

# Self - Criticism, Coping Mechanism and Depression among Adolescents

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**Abstract:** *The aim of this research is to find correlation between self - criticism, coping mechanism and depression among adolescents. Adolescence is a critical developmental period, marked by numerous challenges and stressors, which can significantly impact mental health. Understanding the connections between self - criticism, coping strategies, and depression is essential for developing effective interventions and support systems for this vulnerable population. The research tools used are FSCRS and Brief COPE and The Beck's Depression inventory. Proper statistical treatment was applied in JASP 0.18.1.0 application in order to obtain the result. Total 151 samples were collected in order to do regression analysis. According to finding of hypotheses, all Variables positively correlated with each other. This research found that there is positive correlation between self - criticism and coping mechanism and depression, yet negative correlation between depression and coping mechanism.*

**Keywords:** self - criticism, coping mechanism, depression

## 1. Introduction

Understanding the impact of self - criticism on coping mechanisms in adolescents holds profound significance due to its wide - ranging implications for mental health and well - being during a critical developmental stage. Adolescence is a unique period characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, and emotional changes, making it a time of heightened vulnerability to stress and psychological challenges. As adolescents navigate the complexities of academic demands, peer relationships, and identity formation, they may encounter significant stressors that can shape their coping responses and overall mental health.

### Self - criticism

Self - criticism, entrenched in the intricate landscape of human psychology, is a fundamental aspect of an individual's self - perception and self - evaluation. It encompasses the propensity to engage in a continual cycle of self - judgment, characterized by negative self - perceptions, relentless self - doubt, and often a harshly critical view of one's abilities and self - worth. For adolescents, the journey of self - discovery during this crucial developmental stage is intertwined with self - criticism's complexities. Social expectations, peer comparisons, and the formation of a unique identity can heighten the prevalence and impact of self - criticism. Self - criticism is not a uniform trait but rather a complex, multidimensional construct. It often develops in response to a variety of factors. Childhood experiences, such as critical parenting, societal pressures, and the need to conform to cultural norms, can contribute to the development of self - criticism.

### Coping mechanism

Adolescence is a transformative phase marked by personal discovery, emotional upheaval, and a multitude of challenges. Coping mechanisms are the diverse strategies individuals employ to navigate and manage the stressors and adversities they encounter during this crucial stage of development. These mechanisms encompass an array of

cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses used to regulate emotions, reduce distress, and maintain psychological well - being.

Understanding how they cope with the unique stressors they face is of paramount importance. The ability to adapt to life's challenges, manage stress, and develop effective coping strategies is critical for their emotional and psychological well - being. Adolescents often encounter stressors related to academic demands, peer relationships, identity formation, and family dynamics. How they choose to cope with these stressors can significantly influence their overall behavior.

### Depression

Depression, a formidable adversary in the realm of mental health, casts a long shadow over the lives of adolescents. Its influence, though often underestimated, extends far beyond the realm of transient mood fluctuations. Adolescents, amid their journey of self - discovery, are uniquely susceptible to the grip of depression. As introduced by the American Psychiatric Association (2013), depression is characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a diminished interest in once - beloved activities. It is often accompanied by changes in appetite, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and a host of cognitive and emotional symptoms.

Persistent self - criticism can undermine the development of adaptive coping mechanisms, leaving individuals vulnerable to stress and emotional distress. As coping mechanisms play a crucial role in managing stressors, the interplay between self - criticism and coping has the potential to influence the onset, duration, and severity of depression.

### Significance of the study

Understanding the impact of self - criticism on coping mechanisms in adolescents holds profound significance due to its wide - ranging implications for mental health and well - being during a critical developmental stage. As adolescents navigate the complexities of academic demands, peer relationships, and identity formation, they may encounter

significant stressors that can shape their coping responses and overall mental health.

The outcomes of this research have the potential to significantly contribute to the field of psychology and adolescent mental health. By comprehensively investigating the relationship between self - criticism and coping mechanisms, this study can advance our understanding of the underlying psychological processes that link these constructs. The findings may shed light on the pathways through which self - criticism influences coping outcomes, providing valuable insights for both researchers and mental health practitioners. The implications of this research extend beyond academic pursuits, as the findings may inform the development of evidence - based interventions and prevention programs aimed at promoting healthier coping skills and enhancing emotional resilience in adolescents.

### Statement of the problem

To the study relations between self - criticism, coping mechanism and depression among adolescents.

### Objectives of the study

- 1) To access the level of self - criticism among adolescents within a specific sample population.
- 2) To determine whether high level of self - criticism are associated with maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance or self - destructive behavior.
- 3) To investigate the relationship between self - criticism and the experience of depression among adolescents.
- 4) To contribute to the development of targeted interventions and prevention programs.

### Hypothesis

H1 - There is a Negative correlation between self - criticism and coping mechanism.

H2 - There is a positive correlation between self - criticism and depression.

H3 - There is a negative correlation between coping mechanism and depression.

### Samples

Samples in this research consist of adolescents who are between age 13 to 18 in pune. After collecting 151 samples all were filtered and analyzed. There are 91 female and 60 male subjects were present in data. All samples were collected using snowball method.

### Research tools -

#### 1) The forms of self - criticism & self - reassuring scale (FSCRS) -

(Gilbert et. Al.2004) this scale was developed by Gilbert, Clarke, Hempel, Miles and Irons (2004). It was developed to measure self - criticism and the ability to self - reassure. It is a 22item scale, which measures different ways people think and feel about themselves when things go wrong for them. Cronbach's alphas were 0.90, 0.86, and 0.86 for the IS, HS and RS subscales, respectively (Gilbert et al.2004).

#### 2) Brief COPE (Coping orientation to problems experienced) -

The original brief - COPE by Carver comprised of two - items in each 14 subscales including self - distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, behavioral disengagement, venting, positive reframing, planning, humor, acceptance, religion, and self - blame. The Brief - COPE is a 28 item self - report questionnaire designed to measure effective and ineffective ways to cope with a stressful life event.

#### 3) The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) -

This is a 21 - item scale, self - report rating inventory that measures characteristic attitudes and symptoms of depression (Beck, et al., 1961). The BDI has been developed in different forms, including several computerized forms, a card form (May, Urquhart, Tarran, 1969, cited in Groth - Marnat, 1990), the 13 - item short form and the more recent BDI - II by Beck, Steer & Brown, 1996.

## 2. Result & discussion

The study hereby was conducted falls under correlation study as the main purpose of study as to find out the correlation between self - criticism, depression and coping mechanism.

### Descriptive statistics

	Self - criticism	Coping mechanism	Depression
Mean	42.232	66.722	14.371
Std. Deviation	10.185	9.463	9.039

Shows the descriptive statistics of our study. In the above table, the means and standard deviations of our taken variables are shown; The standard deviation tells us how dispersed our data is with respect or relation to the mean. For self - criticism the mean is 42.232 with std. deviation of 10.185, the mean for coping mechanism of the taken samples is 66.722 with std. deviation 9.463, the Mean and Std. Deviation of depression are 14.371 and 9.039 respectively.

### Correlational Statistics

**Table 1:** Correlation between self - criticism and coping mechanism

Variables		Self criticism	Coping mechanism
1. Self criticism	Pearson's r	-	
	p - value	-	
2. Coping mechanism	Pearson's r	0.613	-
	p - value	<.001	-

The shows the correlation between self - criticism and coping mechanism among adolescents. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.613 and the Pearson's P is <0.100. This reflects that there is an insignificant negative correlation between self - criticism and coping mechanism among adolescents. Therefore, this obviously means hypothesis that self - criticism and coping mechanism have negative correlation was accept.

**Table 2:** Correlation between self - criticism and depression

Variables		Self criticism	Depression
1. Self criticism	Pearson's r	-	
	p - value	-	
2. Depression	Pearson's r	0.298	-
	p - value	<.001	-

The table shows the correlation between self - criticism and depression among adolescents. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.298 and the Pearson's P is <0.01. Which reflects that there is an insignificant positive correlation between self - criticism and depression among adolescents. Therefore, this obviously means hypothesis that self - criticism and depression have positive correlation was accepted.

**Table 3:** Correlation between coping mechanism and depression

Variables		Coping mechanism	Depression
1. Coping mechanism	Pearson's r	-	
	p - value	-	
2. Depression	Pearson's r	0.298	-
	p - value	<.001	-

The shows the correlation between coping mechanism and depression among adolescents. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.214 and the Pearson's P is 0.005 which reflects that there is an insignificant negative correlation between coping mechanism and depression among adolescents. Therefore, this obviously means hypothesis that coping mechanism and depression have negative correlation was accepted.

### 3. Conclusions

The conducted research included all three hypotheses based on which the tests were performed and results were obtained. In this study it was found that there is positive correlation between there is a correlation between self - criticism and coping mechanism and depression, yet negative correlation between depression and coping mechanism.

### 4. Limitations

- 1) The sample collected for the research study consisted of a low number of participants. The number of male participants was considerably higher than that of the female counterparts, which may have had an effect on the variables under study.
- 2) Geographical limitations were faced during the data collection phase of the research. The study is also conducted only in pune the general ability of study may change.
- 3) An online mode of data collection was implemented through a google form. Although it helped for a greater reach to the population, many of the members of the population may have answered biased as the study can be bit personal. The questionnaire wad quite long so participants might felt it boring or time consuming and answered incorrectly.

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