Personality traits i.e., Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Multidimensional coping i.e. Task-Oriented, Emotion-Oriented and Avoidance Oriented i.e., Distraction and Social Diversion: A Comparative Study Based on Gender i.e., Boys and Girls in Mizo-Population

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Abstract

In the present study an attempt has been made to investigate the domain of personality traits of Neuroticim, extraversion Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and multidimensional coping i.e., task-oriented, emotion-oriented and avoidance oriented i.e., distraction and social diversion. The main research objective is “to study the correlational analysis on personality traits and multidimensional coping; to compare the personality traits i.e., neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness on boys and girls; to compare the multidimensional coping on boys and girls, to compare mean bar diagram on personality traits and multidimensional coping in the Mizo-Population. The investigators randomly selected 85 (39 for boys and 46 for girls) age level of 14-18 yrs. All the selected samples were administered NEO-FFI and CISS individually. The results were analysed with the help of Mean, correlational analysis, t-test and bar diagram of the boys and girls included in the present study. Result indicates that correlational analysis based on intercorrelation between measures of personality traits and multidimensional coping for the whole variable range from .15 to .39. out of 45 correlations, 19 correlations are significant at or above .05 level. The correlation coefficients of .15 and .20 are significant at .05 and .01 level of significance respectively. The mean differences between the boys and girls on the domain of neuroticism are found statistically significant but other personality traits of extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness are found statistically insignificant between boys and girls in Mizo adolescent population included in the present study. The mean difference between the boys and girls on task-oriented coping and emotion oriented coping are found statistically significant in the present study but in the avoidance oriented coping are found statistically insignificant. The results also indicate that social diversion, a sub type of avoidance oriented are found statistically significant but distraction, a subtype of avoidance oriented are found statistically insignificant. The investigators have in-cooperated mean bar diagram comparisons between the boys and girls on the domain of personality traits and multidimensional coping.

Key words: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, task-oriented, emotion-oriented, avoidance-oriented.

People respond very differently to stress. The impact of any potentially stressful event is substantially influenced by how a person appraises it.

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The personality that each individual brings to a stressful event influences how he or she will cope with that event. Some personality characteristics make stressful situations worse, whereas others improve them.

Negativity, stress, and illness:
Certain people are predisposed by their personalities to experience stressful events as especially stressful which may, in turn, affect their psychological distress, their physical symptoms, and/or their rates of illness. This line of research has focused on a psychological state called negative affectivity (Watson and Clark, 1984), a pervasive negative mood marked by anxiety, depression and hostility. Individuals high in negative affectivity express distress, discomfort, and dissatisfaction across a wide range of situation (Brett, Brief, Burke, George and Webster, 1990; Watson and Clark, 1984). People who are high in negative affectivity are more prone to drink heavily (Frances, Franklin and Flavin, 1986), to be depressed (Francis, Fyer and Clarkin, 1986) and to engage in suicidal gestures or even suicide (Cross and Hirschfeld, 1986).

Negativity is related to poor health. In a review literature relating personality factors to five diseases - asthma, arthritis, ulcers, headaches, and coronary artery disease - H.S. Friedman and Booth-Kewley (1987) found weak but consistent evidence of a relationship between these disorders and negative emotions.

The suggested that psychological distress involving depression, anger, hostility may constitute the basis of a ‘disease-prone’ personality that predisposes people to these disorders (Scheir and Bridger, 1995).

Negative affectivity can be associated with elevated cortisol secretion, and this increase adrenocortical activity may provide a possible bio psychosocial health outcomes (Van Eck, Berkhof, Nicolson and Sulon, 1996).

Pessimistic explanatory style:
In related investigations, Seligman and his Colleagues (M.O. Burns and Seligman, 1989; C.Peterson, Seligman and Vaillant, 1988) found evidence for a pessimistic explanatory style that may related to illness. Specifically, some people characteristically explain the negative events of their lives in terms of internal, stable, global qualities of themselves. In so doing, they may lay the groundwork for poor health.

Research that builds on pessimistic explanatory style has since found that people marked by this personality characteristic may have reduced immunocompetence.

Hardiness:
Hardiness (a term used by Kobasa) is composed of three characteristics. The 1st is a sense of commitment, or the tendency to involve oneself in whatever one encounters. The second factor is a belief in control, the sense that one causes the events that happen in one’s life and that one can influence one’s environment. The third component is challenge, a willingness to undertake change and confront new activities that represent opportunities for growth. Why are hardy individuals physically and mentally healthier? As a result of their sense of commitment, control, and challenge, hardy individuals may appraise potentially stressful life events more favourably than would individuals who are not so hardy (Soderstrom, Dolbier, Lieferman, and Steinhardt, 2000).

Therefore, they may take more direct action to find out about these events, to incorporate them into their lives and to learn from them what may be of value for the future.

Optimism:
An optimistic nature can also lead people to cope more effectively with stress and thereby reduce their risk for illness (Scheier and Carver, 1985).

Psychological control:
Feelings that one can exert control over stressful events have long been known to help people cope effectively with stress (Bandura, 1977; S.E. Taylor, Helgeson, Reed, and Skokan, 1991; S.C. Thompson, 1981). Perceived control is the belief that one can determine one’s own behaviour, influence one’s environment, and/or bring about desired outcomes. As may be apparent, perceived control is closely related to self-efficacy, which is a more narrow perception of one’s ability to enact
the necessary actions to obtain a specific outcome in a specific situation (Bandura, 1977). Both types of cognitions appear to help people cope with a wide variety of stressful events.

What is coping?

Coping is the process of managing demands (external or onternal) that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person (R.S. Lazarus and Folkman, 1984a).

Coping consists of efforts, both action-oriented and intrapsychic, to manage (i.e., master, tolerate, reduce, minimize) environmental and internal demands and conflicts among them (R.S. Lazarus and Launier, 1978, p. 311).

Two general types of coping strategies can be distinguished: problem-solving coping and emotion-focused coping (Folkman, Schaefer and Lazarus, 1979; H. Leventhal and Nerenz, 1982; Pearlin and Schooler, 1978).

Problem-solving coping involves attempts to do something constructive about the stressful conditions that are harming, threatening, or challenging an individual.

Emotion-focused coping involves efforts to regulate emotions experienced because of the stressful event. Sometimes problem-solving efforts and emotional regulation work together.

Problem-focused coping appears to emerge during childhood; emotion-focused coping skills develop somewhat latter in late childhood or early adolescence (Compas et al., 1991).

Health problems, in contrast lead to more emotion-focused coping, perhaps because a threat to one’s health is an event that must be tolerated but is not necessarily amenable to direct action.

When health problems are amenable to active coping efforts, however problem-focused coping is beneficial (Pakenham, 1999).


Transformational coping involves altering the events so they use less stressful. To do this one, one has to interact with the events, and by thinking about them optimistically and acting towards them decisively, change them in a less stressful direction.

Regressive approach, on the other hand, include a strategy wherein one thinks about the events pessimistically and acts evasively to avoid contact with them.

There are certain resistance resources that increase the likelihood of meeting stressful events with transformational rather regressive coping. The most important of these is ‘personality hardiness’ (Kobasa, 1979). Kobasa noted that personality hardiness combines three tendencies, namely, toward ‘commitment’ rather than alienation, toward ‘control’ rather than powerlessness, and toward ‘challenge’ rather than threat. When stressful events occur, hardy people do experience them as stressful, but also as somewhat interesting and important (commitment), at least somewhat influenceable (control), and of potential value for personality development (Challenge).

Lazarus (1975) has suggested a classification of coping processes which emphasizes two major categories, namely, direct actions and palliative modes. Direct action includes behaviours or actions which when performed by the organism in face of a stressful situation is expected to bring about a change in stress causing environment.

The palliative mode of coping refers to those thoughts or actions whose purpose is to relieve to the organism of any emotional impact of stress. There is, however, no clear consensus as to which coping strategies or modes of coping are most effective.

Research has shown that social and emotional support available to the person helps him/her to effectively cope with stress. Persons maintaining close interpersonal relationships with friends and families are able to use more approach strategies. Social support includes both material support (providing resources) and emotional support (listening to the person and encouraging him/her). However, studies have also shown that unsolicited support may have negative consequences.

Approach or effective strategies of coping include efforts to increase physical and mental preparedness for coping (through physical exercises, yoga and meditation, diet management), creative diversions for emotional enrichment (music, art, theatre, etc) and strategies of dealing with the basic problems.

Coping may either take the form of avoiding the situation (reactive strategy), i.e., dysfunctional style, or confronting and approaching the problem (proactive strategy), i.e., functional style.
One category consists of persons who decide to suffer from accept, or deny the experienced stress, or put the blame on somebody (self or others) or something for being in that stressful situation. These are passive or avoidance strategies and are termed as ‘dysfunctional’ styles of coping with stress situations. The other category consists of persons facing the realities of stress consciously, and taking some action to solve the problem themselves or with the help of other people. These are active approaches and are termed as ‘functional’ styles of dealing with stressful situations and are more approved by social scientists as these are supposed to be more effective and healthy when compared to the ‘dysfunctional’ styles (Pareek, 1983a).

Avoidance mode is characterized by any one of the following: aggression and blame; denying the presence of stress, or finding explanation for it; such behaviour ‘helps’ a person in not doing anything in relation to stress; helplessness and resignation, and minimizing the significance of the stressful situation by accepting it with resignation. On the other hand, approach mode is characterized by hope that things will improve; effort made by the subject to solve the situation; expectation from others that they will help, or asking for help in relation to stress, and jointly doing something about the problem. The avoidance mode is termed punitive while the approach mode is referred to as ‘persistive.’ These expressions, i.e., punitive and persistive, have been borrowed from Rosenzweig (1978).

The eight strategies to cope with stress which role PICS (projective instrument for measuring coping styles) measures are as follows:

1. Impunitive (M): Statements indicating either simple admission of stress, or that stress is unavoidable and nothing can be done about it.
2. Intropunitive (I): Statements indicating self-blame or aggression towards one’s self for causing stress.
3. Extrapunitive (E): Statements expressing aggression towards or putting blame on others for a particular stressful situation.
4. Defensive (D): Statements expressing either denial of stress or rationalization of stress by giving reasons for it.
5. Impersistive (M): Statements indicating that the respondent is optimistic and hopes that time would solve the problem and things would work out well in future.
6. Intropersistive (I): Statements indicating that the role occupant himself/herself should take action to deal with stress.
7. Extrapersistive (E): Statements indicating that the person expects someone else would contribute to the solution of the problem or deal with stress.’
8. Interpersistive (N): It is the opposite of defensive style. Statements indicating that a solution of the problem can be obtained by joint efforts in which the role occupant and others would be involved.

Of these eight dimensions, the first four imply avoidance-oriented behaviour. They are perceived as dysfunctional styles of coping with stress situations. The remaining four dimensions are approach-oriented and are regarded as functional.

Objectives of the present study:
1. To study the correlational analysis on personality traits and multidimensional coping;
2. To compare the personality traits i.e., Neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness on boys and girls;
3. To compare the multidimensional coping i.e. task-oriented, emotion oriented and avoidance oriented i.e., distraction and social diversion on boys and girls.
4. Bar diagram for the comparision of boys n girls on personality traits;
5. Bar diagram for the comparision of boys and girls on multidimensional coping styles.

Method:
Participants:
The sample (N=85, i.e., 39 boys n 46 girls) ranging age 14-18 yrs for the present study was drawn from the different schools residing in Mizoram. The selected participants were administered tests of NEO-PI (five domain) and tests of CISS. Following tests were used in the present study:
1. NEO-PI (domain only);
2. CISS (The copying Inventory for stressful situations).

Brief description of the tests are as follows:
NEO-PI: Paul T. Costa Jr. And Robert R. McCrae., developed this inventory. It measures five personality domain. Here the investigator used form-s for the present study. This questionnaire contain 60 statements. For each statement response, there is five answer keys, such as SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree), N (neutral), A (agree), and SA (strongly agree). The subjects have to choose one answer out of the these five keys. The revised NEO-PI is a concise measure of five dimensions or domains. The NEO-PI-R embodies a conceptual model is a measure of normal personality trait that has demonstrated its utility in both clinical and research settings. The five domains are: 1. Neuroticism (N), 2. Extraversion (E), 3. Openness (O), 4. Agreeableness (A) and 5. Conscientiousness (C).

CISS: The copying Inventory for stressful situations (CISS) is developed by Norman S. Endler and James D.A. Parker (1999). It is an easily administered scale for measuring multidimensional coping. The CISS is a self-report paper-and-pencil measure of coping, consisting of 48 items. There is both an adult form and an adolescent form.

16 items assess Task-oriented coping, 16 items assess emotion-oriented coping, and 16 items assess avoidance oriented coping.

There are two subscales for the Avoidance-oriented scale; Distraction (8 items) and social diversion (5 items). Respondents for both the adult and adolescent versions are asked to rate each item on a 5-point frequency scale ranging from (1) “not at all” to (5) very much. The CISS can usually be completed in about 10 minutes, although there are individual differences for the completion time.

**Procedures:** The selected samples for the present study from different parts of the schools residing in Mizoram T are administered NEO-PI (domain only) and CISS in individual setting.

**Scoring of the test:** Hand scoring was done by using prescribed scoring keys for different tests.

**Statistical Analysis:** Data can be analyzed quantitatively. The obtained data were processed to obtain the following information:
1. Mean and standard deviation of the boys and girls of all variables included in the study;
2. Pearson’s intercorrelational analysis among all the variables included in the present study;
3. T-test for the comparison of the boys and girls included in the study;
4. MeanBar diagram for the boys and girls among all the variables included in the present study.

**RESULT:**
The result tables for the present study were as follows:

### TABLE-1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Intercorrelation of personality traits and multidimensional coping</th>
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Significance level=.15 at .05 level and .20 at .01 level.

### TABLE-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table showing Mean,SD,T-test on personality traits i.e., Neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
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Table 3

Table showing Mean, SD, T-test on multidimensional coping i.e., task, emotion, avoidance, distraction and social diversion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-test</th>
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<td>Boys</td>
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<td>52.66</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>-2.35*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
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<td>56.43</td>
<td>7.99</td>
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<td>Boys</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>54.92</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>3.04**</td>
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<td>3.38</td>
<td>-3.32**</td>
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<td>20.67</td>
<td>6.30</td>
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</table>

DISCUSSION:

Table 1 shows correlational analysis based on intercorrelation between measures of personality traits and multidimensional coping for whole variables. The correlation coefficients of .15 and .20 are significant at .05 and .01 level of significance respectively. Out of 45 correlations, 19 correlations are significant at or above .05 levels. Variable N is negative significant correlation with variable O (.19<.05) and positive significant correlation with emotion oriented coping (em)(.28<.01); avoidance oriented (av) (.18<.05) and social diversion (sd) (.34<.01) respectively.

Factor E has positive significant correlations with C (.39<.01), task oriented (ta) (.19<.05) respectively. Factor O has negative significant correlations with task oriented (ta) (.15<.05). Factor A has negative significant correlation with emotion oriented coping (em) (.23<.01). Variable C has positive correlation with task oriented (ta) (.35<.01), negative correlation with avoidance (av) (.25<.01) and distraction (di) (.23<.01) respectively. Factor task oriented (ta) has positive significant correlation with avoidance (av) (.41<.01), distraction (di) (.23<.01) respectively. Factor emotion oriented (em) has positive significant correlation with social diversion (sd) (.27<.01). factor avoidance (av) has positive significant correlation with distraction (di) (.37<.01) and social diversion (sd) (.37<.01) respectively. Factor distraction (Di) has positive significant correlation with social diversion (sd) (.26<.01).

Table n2 shows mean, standard deviation and t test of the boys and girls on neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C). The mean of the N for both boys and girls were found 25.23 and 27.69 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=.206) was found significant at .05 level. The mean value of the E for both boys and girls were found 26.07 and 25.52 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=.524) was found statistically insignificant. The mean value of the O for both boys and girls were found 23.38 and 24.21 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=.989) was found statistically insignificant.
insignificant. The mean value of A for both boys and girls were found 25.53 and 25.45 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=.095) was found statistically insignificant. The mean value of C for both boys and girls were found 26.64 and 24.52 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=1.85) was found statistically insignificant. Table 3 shows mean, standard deviation and t test for both boys and girls on multidimensional coping i.e., task oriented; emotion-oriented; avoidance oriented which was divided into distraction and social diversion.

The mean value of task-oriented for both boys and girls were found 56.84 and 48.80 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=5.02) was found significant at .01 level. The mean value of emotion-oriented for both boys and girls were found 52.66 and 56.43 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=−2.35) was found significant at .05 level. The mean value of avoidance-oriented for both boys and girls were found 54.92 and 49.80 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=3.04) was found statistically significant at .05 level. The mean value of distraction for both boys and girls were found 27.66 and 25.80 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=1.874) was found statistically insignificant. The mean value of social diversion for both boys and girls were found 16.92 and 20.67 respectively. The mean difference between these two means (t=−3.32) was found significant at .01 level.

In this present study, the investigator incorporated the mean bar diagram comparision for whole variables which can been studied from result part.

Conclusion:
In conclusion part, the investigator found very interesting finding about the correlation factors between the personality traits and coping mechanisms. Besides these the investigator found about the coping mechanism used by boys and girls in similar way as well as in dissimilar way. Such study needs to do in another level of study sothat we can understand more about this study.

References:
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