

Use of Stress Coping Strategies among Students with Hearing Impairment: A Gendered-Comparative Study



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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to identify coping strategies used by males and females with hearing impairment to deal with stress. A causal-comparative study was conducted with a purposive sample of 165 students. Religious coping, positive reinterpretation, and planning were the most common strategies. Females used religious coping more than males, while males used substance use more than females. There was a significant gender difference in the use of problem-focused strategies but not emotion-focused strategies. Age was positively correlated with religious coping, indicating older students used it more. No relationship was found between age and the use of emotion-focused or problem-focused strategies. No significant difference was found in strategy use based on student qualification. This study has implications for students with disabilities, parents, and teachers.

Key Words: Hearing impairment (HI), stress, coping strategies, gender differences, A Gendered-Comparative Study

Introduction

Hearing impairment (HI) is one of the most common disabilities, affecting 360 million people worldwide. HI can have significant impacts on a person's quality of life, including issues with speech recognition, communication, language acquisition, and psychosocial well-being. Young people with HI face additional challenges as they transition into higher education (Bukhari, Butt, & Muhammad, 2021). The college years involve significant mental, social, and academic adjustments, which can be especially difficult for students with disabilities (Amjad & Muhammad, 2019).

Recent research indicates high levels of stress are common among college students with HI. Stress arises when perceived demands exceed an individual's

resources to cope (Naz, Muhammad, & Mahmood, 2022). Without healthy coping strategies, ongoing stress can lead to physical illness, depression, anxiety, and other psychopathologies. Coping strategies include cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage stressful situations. Problem-focused strategies directly address the stressor, while emotion-focused strategies regulate feelings about the stressor.

Prior studies reveal gender differences in stress levels and coping choices. Females tend to use more emotion-focused and avoidant coping, while males often utilise problem-focused strategies. This may stem from gender role socialisation, as males are encouraged to be more solution oriented. Understanding gendered patterns of stress and coping

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among students with HI can inform counselling services and support.

Therefore, this study aimed to identify common coping strategies used by higher education students with HI and examine gender differences. It also analysed relationships between coping strategies and student age or education level. By adding to the limited literature on this population, findings can guide interventions to reduce stress and teach healthy coping skills. Enhanced well-being will further promote academic persistence and success among students with hearing loss (Pirzada, Muhammad, & Anis, 2020).

The purpose of this research was to identify common and different coping strategies that male or female students with hearing impairment apply to deal with a feeling of stress.

The present study intended to:

- 1) Investigate the most common type of coping strategies used by male and female students with HI.
- 2) Highlight the difference in using emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies based on the gender of students with HI.
- 3) Find out the relationship between age and the use of stress-coping strategies among students with HI.
- 4) To identify the relationship between age and the use of emotion-focused and problem-focused stress-coping strategies among students with HI.
- 5) Underline the differences in using stress coping strategies based on the qualification of students with HI.

Methods & Materials

A research design presented a structure for the data collection and analysis (Farooq, Muhammad, & Mahmood, 2023). The researcher came to make a distinct system, hypothetical framework, and the accessibility of the required resources. In this study, the researcher conducted a causal-comparative study. In the causal-comparative study, the researcher endeavours to find out the reason or cause for present variations in the conduct or popularity of companies or people. In other terminology, installed corporations are already distinct on various changeable, and the researcher tries to pick out the main issue that has brought about this distinction (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The researcher accomplished descriptive

research to know the use of stress coping strategies by students with hearing impairment: A gendered-comparative study. Best and Kahn (2006) simplify that descriptive study defined and understand what's. Descriptive study is disturbed with that exist dating or phrases, outcomes that are marked, a technique which might be continuities, an inclination which might be emergent, and perspectives which might be held. It is also apprehensive with gifts and past events and convinces as they examine current phrases. The research design was quantitative and descriptive (Akram, Butt, & Muhammad, 2022), as data was collected through an adapted scale. It consisted of two parts. Part one consisted of demographic, and the second part consisted of the 30 items. By using a reliable instrument, the data were collected from the students of two institutes by purposive sampling technique from Lahore. The sample was those students who were studying from higher education levels. For the selection of the purposive sampling technique used in this study, the scale was used for data collection.

The students of the study were HI students who attended educational programs in public or private institutes located in Lahore. The population of the study was all HI students enrolled in these institutions. One hundred sixty-five students were taken from two institutes, UMT University and Govt. Degree College Lahore. The sample of our study included 83 Males and 82 Females with HI students.

In this research, the population was comprised of students studying in private and public sector institutes of the Lahore district. A sample of 165 students with hearing impairment was selected by using a purposive sampling technique. The data was collected from students who are studying at the college or university level.

This research was quantitative research. Quantitative research describes the analysis and series of numerical records. Therefore, quantitative studies involve simply the usage of statistical facts (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). The researcher personally visited the selected institutes and collected data by the selected scale to check the reliability of the instrument. The researcher made an adapted scale and shared it with her supervisor. While the data were collected from the HI students, the researchers interpreted the scale into sign language by a sign language interpreter from UMT University into video form. One hundred sixty-

five students were selected as a sample for this study. The scale was interpreted into three demographics videos, the introduction of the scale, and the statements of the actual scale. To collect data for the pilot study, the researcher visited UMT University. The researcher made a list of all HI students with the help of the person in charge of the resource room and then collected data in groups. Each group consisted of two students showing the videos of the scale one by one, and the researcher explained the video as well if any students had any kind of problem in getting the concept or statement of the scale. The scale was distributed along with students in diverse classrooms at different times. The scale focused on the use of coping strategies among students with HI. The researcher collected data from private and public institutes. In the data-collecting procedure, the essential research ethical principles were considered.

An instrument is a tool or test used for data gathering as well as developed own scale, then explaining how the tool will make, what it will calculate, and how to determine its reliability and validity (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The researchers conducted quantitative research with the use of the adapted questionnaire. This study used an English version of the Brief COPE Scale.

The adapted scale aimed to evaluate a wide range of coping reactions among students with hearing impairment (HI). It had two sections. Part A collected demographics of male and female students with HI. Part B used the Brief COPE scale to assess differences in coping strategies between genders. This 30-item scale had a 4-point Likert format assessing the frequency of use for each coping strategy. Fifteen coping scopes were covered: Positive reinterpretation, Active coping, Mental disengagement, Use of instrumental social support, Focus on/venting of emotions, Denial, Religious coping, Acceptance, Behavioral disengagement, Suppression of activities, Use of emotional support, Substance use, Humor, Restraint, Planning. Each scope had two items. Coping strategies were categorised into two main types: problem-focused and emotion-focused.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was performed on a small scale and gave

all significant information for the enhancement of the effectiveness and worth of the main study (conducted in 2017). This research was accomplished in two segments. Pilot testing was the first stage, which took one week. The pilot study was conducted in Lahore. Two institutes were selected, 20 students were selected for the pilot testing of the scale, seven students were taken from University Management and Technology Lahore, and 13 students were taken from Government Degree College Johar Town Lahore.

These 20 students were divided into two groups, one of the groups consisting of male students with HI students and the other one consisting of female students with HI and the Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.848 of pilot testing.

Main Study

The data of the pilot study were analysed, all 30 items chosen for the scale, and after that range comprised 30 items was the main study arranged toward data obtained for the use stress coping strategies.

Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability explains the level to which a dimension of a fact to give contains effect and is well balanced. Reliability is also disturbed by repeatability (Taherdoost, 2016). To confirm the reliability of the instrument, the researcher makes sure that the 30 items in the inventory correlate with the objectives and the research questions. For the determination of the reliability, Cronbach's alpha reliability test run was 0.809.

Sample of the study

The sample consisted of 165 students from a private institute, the University of Management and Technology and second a public institute, Govt. Degree College for the Deaf was selected for the data collection from 83 males and 82 females by using a purposive sampling technique. The data was collected from the students who were studying at the college and university levels. Table 1 represents the private and public institutes' names, which the researcher chose for the collection of data.

Table 1*Selected sample of students with HI*

S. No.	Institutes	Students with HI
1	Govt. Degree College for Deaf Lahore	147
2	The University of Management and Technology Lahore	18

Sample's Characteristics

The age level of students with HI was 15-30 years. There was a difference in the explanation of hearing impairment and the type of hearing loss students. A sample of 165 students was taken from college or

university level. Most of the students had severe to profound hearing loss. Eighty-three were male students, and 82 were female students with HI. One hundred forty-seven students were studying at the college level, and 18 were enrolled at the university level.

Table 2*Frequency distribution of students according to their demographics*

S. No.	Demographics	No. of students
1	Male	83
2	Female	82
3	Mild	9
4	Moderate	25
5	Moderately Severe	35
6	Severe	52
7	Profound	44
8	College	147
9	University	18
Total	Total	165

Data Collection

The researchers used an adapted scale to collect complete data. The researcher focused on students taking part in the research after having consent from the head of the institutes. The investigator has collected a scale list for students with HI for the purpose of data collection. The scale focused on stress-coping strategies among students with HI. All 165 students were accomplished during purposive sampling. The researchers made a list of students from two diverse institutions and then collected data from those students. The HI students filled out the scale at their institution. Under the supervision of the investigator, the scale was filled by students who are studying at college and university levels. Researchers made a little cluster and had a video clip of the scale in which a sign language interpreter interpreted the whole scale into sign language. The investigator makes groups of students, which consist of 2-5 students, then show them the video clip and explains every statement by sign language to the HI students.

Data Analysis

The scale was used for the collection of data from 165 students with HI in the Lahore district. In this causal-comparative study, the researchers used an adapted scale to access different coping strategies among students with HI. A part of the scales consisted of demographic information (e.g., gender, age, qualification, institution, the intensity of HI, etc). The researchers collected data personally through the scale then further evolution was to analyse data. After the data was collected from the students HI data was presented in tabulation form on SPSS software, then analysed and interpreted. In this section, based on descriptive statistics, the frequency of demographic variables means score, Independent Sample T-test, ANOVA, and correlation were used. A pilot study was performed before the field studies to analyse the reliability of the survey.

Due to time limitations, itinerant and financial problems, throughout this study, the data were collected from two different institutes and 220 students, but due to shortened or wasted scale, only

165 of them were integrated with this study, but this could be expanded to more institutes and students for better results and data collection.

- 1) Data were collected from only students with HI.
- 2) Data were collected from only Lahore city.
- 3) Data were collected only from two different institutes, UMT and Govt. Degree College for the Deaf. Because the researcher chooses higher education students for the study, a better result, as they can easily understand the scale.

Ethical considerations

The researchers described the study to the head of the institution for what was the crucial intention to accomplish this research. The researchers also conveyed the purpose of the research to the participants and requested them to carefully read and sign the approval letter (Azmat, Jamil, and Muhammad, 2021). Respondents were guaranteed

anonymity and secrecy of their answers, and it was not essential to note down their surnames on the research scale utilised for data collection (Muhammad, 2015).

Analysis

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of data "Use of stress coping strategies by the students with hearing impairment: A gendered-comparative study". The quantitative research design was used in this research, and the COPE scale was used in data collection. The research design used a causal-comparative study for the research. A detailed discussion of the response rate, data analysis, result, and interpretation of the quantitative data for each of the research questions of this study is also included. The instrument was used to collect data through an adaptive Scale, and SPSS software was used to analyse data in the form of Percentage, Frequency, Means score, Independent Sample T-test, Correlation, and ANOVA.

Table 3

Frequency distribution of student gender basis

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	83	50.3
Female	82	49.7
Total	165	100.0

Table 3 reveals that data collected from 165 students with HI in which male students were 50.3% (83) and 49.7% (82) students' status were female. Therefore,

it was resolved that the majority of the students were male.

Table 4

Frequency of age-basis distribution of student

Age	Frequency	Percentage%
15-20	79	47.9
21-25	70	42.4
26-30	16	9.7
Total	165	100.0

Table 4 describes that 47.9% (79) students were 15-20 years old, 42.4% (70) students were 21-25 years old, and 9.7% (16) students were 26-30 years old.

Table 5

Frequency of Qualification basis on the distribution of student

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage%
Intermediate	77	46.7

Bachelor	67	40.6
Masters	21	12.7
Total	165	100.0

Table 5 describes that 46.7% (77) students had intermediate, 40.6% (67) students had bachelor, 12.7% (21) students had Masters.

Table 6

Frequency distribution of student Institution basis

Institute	Frequency	Percentage%
Public	147	89.7
Private	18	10.3
Total	165	100.0

Table 6 illustrates that 89.7% (147) students were from public institutes, and 10.3% (18) students were from Private institutes.

Table 7

Frequency distribution of student Intensity basis

Intensity	Frequency	Percentage%
Mild	9	5.5
Moderate	25	15.2
Moderately Severe	35	21.2
Severe	52	31.5
Profound	44	26.7
Total	165	100.0

Table 7 describes that 5.5% (9) students were Mild, 15.2% (25) students were Moderate, 21.2% (35) students were Moderately Severe, 31.5% (52) students were Severe, and 26.7% (44) students were profound.

This part of the SPSS contains the analysis of the body of the questionnaire. Here we can see the answers to the objectives and the research questions of the study.

Research Objective 1: Identify the most used stress-coping strategies among male and female students with HI. Table 8 shows that the most used stress-coping strategies based on the gender of students are religious coping, positive reinterpretation and planning. The female students mostly used religious coping ($M=7.57$) as compared to male students ($M=6.82$). In addition, male students are mostly starting substance use as a coping strategy ($M=3.12$) as compared to female students ($M=2.13$).

Table 8

Analysis of mean scores based on the gender of students

S. No.	Coping strategies	Male (M)	Female (M)
1	Positive reinterpretation	5.89	5.66
2	Mental disengagement	4.98	5.10
3	Focus on & venting emotions	4.80	5.09
4	Use of instrumental social support	5.57	5.13
5	Active coping	5.48	5.24
6	Denial	5.12	4.87
7	Religious coping	6.82	7.57
8	Humour	4.57	4.37

9	Behavioural disengagement	5.58	5.28
10	Restraint	5.25	5.23
11	Use of emotional and social support	4.59	4.77
12	Substance use	3.12	2.13
13	Acceptance	5.19	5.32
14	Suppression of competing activities	5.58	5.23
15	Planning	5.64	5.80

Research Objective 2: Highlight the difference in using emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies based on the gender of students with HI. Table 9 shows that an independent sample t-test was performed to compare the use of emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies based on the

gender of students with hearing impairment (HI). The analysis showed that there is a significant difference ($p=.026$) in problem-focused strategies based on the gender of students. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in the use of emotion-focused strategies based on gender.

Table 9

Differences in gender-based Independent Sample t-test

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. D	t	Df	P
Emotion-focused coping	Male	83	42.95	8.40	.98	163	.083
	Female	82	41.76	6.87	.99		
Problem-focused coping	Male	83	48.14	9.44	.81	150.80	.026
	Female	82	47.08	6.96	.82		

Research Objective 4: To identify the relationship between age and the use of coping strategies among students with HI. Table 10 shows that the correlation

analysis shows that age reveals positively correlated with religious coping. This means that as the age increases, students with HI use more religious coping.

Table 10

Age and use of emotion and problem-focused strategies by correlation

Variables	Age
Age	1
Positive reinterpretation	0.012
Mental disengagement	0.085
Focus on venting	0.001
Instrumental support	0.041
Active coping	0.031
Denial	0.058
Religious coping	.16*
Humour	0.12
Behavioural disengagement	0.001
Restraint	0.008
Emotional support	0.107
Substance use	0.085
acceptance	0.043
Computing activities	0.009
Planning	0.058

Research Objective 4: Find out the relationship between age and the use of emotion-focused and problem-focused stress-coping strategies among

students with HI. Table 11 shows that there is no relationship between the age and use of emotion-

focused and problem-focused type of strategies among students with HI.

Table 11

Age and use of emotion and problem-focused strategies by correlation

		Age	Emotion-focused	problem-focused
Age	Pearson correlation	1	.022	.028
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.783	.722

Research objective 5: Underline the differences in using stress coping strategies based on the qualification of students with HI. Table 11 shows there is no significant statistical difference in the use of emotion-focused strategies based on the qualification of the students with HI. HI person, which is indicated by

Fratio (.680), is significant at $p = .507$. In addition, table 12 shows there is no significant statistical difference in the use of problem-focused strategies based on the qualification of the students with HI. HI person, which is indicated by Fratio (.857), is significant at $p = .426$.

Table 12

One-Way Analysis of Variance of problem and emotion-focused strategies based on the qualification of students.

Emotion-focused	SS	Df	M	F	Sig.
Between Groups	80.62	2	40.31	0.680	0.507
Within Group	9597.55	162	59.24		
Total	9678.18	164			

Table 13

One-Way Analysis of Variance of the problem and problem-focused Strategies based on the Qualification of students

Problem-focused	SS	Df	M	F	Sig.
Between Groups	118.22	2	59.113	0.857	0.426
Within Group	11166.71	162	68.930		
Total	11284.94	164			

Discussion

The aim of this research conducted to find the use of stress coping techniques by students with hearing impairment: a gendered comparative study. This research was a descriptive type of research. The researcher adopted a scale and collected data through an adapted scale.

The researcher used the COPE scale for the study. This scale covers 15 scopes, and the coping proportions are alienated into two main types: problem-centred strategies and emotion-centred strategies.

The study aimed to identify the common coping strategies that male or female students used to contract their sensation of stress as positive reinterpretation, religious coping, and planning. In this

study, male and female students with HI-related foremost stress intensity. Psychological stress is not always a perfect hassle for college students; however, it has appeared like the difficulty of growing apprehension, specifically in the situation of elevated efforts to cut back pupil erosion (Childs, Finnie, & Martinello, 2016). Coping strategies pass on to unique efforts, both developmental and mental, that human beings hire to grasp, endure, diminish, or curtail demanding occasions. Two trendy coping strategies have been exceptional: emotion-focused adapting procedures include endeavours to control the enthusiastic results of unpleasant or possibly unpleasant occasions; problem-solving techniques are endeavours to do something dynamic to reduce upsetting conditions.

Studies designated that human beings use a variety of techniques to fight the utmost troubling occasions. Wide-ranging features, which include problem-solving as opposed to emotion-focused or dynamic versus avoidance, have the handiest confined value for recognising coping, and consequently investigating coping and its size has advanced to deal with an expansion of more specific coping techniques, referred to under in the measurement segment. The dominance of a single kind of strategy above some extra decided, in element, by way of individual way (e.g. a few humans cope extra energetically than others) along with also through using the kind of stressful incident; for instance, humans usually utilise problem-focused coping to address capacity handy troubles which include work-associated issues and family-related troubles, while stressors are seen as less convenient, inclusive of certain kinds of corporeal fitness problem, stimulate more emotion-focused coping.

Findings concerning gender and stress coping strategies discovered that male individuals appreciably fluctuate from those of females. Particularly, inside the present study, females described elevated thoughts of hysteria, horror, expression of grief, despair, and guilt personally as a response to stressors than males, at the same time as males pronounced higher utilise of outrage, smoking and considering more approximately finding ways to unravel the difficulties. Suitable coping ability must be trained in college students to assist them the circumvent dysfunctional coping skills. There is a need for the administration of the institute to grow psychotherapy examinations to help lessen the intensity of stress going through college learners. Females have been located to acquire more societal sustain from friends and enormous others than their male opposite numbers. Females were greater emotional as contrasted to adult males. Consequently, the percentage felt greater generously and comfortable with friends. Whereas adult males are predicted to stay, as much as assured social prospects that have been situated and that giving out thoughts is a symbol of weak spot.

Gender dissimilarity in coping has been pronounced. The preponderance of proof indicates that girls appoint emotion-focused patterns greater commonly than males (Brougham, Zail, Mendoza, & Miller, 2009; Eaton & Bradley, 2008; Endler & Parker, 1990b; Matud, 2004; Ptacek, Smith, & Zanas, 1992). Males construct more utilise of problem entered

coping techniques than emotion-centred and escaped ones (Eaton & Bradley, 2008; Endler & Parker, 1990b).

Conclusions

This research examined the most commonly used stress-coping strategies by students with hearing impairment (HI). The top strategies were religious coping, positive reinterpretation, and planning. Key findings showed females used religious coping more than males, while males used substances more than females. Comparing emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies, there was a significant gender difference only for problem-focused strategies. Age positively correlated with religious coping, indicating older students used it more. No relationship was found between age and the use of emotion-focused or problem-focused strategies. Additionally, students' qualifications showed no significant difference in the use of either strategy. In summary, while students used various coping methods, differences emerged in religious coping and substance use based on gender, along with increased religious coping among older students.

Recommendations

- 1) Based on the findings of the current study, it is recommended that college or university administrators should allow frequent breaks for students with hearing impairment during their academic period at the institute to avoid the workload, which ultimately leads to emotional problems.
- 2) Colleges and universities should provide accessible counselling for students with hearing impairments. Greater effort should go toward enhancing teaching methods and the overall learning environment on campus.
- 3) Institutions must offer mentoring, guidance, and education to help students cope with stress and understand its unhealthy effects. Having supportive programs in place would assist students in managing stressors (Aslam, Muhammad, & Nasir, 2022).
- 4) Furthermore, colleges and universities should promote healthy lifestyles encompassing physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Setting up wellness clinics on campus could help mitigate certain stresses and their effects.

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