



## COMPARISON OF COPING RESOURCES AND ANXIETY AMONG HOSTELLERS AND DAY SCHOLARS

**Himani Aeron**

Department Of Psychology, Panjab University,  
(India)

### **Abstract**

**Anxiety** is an emotion characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior, to overcome which individuals make use of different coping resources. Coping resources are those resources inherent in individuals that enable them to handle stresses more effectively. Since, anxiety among university students, both-hostellers and day scholars is a common concern thus, it is essential to study different coping resources used by them while experiencing anxiety. So the present study was aimed at finding out any significance difference between the anxiety levels and resources of hostellers and day scholars. The sample collected was a total of 40 students under the age group of 18 years -23 years, out of which 20 were hostellers and 20 were day scholars using convenient sampling. Present study uses the total scores on Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) and five sub-scales of The Coping Resources Inventory (CRI). Data was analyzed using t-test. The results obtained did not show much difference in the level of anxiety experienced by both hostellers and day scholars and were indicative of effective use of coping resources by both of them to deal with anxiety.

**Key words – Anxiety, coping resources, hosteller, dayscholars**

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### **Introduction**

Students very often move to different cities where there is better education for which they stay in school, college or university hostels. Initially they have a positive view of staying in

hostels regarding roommates, education, place, etc. but they may find the situation opposite to what they had previously thought. Hostellers have to face more challenges than native students as they come from different areas, culture, values, language, personality, etc. whereas day scholars don't have to face such difficulties since they belong to the same place. They don't have to adjust or change their way of living while hostellers have to do so. Adapting to these changes can be a matter of great difficulty for some of them and may result in causing anxiety or depression among them. Lack of peer support or understanding on the part of people around them can make them feel isolated and helpless, making their adjustment to new surroundings and environment more difficult. This period is also the time when they learn and explore new things in themselves and their surroundings. Initially they may find adjusting to their new surroundings difficult and even stressful but eventually they learn to adapt to environment and find their way to deal with challenges. To deal with this anxiety they make use of their coping resources.

Students living in hostels face many difficulties and hurdles such as financial crises, adjustment issues, personal helplessness, distress, changes in eating and sleep habits, and many other issues. Research suggests that Empathy, altruistic behavior, emotional stability will be more in hostel students. Hostel environment gives an opportunity for socialization among students (Mimrot, 2012).

It is a common perception that, hostel life has a unique impact on the pattern of students' life. Living in the hostel makes students socially and behaviorally different. Boarding or hostel life is a combination of different cultural backgrounds, in the hostel life students learn to live with different cultural background people (Shah, 2010).



While living in hostel students share their personal ideology with other students, and learn many new ideas from their hostel fellows. Hostel life also influences the students' views and perceptions about the religion. Hostel life also makes students more ambitious, those students who have stayed in hostels are more self-reliant and confident than other students. In hostels students learn courage and spirit from other students, and that may help students to face the practical life more confidently (Ahmad, 2006).

### **Anxiety**

Anxiety is a general feeling of apprehension about possible danger. It is a blend of unpleasant emotions and cognitions that is both more oriented to the future and much more diffuse than fear (Barlow, 1988, 2002a). At the cognitive/subjective level, anxiety involves negative mood, worry about possible future threat or danger, self-preoccupation, and a sense of being unable to predict the future threat or to control it if it occurs. At the physiological level, anxiety often creates a state of tension and chronic arousal, which may reflect readiness for dealing with danger should it occur. At the behavioral level, anxiety may create a strong tendency to avoid situations where danger might be encountered [1].

Anxiety may include symptoms like excessive worrying, difficulty in relaxing, fatigue, irritability, trouble in sleeping, sweating, diarrhea, avoiding the challenging situations, difficulty in focusing on the task at hand, shortness of breath or rapid breathing, insecurity, self-consciousness, isolation, fear, etc.

Hostellers experience much more anxiety than day scholars due to the difficulties they face in the study process, subjects, roommates, cultural differences, and self-identity. Due to this they have experience of cognitive deficits like misapprehension of information or blocking of memory and recall. Spielberger reported two forms of anxiety: state anxiety – a response to

a particular stimulation or set of circumstances, and trait anxiety – an intrinsic characteristic of the person. Previous anxiety research suggests that there are roughly two types that can be experienced at different psychological levels (Spielberger, 1966) [2]. Hancock concludes that students with high level anxiety show significantly less motivation in classrooms perceived as highly evaluative compared to students with low level anxiety (Hancock, 2001).

### **Coping resources**

Coping resources are those resources inherent in individuals that enable them to handle stressors more effectively, to experience fewer or less intense symptoms upon exposure to a stressor, or to recover faster from exposure. Baum and Singer (1982) define resources as adaptive capacities that provide immunity against damage from stress, where resources are viewed as predispositions derived from genetic factors, environmental influences, and learned relationships. In a similar vein, individuals with low resources have been described as vulnerable and constitutionally fragile (Kessler, 1979), while those with high resources have been characterized as resilient (Kessler & Essex, 1982) and hardy (Kobasa, 1979) [3].

Coping resources are highly predictive of psychological wellness (Hobfoll, 2002) and act as buffers for disorders such as anxiety and depression (Bisschop, Kriegsman, Beekman, & Deeg, 2004; McCarthy, Fouladi, Juncker, & Matheny, 2006). They also predict low levels of worker burnout (Brill, 1984; McCarthy, Lambert, O'Donnell, & Melendres, 2009). Coping resources refer to factors upon which individuals can draw in the face of stressful events and are present before stressors occur (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978).

Some adopt positive methods such as seeking social support [4], or using leisure activities [5] while others use maladaptive strategies (e.g. escape/avoidance) to manage stress [6]. Typical coping resources include



social support, confidence, religion or spirituality, stress monitoring and tension reduction abilities, a sense of mastery, physical health, and an ability to engage in problem-solving and structuring.

## **Review of literature**

### **Anxiety**

The anxiety level might interfere with everyday functioning like studies, their daily activities, and social life among students. Anxiety is a major predictor of academic performance (McCraty, 2007; McCraty, Dana, Mike, Pam & Stephen, 2000) and various studies have demonstrated that it has a detrimental effect (Heather & April, 2008; McCraty, 2007). Students with higher level of anxiety will achieve a lower academic performance (McCraty, 2007; Heather & April, 2008) and greater anxiety is associated with poorer academic achievement (problems with memory, attention and reasoning) (Luigi, Francesca, Maria, Eleonora, Valentina & Benedetto, 2007).

Yılmaz and Ocakçı (2010) found that 77.2% of the students experienced a mild level and 19.6% experienced a moderate level of anxiety. A study conducted by Wong, Cheung, Chan, Ma & Tang (2006) in a sample of university students across 10 universities in Hong Kong revealed that 41% of students experienced moderate levels of anxiety. Webb et al. (1996) reported that 54% of UK university students reached the subthreshold for anxiety.

### **Coping Resources**

Scheier et al. (1986) have shown that the tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic influences the way the person copes with stressful encounters, thus implicating a personality trait in the coping process. Much more research of this sort is needed to reveal the degree to which diverse coping strategies are influenced by the social context, personality variables, or both.

Folkman and Lazarus(1987) demonstrated that the emotion and coping patterns of students changed dramatically across these stages. With respect to coping, seeking information and social support occurred quite frequently in the anticipatory stage, but dropped sharply in later stages; distancing was the most frequently employed coping strategy during the waiting period but was infrequently employed during other stages. Thus, if the examination had been treated as a single stressful encounter, and coping had been summated across stages, there would have been great distortion in what might have been learned. To collapse what is happening over time is apt to produce findings that are at best uninterpretable and at worst misleading. Smith and Ellsworth (1987) have made similar observations about appraisal, coping and emotion in a college examination, with comparable finding [7].

Research findings of overall coping resourcefulness by gender are mixed. Studies of university students in Turkey (Matheny et al., 2002), Mexico (Matheny, Roque-Tovar, &Curlette, 2008), and Russia (Makhnack, Postylyakova, Curlette, & Matheny, 1999) suggest that males perceive their psychological resources to be greater than females perceive theirs to be.

### **Purpose**

This research is conducted to find out whether there is any significant difference between the anxiety levels and coping strategies and skills of hostellers and day scholars.

### **Contribution**

The present research aims to compare the anxiety levels and coping resources among hostellers and day scholars. Since anxiety among university students, both-hostellers and day scholars is a common concern thus, it is essential to study the level of anxiety and coping resources used by either of them. It will help to make use of necessary interventions to help students deal with anxiety and enhance their coping skills.



## Hypotheses

2.1 There will be significant difference in anxiety levels among hostellers and day scholars.

2.2 There will be significant difference among hostellers and day scholars on the scale of coping resource inventory.

## Methodology

### Sample

The study involved 40 participants from the student population under the age group of 18 years -23 years, out of which 20 were hostellers and 20 were day scholars.

### Sampling technique

Convenient sampling

### Tools

The following scales were used for this study:

The Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS)  
This scale was designed by William W. K. Zung M.D, (1929-1992) a professor of Psychiatry from Duke University, to quantify a patient's level of anxiety.

The SAS is a 20-item self-report assessment device built to measure anxiety levels, based on scoring in 4 groups of manifestations: cognitive, autonomic, motor and central nervous system symptoms. Answering the statements a person should indicate how much each statement applies to him or her within a period of one or two weeks prior to taking the test. Each question is scored on a Likert-type scale of 1-4 (based on these replies: "a little of the time," "some of the time," "good part of the time," "most of the time"). Some questions are negatively worded to avoid the problem of set response. Overall assessment is done by total score.

### The Coping Resources Inventory (CRI)

This scale is developed by M. Susan Marting and Allen L. Hammer to provide a standardized measure of coping resources that may prove important in mediating the stress response. The CRI was constructed to facilitate

an emphasis on resources rather than deficits. Increased knowledge of the resources rather than deficits, and their role in coping process may also help in the design of the prevention programmes.

It consists 60 items that measures resources in five domains:

### Cognitive (COG)

The extent to which individuals maintain a positive sense of self-worth, a positive outlook towards others, and optimism about life in general.

### Social (SOC)

The degree to which individuals are imbedded in social networks that are able to provide support in the time stress.

### Emotional (EMO)

The degree to which individuals are able to accept and express a range of affect, based on the premise that a range of emotional response aids in ameliorating long-term negative consequences of stress.

### Spiritual/Philosophical (S/P)

The degree to which actions of the individual are guided by stable and consistent values derived from religious, familial, or cultural tradition or from personal philosophy.

### Physical (PHY)

The degree to which individuals enact health promoting behaviours believed to contribute to increased physical well-being. The CRI has been administered to people ranging from fourteen to eighty-three years of age and found to be a valid coping measure.

## Results

### Anxiety

TABLE 1: mean and SD of anxiety scores of hostellers and day scholars



Group	Hostellers	Day scholars
Mean	38.80	40.05
SD	7.08	6.63
N	20	20

P<0.05\*

**P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.5672 this difference is considered to be not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance

**Intermediate values used in calculations:**

t = 0.5672

df = 38

4.2 Cognitive (COD)

TABLE 2: mean and SD on the subscale of COD of hostellers and day scholar

Group	Hostellers	Day scholars
Mean	24.50	26.90
SD	4.86	3.11
N	20	20

P<0.05\*

**P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.0707 This difference is considered to be not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance

**Intermediate values used in calculations:**

t = 1.8598

df = 38

4.3 Social (SOC)

TABLE 3: mean and SD on the subscale of SOC of hostellers and day scholar.

Group	Hostellers	Day scholars
Mean	36.05	36.05

SD	5.28	6.24
N	20	20

P<0.05\*

**P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 1.0000 This difference is considered to be not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Intermediate values used in calculations:**

t = 1.0000

df = 38

4.4 Emotional (EMO)

TABLE 4: mean and SD on the subscale of EMO of hostellers and day scholar.

Group	Hostellers	Day scholars
Mean	43.40	44.85
SD	7.24	5.07
N	20	20

P<0.05\*

**P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.4675 This difference is considered to be not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Intermediate values used in calculations:**

t = 0.7339

df = 38

4.5 Spiritual/Philosophical (S/P)

Table 5: mean and SD on the subscale of S/P of hostellers and day scholar.

Group	Hostellers	Day scholars
Mean	29.15	29.10
SD	5.14	4.38



N	20	20
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P<0.05\*

**P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.9738  
This difference is considered to be not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Intermediate values used in calculations:**

t = 0.0331

df = 38

4.6 Physical (PHY)

TABLE 6: mean and SD on the subscale of PHY of hostellers and day scholar.

Group	Hostellers	Day scholars
Mean	27.00	27.45
SD	4.86	5.23
N	20	20

P<0.05\*

**P value and statistical significance:**

The two-tailed P value equals 0.7794.  
This difference is considered to be not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

**Intermediate values used in calculations:**

t = 0.2821

df = 38

TABLE 7: showing t scores of hostellers and day scholars on scale of anxiety and sub scales of coping resources inventory.

	ANX IET Y	COPING RESOURCES				
		CO D	SO C	EM O	S/ P	PH Y
T SCORE S	0. 567 2	0.0 70 7	1.0 00 0	0.4 67 5	0.9 73 8	0.7 79 4
SIGNIFI CANCE (AT 0.05 LEVEL)	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS

P<0.05\* NS = not significant

**Discussion**

The aim of the present study was to find out whether there is any significant difference between the anxiety levels and coping strategies and skills of hostellers and day scholars. The sample collected was a total of 40 students under the age group of 18 years - 23 years, out of which 20 were hostellers and 20 were day scholars. The first hypothesis formulated was that there will be significant difference in anxiety levels among hostellers and day scholars. The t value came out to be 0.5672 (table 7) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 38.80 and 40.05 for hostellers and day scholars respectively (df 38), which means that there is no significant difference in the anxiety levels of hostellers and day scholars. Thus our hypothesis is rejected. The second hypothesis formulated was there will be significant difference among hostellers and day scholars on the scale of coping resource inventory (CRI). CRI has 5 subscales on which the students were scored.

On the subscale of cognitive (COD) The t value came out to be 0.0707 (table 7) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 24.50 and 26.90 for hostellers and day scholars respectively (df 38), which means that there is no significant difference in the ability of hostellers and day scholars to deal



with stress using a positive sense of self-worth and optimism about life in general. On the subscale of social (SOC) The t value came out to be 1.000 (table 7) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 36.05 and 36.05 for hostellers and day scholars respectively (df 38), which means that the individuals in both the groups are imbedded in social networks that are able to provide support in the time stress. On the subscale of emotional (EMO) The t value came out to be 0.4675 (table 7) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 43.40 and 44.85 for hostellers and day scholars respectively (df 38), which means that there is no significant difference in the ability of hostellers and day scholars to able to accept and express a range of affect, based on the premise that a range of emotional response aids in ameliorating long-term negative consequences of stress. On the subscale of spiritual/philosophical (S/P) The t value came out to be 0.9738 (table 7) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 29.15 and 29.10 for hostellers and day scholars respectively (df 38), which means that there is no significant difference between hostellers and day scholars to deal with stress using stable and consistent values derived from religious, familial, or cultural tradition or from personal philosophy. On the subscale of physical (PHY) The t value came out to be 0.7794 (table 7) which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance with the mean of 27 and 27.45 for hostellers and day scholars respectively (df 38), which means that there is no significant difference in the ability of hostellers and day scholars to deal with stress using health promoting behaviours which are believed to contribute to increased physical well-being resulting in attenuating potentially chronic stress-illness cycles resulting from negative physical response to stressors. Since no significant difference was found in all the five subscales of coping resource inventory, our second hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among

hostellers and day scholars on the scale of coping resource inventory (CRI), is also rejected.

Though this study has shown no significant differences in coping resources and levels of anxiety among hostellers and day scholars but there have been studied that state otherwise. Living away from family for a specific period of time leaves some enduring experiences in the life of the students. In this new life style student learns to live independently, and learn how to compromise with the other students and roommates (as cited in Khozaei et al., 2010).

Students living in hostels face many difficulties and hurdles such as financial crises, adjustment issues, personal helplessness, distress, changes in eating and sleep habits, and many other issues. Research suggests that Empathy, altruistic behavior, emotional stability will be more in hostel students. Hostel environment gives an opportunity for socialization among students (Mimrot, 2012). While living in hostel students share their personal ideology with other students, and learn many new ideas from their hostel fellows. Hostel life also influences the students' views and perceptions about the religion. Hostel life also makes students more ambitious, those students who have stayed in hostels are more self-reliant and confident than other students. In hostels students learns courage and spirit from other students, and that may help students to face the practical life more confidently (Ahmad, 2006).

### Conclusion

The aim of the study was to see whether there is any significant difference between the anxiety levels and coping strategies and skills of hostellers and day scholars but the results have come out to be insignificant on both the scales of anxiety and coping resources. So we can say that both hostellers and day scholars makes effective use of their coping resources to deal with stressors and anxiety efficiently.



Also, the students have to face almost similar levels of stressors in their day to day life irrespective of being a hosteller or a day scholar.

This study has shown that students irrespective of being a hosteller or a day scholar experience anxiety therefore, we can better identify and understand the common factors that are responsible for creating anxiety instudents. It also helps the students to acknowledge different coping resources available to them on the basis of which they can use novel ways to deal with the challenges they face. Though there have not been much difference in the anxiety levels and use of various coping resources between hostellers and day scholars but many studies have suggested otherwise. The reason for the insignificant difference among both the groups can due to small size of the sample.

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