



Relationship between Early Maladaptive Schemas and Coping Styles with Stress

Setareh Babajani^{1*}, Nahid Akrami², Ali Farahani³

¹MS in Psychology, University of Isfahan, Iran

²Faculty Member, University of Isfahan, Iran

³PhD student, University of Isfahan, Iran

*Corresponding author's e-mail: farahani152000@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: This study aimed to investigate the relation between early maladaptive schemas and checking strategies, has examined 150 women aged between 20 to 30 years. Young schemas questionnaire and coping styles questionnaire are used for collecting information, also Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression are used for analyzing data. Findings showed that there is a significant negative correlation between abandonment, social isolation, Approval-seeking/ Recognition-seeking, emotional deprivation, subjugation, defectiveness, failure schemas, and problem-focused coping styles, and there is a positive significant correlation between types of schemas and emotion-focused coping styles. Also there is a significant negative correlation between punitiveness schemas and avoidant coping. According to findings of multiple regressions, the only variable which had the predictive power of problem-focused coping styles was defectiveness schema, vulnerability to harm and illness, punitiveness and unrelenting standards schemas have significant role in predicting emotion-focused style, and finally, only the unrelenting standards schema have an affective role in avoidance style predictive model.

Key words: Early maladaptive schemas, Coping Styles

ORIGINAL ARTICLE
Received 02 Sep. 2014
Accepted 31 Oct. 2014

INTRODUCTION

Young, by introducing concept of early maladaptive schema, has presented a new viewpoint for examining etiology and offering a medical model for many mental disorders for times of after childhood. According to this theory, based on the effects of childhood early experience in relation with parents, belief systems are gradually formed in person's mind that remains latent in person's mind and activated some of its events during the life. Because of this activation, cognitive, emotional, motivational, behavioral, and physiological symptoms will appear [1].

Young et.al, believe that human has five basic needs including secure attachment to others (need for security, stability, love, and acceptance); autonomy, competence and identity; and freedom to express valid needs and emotions; spontaneity and play; realistic limits and self-control. If these five needs are not met well, maladaptive schemas will form in five areas of child's mind which can underlie many mental and emotional disorders [2]. Five general areas that all schemas include in them are: disconnection and rejection, impaired autonomy and performance, impaired limits, other directedness, over vigilance/inhibition.

Under these five areas, Young has identified eighteen early maladaptive schemas which each of these schemas alone or with some other schema can cause more or less deep psychological problems in each person and with formation each one or a combination of them, people will face with them via three styles: surrender, avoidance, and overcompensation. In confrontation with each schema, each person may choose each of these styles and according to Young opinion; individual's temperament is the best predictor for choosing styles [1]. Early maladaptive schemas are considered as central and basic goal in curing long-time personality disorders and personality problems [3]. Schema-based treatment is used by the objective to reduce effects of early maladaptive schemas and to replace negative coping responses and schema moods by healthier ways [4].

In confrontation with stressful situation, each person will experience hidden and destructive emotions. Mental pressures are effective factors in forming disorders and all existing disorders are, in some ways, related with stress [5]. On the one hand, people in these situations will use coping strategies. As Lazarus and Folkman [6] stated, stress will happen when environmental demands exceed the adaptive resources and coping strategies are used as a mechanism for enhancing compromise between individual and environment or are used for handling stressful events. In this regard, it is assumed that personality acts as basic determinant of different coping strategies in different people [7]. Investigating the role of personality variables in mental health and strategies coping with stress has a long history [8], and many studies have found a significant relation between personality traits and coping strategies [8,9,10].

On the other hand, according to schema model, cognitive and emotional impression of situations and especially of experienced emotions in each situation is extensively resulted from formed schemas in individuals. As mentioned earlier, some studies are conducted about relation between personality traits and confrontation, but no study has been done about relation between coping strategies and early maladaptive schemas, as one of the effective theory relevant to personality domain. Now, there is a question are early maladaptive schemas effective factors in choosing strategies for coping with stress? Or can we find any relation between these two factors? If so, which schema has a more important role in predicting peoples' coping strategies?

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research project is a correlation one and Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression are used for data analysis. Statistical universe is all women ranged between 20 and 30 years from Isfahan. Project sample includes 150 people which are chosen by simple random sampling and have fulfilled mentioned questionnaires:

Coping inventory for stressful situations (CISS): It has made by Endler and Parker [11]. It has 48 questions and responses are set in Likert rating scale, and finally individual's ruling style is identified based on the scores obtained in the exam: avoidance coping, emotion-focused, and problem-focused coping styles. Endler and Parker [11] obtained reliability for problem-based, emotion-based and avoidance style in boy's sample for .92, .82, .85 respectively, and for girl's sample are .90, .85, .82 respectively Jafar nejed (9). Stability coefficient for problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance styles obtained .83, .80, .70 respectively.

Schema questionnaire (short form): This questionnaire is made by Young [12]. It has 90 maters which measure 18 early maladaptive schemas. Each mater is scored by 6 degree likert scale. So, scores of this questionnaire are obtained by summing scores of each scale maters. In other hand, each scale has 5 options which measure kind of early schemas. High score states high degree of early maladaptive schemas in subject. Yousefi et al. [13] examined stability and reliability of the questionnaire on a sample of 579 person which its validity by Cronbach's alpha and split half are in whole sample [.91, .86], in girls [.87, .84], and in boys (.84, .81) respectively. They got Cronbach's alpha for all options more than .81, and for whole questionnaire .91.

RESULTS

To examine hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression have been used.

Hypothesis: There is a significant relation between all kind of schemas and coping styles. According to findings of table 1, there is a significant negative relation between abandonment ($r = -.268$), social isolation ($r = -.352$), dependency ($r = -.301$), approval-seeking/ Recognition-seeking ($r = -.186$), emotional privation ($r = -.185$), subjugation ($r = -.208$), defectiveness ($r = -.381$), failure ($r = -.236$), misbehavior/ insufficient self-control ($r = -.355$) and problem-focused coping style, and the more intensive is mentioned schema, the less problem-focused coping style will be used and vice versa. Also, based on the obtained results from correlation coefficient in Table 1, there is a positive significant relation between all kind of schemas and emotion-based coping styles, and high level of these schemas in individual cause to more use of emotion-focused coping style and vice versa.

Table 1. Results of Pearson correlation coefficient about relation between all kind of schemas and coping styles

Schemas	Coping styles		
	Problem-based	Emotion-based	Avoidance
Abandonment	-.268**	.468**	-.033
Social isolation	-.352**	.479**	-.100
Negativity/Pessimism	-.015	.207*	.123
Emotional inhibition	-.110	.191*	-.107
Dependence	-.301**	.345**	-.066
Approval-seeking/ Recognition-seeking	-.186*	.422**	-.054
Emotional Deprivation	-.185*	.431**	-.139
Vulnerability to Harm and Illness	-.115	.546**	-.032
Enmeshment	-.167	.448**	-.048
Subjugation	-.208*	.458**	-.121
Unrelenting Standard	.041	.439**	-.136
Punitiveness	-.131	.453**	-.185*
Defectiveness	-.381**	.433**	-.027
Mistrust/Abuse	-.214*	.378**	-.129
Failure	-.236**	.312**	-.027
Self-sacrifice	-.010	.296**	-.038
Entitlement/Grandiosity	-.036	.354**	-.076
Insufficient Self-control/Self-discipline	-.355**	.395**	.017

** Significant in 0.01; *significant in 0.05

Finally, in level of .05, there is a negative significant relation between punitiveness schema and avoidant coping ($r = -.185$), and high level of this schema in sample reduces the use of avoidant coping style and vice versa. After reviewing a simple relation between the types of schemas, in this section, multiple regressions in step to

step method is used to determine the most predictive schemas in the field of predicting coping styles, and results are presented in the following table:

1) Summary results of multiple regressions to predict problem-focused coping style of the schemas

Results of Table 2 show that, the calculated value of F for regression analysis is significant ($p < .05$). So, the performed regression equation is statistically significant. Also, this table shows step to step regression coefficients. Based on the results of regression in the only presented step, defectiveness schema enters into the equation and it explains 13.7% of variance of problem-focused coping style. According to beta standard coefficient, with each unit change in the variance of defectiveness schema in the amount of $-.37$, a significant change can be made in the variance of problem-focused coping style. Other schemas don't have statistically significant role in the presented model.

Table 2. The regression coefficients of variables entered in predicting problem-focused coping style of types of schemas

Model	Variable	Nonstandard coefficient		Standard coefficients	t-value	Significance level
		B	Standard deviation	Beta		
1	Fixed	64.416	2.489		25.880	.000
	Defectiveness	-.951	.241	-.370	-3.942	.000
F	Sig.		R		R ²	
15.536	.000 ^a		.370 ^a		.137	

2) Summary results of multiple regressions in predicting emotion-focused coping style of types of schemas

Findings of Table 3 show that calculated value of F for regression analysis is significant ($p < .05$). So, the performed regression equation is statistically significant. Also, this table shows step to step regression coefficient. Based on the results of regression in presented step, defectiveness schema enters into the equation and it explains 30.9% of emotion-focused coping style. Based on the Beta standard coefficient, with each unit change in the variance of defectiveness schema in the amount of $.556\%$, it will create a significant change in emotion-focused coping style. In the second step, by adding punitiveness schema the value of variance will increase to 42.5% , and in the third step by adding unrelenting standards schema this value will increase to 45.7% . Other schemas don't have statistically significant role in presented model.

Table 3. Regression coefficients of entered variables in predicting emotion-focused coping style of types of schemas

Model	Variable	Nonstandard coefficient		Standard coefficients	t-value	Significance level
		B	Standard deviation	Beta		
1	Fixed	36.027	2.205		16.342	.000
	Vulnerability to Harm and Illness	1.218	.185	.556	6.580	.000
2	Fixed	27.130	2.859		9.490	.000
	Vulnerability to Harm and Illness	.860	.188	.392	4.567	.000
3	Punitiveness	.938	.213	.378	4.401	.000
	Fixed	23.305	3.225		7.227	.000
3	Vulnerability to Harm and Illness	.761	.189	.347	4.037	.000
	Punitiveness	.740	.224	.298	3.296	.001
F	Unrelenting standards	.439	.185	.209	2.371	.020
	Sig.		R		R ²	
43.292	.000 ^a		.556 ^a		.309	
35.433	.000 ^b		.652 ^b		.425	
26.633	.000 ^c		.676 ^c		.457	

3) Summary results of multiple regression in predicting avoidance coping style from types of schemas

Findings of Table 4 show that, calculated value of F for regression analysis is significant ($p < .05$). So, the equation of performed regression is statistically significant. Also, this table shows step to step regression coefficients. According to regression results, in only presented step, unrelenting standards schema enters into the equation and it explains 5.2% of avoidance coping style variance. Based on Beta standard coefficient, with each unit change in unrelenting standard schema in amount of $-.228$, it creates a significant change in avoidance coping style Variance. Other schemas don't have significant role in presented model.

Table 4. Regression coefficients of entered variables in predicting avoidance coping style from types of schemas

Model	Variable	Nonstandard coefficients		Standard coefficient	t-value	Significant level
		B	Standard deviation	Beta		
	Fixed	54.371	3.390		16.037	.000
	Unrelenting standards	-.442	.189	-.228	-2.346	.021
F	Sig.		R		R ²	
5.503	.021 ^a		.228 ^a		.052	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Considering research question about whether there is a relation between maladaptive schemas and coping styles, results show a significant relation between these two components. So, there is a negative relation between abandonment, social isolation, approval-seeking/ recognition-seeking, emotional deprivation, subjugation, defectiveness, failure, and coping style, namely people who have these kinds of schemas, have less use of problem-focused coping style while confronting with stimulating stress situation, and negative emotion resulting from situation prevents people to have logical reaction in solving problem. This finding is consistent with Young theory [1] which stated, when each of these schemas are considerable in a person and has a high score, it can have an undesirable effect on type of thinking and experienced emotion in stimulating stress situation, and will involve person in emotional derangement. So, uniting maladaptive schemas with disability of using problem focused coping style in confrontation with difficult situations can be explained and is expected to be used by some people whom extreme schemas haven't formed in them.

According to Young et al. [1], when a person has each of 18 schemas or a combination of them, it may have problem in social, interpersonal, and personal performance fields of life. Considering other parts of results, this matter is verifiable, since a positive significant relation is obtained between types of schemas and emotion-focused coping style, namely each schema causes a person in confrontation with a distressing and stressful situation reacts with responses based on its emotions. Also, the only schema which has a significant relation with avoidance coping style is punitiveness schema which is negatively related with avoidance coping style, namely if an individual has punitiveness schema, will use more of this style.

Based on results of multiple regression, The only variable which had ability for predicting problem-focused coping style was defectiveness schema, and vulnerability to harm and illness, punitiveness, and unrelenting standards have significant role in predicting emotion-focused coping style, finally in avoidance style predicting model, only the unrelenting standards schema has a significant role. In explaining these findings we can conclude that existence of unrelenting standards which provoke to person's perfectionism, cause that since of fear of probable failure, the person prevents stressful situation.

Findings are consistent with results of researches [8, 9, 10] and theories which emphasize on relation between coping style and personality and have found a significant relation between components and personality characteristics and types of styles, as Endler and Parker [7] stated that personality act as main determinant of coping strategy in different individuals.

Based on findings, especially considering relation between schemas and problem-focused and emotion-focused coping style, negative and disturbing effect of schemas in other part of individuals' performance (coping style) verify and more emphasize on importance of identifying early maladaptive schemas and position of therapeutic schema. At the end, since the sample includes just women, care should be considered in generalizing findings and it proposed that similar studies should be done on men.

REFERENCES

1. Young, J. E., Klosko, J. & Weishaar, M. E. 2003. Schema therapy: A practitioner guide. NewYork. Guilford.
2. Wang, C., E., A., Halvorsen, M., Eisemann, M., & Waterloo, K. 2010. Stability of dysfunctional attitudes and early maladaptive schemas: A year follow-up study of clinically depressed subjects. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 41, 389-396.
3. Thimm, J.C. 2010. Personality and EMSs: A five-factor model perspective. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 41, 373-380.
4. Renner, F., Van Goor, M., Huibers, M., Arntz, A., Butz, B. & Bernstein, D. 2013. Short-term group schema cognitive-behavioral therapy for young adults with personality disorders and personality with changes in symptomatic distress, schemas, schema modes and coping styles. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, (51), 487- 492.
5. Shamlou, S. 1999. Mental health. Tehran: Roshd Publisher. [Persian]
6. Lazarus R.S., & Folkman S. 1984. Coping and adaption. In Gentry W. D. (Ed). *Handbook of Behavioral Medicine*. Gilford press.
7. Endler, N., & Parker, I.D.A. 1996. Multi- dimensional assessment of coping critical evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 55, 844-854.
8. Penley, J. A., & Tomaka, J. 2002. Associations among the Big five, emotional responses, and coping with acute stress. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 32, 1215-1228.
9. Jafarnejad, P. 2003. Investigating relation of five big factors, coping style and psychological health of BA student of University. MA Thesis, Tarbiat Moallem University, Tehran [Persian].
10. Uehara, T., Kakudo, K., sakado, M., Sato, T. & Someya, T. 1999. Relationship between stress coping and personality in patients with major depressive disorder. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 68 (1), 26-30.
11. Endler, N.D., & Parker, J.D.A. 1990. Multidimensional assessment of coping: A critical evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(5): 844-854.
12. Young, J. E. 1990. *Cognitive therapy for personality disorders*. Sarasota, FL: Prothesed resources Press.

13. Yousefi, N., Etemadi O., Bahrami, F., Fatehi zadeh, M. & Bashlideh, K. 1999. Investigating psychometrics indexes of early maladaptive schemas questionnaire. Doctoral Thesis in family consultation. University of Isfahan [Persian].