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PGDT Trainees' Coping Styles, Locus of Control and Sex as Predictor of Psychological Wellbeing: Evidence from Dilla University Institute of Education and Behavioral Sciences PGDT Trainees

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Abstract

Educational environments represent a critical context for investigating teachers' psychological characteristics, as these factors influence both professional development and instructional effectiveness. The purpose of the study is to explore associations among locus of control, coping strategies, gender, and psychological well-being among Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) trainees at Dilla University. A correlational research design was employed to address the research objectives. The target population comprised all regular and summer PGDT trainees enrolled in the Institute of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Dilla University. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, 209 participants were selected to ensure adequate representation. Data were gathered through three standardized instruments: the Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale, the Locus of Control Scale, and the Coping Styles Scale. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 23 and included descriptive measures (mean and standard deviation) as well as inferential techniques such as Pearson's product–moment correlation, independent-samples t-test, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The findings shown that locus-of-control was significantly and negatively compared to overall psychological well-being and its six components—self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth ($p < .05$). In contrast, problem-focused coping and its related dimensions demonstrated a significant positive association with psychological well-being ($p < .01$). Avoidant coping strategies showed a significant negative relationship with overall well-being and its sub-dimensions ($p < .01$). Emotion-focused coping did not exhibit a statistically significant association with overall psychological well-being or most of its dimensions ($p > .05$), except for autonomy and environmental mastery, where significant relationships were observed ($p < .05$). Overall, the findings suggest that coping strategies and locus of control orientation play an important role in shaping psychological well-being among university trainees. Specifically, problem-focused coping emerged as a positive predictor of well-being, whereas avoidant coping patterns and an external locus of control functioned as negative predictors. These results carry important implications for understanding the psychological preparedness of teacher trainees and their prospective professional engagement in the teaching career.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Psychological well-being has been the subject of wide-ranging empirical studies and theoretical discussions (Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002). However, there is still no universally agreed definition of the concept. In recent decades, research interest in well-being has expanded considerably (Huppert, 2009; Ryff & Singer, 1998). According to Huppert (2009), psychological well-being refers to how well life is going, characterized by both positive feelings and effective functioning. This suggests that individuals with sound psychological health are typically satisfied with life, able to handle challenges, experience happiness, and maintain supportive social connections.

In line with this, Edwards (2005) describes psychological well-being as a state of positive mental health, while Ryff (1989) conceptualizes it as a multidimensional construct shaped by personality traits, emotional regulation, identity, and lived experiences (Helson & Srivastava, 2001). It embodies living a purposeful, meaningful, and vital life (Ryff, 1989), realizing one's potential (Insel & Roth, 2006, cited in Kibret, 2015), and developing optimally through personal choices and lifestyle (Babao & Moscoso, 2008). People who exhibit these attributes are therefore considered too well in their psychological well-being. Research has further shown that well-being tends to increase across age, conscientiousness, education, and extroversion, while it decreases across neurotic tendencies (Keyes, Schmotkin, & Ryff, 2002).

Despite numerous investigations, scholars continue to emphasize that psychological well-being is complex and multidimensional, with its components still debated (Keyes *et al*., 2002; Ryff, 1989b; Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002). A significant shift in the literature was introduced by Ryff (1989), who moved from subjective accounts toward an objective approach. Her framework provided the broadly accepted model is wellbeing (Ryff, 1989b; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). This model consists of six elements: autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, life purpose, positive relations with others, and self-acceptance.

From the perspective of eudaimonic well-being, psychological growth and fulfillment are viewed as the fullest realization of one's capabilities, assessed through these six components. Ryff (1989) conceptualized psychological well-being as the effort to actualize personal talents and capacities.

The six elements are described as follows:

- **Autonomy**: independence and self-regulation in daily life.
- **Environmental mastery**: competence in managing surroundings and using available opportunities.
- **Personal growth**: a sense of continual development and openness to new experiences.
- **Positive relations with others**: close, meaningful, and satisfying social relationships.
- **Purpose in life**: a clear sense of direction and meaning in both past and present experiences.
- **Self-acceptance**: a positive view of oneself, including recognition of both strengths and weaknesses.

Research has consistently indicated that psychological well-being is linked to both personality traits and behavioral factors. Two such important predictors are locus of control (Uma & Manikandan, 2017; Mobarakeh *et al*., 2015; Nwankwo *et al*., 2017) and coping mechanisms (Rosario *et al*., 2011; Carnicer & Calderón, 2013; Ziba & Nahid, 2013). Demographic variables such as gender also play a role. Findings have been mixed; for instance, Mills *et al*. (1992), in a study on married couples, reported that husbands scored higher in well-being compared to wives (see Nwankwo *et al*., 2017).

Higher education settings are environments where individuals are often exposed to high levels of stress. For university students, locus of control, psychological well-being, and coping strategies significantly influence academic performance. Teachers in training programs, such as PGDT (Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching) trainees, are key players in the educational system, making their psychological well-being particularly critical. Possessing adaptive coping styles, a strong internal locus of control, and balanced psychological health contributes to

their personal and social growth, effective teaching, and prevention of maladaptive behaviors. Thus, studying the interplay of psychological well-being, coping styles, and locus of control among PGDT trainees is essential not only for improving their own lives but also for strengthening the broader educational system.

Based on this rationale, the present research seeks to examine the relationships among locus of control, coping styles, and psychological well-being in PGDT trainees at Dilla University. Specifically, the study addresses the following

Depending on the aims in the research, attempts were made to answer the following questions: First things first: what do the psychological , coping style and locus of control profiles of the participants look like? Second, do locus of control orientation, sex, and coping styles have significant relationships with psychological wellbeing dimensions? Third: Do locus of control, sex, and coping styles have significant joint or unique predictive validity for psychological wellbeing?

1.2 Review of Related Literatures

Within psychological research, psychological well-being is regarded as one of the most influential variables because of its strong relationship with individuals' overall health and functioning. Ryan and Deci (2001) distinguished two complementary perspectives: the hedonic view, which emphasizes happiness through desire achievement and avoidance of pain, and eudaimonic perspective, that emphases on realizing one's potential and functioning fully. Ryff (1989) advanced eudaimonic well-being model , later refined with Keyes (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), which conceptualizes well-being as the pursuit of personal growth and self-actualization. This multidimensional approach has been widely adopted in research, with various scholars examining and validating its six central dimensions (Abbott *et al*., 2006; Kafka & Kozma, 2002; Meléndez *et al*., 2009). These are autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and positive relationships with others.

The eudaimonic model suggests that psychological well-being is maximized when individuals achieve balance across these six domains (Ryff, 1989).

Specifically:

- Autonomy reflects independence and self-determination.
- Environmental mastery indicates competence in managing daily life.
- Personal growth denotes an individual's willingness to embrace change and pursue continuous self-development.
- Purpose in life signifies possessing clear goals and a meaningful sense of direction.
- Self-acceptance involves maintaining a favorable evaluation of oneself, including one's past experiences.
- Positive relations with others refer to the ability to build and sustain supportive, satisfying, and high-quality interpersonal relationships.

Additional studies indicate that a range of variables are positively linked to these well-being dimensions as well as to effective coping strategies within academic settings. These factors include Key contributory factors identified in prior research include individuals' level of self-worth (Cabanach *et al*., 2014), their perception of personal control over life circumstances (Doron *et al*., 2009), the strength and effectiveness of their social support networks (Fernández-González *et al*., 2015), and the degree to which they experience autonomous motivation and self-directed regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). a clear sense of life purpose (Freire *et al*., 2015), and engagement in self-actualization goals (Miquelon & Vallerand, 2008), as synthesized in the review by Freire, Ferradás, Valle, Núñez, and Vallejo (2016).

Academic stress is a critical issue for higher education students. More than the stress itself, how students cope with it strongly influences their well-being. Coping styles are generally categorized into problem-focused coping (PFCS) and emotion-focused coping (EFCS) (Wonderlich-Tierney & Vander, 2010). PFCS involves active strategies to address the source of stress, such as problem solving, while EFCS relies on emotional responses like rumination or self-blame (Kelly, Tyrka, Price, & Carpenter, 2008). PFCS is typically more effective in resolving stressors compared to EFCS. In general

terms, coping represents the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral efforts made to manage stressors or reduce their negative effects (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). The relevance of coping to both health (Kraag *et al*., 2006) and subjective well-being (Parsons *et al*., 1996; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006; Viñas *et al*., 2015) has been well documented.

Folkman (1984) argued that problem-focused coping is most beneficial when the stressor is modifiable, whereas emotion-focused coping tends to be used in situations that cannot be changed. Although coping effectiveness depends on context (Endler *et al*., 1994), research generally supports that approach-oriented coping is more adaptive than avoidance-oriented coping (Gustems-Carnicer & Calderón, 2013; Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2015).

Psychological well-being, being concerned with positive functioning, is influenced by multiple individual, demographic, and social factors, such as self-esteem, optimism, gender, education, age, health, and social connections (Binder & Coad, 2010). Empirical evidence also highlights how different coping styles relate to psychological well-being. Loukzadeh and Bafrooi (2013), for instance, observed that EFCS was used more often than PFCS, but EFCS correlated negatively with purpose in life and personal growth, whereas PFCS showed a positive association with purpose in life.

More recent findings continue to emphasize that problem-focused coping is related to higher wellbeing, though reliance on focused emotion strategies is related to lower levels of well-being in both men & women (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 2000). Supporting this, Fierro & Jiménez (2002, cited in Freire *et al*., 2016) found that passive or emotion-oriented coping correlated negatively with well-being among young university students. Similarly, González *et al*. (2002) reported that well-being was positively correlated with problem-focused coping and social support seeking, but negatively correlated with emotion-focused coping strategies.

Another key factor in understanding psychological well-being is locus of control. This concept describes whether individuals perceive life outcomes as the result of their own actions (internal locus) or as controlled by external forces like luck, chance, or powerful others (external locus) (Rotter, 1966; Keenan & McBain, 1979, cited in Reknes, Visockaite, Liefooghe, Lovakov, & Einarsen, 2019). Internals tend to actively influence their environment, while externals are more likely to feel powerless and passive (Keenan & McBain, 1979). Research has linked locus of control to positive psychological functioning (Pannells & Claxton, 2008).

Research findings consistently indicate that individuals with an internal locus of control tend to demonstrate higher academic achievement (Gifford, Briceño-Perriott, & Mianzo, 2006), increased self-motivation and social responsibility (Nelson & Mathias, 1995), reduced levels of stress and depressive symptoms (Garber & Seligman, 1980), and even greater longevity (Chipperfield, 1993). In addition, perceptions of personal control have been found to play a moderating role in both psychological and physical aspects of well-being (Brandstadter & Renner, 1990).

In contrast, an outside point of control has been shown related negatively to the wellbeing (Kulshrestha & Sen, 2006). Individuals who attribute outcomes to external forces often experience feelings of helplessness and limited capacity to change unfavorable situations (Nielsen, 1987), which in turn diminishes their overall sense of well-being (Kulshrestha & Sen, 2006).

The present research focuses specifically on PGDT trainees, a group that has been relatively understudied. Its goals are:

(a) to describe the profiles of psychological well-being across its six dimensions;

(b) to investigate how coping strategies (problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance) and locus of control orientations (internal versus external), along with gender, predict these profiles; and

(c) to test whether students with higher well-being use more adaptive coping strategies and maintain an interior points of regulator associated to those lower well-being across dimensions.

2 Research Methodology

2.1 Participants

The research aimed to investigate the extent to which locus-of-control, coping styles, and gender predict school teacher (PGDT) trainees' psychological wellbeing. Hence, to carry out the study, the descriptive and correlational research designs were employed. The study population was drawn from Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) regular and summer program trainees who were enrolled in the 2018/19 academic year at Dilla University Institute of Education and Behavioral Science. In the study population, all the fields that are Amharic, English, Afaan Oroomo, athematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geography, History, Physical Education, Civics, and ICT were used. o achieve the objectives of the study, a sample was drawn from a total population of approximately 692 individuals (603 males and 89 females). Based on the sample size determination table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a total of 242 participants were considered adequate and therefore selected for inclusion in the study. Then, the target population was categorized by strata (i.e., stratified by field of study/department). 242 was selected with the consideration of a proportional stratified random sampling approach in terms of department and gender. The questionnaires were distributed by lottery method and finally collected from 209 PGDT trainers who properly filled them out.

2.2 Instruments

The research utilized three validated survey instruments: Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, a modified form of the Adult Nowicki–Strickl, Locus of Control Scale and Adolescent Coping Styles Scale.

Psychological wellbeing scale

To assess the trainees' level of psychological well-being, the 42-item version of Ryff's (1989) Psychological Well-Being Scale was administered. Within this theoretical perspective, well-being is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that integrates both psychological and social aspects of optimal human functioning. The scale evaluates six fundamental dimensions: self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive interpersonal relationships, and a sense of purpose in life.

In the present study, the scale consisted of 42 items distributed evenly across the six subscales: self-acceptance (7 items), autonomy (7 items), environmental mastery (7 items), personal growth (7 items), positive relations with others (7 items), and purpose in life (7 items). Among these, 22 statements were positively phrased, whereas 20 were negatively worded and reverse-scored to ensure response balance. Participants responded using a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. An example of representative item is: "Generally, I feel that I have control over a circumstances of my life."

Scores on each subscale can vary depending on the individual's responses, with bigger values showing higher psychological wellbeing in that, domain. An aggregated score across all six subscales provides a composite index of the respondent's overall psychological well-being.

The control scale of Locus

Trainees' Points of controller orientation was assessed using an adapted version of the Adult Nowicki–Strickland Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (ANS-IE) (Nowicki & Duke, 1973). This tool was originally developed on the basis of Rotter's theoretical framework and has been widely applied in studies of personality assessment.

The original ANS-IE contains 40 items, each requiring a "Yes" or "No" response. Scores are coded in the external direction, with higher values reflecting a stronger external orientation (Nowicki & Duke, 1993). Thus, an individual's entire score of the scale in the interval 0 to 40. A score above the median indicates an external locus of control, while scores below the median suggest an internal orientation.

The choice of this instrument was guided by its established reliability and its frequent use in psychological and educational research, making it suitable for identifying whether respondents perceive outcomes as determined primarily by their own actions

(internal) or by outside forces like luck, chance, or others powerful issue.

Coping scale

The study adopted the coping scale locally used by Shemsu (2010). The scale was developed on the basis of the general short form of self-reported The adolescent coping scale (ACS) was used as an instrument in this study. As described by Shemsu (2010), the original scale contains 19 items (18 structured and one open-ended item) which were developed by Frydenberg and Lewis (1993). The adolescent coping scale was chosen because the wording of the items in the original scale was not ambiguous and it retained the narrow band of coping distinctions. Moreover, the scale was developed for adolescents but is also used to assess young adults' coping behaviours (Frydenberg and Lewis 1998). The questionnaire items were designed to measure on a 4-point likert scale, ranging from "does not apply to me" to "applies to me always". The adopted scale has 31 items (13 items for the problem-focused coping subscale, 9 items for avoidance coping, and 9 items for emotion-focused coping subscale), which was developed by taking 18 items from the Adolescent Coping Scale (ACS).

2.3 Method of data analysis

Once all questionnaires were completed and verified for accuracy, the data was prepared for statistical analysis. The analyses were conducted by SPSS V-23.0. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were applied to address the research objectives.

At the descriptive level, statistical tools such as means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were calculated to summarize participants' scores across the study variables.

For inferential analyses, several techniques were employed:

- An independent-samples t-test was performed to determine whether significant gender-based differences existed in locus of control, coping strategies, and psychological well-being.
- Correlation coefficient of Pearson's product–moment was employed to examine the associations between the predictor variables (locus of control, coping strategies, and gender) and the outcome variable (psychological well-being, including its specific dimensions).
- Multiple regression analysis was utilized to assess both the collective and individual contributions of the independent variables in predicting psychological well-being.
- In addition, stepwise regression procedures were implemented to determine which variables served as the most powerful predictors of psychological well-being.

All statistical tests were evaluated at a 0.05 alpha level, with significance levels reported accordingly.

3 Results

In order to examine how locus of control, coping styles, and gender contribute to predicting students' psychological well-being, a series of statistical analyses were carried out. Specifically, descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests, Pearson product–moment correlations, and regression analyses were employed. The findings from these analyses are summarized and presented in the following tables.

3.1 The status of Locus of control orientations, Coping styles and Psychological wellbeing of the respondents

In order to see the profiles of locus of control orientations, coping styles, and psychological wellbeing of the respondents, the following descriptive statistics, that is, mean and standard deviation, were used

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Participant Profile of Locus of control, Coping styles and Psychological wellbeing (N=209)

Variables		Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Locus of control (IV)	LOC	8	38	20.20	4.882
Coping style (IV)					
Subscales	Problem Focused coping	17	52	37.80	6.936
	Avoidance Coping	10	35	19.64	5.177
	Emotion Focused Coping	11	34	23.71	4.632
	Total	40.00	115.00	81.1531	12.58722
Psychological wellbeing (DV)					
Subscales	Autonomy	13	41	26.63	4.757
	Environmental mastery	15	40	27.00	4.602
	Personal growth	17	42	28.24	5.153
	Positive relationship with other	11	41	27.39	4.905
	Purpose in life	16	89	29.13	6.652
	Self acceptance	18	40	28.13	4.696
	Total	124.00	217.00	166.517	21.92910

As it was illustrated in the above table 1, the respondents' locus of control beliefs were externally oriented (M = 20.20, SD = 4.882) rather than internally oriented. It is noted that the total score on the LOC scale between 8 and 19 is considered an internal LOC, whereas the score between 20 and 38 is considered an external LOC. As it is mentioned in the methodology section, the higher the score (i.e., above the median point) in the locus of control of orientation scale, the more external it means. With regard to the coping styles, problem-focused coping (M = 37.80, SD = 6.936) was the major coping style which was mostly used by the participants. Followed by emotion-focused and avoidance coping were (M = 23.71, SD = 4.632) and (M = 19.64, SD = 5.177) respectively.

Concerning psychological wellbeing, purpose in life (M = 29.13, SD = 6.652), Personal Growth (M = 28.24, SD = 5.153), Self-Acceptance (M = 28.13, SD = 4.696), Positive Relationship With Others (M = 27.39, SD = 4.905), Environmental Mastery (M = 27.00, SD = 4.602), and Autonomy (M = 26.63, SD = 4.757) respectively. Note that in all the sub-domains of psychological wellbeing, the observed mean (i.e., mean of each subscale) ratings are higher than the expected mean (i.e., 21), and hence the mean ratings for the total psychological wellbeing scale (166.52) are higher than the expected mean (126.52).

Table 2: T-Test Results for gender differences on LOC, Coping style, and Psychological wellbeing (N=209)

Sub-scales	Sex					
	Female (N=61)		Male (N=148)			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	Sig. (two tailed)
Psychological wellbeing total (DV)	164.245	19.342	167.452	22.907	-.961	.338

As can be seen from table 2 below, an independent-samples t-test was conducted and there was no significant difference between males (M = 167.45, SD = 22.91) and females (M = 164.25, SD = 19.34) in their total psychological wellbeing scores. df (207) =-.961, p =.338 (two-tailed).

3.2 Relationship between the Variables Under the Study

In an attempt to investigate the association between the independent variables (sex, locus-of- control, coping styles) & dependent variables (psychological wellbeing and its sub dimensions) in the study, a Pearson product moment correlation coefficient test was computed.

Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. As can be seen from table 3, locus of control was negatively and significantly related to all sub dimensions of psychological well-being (p 0.05). Concerning coping styles with psychological wellbeing totals and sub dimensions, table 3 is displayed as follows. Problem-focused coping style was positively and significantly related to all the sub dimensions of psychological wellbeing and its total scale (p 0.01). More importantly, a problem-focused coping style was positively and significantly related to total psychological wellbeing (r =.421, p 0.01). In contrast, the avoidance coping style was negatively and significantly related to all sub dimensions of psychological well-being and its total scale (p 0.01). In addition, the emotion-focused coping style was negatively and significantly related to only autonomy (r =.156, p 0.05) and environmental mastery (r =.143, p 0.05). However, coping style as a total scale was significantly and positively related to only the autonomy sub dimension of psychological wellbeing (r =.155, p 0.05).

Table 3 below shows that locus-of-control shown negatively and significantly compared to psychological wellbeing total with (t (207) =-3.679, p 0.01). In contrast, sex did not show a statistically significant association with overall psychological well-being (t(207) = 0.887, p > 0.05). The results presented in the table further indicate that locus of control emerged as a significant negative predictor of psychological well-being. The regression analysis demonstrates that locus of control accounted for 6.6% of the variance in psychological well-being. This suggests that participants who tended toward an external locus of control were more likely to report lower levels of psychological well-being, indicating a detrimental influence of external control beliefs on respondents' mental health status.

3.3 Predicting Psychological wellbeing from Coping styles (PFCS, EFCS & AVCS)

Other independent variables examined to predict the psychological wellbeing of the respondents were coping styles. In order to know the contribution of coping styles in predicting psychological wellbeing, multiple regression was also done.

Table 3: Results of Pearson correlation test for examining the relationship between the study variables under the study

Variables	Sex	LOC	PFCS	AVCS	EFCS	A	EM	PG	PRS	PIL	SA	PWB Total
Sex**	1.00											
Locus of control	-.028	1.00										
Problem Focused Coping	-.039	-.176*	1.00									
Avoidance Coping	-.018	.233**	.049	1.00								
Emotion Focused Coping	.000	-.028	.599**	.419**	1.00							
Autonomy	.001	-.164*	.350**	-.142*	.156*	1.00						
Environmental mastery	.039	-.171*	.411**	-.280**	.143*	.413**	1.00					
Personal growth	.114	-.166*	.289**	-.315**	-.101	.381**	.387**	1.00				
Positive relationship with other	.137*	-.185**	.311**	-.269**	.069	.360**	.485**	.467**	1.00			
Purpose in life	.021	-.163*	.230**	-.315**	-.064	.319**	.282**	.428**	.408**	1.00		
Self acceptance	-.025	-.224**	.243**	-.311**	.008	.363**	.476**	.495**	.513**	.398**	1.00	
Psychological wellbeing total	.067	-.249**	.421**	-.386**	.038	.648**	.687**	.739**	.747**	.709**	.745**	1.00

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: Control point PFCS stands for Problem Focused Coping, AVCS stands for Avoidance Coping, and EFCS stands for Emotion Focused Coping. A: Independence, EM stands for environmental mastery.PG: Personal development, PRS: Positive interpersonal relationships PIL: Life's Purpose, Self-acceptance and PWB total: Psychological wellbeing total

Table 4: Results of multiple regression analysis for Predicting Psychological wellbeing from three Coping styles (N=209)

Variables	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Problem Focused Coping	1.604	.231	.507	6.933	.000
Avoidance Coping	-1.538	.273	-.363	-5.626	.000
Emotion Focused Coping	-.540	.381	-.114	-1.416	.158

**p< .01

In table 4, problem-focused coping and avoidance coping is significant indicator of psychological well-being. According to the table, problem-focused coping style was significantly and positively predicted psychological wellbeing (t = 6.933, p 0.01), whereas avoidance coping style was significantly and negatively predicted psychological wellbeing (t =-5.626, p 0.01).However, emotional-focused coping style was not significantly predicted by psychological wellbeing (t =-1.416.887, p > 0.05).

The regression model summary reveals that 35% of the total variation in the dependent variable (psychological wellbeing) can be explained by the combined problem-focused coping and avoidance coping styles. The findings imply that problem-focused coping styles had a The findings indicated that problem-focused coping had a positive influence on respondents' psychological well-being, whereas avoidance coping exhibited a weaker, negative effect. Considering the standardized beta coefficients, the variable with the highest beta value—disregarding negative signs—was (β = .51, corresponding to problem-focused coping. This implies that problem-focused coping made the strongest unique contribution to predicting psychological well-being after accounting for variance which explained with other variables that the model included.

A stepwise-regression method has been employed to evaluate the relative contributions of each predictor variable in predicting the criterion variable and to identify the strongest predictor.

As it can be seen from the stepwise regression analysis table above, the predictor variables considered in this analysis are problem-focused coping style and avoidance coping style. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were tested and satisfied. In the first step of the regression analysis, the problem-focused coping style (PFCS) accounted for 17.8% of the variance in psychological well-being. When both PFCS and the avoidance coping style (AVCS) were included in Step 2, the model's total explained variance increased to 34.3%, F(4, 421) = 53.846, p < .001. The inclusion of AVCS contributed an additional 16.6% of the variance in psychological well-being after controlling for PFCS, ΔR^2 = .343, F change (2, 421) = 52.001, p < .001. In the final model, only these two coping styles emerged as significant predictors, with PFCS showing a stronger effect (β = .421, p < .001) compared to AVCS (β = –.408, p < .001). This indicates that, among participants, the problem-focused style of coping serves the healthier predictor for psychological wellbeing.

Table 5: Result of stepwise regression analysis for predicting Psychological wellbeing from coping styles (PFCS and AVCS)

Model	Variables	Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients					
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	R2	Δ R2	F
1	Problem focused Coping	1.332	.199	.421	6.684	.000	.178	.178	44.672
2	Avoidance Coping	-1.727	.239	-.408	-7.212	.000	.343	.166	52.011

**P<0.01

4 Discussions

The results of current research revealed that participants generally exhibited an exterior locus- of-control orientation, as indicated by their mean scores (M = 20.20, SD = 4.882), which exceeded the median cutoff point for internal orientation. This suggests that many PGDT trainees tend to fear of the external factors such as fate, chance, or the influence of others, rather than perceiving themselves as agents of control.

Regarding coping profiles, problem-focused coping emerged as the most frequently practiced strategy (M = 37.80, SD = . . .). This indicates that most trainees attempt to deal with stressful situations by actively addressing problems, for example by seeking solutions, drawing on social support, working harder, or engaging in constructive activities.

When considering psychological well-being, the study found that trainees scored above the expected mean across all six sub-dimensions, with a total mean (166.52) exceeding the theoretical average (126). This suggests that, overall, participants reported relatively high levels of psychological well-being.

The correlation analysis revealed a significant negative association between external locus of control and psychological well-being at both the overall and sub-dimensional levels ($r = –.249$, $p < .01$). Further regression analysis confirmed that outside points of control significantly & negatively predicted psychological wellbeing, $t(207) = –3.679$, $p < .01$. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that trainee with an external orientation tend to show minimum levels of psychological functioning (Uma & Manikandan, 2017; Mobarakeh *et al.*, 2015). This suggests that trainees who perceive life events as being outside their personal control are more prone to reduced well-being.

Additionally, the study investigated the influence of coping strategies. Finding indicated that problem-focused coping was positively compared to psychological wellbeing, whereas avoidance coping exhibited a negative relationship. In other words, reliance on avoidance-based coping mechanisms was linked to poorer psychological outcomes. Supporting this conclusion, Farzana, Shahina, and Shah (2016) also reported that coping styles play a crucial part in changing a trainee's psychological wellbeing. Emotion-focused coping, however, showed no significant association with overall well-being, except in relation to autonomy and environmental mastery. This outcome is consistent with prior research suggesting that active problem-solving strategies enhance well-being (Parsons, Frydenberg, & Poole, 1996), whereas avoidance strategies are often linked to poorer outcomes, including higher stress and psychological distress (Murray-Harvey *et al.*, 2002).

Overall, the findings imply that trainees who adopt active, solution-oriented coping approaches experience higher psychological well-being, whereas reliance on avoidance strategies undermines their functioning. The results reinforce the idea that coping styles play a central role in shaping students' mental health and adaptive capacity. Furthermore, the dominance of external locus of control among trainees points to the need for interventions that foster internal control beliefs, which may help improve their resilience and well-being.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the study findings, it is concluded that locus of control, especially externally oriented LOC, has a negative effect on PGDT trainees' overall psychological well-being. Similarly, the avoidance coping style has a negative effect on students' overall psychological well-being. In contrast, a problem-focused coping style has a beneficial effect on having better psychological wellbeing among university students.

Suggestions for Further Research

With regards to the numerous limitations of this study, the following suggestions are put forward by the researcher for further research: embarking on a similar study with more participants from various institutions/universities and conducting related studies using variables such as age, locality, economic status, self-concept, and a slew of others as variables that may impact university students' psychological well-being.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

Consent was sought form the research participants. Confidentiality was maintained in reporting information.

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