(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

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Cognitive emotional regulation, coping style and resilience used among middle aged adults

Kevin B Issac [1, *] and Sharmili Chatterjee [2]

[1] Department of Psychology, Currently in final semester MSc Counselling Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.
[2] Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Abstract

Cognitive emotional regulation refers to the mental processes by which individuals are able to manage and respond back to the emotions experienced. Coping style denotes the habitual ways individuals react or respond to stress or challenging situations. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back from adversity, stress or difficult experiences. This study aims to explore cognitive emotional regulation, coping style and resilience used among middle aged adults. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from middle-aged adults. This study employed Convenience Sampling. The data was gathered with the help of Google forms from 214 Middle aged adults, between 40 and 65 years old and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 25. The findings suggest that there is no significant corelation between resilience and Cognitive emotional regulation suggesting that an individual's resilience level may not necessarily determine the specific cognitive emotional regulation strategies they employ. Additionally, there was a significant relationship between resilience and coping styles suggests that individuals with higher resilience tend to employ more adaptive and effective coping mechanisms. There was a negative relationship between coping styles and cognitive emotional regulation suggesting that individuals who tend to use more adaptive coping strategies may rely less on certain cognitive emotional regulation strategies. There is no significant difference between Cognitive emotional regulation, resilience and coping styles among males and females. Findings suggest that the levels of resilience, cognitive emotional regulation, and coping strategies do not differ significantly between male and female participants in this study. This implies that the relationships observed between these variables are not influenced by gender differences.

Keywords: Emotional regulation; Coping style; Resilience

1. Introduction

Being able standup in the tough seasons of life is not always an easy task, more often for the middle- aged adults. As people grow older, they live through a reasonable continuum of suffering but within a certain age bracket of specific afflictions due to various causes like work, family, health and loss among others. People are affected by such challenges based on cognitive emotional regulation, coping styles and resilience. Adults in their middle years, who frequently manage several obligations, could depend on cognitive emotional regulation to maintain their resilience. Identifying the specific cognitive and behavioral strategies associated with resilience in middle age can guide mental health professionals in designing tailored interventions to enhance emotional well-being. The findings are valuable for preventive mental health practices, providing evidence on how individuals can foster adaptive emotional regulation, utilize effective coping strategies, and strengthen resilience, ultimately contributing to better mental health across the lifespan (Southwick et al., 2014).

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* Corresponding author: Kevin B Issac

1.1. Cognitive Emotional Regulation

Cognitive emotional regulation refers to the mental strategies individuals use to manage and process their emotional responses to adverse events or stressors (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007). For middle-aged adults, interventions that focus on enhancing adaptive cognitive emotional regulation strategies can be particularly beneficial. These interventions may include training in cognitive reappraisal, developing mindfulness practices, and fostering social support networks to provide emotional stability during challenging times.

1.2. Coping Styles

Coping styles are the strategies or methods we use to deal with stress, emotions and challenges in our daily lives. Coping styles can further be broken down into constructive and Dysfunctional strategies. Adaptive coping strategies, like problem-solving, acceptance, and cognitive restructuring, are associated with improved psychological outcomes. Dysfunctional coping styles, such as evading, denial, or Drug consumption, might offer short-term comfort but are often detrimental in the long term (Compas et al., 2001). Avoidant coping, for instance, may initially reduce anxiety by allowing someone to ignore a problem, but over time, it can lead to an accumulation of unresolved issues and increased stress.

1.3. Resilience

Being resilient means having the capacity to overcome hardship. Like a rubber band, you regain your natural shape no matter how hard life bends you. Being resilient means not only enduring adversity but also emerging stronger from it. Each of us has the potential to develop resilience, but our life circumstances, support systems, and personal beliefs play significant roles in determining how resilient we are. This capacity is influenced by internal and external factors, including positive self-concept, social support, and coping mechanisms, which contribute to one's ability to maintain psychological stability (Luthar et al., 2000).

2. Methods

2.1. Objectives

To identify the common cognitive Emotional regulation strategies used by middle-aged males and females. To examine the coping styles adopted by middle-aged males and females. To assess the levels of resilience among middle-aged males and females. To analyse the differences in these variables between genders.

2.2. Hypothesis

- Ho1: There is no significant correlation between Resilience and Cognitive Emotional Regulation
- Ho2: There is no Significant Correlation between Resilience and Coping style
- Ho3: There is no Significant Correlation between Coping style and Cognitive emotional regulation
- Ho4: There is no significant difference between the mentioned variables amongst males and females

2.3. Research design

A cross-sectional quantitative research design, collects data from many different individuals at a single point in time. Present study will be using self-report questionnaires to collect data on Cognitive emotional regulation, coping styles and resilience in middle age adults in India.

2.4. Participants

Participants for this study includes middle age adults between the age of 40 – 65 years from various job sectors as well as from Urban, Sub-urban and rural sector. Participants include individuals who are currently working and non-working.

2.5. Sample

The sample consisted of 214 participants of which 104 Males and 110 Females between the ages 40-65. The Inclusion criteria included Middle Aged adults (40-65 years) from various settings. The Exclusion Criteria : Individuals with diagnosed mental health disorders or cognitive impairments that might affect their coping strategies, people under the influence of heavy substances and individuals facing/faced with recent emotionally traumatic event.

2.6. Tool description:

The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) is a self-report instrument designed to assess individual differences in cognitive emotional regulation strategies Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven (2001) The CERQ consists of 36 items divided into nine subscales, each representing a specific cognitive strategy used to manage emotions. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale.The Brief COPE Inventory is a condensed version of the original COPE inventory, created by Charles Carver (1997). It is a self-assessment tool with 28 items that measure 14 different coping strategies, each represented by two items. These strategies are divided into problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping. Each item is scored on a 4-point Likert scale. The Resilience Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ-8) is a short and simple tool used to measure how well someone bounces back from challenges. As the name suggests, the RAQ-8 has 8 questions that help assess a person's ability to cope with difficulties.

2.7. Procedure

The objective of such diverse sampling was achieved by enrolling participants through different combinations of online, community centers, and workforce linkages. They completed a structured questionnaire, online assessing their cognitive emotional regulation and coping style and resilience. Participants were presented with informed consent form prior to the survey, that outlined the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation in this study, allowing non consenting participants to withdraw without any consequences. The collected data were then analysed using SPSS software and appropriate statistical methods to explore the relationship among the three variables.

2.8. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample which provided an overview of the participants gender, place of residence, age, current employment status. Correlation analysis, specifically Pearson's correlation was utilized to examine the relationship between the three variables. To compare means between males and females Independent T-test was used.

2.9. Variables

The dependent variable here are Cognitive Emotional Regulation, Coping style and Resilience and the independent variable being Gender (Male vs. Female).

3. Results and discussion

The aim of the study is to examine the cognitive emotional regulation strategies, coping styles, and resilience levels among middle-aged adults.

Table 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Sample Characteristics	n	% / *M, SD*
Gender		
Male	104	48.6%
Female	110	51.4%
Place of residence		
Urban	137	64.0%
Sub-urban	42	19.6%
rural	35	16.4%
Are you currently employed?		
Yes	164	76.6%
No	50	23.4%

Note. N = 214

Islam, M.R. (2018) states that, a random of size n>30 drawn from an infinite population, the sample mean approaches a normal distribution. This study has 214 sample size which is >30 based on Central Limit Theorem, so for testing the correlation of the variables parametric test will be performed.

Table 2 Correlation: Cognitive Emotional Reg., Coping Style and Resilience

	Variables	n	M	SD	1	2	3
1.	Cognitive Emotional Reg.	214	50.79	4.70	-		
2.	Resilience	214	30.60	9.49	0.063	-	
3.	Coping Style	214	73.24	11.40	-.404*	.299*	-

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

- Ho1: There is no significant correlation between Resilience and Cognitive Emotional Regulation

The correlation analysis shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient between Resilience and Cognitive Emotional Regulation, with a p-value of 0.063. Since the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.01, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no statistically significant correlation between Resilience and Cognitive Emotional Regulation. In other words, an individual's resilience level does not seem to be directly associated with their cognitive emotional regulation strategies.

- Ho2: There is no Significant Correlation between Resilience and Coping style

The correlation analysis shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient between Resilience and Coping style is 0.299, with a p-value less than 0.01. Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between Resilience and Coping style.

- Ho3: There is no Significant Correlation between Coping style and Cognitive emotional regulation

The correlation analysis shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient between Coping style and Cognitive emotional regulation is -0.404, with a p-value less than 0.01. Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between Coping style and Cognitive emotional regulation.

Table 3 Independent T-test of cognitive emotional regulation, resilience and coping styles

	Variables	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
1..	Cognitive Emotional Reg	Male	104	50.35	9.122	-.664	.508
		Female	110	51.21	9.854		
2.	Resilience	Male	104	30.64	4.942	.125	.901
		Female	110	30.56	4.496		
3.	Coping Style	Male	104	72.51	12.193	-.909	.365
		Female	110	73.93	10.610		

Note. significant level at .05 (2-tailed).

- Ho4: There is no significant difference between the mentioned variables Resilience, Cognitive Emotional Regulation, Coping style amongst males and females.

The independent samples t-test results show that the differences in mean values between males and females for Resilience (p=0.901), Cognitive Emotional Regulation (p=0.508), and Coping style (p=0.365) are not statistically significant. Since the p-values for all three variables are greater than the significance level of 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is no significant difference in Resilience, Cognitive Emotional Regulation, and Coping styles between males and females in the sample.

4. Conclusion

The study explored the relationships between resilience, cognitive emotional regulation, and coping strategies among 214 middle-aged adults. The findings revealed no significant correlation between resilience and cognitive emotional

regulation (r=0.063, p>0.01), suggesting these constructs operate independently. However, a significant positive correlation was found between resilience and coping style (r=0.299, p<0.01), indicating that individuals with higher resilience tend to employ more adaptive coping mechanisms. Interestingly, a significant negative correlation emerged between coping style and cognitive emotional regulation (r=-0.404, p<0.01), suggesting that individuals who utilize more adaptive coping strategies may rely less on certain cognitive emotional regulation strategies. Furthermore, the study found no significant gender differences in any of the measured variables, indicating that both males and females exhibit similar patterns in resilience, cognitive emotional regulation, and coping strategies.

4.1. Implications

- This study shows how important it is for middle-aged adults to build resilience and use healthy coping strategies to maintain their emotional well-being.
- Instead of focusing only on how people regulate their emotions, mental health professionals can create programs that strengthen coping skills.
- Since no major gender differences were found, support programs can be designed to benefit both men and women equally.

Limitations

The study relies on self-report measures which could introduce social desirability bias. Participants may have altered their responses to align with socially acceptable norms. The limited sample size of 214 participants which reduces the generalizability of the findings of this study.

Recommendations for Future Research

- To increase representativeness, future research could employ random or stratified sampling techniques, rather than convenience sampling, which would allow for a more accurate representation of middle-aged adults as a whole.
- A longitudinal design could provide insight into how cognitive emotional regulation, coping style, and resilience develop and change over time in middle-aged adults

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The research was done in order of fulfilment for the award of Master degree (M. Sc.) in Counselling Psychology of Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous) affiliated to Bengaluru North University, the results of the research were not affected by the organization.

Statement of informed consent

Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures, with guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

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