Coping Questionnaire* by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) was used. It is designed to identify the thoughts and actions an individual has used to cope with a specific stressful encounter. It measures coping processes and not coping dispositions or styles.

#### *4.3.2.1 Description*

The questionnaire consisted of 66-items involving a range of cognitive and behavioral strategies. Further, the response format included a 4-point Likert scale so that respondents could indicate the frequency with which they use each strategy.

The Questionnaire included the following 8 coping scales:

- Confronting coping
- Distancing
- Self-controlling
- Seeking social support
- Accepting responsibility

- Escape-avoidance
- Planful problem solving
- Positive reappraisal

#### *4.3.2.2 Administration and Scoring*

The Ways of Coping Questionnaire can generally be completed in about ten minutes, although the time will vary with respondents. The questionnaire is in the self-report format in which participants have to describe the extent to which they carry out the statements describing the actions in response to the stressful situations.

The following instructions were given to the respondents: Take a few moments and think about the most stressful situation that you have experienced in the past week. Directing the respondent's focus to a particular episode of stressful encounter proved helpful in getting required responses.

#### *Scoring*

There are two methods for scoring the ways of coping questionnaire, raw and relative. Raw scores describe coping effort for each of the eight types of coping; whereas relative scores describe the proportion of effort represented by each type of coping.

In both the methods of scoring, individuals respond to each item on a 4-point Likert scale, indicating the frequency with which each strategy is used: 0 indicates "does not apply and/or not used," 1 indicates "used somewhat," 2 indicates "used quite a bit," and 3 indicates "used a great deal." In the raw scoring, the raw scores are the sum of the subject's responses to the items that comprise a given scale. This method provides a summary of the extent to which each type of coping was used in particular encounter. Relative scores, describe the contribution of each coping scale relative of all of the scales combined. The relative score technique controls for the unequal numbers of items within the scales and for the individual differences in response rates. It has also been found that the relative scores revealed relations among ways of coping that can be blurred with the raw score technique.

#### *4.3.2.3 Reliability and Validity*

Moderate internal consistency reliabilities for the subscales were reported to be ranging from a low of .56 to a high of .85. The eight coping scales had moderate alpha coefficients, ranging from .61 to .79.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the results of the study are reported and discussed. The mean and standard deviation (SD); and the relationships between personality styles and coping strategies are reported. Regression equations for coping strategies are formulated and finally, the regression analysis is carried out to determine if personality dimensions can act as predictors of coping strategies.

#### 5.1 Mean and Standard Deviation for the Personality Styles

Mean and Standard Deviation of the various personality scales for the sample of undergraduate males is given in the Table 5.1. The Figure 5.1 also provides the PS values on various personality scales for Undergraduate males based on Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Various Personality Scales (n = 80)**

<i>Personality Scales</i>	<i>Mean PS Values</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<b>Enhancing</b>	54.1	17.5164
<b>Preserving</b>	44.7875	17.7012
<b>Modifying</b>	58.025	19.0395
<b>Accommodating</b>	48.925	21.9491
<b>Individuating</b>	64.4125	20.0427
<b>Nurturing</b>	48.025	19.6796
<b>Extraversing</b>	42.4875	18.9936
<b>Introversing</b>	65.125	20.9298
<b>Sensing</b>	61.6625	20.6225
<b>Intuiting</b>	42.45	21.8138
<b>Thinking</b>	69.175	17.69915
<b>Feeling</b>	48.025	21.3659
<b>Systematizing</b>	50.6125	19.5567
<b>Innovating</b>	46.1	23.3290
<b>Retiring</b>	67.0875	20.93945
<b>Outgoing</b>	49.9	21.0398
<b>Hesitating</b>	50.75	22.4220
<b>Asserting</b>	59.425	37.70609
<b>Dissenting</b>	69.7375	18.2248
<b>Conforming</b>	51	20.7455
<b>Yielding</b>	51.75	25.71336
<b>Controlling</b>	63.9625	18.0859
<b>Complaining</b>	53.4	20.2588
<b>Agreeing</b>	54.8375	21.6908

Thus, from the Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1, it is clear that dissenting (69.7375), thinking (69.175) and retiring (67.0875) are the prevalent personality styles among the undergraduate males. These are further closely followed by other styles as introversing (65.125), individuating (64.4125) and so on as shown in Figure 5.1.

In addition to Figure 5.1, Figure 5.2 gives the personality styles profile overview for the mean PS values for all the twenty-four personality scales.

### 5.2 Mean and Standard Deviation for the Coping Strategies

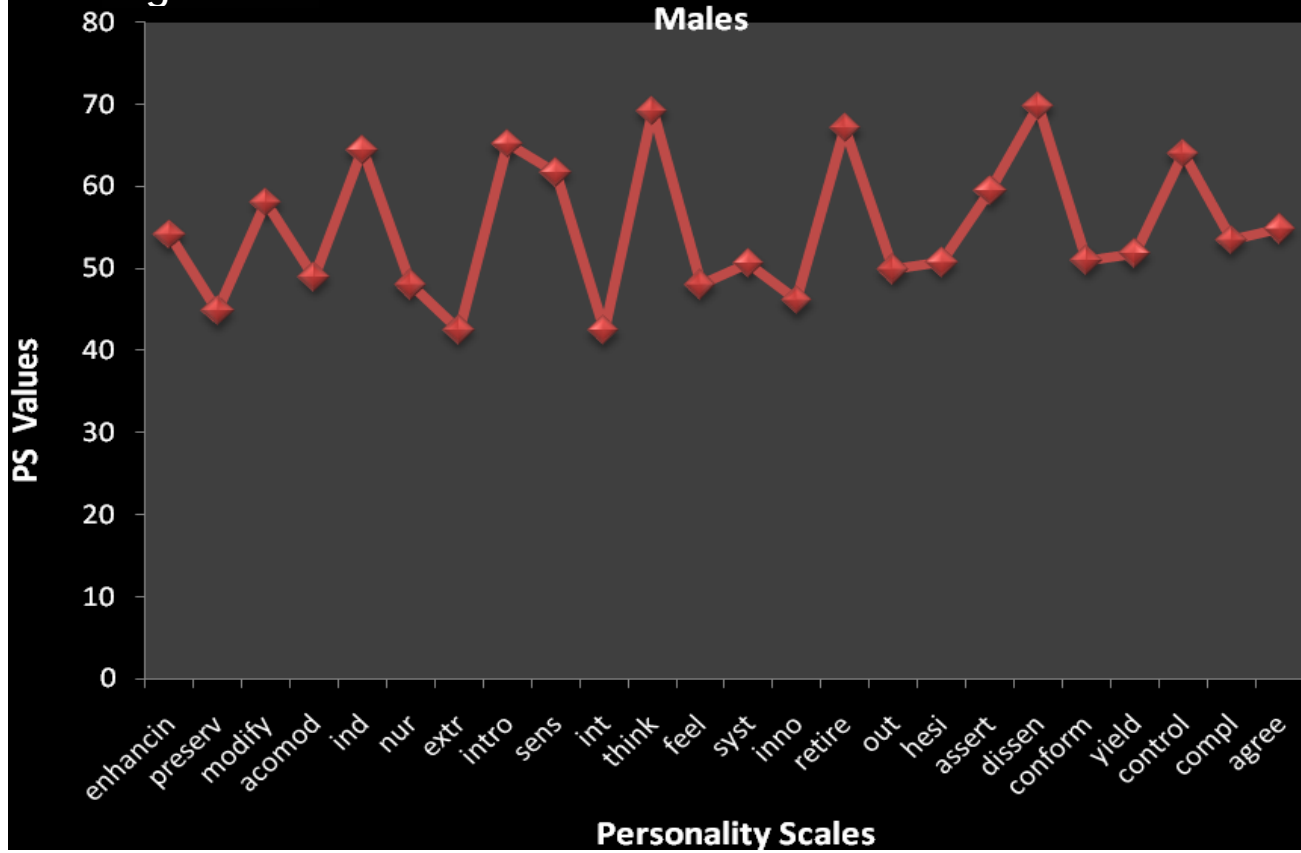
Mean and standard deviation for the coping strategies for the sample of undergraduate males is given in the Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Coping Strategies (n = 80)**

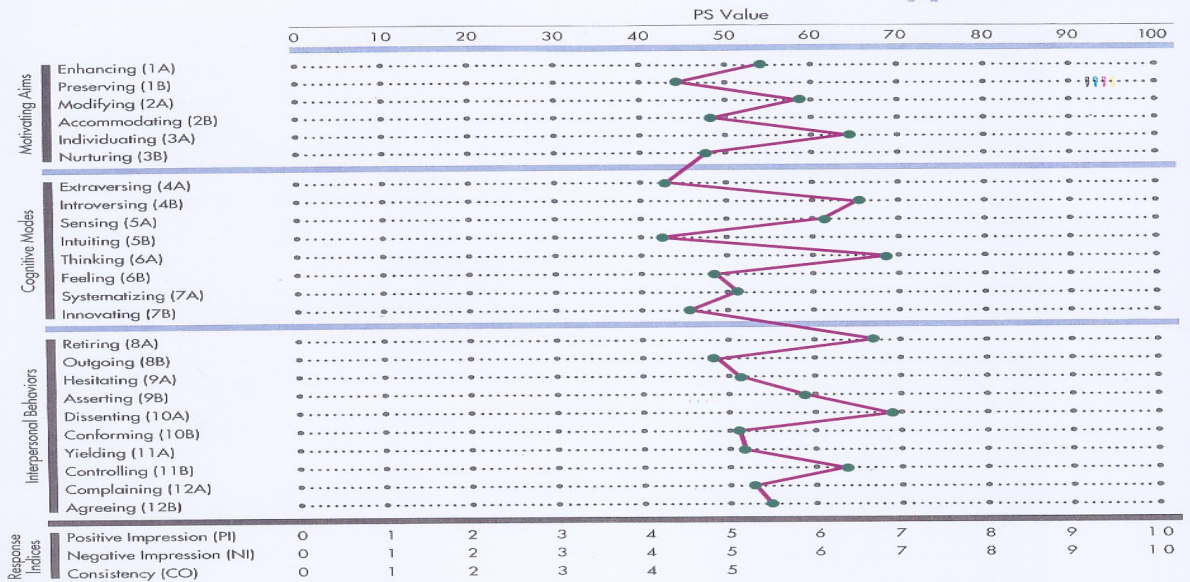
<i>Coping Strategies</i>	<i>Mean Values</i>		<i>Standard Deviations</i>	
	<b>Raw</b>	<b>Relative</b>	<b>Raw</b>	<b>Relative</b>
<b>Accepting Responsibility</b>	6.66	0.136061	2.4179	0.04126
<b>Confrontive Coping</b>	8.337	0.110941	3.2018	0.033057
<b>Escape Avoidance</b>	12.28	0.125617	3.674	0.032012
<b>Positive Reappraisal</b>	10.237	0.120632	2.72	0.02789
<b>Planful Problem Solving</b>	9.26	0.127303	2.68	0.03459
<b>Self-Controlling</b>	10.95	0.128385	3.1738	0.03147
<b>Distancing</b>	9.037	0.12312	2.870	0.033504
<b>Seeking Social Support</b>	9.46	0.127941	2.9249	0.029879

From the Table 5.2 and Figure 5.3, it is clear that accepting responsibility is the prevalently used coping strategy, that is, undergraduate males often cope by focusing on the problems as they acknowledge their role in the problem with the concomitant theme of trying to put things right.

Figure 5.1. PS Values on various Personality Scales for Undergraduate Males



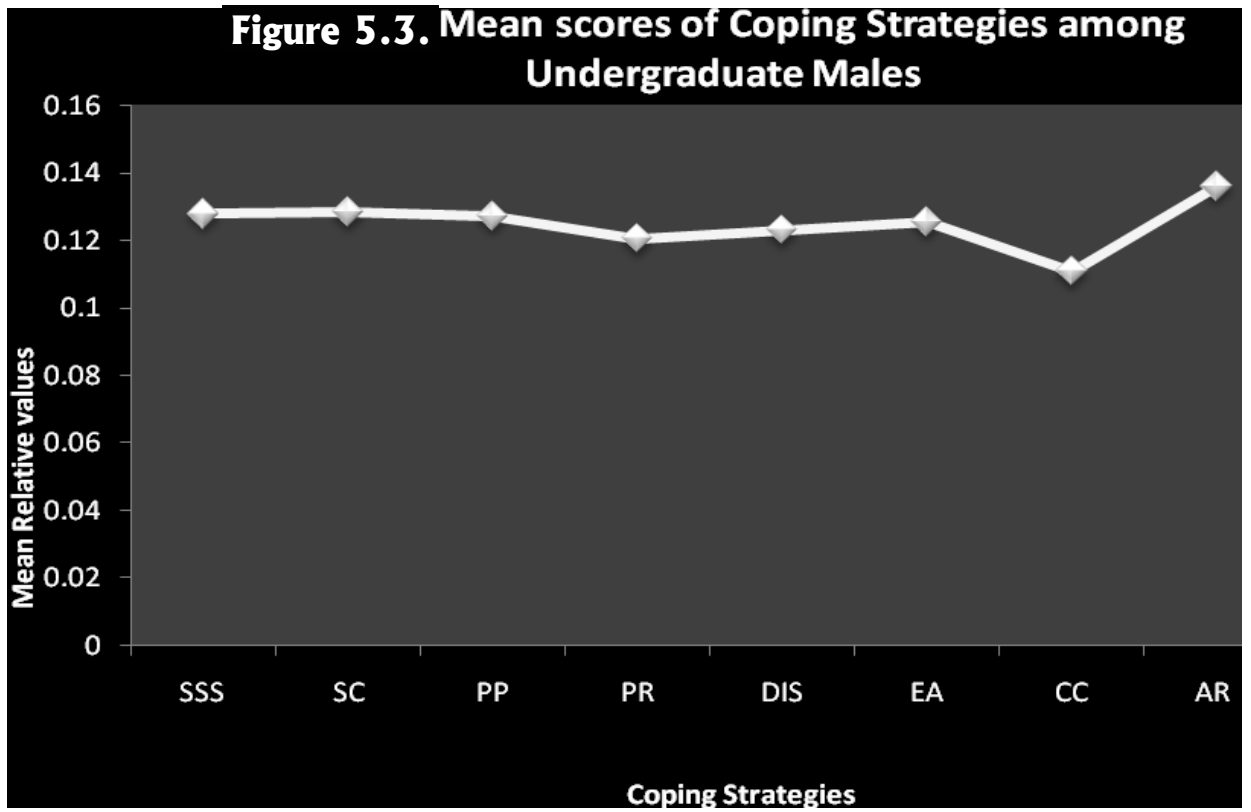
**Figure 5.2. Personality Styles profile overview for the mean PS values for all the twenty-four Personality Scales**



**Norms (check one)**

<b>Adult</b>	<b>College</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
<input type="checkbox"/> General	<input type="checkbox"/> General

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### 5.3 The Relationship between Coping Strategies and Personality Styles

In this section the Pearson product moment correlations are computed. Correlation coefficients (r) are also determined to give an indication of the relationship between variables. The correlations between the coping strategies and the personality styles are given in the Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3: Correlations between personality styles and coping strategies (n = 80)**

<i>Coping Strategies</i>	<i>Personality Styles</i>							
	Intuiting	Accommodating	Systematizing	Dissenting	Individuating	Yielding	Conforming	Asserting
Accepting Responsibility	-	-.263*	.226*	-	-	-	-	-
Confrontive Coping	-	-	-	.214*	.224*	-	-	-
Escape Avoidance	-	.230*	-	.237*	-	.221*	-	-
Planful Problem Solving	-	-	-	-	-	-	.303*	-
Self-Controlling	-	-	-	-	-	-	.229*	-
Distancing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.243*
Seeking Social Support	.242*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), for N = 80

Empty cells indicate non significant values.

Table 5.3 presents the significant correlations between various personality styles and coping strategies in undergraduate males. Accepting Responsibility as a coping strategy correlates significantly with personality styles of Accommodating ( $r = -.26$ ), and with Systematizing ( $r = .226$ ). It can be deduced that the males who have a highly organized and predictable approach to life, are orderly, conscientious and efficient tend to accept and acknowledge their role in the problem. Also, males who are taking little efforts to alter their lives and are unable to rouse themselves, lack initiative and do little to generate the outcomes they desire are highly associated with denying their roles in the problem situation as accommodating style correlates negatively with accepting responsibility as a way of coping.

Further, Confronting Coping correlates with Personality Styles of Dissenting ( $r = .21$ ) and Individuating ( $r = .22$ ). Thus, it can be surmised that males with a tendency to act out in an independent and nonconforming manner, resisting traditional standards, oriented towards actualizing their own needs and wishes and worrying little about the impact of their behavior

on others tend to use aggressive efforts to alter the situation as a way of coping with stressful events.

Similarly, Escape Avoidance correlates with Accommodating ( $r = .23$ ), Dissenting ( $r = .24$ ) and with Yielding ( $r = .22$ ). This provides an evidence in relation to the conclusion that people undertaking little to shape or alter their lives, lacking initiative, doing little to generate outcomes they desire and being reckless & independent are more oriented to engaging in wishful thinking, and behavioral efforts to escape or avoid the problem. People with yielding personality style are the ones bypassing opportunities for rewards and tend to fail repeatedly to achieve despite possessing abilities to do so. Such people are highly oriented to engage in the use of escape avoidance as a way of coping with stressful and demanding situations of life.

Planful Problem Solving correlates with Conforming ( $r = .30$ ), thus is evident that people who are upstanding, self-controlled and relate to authority in a respectful and cooperative manner & behave in a socially appropriate manner tend to show an orientation towards the selection of planful problem solving strategies that involve deliberate efforts to alter the problematic situation, coupled with an analytic approach to solving the problem.

Self- Controlling relates with Conforming ( $r = .229$ ). It can thus be inferred that people who are upstanding, self-controlled and tend to behave in formal manner are more inclined to use self-controlling as a preferred way of coping, that is, they make efforts to regulate their own feelings and actions in accordance with the situations.

Seeking Social Support correlates with Intuiting ( $r = .24$ ) showing that persons high on seeking out and enjoying mysterious experiences of life and open to knowledge choose seeking informational and emotional support as a preferred coping strategy.

Distancing as a coping strategy correlates negatively with Personality Style of Asserting ( $r = -.24$ ). This provides evidence that males with competent, egocentric, ambitious and self-assured view of them & those who are outspoken and arrogant would prefer a more direct confronting in a problem situation rather than choosing distancing or trying to make cognitive efforts to detach oneself & minimize the significance of the situation as a strategy to cope.

Thus, from the correlation matrix (Table 5.3) it can be concluded that planful problem solving is highly associated in a positive manner with the conforming personality style in undergraduate males. Further, negative association between accommodating personality style and accepting responsibility has been found. In line with this, the asserting style is also negatively correlated to the use of distancing as a way of coping.

#### 5.4 Prediction of Coping Strategies from Personality Styles

This section includes the regression equations formulated for the various coping strategies that can be predicted individually from the given values of the personality styles. Regression equations are formulated in the following manner:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta X + \text{error}$$

Where, Y refers to the dependent variable, that is, coping strategies and X refers to the independent variable, that is, personality style.  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are the constants and error refers to the standard error in the regression model

Thus, my regression equations for the coping strategies are:

- For Escape Avoidance as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{EA} = 9.253 - .067(\text{enhancing}) + .027(\text{preserving}) + .466(\text{modifying}) + .451(\text{accommodating}) - .154(\text{individuating}) - .596(\text{nurturing}) - .208(\text{extraversing}) - .005(\text{introversing}) - .073(\text{sensing}) - .089(\text{intuiting}) - .329(\text{thinking}) - .128(\text{feeling}) - .020(\text{systematizing}) + .312(\text{innovating}) + .080(\text{retiring}) + .013(\text{outgoing}) - .715(\text{hesitating}) + .036(\text{asserting}) + .640(\text{dissenting}) + .439(\text{conforming}) + .107(\text{yielding}) - .052(\text{controlling}) + .014(\text{complaining}) + .566(\text{agreeing}) + 13.048$$

- For Accepting Responsibility as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{AR} = 19.052 + .064(\text{enhancing}) + .261(\text{preserving}) - .075(\text{modifying}) - .360(\text{accommodating}) - .189(\text{individuating}) - .067(\text{nurturing}) - .318(\text{extraversing}) - .234(\text{introversing}) + .077(\text{sensing}) + .476(\text{intuiting}) - .012(\text{thinking}) - .363(\text{feeling}) + .173(\text{systematizing}) + .140(\text{innovating}) + .253(\text{retiring}) + .185(\text{outgoing}) - .165(\text{hesitating}) - .109(\text{asserting}) + .477(\text{dissenting}) + .070(\text{conforming}) - .267(\text{yielding}) + .060(\text{controlling}) - .111(\text{complaining}) + .539(\text{agreeing}) + 8.572$$

- For Self Controlling as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{SC} = 14.394 + .249(\text{enhancing}) + .491(\text{preserving}) + .383(\text{modifying}) + .472(\text{accommodating}) - .169(\text{individuating}) - .245(\text{nurturing}) - .569(\text{extraversing}) - .478(\text{introversing}) + .149(\text{sensing}) - .002(\text{intuiting}) - .329(\text{thinking}) + .090(\text{feeling}) + .331(\text{systematizing}) + .460(\text{innovating}) + .386(\text{retiring}) + .147(\text{outgoing}) - .238(\text{hesitating}) - .042(\text{asserting}) + .351(\text{dissenting}) + .089(\text{conforming}) - .006(\text{yielding}) - .113(\text{controlling}) - .198(\text{complaining}) + .170(\text{agreeing}) + 11.051$$

- For Seeking Social Support as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{SS} = 24.451 - .341(\text{enhancing}) + .008(\text{preserving}) - .091(\text{modifying}) - .086(\text{accommodating}) + .263(\text{individuating}) + .046(\text{nurturing}) - .252(\text{extraversing}) - .242(\text{introversing}) + .221(\text{sensing}) + .584(\text{intuiting}) - .239(\text{thinking}) - .195(\text{feeling}) - .047(\text{systematizing}) - .080(\text{innovating}) + .356(\text{retiring}) + .078(\text{outgoing}) - .374(\text{hesitating}) -$$

$$.374(\text{asserting}) + .028(\text{dissenting}) + .052(\text{conforming}) + .205(\text{yielding}) + .317(\text{controlling}) - .101(\text{complaining}) + .319(\text{agreeing}) + 10.721$$

- For Confronting Coping as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{CC} = 40.787 - .146(\text{enhancing}) + .251(\text{preserving}) - .067(\text{modifying}) + .060(\text{accommodating}) + .217(\text{individuating}) + .025(\text{nurturing}) - .658(\text{extraversing}) - .205(\text{introversing}) + .115(\text{sensing}) + .270(\text{intuiting}) + .147(\text{thinking}) - .050(\text{feeling}) + .161(\text{systematizing}) + .116(\text{innovating}) + .232(\text{retiring}) + .629(\text{outgoing}) - .679(\text{hesitating}) - .655(\text{asserting}) + .241(\text{dissenting}) - .218(\text{conforming}) + .075(\text{yielding}) + .025(\text{controlling}) - .113(\text{complaining}) + .191(\text{agreeing}) + 11.126$$

- For Positive Reappraisal as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{PR} = 22.714 - .205(\text{enhancing}) + .491(\text{preserving}) + .058(\text{modifying}) + .112(\text{accommodating}) + .071(\text{individuating}) - .032(\text{nurturing}) - .063(\text{extraversing}) - .250(\text{introversing}) + .121(\text{sensing}) + .279(\text{intuiting}) + .285(\text{thinking}) - .028(\text{feeling}) + .120(\text{systematizing}) + .143(\text{innovating}) + .330(\text{retiring}) + .105(\text{outgoing}) - .555(\text{hesitating}) - .530(\text{asserting}) + .354(\text{dissenting}) - .067(\text{conforming}) - .615(\text{yielding}) - .303(\text{controlling}) + .143(\text{complaining}) + .247(\text{agreeing}) + 9.593$$

- For Planful Problem Solving as a coping strategy:

$$Y_{PP} = 8.176 + .102(\text{enhancing}) + .651(\text{preserving}) + .149(\text{modifying}) + .325(\text{accommodating}) + .117(\text{individuating}) + .196(\text{nurturing}) - .170(\text{extraversing}) - .294(\text{introversing}) + .094(\text{sensing}) - .073(\text{intuiting}) - .001(\text{thinking}) - .103(\text{feeling}) - .135(\text{systematizing}) + .029(\text{innovating}) + .323(\text{retiring}) + .083(\text{outgoing}) - .249(\text{hesitating}) - .206(\text{asserting}) + .325(\text{dissenting}) + .333(\text{conforming}) - .003(\text{yielding}) - .373(\text{controlling}) + .033(\text{complaining}) - .371(\text{agreeing}) + 9.807$$

- For Distancing as a coping strategy:

$$Y_D = 21.040 - .120(\text{enhancing}) + .289(\text{preserving}) + .009(\text{modifying}) + .177(\text{accommodating}) + .050(\text{individuating}) - .188(\text{nurturing}) - .137(\text{extraversing}) - .161(\text{introversing}) + .094(\text{sensing}) + .184(\text{intuiting}) - .271(\text{thinking}) - .199(\text{feeling}) + .122(\text{systematizing}) + .107(\text{innovating}) + .279(\text{retiring}) + .432(\text{outgoing}) - .466(\text{hesitating}) - .801(\text{asserting}) + .261(\text{dissenting}) - .052(\text{conforming}) + .023(\text{yielding}) + .125(\text{controlling}) + .046(\text{complaining}) + .219(\text{agreeing}) + 11.359$$

Putting the respective values of the independent variables in the equations can provide an estimate of the specific coping strategy.

### 5.5 Regression Analysis regarding Personality Styles and Coping Strategies

A regression analysis of coping strategies (dependent variable) and personality styles (independent variable) was conducted. The regression analysis for relevant constructs is given in the Table 5.4

**Table 5.4: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Personality Styles (combined) predicting Coping Strategies employed by Undergraduate males**

S.no.	Coping strategy	Personality styles	Coefficients					Adjusted R Square
			B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	
1	Seeking social support	Intuiting	.078	.031	.584	2.558	.014*	.146
		Retiring	.050	.023	.356	2.205	.032	
		Adjust	.170	.071	1.741	2.380	.021	
		Adjust t-score	-.378	.200	-1.281	-1.892	.064	
2	Self-controlling	Preserving	.088	.039	.491	2.253	.029	.229
		Modifying	.064	.031	.383	2.087	.042	
		Accommodating	.068	.026	.472	2.666	.010*	
		Extraversing	-.095	.038	-.569	-2.503	.016	
		Introversing	-.073	.030	-.478	-2.411	.020	
		Thinking	-.059	.031	-.329	-1.932	.059	
		Innovating	.063	.028	.460	2.214	.031	
		Retiring	.058	.023	.386	2.514	.015*	
		Adjust	.160	.074	1.514	2.178	.034	
		Adjust t-score	-.397	.206	-1.241	-1.929	.059	
3	Accepting responsibility	Accommodating	-.040	.020	-.360	-1.998	.051	.201
		Intuiting	.053	.024	.476	2.156	.036	
		Feeling	-.041	.023	-.363	-1.781	.081	
		Dissenting	.063	.034	.477	1.888	.065	
		Agreeing	.060	.023	.539	2.644	.011*	
		Adjust	.104	.057	1.288	1.820	.075	
		Adjust t-score	-.327	.160	-1.341	-2.048	.046	
4	Planful problem solving	Retiring	.041	.021	.323	2.006	.050	.149
		Controlling	-.055	.028	-.373	-1.952	.057	
5	Positive reappraisal	Preserving	.075	.034	.491	2.223	.031	.210
		Retiring	.043	.020	.330	2.125	.039	
		Hesitating	-.067	.031	-.555	-2.162	.035	
		Asserting	-.076	.036	-.530	-2.127	.038	
		Adjust	.153	.064	1.686	2.396	.020	
		Adjust t-score	-.326	.179	-1.188	-1.823	.074	
6	Confronting coping	Asserting	-.111	.042	-.655	-2.666	.010*	.232
		Adjust	.306	.074	2.865	4.131	.000	
7	Escape avoidance	Modifying	.090	.036	.466	2.492	.016	.198
		Accommodating	.075	.030	.451	2.500	.016	
		Thinking	-.068	.036	-.329	-1.896	.064	
		Dissenting	.129	.051	.640	2.527	.015*	
		Conforming	.078	.040	.439	1.919	.061	

\* $p \leq 0.01$

Table 5.4 shows the extent to which the combined personality styles explain the variation in the coping strategies used by the undergraduate males. A total of 14.6% of the variation in the use of seeking social support as a coping strategy is explained by the Intuiting personality style ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Further, 22.9% of the variation in the use of self-controlling as a coping strategy is explained by the personality dimensions (accommodating, retiring personality types,  $p \leq 0.01$ ). To add on, 20.1% of the variation in the accepting responsibility as a coping strategy is explained by agreeing personality style in males ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Furthermore, 23.2% of the variation in the use of confronting coping is explained by asserting personality dimension ( $p = .01$ ). Also, nearly 19.8% variations in the use of escape avoidance as a way of coping were explained by dissenting personality style ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

The significance levels of the findings have also been given. Beta values indicate the relative strength of the personality variables in explaining coping strategies; in order of strength the contributions are: 1) for seeking social support- intuiting (.58) and retiring (.36); 2) for self-controlling- extraversing (-.56)<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, preserving (.49)<sup>\*\*</sup>, introversing (-.48), accommodating (.47), innovating (.46), retiring (.39), modifying (.38) and thinking (-.33); 3) for accepting responsibility-agreeing (.54), dissenting (.48), intuiting (.48), feeling (-.36) and accommodating (-.36); 4) for planful problem solving- controlling (-.37) and retiring (.32); 5) for positive reappraisal- hesitating (-.56), asserting (-.53), preserving (.49) and retiring (.33); 6) for confronting coping- hesitating (-.67) and asserting (-.66); 7) for escape avoidance-dissenting(.64), modifying (.46), accommodating (.45), conforming (.44) and thinking (-.32).

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>The negative Beta value (e.g. -.56) indicates the negative relationship between extraversing as a personality style and self-controlling as the coping strategy, such that, the lower the extraversing score, the higher the use of self-controlling and vice versa.

<sup>\*\*</sup>The positive Beta value (e.g., .49) indicates the positive contribution of the particular personality style to the respective coping strategy, that is, for instance, higher the scores on the preserving personality style, higher would be the self- control of the individual.

The findings listed above lead to an overall conclusion that personality styles do contribute to the prediction of coping strategies. The contribution of intuiting personality style to variance in seeking social support, of agreeing personality style in accepting responsibility and the contribution of accommodating and retiring personality styles to use of self-controlling as the coping strategies in undergraduate males are worth consideration.

### 5.6 Regression Analysis regarding Coping Strategies and the Sub-Scales of Personality Styles

A regression analysis of the coping strategies (dependent variable) and the sub scales of the personality styles (independent variable) were conducted. The regression analysis for relevant constructs is given in the Table 5.5.

**Table 5.5: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Personality Styles (Scale-Wise) predicting Coping Strategies of Undergraduate males**

	Personality styles	Coping strategies	Coefficients					Adjusted R Square		
			B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.			
<b>MOTIVATING AIMS</b>	Modifying	Escape avoidance	.063	.031	.329	.643	2.045	.044	.049	.149
		Self-controlling	.052	.027	.314		1.947	.055	.043	
	Accommodating	Accepting responsibility	-.032	.017	-.289	.633	-1.930	.057	.021	
		Self-controlling	.050	.021	.344		2.322	.023	.043	
	Nurturing	Positive reappraisal	.035	.019	.254	.254	1.890	.063	-.016	
	Individuating	Confronting coping	.044	.022	.274	.274	1.994	.050	.009	
<b>COGNITIVE MODES</b>	Systematizing	Accepting responsibility	.039	.020	.314	.314	1.980	.052	.043	.067
	Thinking	Confronting coping	.062	.026	.342	.879	2.412	.018	-.005	
		Planful problem solving	.038	.021	.252		1.807	.075	.027	
		Positive reappraisal	.044	.022	.285		2.011	.048	.002	
<b>INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIORS</b>	Asserting	Positive reappraisal	-.061	.031	-.422	-.422	-1.977	.052	.199	.704
	Agreeing	Positive reappraisal	.033	.019	.264	.264	1.785	.079	.199	
	Hesitating	Planful problem solving	-.042	.024	-.354	-.716	-1.788	.078	.088	
		Escape avoidance	-.059	.033	-.362		-1.819	.073	.079	
	Conforming	Planful problem solving	.044	.019	.343	.343	2.277	.026	.088	
	Outgoing	Distancing	.055	.023	.402	.402	2.338	.022	.051	

According to Table 5.5, personality styles (motivating aims) explain a total of 14.9% of the variance in coping strategies (escape- avoidance & self-controlling are explained up to 4.9% & 4.3% respectively by the modifying personality style; accepting responsibility, self-

controlling is explained up to 2.1% & 4.3% by accommodating style; and 0.9% variation in confronting coping is contributed to individuating style). Further, personality styles (cognitive modes) explain a total of 6.7% variance in coping strategies (accepting responsibility is explained up to 4.3% by the systematizing personality style; and variation in planful problem solving & positive reappraisal is contributed to about 2.7% & 0.2% respectively by thinking style). Interpersonal behaviors of personality styles contribute to about 70.4% of variance in coping strategies (positive reappraisal is explained up to 19.9% by the asserting personality style & the agreeing personality styles; hesitating and conforming personality styles contribute 8.8% variation in planful problem solving coping; 7.9% of variation in escape avoidance is contributed to by hesitating styles; and outgoing personality style contribute to a 5.1% of variance in distancing as a coping strategy).

The beta values in the Table 5.5 indicate the relative strength of the various scales of personality styles in explaining coping strategies. In order of strength these variables (styles) are: Thinking (.879), Hesitating (-.716), Modifying (.643), Accommodating (.633), Asserting (-.422), Outgoing (.402), Conforming (.343), Systematizing (.314), Individuating (.274), Agreeing (.264), and Nurturing (.254).

Further, talking about the motivating aims subscale, positive beta values indicate that higher the individual's scores on modifying personality style, higher would be his tendency to employ self-controlling and escape avoidance strategies. Similarly, the beta values for nurturing and individuating scales point to the deduction that higher the scores on nurturing and individuating styles, higher would be the tendency to employ positive reappraisal and confronting coping respectively. The negative beta value indicates that higher the score of an individual on accommodating scale, lower would be the tendency to accept responsibility for the problematic situations.

On cognitive modes subscale, positive contribution of thinking personality style indicates that more logical and analytical a person is, higher is the tendency to use confronting coping, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal as coping strategies. Systematizing also contributes positively to accepting responsibility as a way of coping. That is, highly organized, conscientious and efficient individuals would acknowledge their role in the problem and are inclined to commit to changing and setting the things in the right directions.

On the interpersonal behaviors subscale, positive beta value (.264) indicates that agreeing personality style contributes positively to the use of positive reappraisal as a way of coping, such that, the individuals who relate strongly to others, and are loyal to a great extent (high score on agreeing) are inclined to make efforts to find a positive meaning in the problem. Thus, higher the score on agreeing style, higher would be the score on positive reappraisal. Negative contribution of hesitating to planful problem solving and escape avoidance indicates that higher the scores on hesitating scale, that is shy, timid and nervous an individual is, lower would be his score on planful problem solving or lower would be his tendency to focus on the problem and employ problem focused strategies. Further, conforming contributes

positively to problem solving strategies, that is higher the score on conforming personality style, higher is the tendency to use problem-focused coping strategy.

The findings from the Table 5.5 stand in the support of the first hypothesis which posited that the interpersonal behaviors as being the best predictor of coping strategies, in comparison to the motivating aims and cognitive modes. Interpersonal behaviors sub-scale of personality styles (MIPS) contributes up to 70.4% of variation in the coping strategies as compared to a contribution of 14.9% of variation in coping strategies by motivating aims followed by a 6.7% of variation in coping strategies being contributed by cognitive modes.

**5.7 Regression Analysis regarding Coping Strategies and the Active and Passive Styles of Personality**

A regression analysis of the coping strategies (dependent variable) and the sub divisions of the personality styles (active-passive styles) were conducted. The regression analysis for relevant constructs is given in the Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Personality Styles (Active Styles vs. Passive Styles) predicting Coping Strategies of Undergraduate males**

	Personality Styles	Coping Strategies	Coefficients					Adjusted R Square
			B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	
<b>A C T I V E</b>	<i>Extraversing</i>	Confronting coping	-.062	.032	-.365	-1.92	.059	.005
	<i>Sensing</i>	Seeking social support	-.035	.019	-.244	-1.801	.076	-.004
	<i>Innovating</i>	Escape avoidance	.050	.025	.316	2.009	.049	.029
	<i>Outgoing</i>	Confronting coping	.075	.033	.495	2.292	.025	.005
	<i>Asserting</i>	Distancing	-.071	.032	-.466	-2.218	.03	.001
	<i>Conforming</i>	Seeking social support	.051	.022	.362	2.310	.024	-.004
		Planful problem solving	.038	.021	.294	1.851	.069	-.031
	<i>Controlling</i>	Seeking social support	.051	.028	.317	1.849	.069	-.004
	<i>Agreeing</i>	Accepting responsibility	.044	.021	.392	2.080	.041	.029
<b>P A S S I V E</b>	<i>Accommodating</i>	Escape avoidance	.049	.027	.295	1.798	.077	.008
		Accepting responsibility	-.038	.017	-.345	-2.251	.028	.134
		Self-controlling	.05	.023	.344	2.186	.032	.087
	<i>Hesitating</i>	Escape avoidance	-.056	.032	-.339	-1.749	.085	.008
	<i>Yielding</i>	Positive reappraisal	-.038	.018	-.356	-2.058	.044	.070
		Escape avoidance	.044	.026	.310	1.735	.087	.008
	<i>Individuating</i>	Seeking social support	.037	.021	.256	1.813	.074	.046
		Accepting responsibility	-.039	.016	-.321	-2.384	.02	.134
	<i>Intuiting</i>	Positive reappraisal	.034	.016	.273	2.083	.041	.070
		Accepting responsibility	.028	.014	.256	2.025	.047	.134
		Seeking social support	.039	.018	.288	2.169	.034	.046
	<i>Retiring</i>	Seeking social support	.05	.021	.359	2.412	.019	.046
		Accepting responsibility	.035	.016	.307	2.165	.034	.134
		Self-controlling	.049	.022	.324	2.226	.029	.087
	<i>Systematizing</i>	Self-controlling	.051	.024	.316	2.095	.04	.087

Considering the Active and Passive styles of personality from the Table 5.6, there is not much contribution of active styles as compared to the passive styles that to an extent do contribute to the prediction of coping strategies. But due to the negative adjusted R square values, this classification pattern does not provide a good explanation for coping choices. The findings from the Table 5.6 disapprove and reject the second hypothesis which posited that active and passive styles of personality would be effective in prediction of the coping strategies employed by the undergraduate males.

### **5.8 The Relationship between Coping Strategies and Adjustment scores**

Adjustment Index in MIPS (Millon, 1994) is indicative of the overall adjustment of an individual. The MIPS Adjustment Index is calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Adjustment Index} = \{1A + [(8B + 9B + 10B + 11B + 12B) / 5]\} / 2 - \{1B + [(8A + 9A + 10A + 11A + 12A) / 5]\} / 2$$

The following six MIPS *PS* values were placed on the positive side of the Adjustment Index: Enhancing, Outgoing, Asserting, Conforming, Controlling, and Agreeing. The Enhancing scale was weighted twice as much as the other five scales. The following six MIPS *PS* values entered the negative side of the equation for the Adjustment Index: Preserving, Retiring, Hesitating, Dissenting, Yielding and Complaining. The Preserving scale was weighted twice as much as the other five scales.

Further, the resulting Adjustment scores were converted to T-scores using the mean and the standard deviation in the formula:

$$\text{Adjustment Index T-score} = [(\text{Adjust} - \text{Group mean}) / \text{Group SD}] \times 10 + 50$$

A cut-off score for the Adjustment Index of T 35 was used to classify individuals as fit or unfit because it provided maximum classification efficiency in consideration to the adjustment concept that is those who have Adjustment Index T score of less than thirty-five are considered unfit due to nonadaptability to the environment and the surroundings.

#### **5.8.1 The Relationship between the Coping Strategies and the Adjustment Index scores**

Considering the relationship between coping strategies employed and the adjustment index of the individuals, Table 5.7 outlines the results of computed Pearson correlation (*r*) values between adjustment index and coping strategies.

**Table 5.7 Pearson correlation (r) values between the Adjustment Index scores and the Coping strategies in the Undergraduate males (n = 80)**

	<i>Coping strategies</i>	<i>Pearson correlation coefficients</i>	<i>Significance level</i>
<b><i>Raw scores</i></b>	Planful Problem Solving	.206	.067*
	Positive Reappraisal	.100	.376
	Seeking Social Support	.111	.329
	Self-Controlling	.066	.559
	Accepting Responsibility	.066	.561
	Confronting Coping	.086	.450
	Distancing	.029	.797
	Escape Avoidance	-.027	.810
<b><i>Relative scores</i></b>	Planful Problem Solving	.137	.226
	Positive Reappraisal	-.020	.860
	Seeking Social Support	.037	.742
	Self-Controlling	-.041	.717
	Accepting Responsibility	.013	.909
	Confronting Coping	.038	.737
	Distancing	-.068	.549
	Escape Avoidance	-.110	.331

From the Table 5.7, it is evident that none of the variables correlated significantly although significant correlation has not been obtained between Adjustment and planful-problem solving\* scores; there still exists an association between these two (nearly significant correlation between planful problem solving and adjustment scores,  $r = .206$ ,  $p = .067$ ). That is to infer, higher the scores on adjustment index, higher would be the inclination to the use of problem-focused coping.

### 5.8.2 The Relationship between the Coping Strategies and the Adjustment Index T-scores

Number of people using a particular strategy was also computed in the terms of three different adjustment categories. Considering the relationship between the coping strategies and the Adjustment Index T-scores, three categories of individuals were chosen on the basis of the Adjustment Index T-scores which included: Persons with T-scores less than 35, scores ranging between 35 and 50, and with the T-scores of above 50. There were 4 males in the category of scores < 35, and 38 males in each of the other two categories.

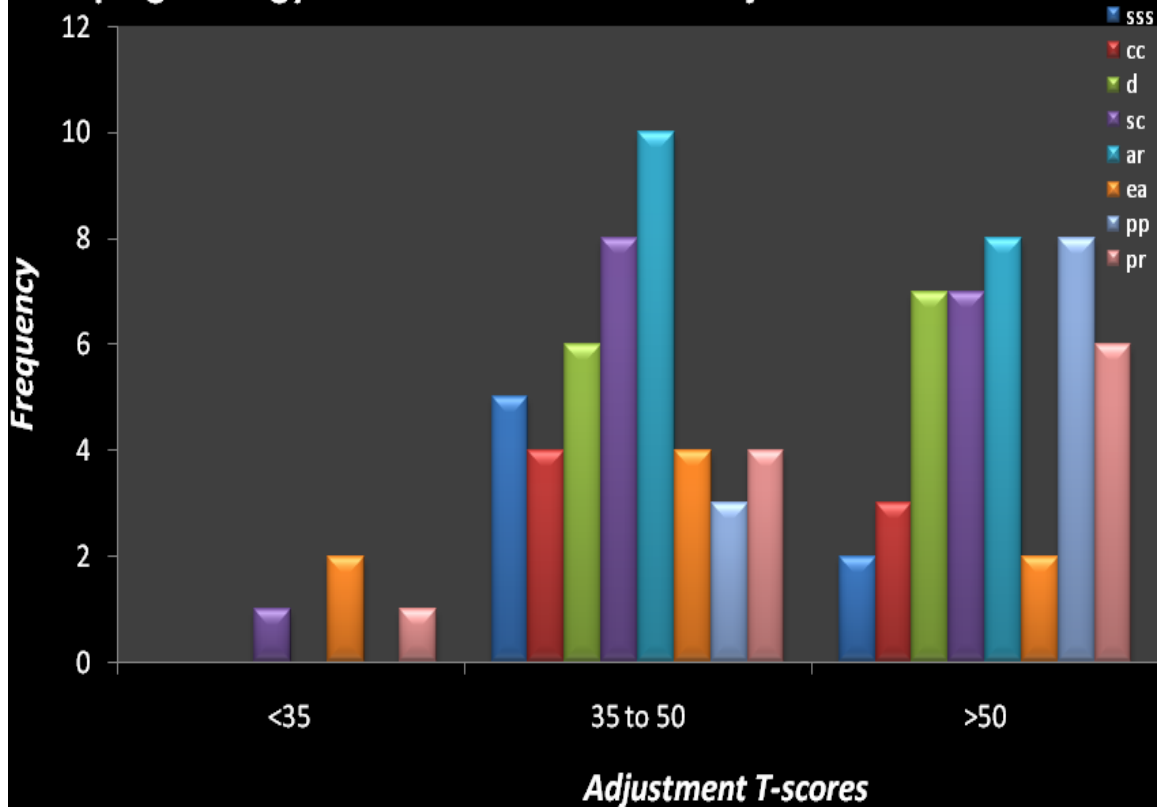
Table 5.8 outlines the number of the individuals using a particular coping strategy in accordance with the categorizations made on the basis of the Adjustment Index T-scores.

**Table 5.8: The number of the Individuals using a particular coping strategy in accordance with the Adjustment T-scores.**

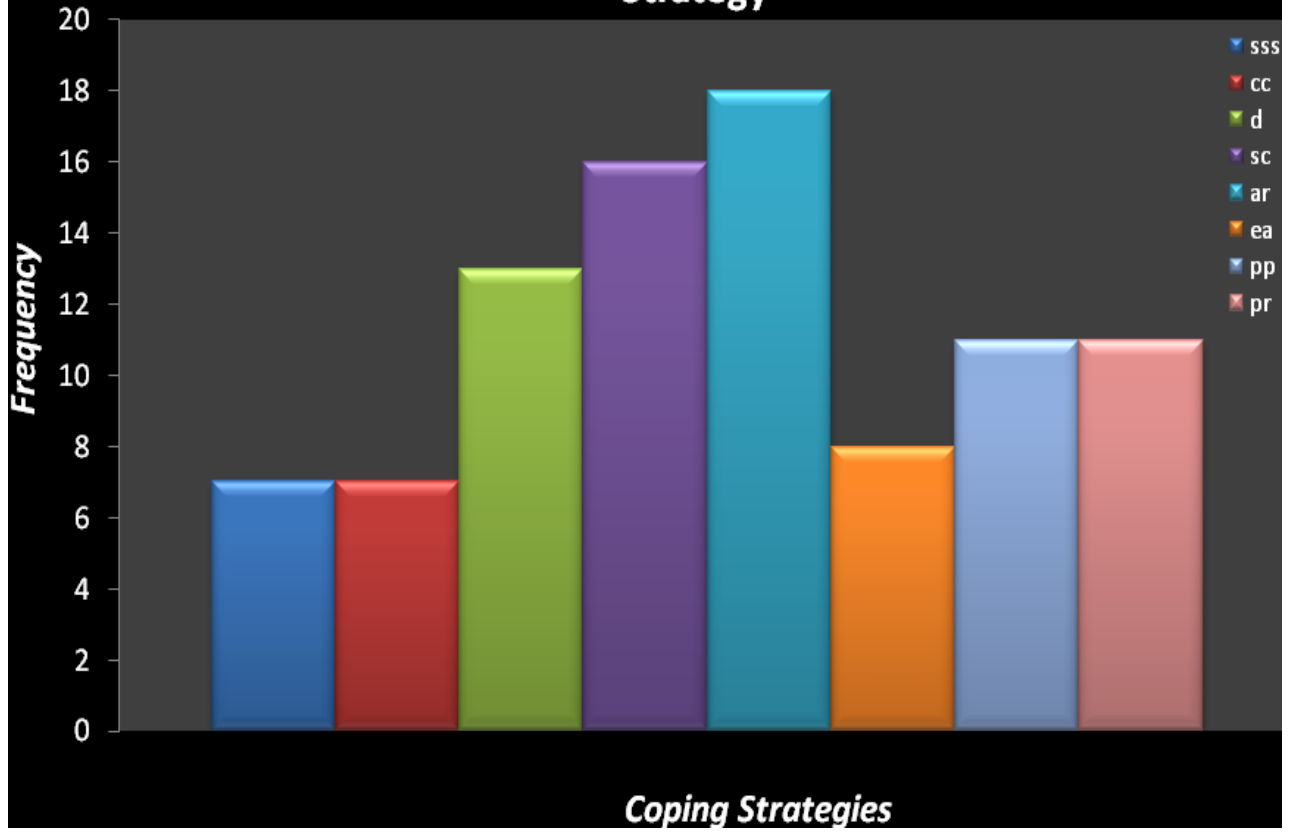
<i>Coping Strategies</i>	<i>Adjust T- value</i>			<i>Total Frequency</i>
	<i>&lt; 35</i>	<i>35 - 50</i>	<i>&gt; 50</i>	
<i>Seeking social support</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Confronting coping</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Distancing</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Self-controlling</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>Accepting responsibility</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>
<i>Escape-avoidance</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Planful problem solving</i>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Positive reappraisal</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>

According to the Table 5.8 and Figure 5.4, it is evident that people in the medium range use more of accepting responsibility as a way of coping in comparison to other categories. Males in the lowest category with Adjust T-scores less than 35 are more oriented towards the escape avoidance strategies and thus may have problems coping effectively with problem situations. On the other hand, males having high Adjust T-scores (more than 50) use more of accepting responsibility and planful problem

**Figure 5.4. The number of the Individuals using a particular Coping Strategy in accordance with the Adjustment T-scores.**



**Figure 5.5. Number of Individuals using a particular Coping Strategy**



solving in comparison to other coping strategies. However, it is worth noting that these strategies, in the high group, are also closely followed by the use of distancing and self-controlling as coping strategies.

Thus, the findings from the Tables 5.7 and 5.8 and the Figure 5.4, further confirm the third hypothesis which posits that males having high Adjustment scores may use more of accepting responsibility and planful problem solving in comparison to the other coping strategies. The positive relationship further points to the finding that high adjustment scores of the individual would be accompanied by the individual's efforts to alter the situation in combination with the use of analytical approach to solving the problems in life.

Considering the total frequency and the coping strategies, from the Table 5.8 and the Figure 5.5, it is clear that the highest exercised coping strategy comes out to the one of accepting responsibility which further confirms the fourth hypothesis that posits accepting responsibility to be the highest employed method of coping with stress among the undergraduate males.

### **5.9 General Discussion**

From the findings of the study it can be concluded that Interpersonal Behaviors as a subscale of Personality Styles makes maximum contribution to the variance in coping strategies. It indicated how interactions of an individual in daily dealings may affect and impact his choice of coping strategies. Findings are supported by the research done in the interpersonal styles domain as to how various interpersonal behaviors affect the choice of coping strategy (e.g. relationship between insecure attachment style and excessive reassurance seeking) by Davila (2001), Abela et al (2005) and Deniz, Hamarta & Ari (2005).

With respect to the Adjustment Index that determines how well an individual is coping with the problems or avoids them, a positive correlations between adjust scores and planful problem solving has been found. This indicates that high adjustment levels indicate the use of deliberate problem-focused efforts to alter the situation, coupled with an analytical approach to solving the problems. The results are in line with the studies by other researchers that report an association between problem-focused coping and better adjustment and emotion-focused coping is related to poorer adjustment in the studies of adults. These findings are confirmed by the research done by Compas et al (1988), Folkman & Lazarus (1980), Rohde, Lewinsohn, Tilson, & Seeley (1990), Scharloo et al (1999), Pakenham, (1999) and Chang et al (2006).

Personality styles investigated in the present study contribute to a very great extent in predicting the coping strategies of undergraduate males. Sociable individuals, showing strong loyalties and attachments tend to focus on acknowledging their roles in problem solving. Further, individuals undertaking little to alter their lives and circumstances are unable to rouse themselves, and those who often lack initiatives are inclined to shun their responsibility for the problem and act in a passive manner to whatever is happening around them.

Individuals, who turn to others to find stimulation and encouragement, draw upon friends and colleagues for ideas and guidance, and garner assurances of self-worth are not the ones to take efforts to regulate their own feelings and actions and in a way tend not to act in a self-controlling manner.

Furthermore, a positive relationship exists between Conforming Personality Style and Planful Problem-Solving and Self-Controlling as being the prominently used coping strategies. Thus, individuals who are self-controlled and unlikely to be self-expressive and act spontaneously are the ones who engage in planning as to how to tackle stressful situations while keeping their affects under control and subjective vigilance. Also, a negative association between accommodating style and use of accepting responsibility as a coping strategy suggests that individuals lacking initiative and doing little to alter their lives are the ones who deny their role in the problem situation and thus, tend to act in a passive manner to whatever is going on in their surroundings.

With regard to regression analysis, it was found that intuitive individuals tend to take control of the problem situations and act responsibly regardless of how others view them. Individuating tends to contribute negatively to acceptance of responsibility in males that is those who are egocentric and seek to fulfill their wishes before others tend not to consider how they make impacts on others and do not engage in problem tackling strategies and rather lack initiatives to accept responsibility for the situation.

With respect to the frequency of undergraduate males employing various coping strategies, the trend among them indicated a preference for accepting responsibility closely followed by their tendency to engage in self-controlling strategies, distancing and further, engaging in planful problem solving and positive reappraisal of the problems.

From the above findings it can be inferred that coping can be predicted by considering personality dimensions. More specifically, interpersonal styles tend to be good predictors of coping strategies among males. With regard to problem-focused coping (including seeking social support, planful problem solving, accepting responsibility etc.) best predictors tend to be agreeing, extraverting, conforming styles of personality. Emotion-focused coping (generally including distancing, escape-avoidance etc.) tends to be predicted from personality styles of asserting (negative correlation), dissenting and accommodating. Further considering problem-focused coping, the extent of adjustment of an individual to the problem situations also plays an important role.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

#### *6.1 Conclusion*

Personality is conceptualized in the literature as the enduring characteristics and dispositions of a person that provide some degree of consistency across various ways in which people behave. Personality dimensions are conceptualized as the building blocks of the construct of personality. Personality plays a key role in providing information on how individuals respond to various life situations. Coping on the other hand is defined as the variations in an individual's responses to how he perceives and reacts to a stressful situation.

This study indicated that the personality styles contribute to the prediction of coping strategies. The impact of various personality styles to variance in coping strategies in males has been discussed. In considering adjustment, males showed a positive association between their level of adjustment and accepting responsibility as a way of coping. Also, accepting responsibility was found to be the maximally used coping strategy among the young adult males.

#### *Significance*

It is important to know about the type of coping strategies being used by the young adults basically as, this is a crucial period of their life-span and during which they are taxed upon with various stressors in their lives, be it relationships or career.

Also, the research on adults has devoted little attention to the coping as affected by personality styles in normal population and young adulthood. Much of the research is emphasized on coping in distressing and work situations. This study looks into the personality styles and coping strategies prevalent among the undergraduate males in educational settings.

The present study also focuses on the coping behaviours of young adults which may have adaptive and maladaptive outcomes and relates predisposing personality styles as contributors to the choice of coping strategies.

#### **6.2 Implications**

Hopefully, this research will contribute to a better understanding of ways of coping among undergraduate males. Further research can accommodate academic performance which could act as a criterion measure and the relationship between these variables can be explored. The findings of this study can be helpful in implementing therapeutic techniques based on the predispositions of the individual in the form of personality styles.

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