



Coping Strategies Of Female Football Players

¹Dr. Pallob Kumar Mondal, ²Assistant Professor

¹State Institute of Physical Education for Women, Hastings House, Kolkata, India

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to assess stress coping strategy of female football players.

Methodology: A total of thirty-one (N=31) state level female football players from different clubs in West Bengal were selected as the subjects of the study. The age range of subjects were from 18-22 years.

Criterion Measured: The measured criterion were as personal data: age (years), height (cm) and weight (kg); and stress coping strategy was measured by 1. Problem-focused coping strategy: a) behavioral-approach coping, b) cognitive-approach coping and c) cognitive-behavioral coping and 2. Emotion-focused coping strategy: a) behavioral avoidance coping b) cognitive avoidance coping. **Results:** Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis and interpretation of the study. The results of the data of state level female football players were as personal data: height (152.77 ± 4.0 cm), body weight (49.81 ± 4.4 kg), and coping strategy: behavioral-approach coping (24.70 ± 5.0); cognitive-approach coping (11.25 ± 3.5); cognitive-behavioral approach coping (17.20 ± 4.0). On the other hand, behavioral-avoidance coping and cognitive-avoidance coping was (20.4 ± 4.6) and (10.6 ± 3.7) respectively. According to norm of Srivastava, female football players performed lower level of behavioural-approach coping strategy but moderate level of cognitive-approach coping and cognitive-behavioral approach coping strategies. However, they manage their stress by using avoidance coping strategy efficiently as the avoidance-behavioral as well as avoidance-cognitive coping scores were belongs to the category of efficient level of the norm (Srivastava, 2001). **Conclusion:** The study revealed that female football players manage their specific external and/or internal stress or physical as well as psychological stress by the efforts of cognitive and behavioural avoidance coping mechanism i.e., they follow emotion-focused coping mechanism to deal with stressful situation. However, sometimes they follow problem-focused coping mechanism to manage stressful situation.

Key Words: Stress, Coping strategies, Female football players

Introduction: Sports is an unparalleled way to integrate physical and psychological aspects of human being to develop the human society in a better way in the world (Martín-Rodríguez et al., 2024). Football is one of the most exciting and widespread sports, played by amateurs as well as professionals players by which national and international integration among the countries takes place. Earlier period, this fabulous or charming game was not conducted in an organised way but after 1864 the game became organised due to the establishment of the English Football Association (FA) (Okholm Kryger et al., 2022). At that time, the game was arranged only for male participant in an organised way. However, in the year 1892, in Scotland, the first female officially recorded football match was organised. After that, nearly hundred years of women football history, not a single match was arranged for female by the association. In the year 1991, FIFA organised Women's World Cup for the first time (Williams, 2011) and also the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the supreme authority of football has taken eleven important developmental goals to make football globally, in which eighth goal was for the encouragement and development of female football. In this regard, FIFA has committed to invest a one billion USD for the development and acceleration of women football during the period of 2020-2022 (FIFA, 2020). In recent years, the female football has gained its momentum and get popularity (UEFA 2017a) by the quality of play and with the support of media coverage (McCall et al., 2022).

Mahmoud, (2023) stated that "Football is not merely a game; it is a captivating interplay of physical prowess and psychological intricacies". Football players faces different types of stressors in personal as well

as professional life. They faces some stressors in personal life like family problem, pear pressure, financial crisis, health hazards etc. and also they faces some professional stressors in their sporting field like sports performance, coaching pattern, team-mates behaviour and spectator's expectations (Marwat et al., 2023). Any competition or regular intense physical activity undergo a certain level of challenging situation which can enhance cognitive functions, develop mental strength, and reduce the symptoms of anxiety and depression and tackle the stimulation of intense responses by the active participant (Alix-Sy et al., 2008).

Stress is the by-product of internal and external demands which is elicited by numerous psycho-physiological factors like need, fear, anxiety, depression, tension etc. To control these psycho-physiological factors we need to follow some coping mechanism strategy. Indeed, stress is quite natural to the living being in the universe in their daily living activities. So, to survive in the world and live healthy and spend quality time, we need to manage these natural stress. Coping is a psychological process which is usually a way to deal with stress, or "cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In recent years, researchers are interested to deal with stress and coping strategies in adult life, aging (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and sports arena. Stress and coping are the cause and effect relationship, if coping is ineffective then stress could be damaged physical and psychological characteristics like physical fitness, morale character social functioning etc. of human being and again, if coping is effective then the stress related to physical as well as psychological is likely to remain under control (Lazarus, 2006). In the play filed, players use different pattern of coping mechanism to overcome the stressors directly or indirectly. In this regard, they try to change their behavioural pattern, avoiding the situation, solving the problem, knowledge gathering, self-reliance and seeking help etc. to manage the stressful situation (Marwat et al., 2023).

Coping strategies divided into two groups, according to its function i) problem-focused and ii) emotion-focused coping strategies (Lazarus, 2006). The problem-focused or approach coping strategy deals with the problem solving or active attempts to resolve the stressor i.e., when we are adopting a strategy to deal with stressor directly, then we are using the problem-focused coping strategy e.g., planning, problem-solving, or removing the stressor (Carroll, 2013). The problem-focused coping has three sub-categories a) behavioural-approach coping b) cognitive-approach coping and c) cognitive-behavioral approach coping. Problem-focused or approach coping strategy is concerned with the stressor directly, so it is associated with less stress (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978) and illness (Blake & Vandiver, 1988). This type of coping strategies is a combination of therapeutic as well as interpersonal efforts to acquired skills and foster behaviour to modify the stressor's reality (Cooper et al., 2016). This type of coping strategies is extensively used in that situation where people thinks that the situation could be managed by direct interference (Cowburn & Foster, 2018).

The emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategy deals with the emotional response to the stressor or reducing emotion and tension of a stressor (Roth & Cohen, 1986; Moos et al., 1990). In general, people use emotion-focused coping strategy when there is nothing to modify harmful, threatening, or challenging environmental conditions. The strategy has two sub-categories a) behavioural-avoidance coping and b) cognitive-avoidance coping. The emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategies associated with more stress (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978) and illness (Blake & Vandiver, 1988) as this type of coping does not affect the cause of the stressor directly (Flournoy & Browne, 2018). The emotion-focused coping strategy is to maintain hope and optimism, to deny both fact and implication, to refuse to acknowledge the worst, to act as if what happened did not matter, and so on. The nature and functions of both the coping strategies in respect to stress management are not same. However, the ultimate goal of both the coping strategy is to manage stress in a better way with the use of cognitive and behavioural efforts (Gentry & Kobasa, 1984).

Purpose of the study: The study was conducted to observe stress coping strategies of female football players.

Materials and Methods: The study was conducted on thirty-one state level female (N=31) football players, selected from the various football clubs in West Bengal. The purposive sampling method was used to select the subjects for this study. The age ranged of the players were between 18 to 22 years.

Psychological trait: Psychological trait was measured by coping strategies (Srivastava, 2001).

Table– 1: Descriptions of Coping Strategies of female football Players

Coping Strategies	Sub-Scales	Mean	±SD
Approach Coping Strategies	Behavioral-Approach Coping	24.70	5.0
	Cognitive Approach Coping	11.25	3.5

(Problem Focused Coping)	Cognitive-Behavioral Approach Coping	17.20	4.0
Avoidance Coping Strategies (Emotion-Focused Coping)	Behavioral-Avoidance coping	20.4	4.6
	Cognitive-Avoidance coping	10.6	3.7

Table–1 represents the descriptive statistics (mean $\pm$ SD) of different dimensions of problem-focused or approach coping and emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategy of female football players. The mean and SD values were for behavioral-approach coping: 24.7 $\pm$ 5.0, cognitive-approach coping: 11.2 $\pm$ 3.5 and cognitive-behavioural coping: 17.2 $\pm$ 4.0. On the other hand, the mean and SD values were for behavioral-avoidance coping: 20.4 $\pm$ 4.6, and cognitive-avoidance coping: 10.6 $\pm$ 3.7 respectively of female football players.

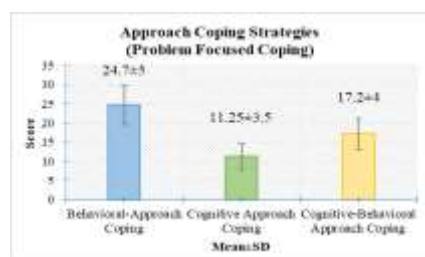


Fig-1: Sub-Scales of Problem-focused or Approach Coping Strategies

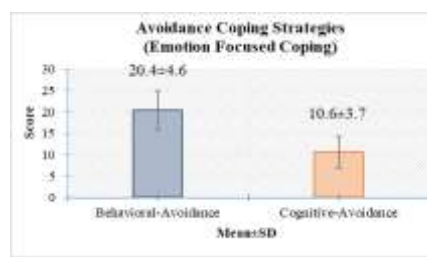


Fig-2: Sub-Scales of Emotion-focused or Avoidance Coping Strategies

Fig-1 and 2 shows the problem-focused or approach coping strategy with their sub-category i.e., behavioural-approach, cognitive-approach and cognitive-behavioural approach and emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategy with their sub-category i.e., behavioural-avoidance and cognitive-avoidance coping strategy.

Table– 2: Percentage of Players belongs to the respective category of Approach Coping Norm*

Approach (Problem-Focused) Coping Strategies	Level of Coping		
	Low/Deficient	Moderate	High/Efficient
Behavioural Approach Coping (% of female football Player)	0-29 (74.19%)	30-45 (25.81%)	46-60 (0%)
Cognitive Approach Coping (% of female football Player)	0-11 (61.29%)	12-18 (32.26%)	19-24 (6.45%)
Cognitive-Behavioural Approach Coping (% of female football Player)	0-15 (35.48%)	16-24 (61.29%)	25-32 (3.23%)

***Norm: Srivastava, 2001**

Table–2 represents the percentage of players belongs to the respective category of approach coping norm. In behavioural-approach coping strategy, the majority percentage i.e., 74.19% of players belongs to the low or deficient level of coping mechanism, however a remarkable percentage i.e., 25.81% of players belongs to the moderate level of coping style category and nothing in the high or efficient level of coping mechanism.

In cognitive-approach coping strategy, the majority percentage i.e., 61.29% of players belongs to the low or deficient level of coping mechanism however a remarkable percentage i.e., 32.26% of players belongs to the moderate level of coping style category and negligible percentage 6.25% of players in the high or efficient level of coping mechanism.

In cognitive-behavioural approach coping strategy, the majority percentage i.e., 61.29% of players belongs to the moderate level of coping mechanism, however a remarkable percentage i.e., 35.48% of players belongs to the low or deficient level of coping style category and negligible percentage 3.23% of players in the high or efficient level of coping mechanism.

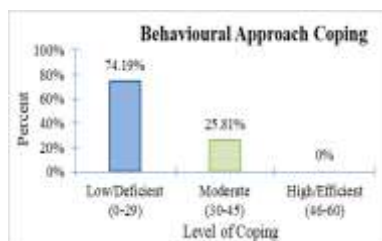


Fig-3: Percentage of Players belongs to respective category of Behavioural-Approach coping norm

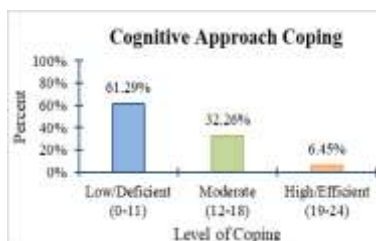


Fig-4: Percentage of Players belongs to respective category of Cognitive-Approach coping norm

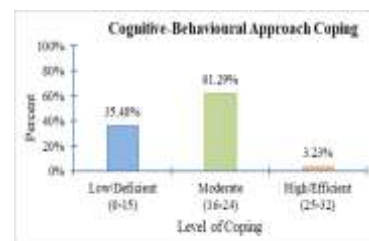


Fig-5: Percentage of Players belongs to respective category of Cognitive-Behavioural Approach coping norm

Fig-3, 4 and 5 shows the percentage of players belongs to the respective category of problem-focused or approach coping norm (Srivastava, 2001).

Table- 3: Percentage of Players belongs to the respective category of Avoidance Coping Norm*

Avoidance (Emotion-Focused) Coping Strategies	Level of Coping		
	Low/Efficient	Moderate	High/Deficient
Behavioural Avoidance (% of female football Player)	0-27 (93.55%)	28-42 (6.45%)	43-56 (0%)
Cognitive Avoidance (% of female football Player)	(0-13) (77.42%)	14-21 (22.58%)	22-28 (0%)

***Norm: Srivastava, 2001**

Table-3 represents the percentage of players belongs to the respective category of avoidance coping norm. In behavioural-avoidance coping strategy, the majority percentage i.e., 93.55% of players belongs to the low or efficient level of avoidance coping mechanism however negligible percentage i.e., 6.45% of players belongs to the moderate level of avoidance coping style category and nothing in the high or deficient level of coping mechanism.

In cognitive-avoidance coping strategy, the majority percentage i.e., 77.42% of players belongs to the low or efficient level of coping mechanism however a remarkable percentage i.e., 22.58% of players belongs to the moderate level of coping style category and nothing in the high or deficient level of coping mechanism.

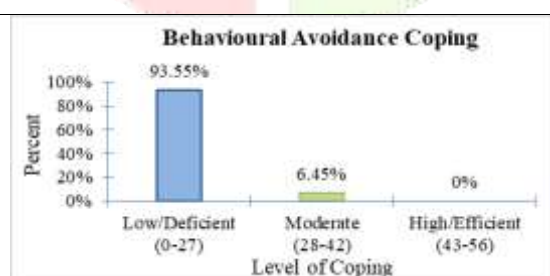


Fig-6: Percentage of Players belongs to respective category of Behavioural-Avoidance coping norm

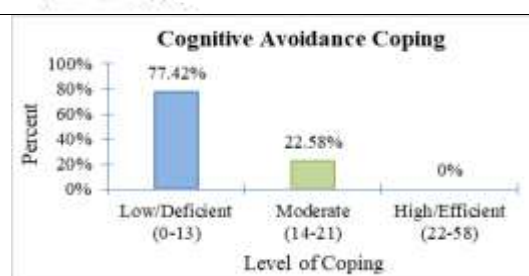


Fig-7: Percentage of Players belongs to respective category of Cognitive-Avoidance coping norm

Fig-6 and 7 shows the percentage of players belongs to the respective category of emotion-focused or avoidance coping norm (Srivastava, 2001).

Psychologists believe that the general nature of problem-focused or approach coping is associated with lower stress levels and better mental health (Penley et al., 2002) and emotion-focused coping is associated with more risk for stress-related illnesses (e.g. heart disease) (Chiavarino et al., 2012). Several studies have revealed that high-hardy individuals engage in problem-focused or approach coping strategy for the purpose of transforming stressful situations into the comfortable situations. In contrast, low-hardy individuals tend to engage in emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategies such as cognitive and behavioural disengagement

and denial to deal with a stressful situation (Gentry & Kobasa, 1984). Chiavarino et al., (2012) stated that female use emotion-focused coping strategy whereas male use more problem-focused coping strategy to manage the stressful situations. Folkman & Lazarus (1980) Stated that students use both problem-focused coping as well as emotion-focused coping strategy to overcome the exam stress. They use problem-focused or approach coping strategy to eliminate stressor directly by changing their behaviour or active participation in the preparation phase of school exam. Conversely, they use their emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategy to manage the stress regarding rank or grades in the exam.

In this study, it is seen that female football players use both problem-focused or approach coping as well as emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategy to manage the stressor raised in the practice session or competition phase. However, it was seen that they primarily follow the emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategy to manage the stress.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the results and findings of the study the following conclusion was drawn.

The female football players' mainly use emotion-focused or avoidance coping strategies to overcome the stressful situations raised in their practice session or competition phase. However, in certain conditions they use problem-focused or approach coping strategies to handle the situation effectively.

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