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Metacognitive Awareness in Relation to Coping among Students

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Metacognition is the capacity to monitor and regulate cognitive processes and abilities like memory, perception, decision making. Metacognition consist of three facets, metacognitive knowledge (knowledge and understanding of several cognitive processes), metacognitive strategies (strategies used to manage cognition) and metacognitive experiences (emotions and judgement related with activities of cognition). This study examined the relationship between student's coping and metacognitive awareness. In order to assess metacognitive awareness and coping, a sample of 300 college students were assessed on metacognitive awareness and coping styles. Statistical analyses, correlation and regression, were employed to evaluate the data and identify potential relationships among the variables. The results of correlation analysis revealed that metacognition has significant relationship with coping i.e. passive problem coping, active problem coping, active emotional coping. In addition, regression analysis showed that planning, information management strategies, monitoring (subcomponents of 'regulation of cognition') significantly predicts coping. Thus, research shows the significance of metacognitive awareness in coping. Therefore, increasing metacognitive skills may improve adaptive coping strategies among students.

Keywords: coping, metacognition, knowledge of cognition, regulation of cognition.

Coping

Lazarus and colleagues (1980) proposed classic transactional model of stress and coping. The focus of this model lies on coping while pursuing goals in achievement settings, and interrelated processes that are going on between the coping outcomes and its antecedents. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) also described coping "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". In academic contexts, coping strategies are commonly categorized under three dimensions encompassing problem focused coping, emotion focused coping, and avoidance oriented coping. The deployment of these strategies to address academic demands has been shown to differentially influence psychological development as well as the combination of academic success with pupils' personal priorities, personal goals, and core values. Lin and Chen divided coping style into four factors, these are active problem coping (APC), active emotional coping (AEC), passive problem coping (PPC), passive emotional coping (PEC). *Active problem coping* implies addressing the core issue of the problem directly. In this approach the person solves a problem by simplifying the issue, identifying and comprehending its main points while maintaining a calm and positive outlook. This approach implies handling the matter with independent planning. The person is seeking external assistance from teachers or colleagues or collecting relevant data from other available sources for better comprehension of the situation. *Active emotional coping* focus is on prioritizing emotional adjustment. In this approach the person deals with their emotions with a

positive outlook and self-determination to manage feelings. The issue is avoiding emotional outburst by redirecting one's attention, by seeking external help or de-stressing methods to manage one's emotions and feelings. *Passive problem coping* implies adopting evasive behaviour through procrastination. This means that an individual avoids addressing the issue. This also includes neglecting the problem through the use of drugs or alcohol to numb the mind. *Passive emotional coping* implies a response style which is characterized by emotional withdrawal and decline of mental faculties. It might be expressed through self-pity, a sense of resignation while blaming others and attributing responsibility to inimical forces.

In academic context, coping among students involves strategies, thoughts and behaviours the students use to manage stress, face demands and challenges within the academic environment. Coping in academics is crucial because the students are regularly under stress from examinations, performance pressure, workload, peer competition and expectations from family and teachers. Effective coping helps the students in maintaining psychological well-being, staying motivated and achieving academic success, whereas maladaptive coping may lead to anxiety, burnout or academic disengagement. Coping style is influenced by various psychological factors such as cognition, motivation, self-efficacy, interpersonal relations, personality traits and intelligence. Personality traits shape coping responses. Conscientiousness and extraversion are related with problem focused coping style whereas neuroticism predicts maladaptive strategies (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007). Self-efficacy and self-regulation also play a essential role, in those students who believe more in their academic competency and being able to regulate their behaviour will cope more efficiently (Zimmerman, 2002). Another vital cognitive factor is metacognition, awareness and regulation of one's thinking processes, which enhances adaptability by allowing learners to monitor and regulate their strategies (Flavell, 1979; Schraw & Dennison, 1994). Metacognitive awareness refers to the capability to reflect on and regulate one's thinking and learning processes (Flavell, 1979; Schraw & Dennison, 1994). It is considered one of the most important factors in coping because it helps pupils identify stressors, evaluate their strategies, and modify them according to situational demands. Unlike relatively fixed traits such as intelligence, metacognitive awareness is modifiable and adaptable, constitutes a powerful resource in managing academic stress (Metcalfe, 2009; Flavell, 1987).

Metacognition

Metacognition is generally denoted as "thinking about thinking," and it represents the degree of individual's awareness and regulate one's cognitive processes (Flavell, 1979). Model of metacognition has two main components: Knowledge of Cognition and Regulation of Cognition. The Knowledge of Cognition represents learners' understanding of their own learning processes and their ability to identify and apply effective strategies in pursuit of academic goals. This component has three sub-components; *Declarative knowledge* refers to individual's understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses as well as the relationship between these characteristics and the demands of a task such as learning or problem solving. *Procedural knowledge* contains awareness of the strategies available and how such strategies can be applied to accomplish a tasks. *Conditional Knowledge* refers to know when and under what conditions learners can use a specific strategy to accomplish their goals. The *Regulation of Cognition* comprises several strategies that facilitate effective learning. The regulation of cognition component of

metacognition has five sub-components. *Planning* is a strategy that includes setting goals and allocating resources before starting a task. *Information management strategies* contain techniques i.e. organizing, elaborating, and summarizing to process information more efficiently. *Monitoring* involves on-going assessments that one's comprehension and learning progress, including assessing whether the material being studied is understood. *Debugging strategies* are those used after difficulty is encountered, including seeking help or corrective measures. Lastly, *evaluation* involves reflecting on one's performance to determine if tasks and learning goals have been successfully achieved (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). Metacognition and coping style are interrelated, with metacognition influencing the selection and effectiveness of coping strategies. Metacognition involves recognizing and understanding one's cognitive processes. Metacognition play an important role in how individuals regulate their responses to stress and navigate challenging circumstances. Metacognition allows individuals to better choose and execute coping mechanisms because individuals who know how they think and process information can better select and utilize methods of coping that are better suited to their particular situations. Metacognition plays its role in academic coping by way of enabling students to understand and manage their own learning processes. It involves planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's learning strategies, which may lead to improved academic performance and resilience in the face of challenges.

Metacognitive Awareness and Coping among students

The literature provides considerable evidence for the significant and dynamic relationship between metacognitive awareness and coping. It is argued here that metacognitive awareness is more than an academic skill and is actually viewed as a fundamental process influencing a student's coping responses. Students with higher metacognitive awareness are better at planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning strategies, thus experiencing and dealing with academic stressors more effectively and flexibly (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). According to studies, students with higher cognitive awareness tend to use problem-focused coping (Özbay & Kýlýç 2024). High cognitive awareness makes them adopt problem-focused coping strategies, enabling them to deal with stress efficiently. Empirical studies conducted on college students found that this awareness is positively related to academic achievement (Young & Fry, 2008). Metacognitive awareness is also associated with self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, which further enable a student's capacity to cope with academic demands (Zimmerman, 2002).

Rationale of the study

Academics pose multiple challenges that require students not only to acquire knowledge but also to regulate their learning processes effectively, due to which students frequently encounter academic stressors that necessitate the use of coping strategies. In this context, metacognitive awareness—the ability to reflect upon, monitor, and regulate one's own thinking—emerges as a critical determinant of academic coping and success. Students with higher metacognitive awareness are better equipped to identify effective learning strategies, adapt to task demands, and managing academic pressure. The way students cope with academic demands often influences their achievement, well-being, and long-term resilience. Thus, understanding the role of metacognitive skills in facilitating adaptive coping offers critical insights into enhancing academic success, mitigating maladaptive responses, and strengthening self-regulated learning

processes. In light of this, investigating the relationship between metacognitive awareness and coping among students represents a timely and significant area of inquiry. This study aims to address this key gap in the existing literature by integrating perspectives on metacognitive awareness with coping among students, thereby generating implications of relevance for educators, counsellors, and policymakers committed to fostering resilient, autonomous, and effective learners.

Objectives:

1. To explore the relationship of metacognitive awareness with coping among students.
2. To identify metacognitive awareness as predictor of coping among students.

Hypotheses:

1. There would be significant relationship between metacognitive awareness and coping.
2. Metacognitive awareness would be significant predictor of coping.

Method

Design

In this research, a correlational research design was used to study the role of metacognitive awareness in coping.

Sample

The total sample for the study comprised of 300 students (undergraduates) in the age group of 17-18 years. They were selected by a convenience non-random sampling procedure from the Rewari district of Haryana.

Tools:

Measure of Metacognitive Awareness

Metacognitive Awareness Inventory: The scale developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994) comprises 52 items and is divided into two primary components: *Knowledge of Cognition* (declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge*)* and *Regulation of Cognition* (planning, information management strategies, monitoring, debugging strategies, and evaluation). A high score indicates a higher metacognitive awareness among students. Cronbach's alpha value was found to be 0.95. The internal coefficients for the subscales vary between 0.88 and 0.93.

Measure of Coping

Stress Coping Style Inventory: The self-report scale developed by Lin and Chen (2010) consists of 28 items measuring four factors of coping styles for university and college students: Active Problem Coping (APC), Active Emotional Coping (AEC), Passive Problem Coping (PPC), Passive Emotional Coping (PEC). Participants respond using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). A higher score on each subscale denotes more and frequent use of the corresponding coping style, while lower scores reflect less frequent use. The scale demonstrated good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83.

Procedure: For the purpose of fulfilling the objectives of this investigation, we contacted to the participants in their first year of graduation. First, good rapport was established. After that provided information of each measure separately. Then present the scales one by one and ensured that the participants fill out each scale without leaving any items. Give them enough time. The proforma was taken back from students after filled it. The students were thanked for their precious time and support.

Results

The mean and standard deviation values were computed for metacognition and coping, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviation (SD) for scores on Metacognition and Coping of students

Variables			Mean	SD
Meta cognition	Knowledge of cognition	Declarative Knowledge	6.41	1.37
		Procedural Knowledge	2.95	1.00
		Conditional Knowledge	4.01	1.09
	Regulation of cognition	Planning	5.75	1.36
		Monitoring	5.49	1.38
		Information Management Strategies	7.57	1.80
		Debugging Strategies	3.82	1.08
		Evaluation	4.68	1.27
Coping		Active Emotional Coping	28.48	6.11
		Active Problem Coping	20.71	5.21
		Passive Emotional Coping	17.32	5.78
		Passive Problem Coping	23.87	5.78

The above table shows the mean scores on Metacognition (knowledge & regulation of cognition) and Coping. The mean score of knowledge of cognition on the declarative knowledge domain was 6.41 (SD=1.37), for procedural knowledge, the mean score was 2.95 (SD=1.00), conditional knowledge was 4.01 (SD=1.09) and the mean score of regulation of cognition on the planning domain was 5.75 (SD=1.36), monitoring was 5.49 (SD=1.38), information management strategies 7.57 (SD=1.80), debugging strategies 3.82 (SD=1.08) and for evaluation, the mean score was 4.68 (SD=1.27). The mean scores of coping on AEC domain was 28.48 (SD=6.11), for APC, the mean score was 20.71 SD=5.21), PEC was 17.32 (SD=5.78) and for PPC was 23.87 (SD=5.78).

In order, to examine the degree of association among the variables under study, coefficients of correlation were computed. Table 2 depicts the coefficient of correlations between metacognition (knowledge & regulation of cognition) and coping (AEC, APC, PEC, PPC).

The results in Table 2 reported that procedural knowledge, a subcomponent of knowledge of cognition, was positively and significantly correlated with AEC ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$) and APC ($r = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$). The subcomponent of knowledge of cognition, i.e. conditional knowledge, was significantly and positively correlated with AEC ($r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$ level), APC ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$) and conditional knowledge, was significantly and negatively correlated with PEC ($r = -0.13$, $p < 0.05$ level). The association between planning and PEC was significant, the direction of the association was negative ($r = -0.14$, $p<0.05$). The subcomponent of regulation of cognition, i.e. planning, was significantly and positively correlated with APC ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$ level). Monitoring, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition, was significantly correlated with AEC and APC. The correlation coefficient was 0.15 and 0.25 respectively, $p < 0.01$ level, and the direction of the correlation was positive. Information management strategies, a subcomponent of regulation of cognition was

found to be significantly and positively correlated with AEC (r = 0.18, p< 0.01) and APC (r = 0.26, p< 0.01). The association of debugging strategies with AEC (r = 0.16, p< 0.01) and APC (r = 0.21, p<0.01) was significant, and the direction of the association was positive. Evaluation, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition, was positively and significantly correlated with APC (r = 0.22, p<0.01). All subcomponents of metacognition were found not to be significantly correlated with PPC. Declarative knowledge, a subcomponent of the knowledge of cognition component, was not significantly correlated with any of the coping style. Similarly, procedural knowledge, another subcomponent of knowledge of cognition, was not significantly correlated with PEC. The subcomponent of regulation of cognition, i.e. planning was not significantly correlated with AEC. Monitoring, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition, was not significantly correlated with PEC. The subcomponent of regulation of cognition, i.e. information management strategies, was not significantly correlated with PEC. The association of debugging strategies with PEC was not significant. Evaluation, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition, was not significantly correlated with AEC and PEC. The obtained results clearly indicate that the first hypothesis which states, "There would be significant relationship of metacognitive awareness with coping." is partially proved.

Table 2. Coefficient of Correlation between Metacognition and Coping among students

Variables			Active I Emotional Coping	Active Problem Coping	Passive Emotional Coping	Passive Problem Coping
Metacognition	Knowledge of cognition	Declarative Knowledge	.05	.11	-.06	.02
		Procedural Knowledge	.15*	.17**	-.05	.04
		Conditional Knowledge	.12*	.22**	-.13*	-.06
	Regulation of cognition	Planning	.07	.19**	-.14*	-.06
		Monitoring	.15**	.25**	-.11	-.04
		Information Management Strategies	.18**	.26**	-.08	-.02
		Debugging Strategies	.16**	.21**	-.08	-.02
		Evaluation	.10	.22**	-.08	-.07

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Table 3. Metacognition as Predictor of Coping

Coping	Predictors	R	R^2	R^2 Change	β	F
Active Emotional Coping	Information Management Strategies (Regulation of Cognition)	.18	.03	.03	.18	9.60**
Active Problem Coping	Information Management Strategies (Regulation of Cognition)	.26	.07	.07	.26	21.34**
	Monitoring(Regulation of Cognition)	.29	.09	.02	.16	13.88**
Passive Emotional	Planning(Regulation of Cognition)	.13	.02	.02	-.14	5.53*
Passive Problem Coping	No significant predictor					

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Stepwise multiple regression was applied to examine the extent to which weighted combinations of metacognition (predictor variables) predict AEC (criterion variables). The results of the regression analysis showed that information management strategies subcomponents of metacognition significantly predicted AEC, positively contributed (β = 0.18, $p<0.01$) and explained 3% of the variance. The information management strategies subcomponent of regulation of cognition, explained 7% of the variance in APC independently, and â value is 0.26, regression coefficient 'β' was positive and significant at the 0.01 level. Monitoring, a subcomponent of regulation of cognition, explained 2% of the variance in APC, β value is 0.16, regression coefficient 'â' was positive and a significant effect was observed, $p < 0.01$. Monitoring and information management strategies combined explained 9% of the variation in APC. This means that better monitoring and information management strategies enhance APC. Planning, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition, negatively contributed (β = -0.14, $p<0.05$) and explained 2% of the variance in PEC among students.

Discussion

Coping in academic environment is necessary for students' better academic performance. The present investigation aims to examine the role of metacognitive strategies in improving the coping abilities of college students. The researcher examined metacognition, encompassing knowledge of cognition (declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge) and regulation of cognition (planning, monitoring, information management strategies, debugging strategies, and evaluation), as indicators of coping in academic environment, which included AEC, APC, PEC and PPC. The correlation analysis showed that procedural knowledge (subcomponent of knowledge of cognition) was significantly and positively correlated with APC and AEC. This indicates that person with good procedural knowledge, which refers to knowledge about the methods or processes required to carry out a task, including the specific procedural steps involved in its completion, tend use more active problem and active emotional focused coping style. This means that students, who have knowledge about how to use effective strategies, actively deal with their academic demands and also regulate their emotions under stressful situations in academic contexts. Students with good procedural knowledge are more likely to discuss their issues with teachers, family members, seniors or friends and classmates and ask for their opinions and thus are better in dealing with the stressor and managing their emotions. They show active problem coping style, which is positive form of coping. Conditional knowledge, the third subcomponent of knowledge of cognition, was significantly and positively correlated with APC and AEC, and negatively correlated with PEC. That is, individuals with higher conditional knowledge—understanding when and why to apply a procedure, skill, or strategy—tended to use active problem and emotional-focused coping strategies more frequently, while relying less on passive emotional coping. This implies that interested and motivated students who are aware of how to allocate their resources while using appropriate strategies to complete various cognitive tasks better cope with academic demands. They simplify the problems, thus making them easier to solve, plan effectively to handle academic conflicts, and complete their homework on time. Students who are motivated and have knowledge of when and why to a certain strategy and learned procedure tend be more calm under stressful academic environment, exhibiting active emotional coping, which is an effective style of coping. Such students are also less likely to engage in negative coping behaviours such as passive emotional coping. They are

less likely to blame God or others for unfairness or express direct anger and frustration toward others in response to stress. Similarly, planning, a subcomponent of regulation of cognition was found to be significantly and positively associated with APC and negatively associated with PEC. It means that individuals with better planning skills of their academic tasks have more use of APC and less use of PEC in their academic life. Students who can think of several possible ways to solve a problem when they encounter one are more likely to use an active problem-focused coping behaviour. Undergraduates who set specific goals before beginning a task and asking relevant questions about the material beforehand are less likely to engage in passive emotional coping like self-criticizing, withdrawal, or escape when experiencing stress. Monitoring was significantly and positively associated with APC and AEC. It indicates that individuals with higher monitoring abilities (monitoring, testing, revising, and rescheduling one's strategies for learning) are more likely to use APC and AEC. This indicates that students who can evaluate the efficiency of their strategies in different academic activities and also consider several alternatives for solving a problem, may be more likely to cope using active approaches. Information management strategies, which constitute the third subcomponent of regulation of cognition, were significantly and positively associated with APC and AEC. Thus, individuals with stronger information management strategies—skills involved in processing information, such as organizing and elaborating—tend to use more of both active problem and active emotional focused coping styles. This means that students who focus on understanding meaning and significance of new material and essential information confront academic conflict or difficulties optimistically through a problem-focused approach. Debugging strategies (subcomponent of regulation of cognition) was significantly and positively correlated with APC and AEC. This indicates that person with high degree of debugging strategies (include strategies used to correct comprehension and performance errors), highly use of APC and AEC in their academic setting. This implies that students who change strategy when failing to understand or solve a problem and re-evaluate their methods tend to cope with educational activities in an active way i.e. such students tend to use more active problem and emotional coping style. Evaluation was significantly and positively related to APC. It means that individuals with better evaluation (evaluating the outcome of performance or strategy) use of active problem coping style. Thus, the findings of the study suggest that metacognition are significantly associated with coping in educational environment among students. Research consistently supports the relationship between metacognitive awareness and effective coping in academic context and educational environment. The findings are supported by Delahaij and van Dam (2016), who also reported significant relationship between metacognition and coping. They found that individuals who are more metacognitively aware tend to use a wider range of coping strategies and are more likely to employ adaptive, problem-focused coping. This suggests that the ability to monitor one's thoughts allows for a more flexible and effective selection of coping mechanisms. Karimi and Mirjafari (2017), found that there is a significant relationship between metacognitive beliefs and coping strategies (problem centred approach). Similar results were reported by Özbay and Kýlýç (2024), as they found that students with greater cognitive awareness tend to employ problem-focused coping (adaptive coping).

Findings from the regression analysis indicate that regulation of cognition (planning, monitoring and information

management strategies) significantly predict AEC, APC and PEC. Active emotional coping is significantly predicted by information management strategies, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition. This indicate that the students who use organizational structures for learning, take breaks between study sessions, and draw pictures or diagrams to aid understanding tend to use active emotional coping styles. Active problem focused coping is significantly predicted by two subcomponents of the regulation of cognition namely information management strategies and monitoring. This indicates that when students make conscious efforts to focus their attention on important information, generate examples to relate the information to be learned with their own experience, consider all alternatives for solving a problem and engage in regular assessment of the strategy or behaviour contributes to active problem focused coping style. Planning, a subcomponent of the regulation of cognition, negatively contributed in passive emotional coping among students. This means students who have poor planning ability engage in short-term relief that may have negative long-term consequences. Therefore, enhanced ability to monitor one's own cognitions (metacognitive awareness) improves adaptive coping with stress among students.

Conclusion

The results of this study illustrate a positive relationship between coping and metacognitive awareness, which indicates that better metacognitive awareness predicts adaptive and active coping styles (active problem and emotional focused coping). This study contributes to the growing literature seeking to understand the influence of metacognition abilities on students' coping in academics and educational environment. These findings emphasize the need to design interventions for developing and improving metacognitive awareness among students which in turn would help in improving coping and enhancing academic performance.

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