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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS ACROSS DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS OF KASHMIR (J&K), INDIA

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Abstract

Hardiness is the ability of an individual to combat stress. Kobasa (1979) defined hardiness in terms of more specific dimensions of control, commitment and challenge characteristics that may influence both cognitive appraisal and behavior in response to stressful events. The present study is an attempt to ascertain the level of psychological hardiness among bank, education, health and police professions of Kashmir valley. For the conduction of study a sample of 200 officials (50 subjects from each profession) was randomly selected. The measure used for data collection was Kobasa S.C. & Maddi S.R. (1982) psychological hardiness scale. The data was analyzed by computing mean, SD, t-test, ANOVA and Turkeys Post-Hoc (HSD) test. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in level of psychological hardiness among different professions viz. bank, education, police and health.

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Introduction:-

At times things do not go the way we want. Sometimes happenings bother us while other times these may please us. The same situation has varying impact on different people at the same time. Events occur in our life, it depends on the way we perceive these events and the coping power that we have. An event may be stressful for someone and for another may not.

Some people have resistance against stress and this resistance against stress is known as hardiness. Therefore, the level of hardiness varies across people. To be described as hardy means to be strong and tolerant of stressful situations. According to the Oxford Dictionary, "Hardiness is the ability to endure difficult conditions". While as "English Collins Dictionary" states Hardiness as "the condition or quality of being hardy, robust or bold". Some people seem to be hardy than others when it comes to dealing with stress. Hardiness helps people turn stressful circumstances into opportunities. It is the capacity for enduring or sustaining hardship, privation, etc.; capability of surviving under unfavourable conditions. It is a buffer against aging.

Maddi and Kobasa (1984) believe that the foundation of an individual's ability to successfully cope with stress and remain healthy is personality style, which they termed "Hardiness". Psychologically "hardy" individuals have a different view of themselves and of the world. Moreover, according to Kobasa (1979), Hardiness is defined in terms of more specific dimensions of control, commitment and challenge characteristics that may influence both cognitive appraisal and behavior in response to stressful events. Higher control reflects the belief that persons can exert an influence on their surroundings, such persons feel that they have the power to turn an unfortunate situation into an advantageous one. Higher commitment is defined in terms of an individual's full engagement in activities and strongly committed people have a sense of purpose and self understanding, allowing them to uncover meaning in which they are and value in, such persons seem to perform in cheerful and effortless manner. Highly challenged

individuals believe that change rather than stability characterizes life. Such persons anticipate change as affording them an opportunity for further development.

Hardiness (psychological), alternatively referred to as psychological hardiness, personality hardiness, or cognitive hardiness in the literature, is a personality style first introduced by Suzanne C. Kobasa (1979). In the following years, the concept of hardiness was further elaborated in their book (Maddi, S. R., & Kobasa, S. C. 1984) and a series of research reports by Salvatore Maddi, Kobasa and their graduate students at the University of Chicago (Kobasa, S. C. 1982; Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., & Courington, S. 1981; Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., & Kahn, S. 1982; Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., Puccetti, M. C., & Zola, M. A. 1985; Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., & Zola, M. A. 1983; & Kobasa, S. C., & Puccetti, M. C. 1983). Hardiness has been proposed to buffer the psychological and physical effects of stress on the body and was derived from the existential concept of the authentic personality. Research supported the idea that hardiness contributed to mental health through coping and appraisal mechanisms (Florian, Mikulincer & Taubman, 1995). Mathis, Michele, Lecci, and Len (1999) examined whether hardiness can be used in identifying students who have difficulties with academic, social, emotional and attachment adjustment. Results showed that hardiness overall was a better predictor of mental rather than physical health.

Hardiness is often considered an important factor in psychological resilience or an individual-level pathway leading to resilient outcomes (Bartone, P. T., & Hystad, S. W. 2010, Bonanno, G. A. 2004). Hardiness has some notable similarities with other personality constructs in psychology. Chief among these are locus of control (Rotter, J. B. 1966), sense of coherence (Antonovsky, A. (1987), (SOC) self-efficacy (Bandura, A. (1997), and dispositional optimism (Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1985).

Studies of coping strategies have demonstrated a complex relationship with Hardiness. Maddi (1999) suggests two coping styles, using as an example of the situation of losing one's job. Transformational coping is "an attempt to transform a stressful situation into an opportunity for personal growth and societal benefit". Regressive coping refers to "an attempt to deny, avoid, or escape a stressful situation". Transformational coping might involve the optimistic appraisal that you accepted risk when you joined the organization. It might be followed by decisive actions; interviewing those who fired you, or reassessing whether that job or some new career best suits you. In contrast, regressive coping might involve pessimistic appraisal; the job you lost is irreplaceable and you are unworthy, and use strategies such as drinking heavily. According to Kobasa, S.C. (1982), individuals high in hardiness tend to put stressful circumstances into perspective and interpret them in a less threatening manner. As a consequence of these optimistic appraisals, the impact of the stressful events is reduced and they are less likely to negatively affect the health of the individual. Research on self-reported stressors, real-life stressful experiences, and laboratory-induced stress support this claim (Westman, M. 1990; Allred, K.D., Smith, T.W. 1989; Banks, J.K., & Gannon, L.R. 1988; Clark, L.M., & Hartman, M. 1996; DiBartolo, M.C., & Soeken, K.L. 2003; Rhodewalt, F., & Zone, J. B. 1989; Florian, V., Mikulincer, M., & Taubman, O. 1995; & Wiebe, D. J. 1991).

Relevance of the Study:-

Kashmir is a place where the people are very much stressed because of prevailing circumstances in addition to the usual life stress. In such an environment it seems that hardiness can play a very crucial role to combat stress. The review of literature shows that hardiness has not been much studied and especially in Kashmir the research with respect to the said variable is almost nil, the investigator felt the need to conduct a study on Kashmiri population belonging to different professions.

Objectives:-The present study of psychological hardiness is being conducted with the following objectives in mind:

1. To compare psychological hardiness among different individual with respect to gender, domicile (rural/urban), economical status, family type, marital status and nature of job.
2. To compare psychological hardiness between different professions, viz. bank, education, health and police.

Hypothesis:- On the basis of the objectives of the study, the following Null Hypotheses have been formulated:

Ho1:-There is no significant difference in psychological hardiness among different individuals with respect to gender, domiciling (rural/urban), economical status, family type, marital status, and nature of job.

Ho2:-There is no significant difference in psychological hardiness across the personnel of different professions.

Sample: This study consists of N = 200 subjects taken from different districts of Kashmir province. The sample was selected by purposive sampling. A detailed description of the sample is given as follows:-

Gender	Male = 143	Female = 57	200
Domicile (rural/urban)	Rural = 79	Urban = 121	200
Economical status	Above 40000's = 46	Below 40000's = 154	200
Family Type	Nuclear = 123	Joint = 77	200
Marital status	Married = 152	Unmarried = 48	200
Nature of Job	Permanent = 166	Temporary = 34	200

Tools Used: For the assessment of psychological hardiness, **Kobasa S.C. & Maddi S.R. (1982)**, psychological hardiness scale was used. The scale consists of 2 sections i.e. section A and B, sections A consists of 1-14 items each having 4 options which measures commitment and sections B of 15-20 items each having 2 options which measure commitment hardiness.

Results: Table 4.1: Showing means difference of psychological hardiness between male and female subject:-

Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t-value
Male	143	28.4406	5.17527	198	0.321 ^{NS}
Female	57	28.1754	5.50040		

^{NS} = not significant

The results presented in table 4.1 reveal the t-value of the mean scores of psychological hardiness with respect to gender. No significant difference in psychological hardiness between male and female subjects is found, as the t-values (t = 0.321) is insignificant.

Table 4.2: Showing means difference of psychological hardiness between rural and urban subject:-

Domiciling	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t-value
Rural	79	28.0380	4.98059	198	-0.710 ^{NS}
Urban	121	28.5785	5.44021		

The results presented in table 4.2 reveal the t-value of the mean scores of psychological hardiness with respect to residential area. No significant difference in psychological hardiness is found as the t-values (t = -0.710) is insignificant.

Table 4.3: Showing means difference of psychological hardiness between subject of below 40 thousand and above 40 thousand salaries:-

Economical status	N	mean	Std. deviation	df	t-value
Below 40 thousand	154	28.4091	5.43243	198	0.216 ^{NS}
Above 40 thousand	46	28.2174	4.67577		

The results presented in table 4.3 reveal the t-value of the mean score of psychological hardiness with respect to salary. No significant difference in psychological hardiness between subject of below 40 thousand and above 40 thousand salary is found, as the t-value (t = 0.216) is insignificant.

Table 4.4: Showing means difference of psychological hardiness between subject of nuclear and joint family type:-

Family type	N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	t-value
Nuclear	123	28.1870	5.31060	198	-0.604 ^{NS}
Joint	77	28.6494	5.19303		

The results presented in table 4.4 reveal the t-value of the mean scores of psychological hardiness with respect to family type. No significant difference in psychological hardiness between subjects of nuclear and joint family type is found, as the t-values (t = -0.604) is insignificant.

Table 4.5: Showing means difference of psychological hardiness between married and unmarried subjects:-

Marital status	N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	t-value
Married	152	28.3882	5.31155	198	0.111 ^{NS}
Unmarried	48	28.2917	5.13626		

The results presented in table 4.5 reveal the t-value of the mean scores of psychological hardiness with respect to marital status. No significant difference in psychological hardiness between subjects of married and unmarried subject is found, as the t-values ($t = 0.111$) is insignificant.

Table 4.6: Showing mean difference of psychological hardiness between subjects of permanent and temporary nature of job:-

Nature of job	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t-value
Permanent	166	6.1928	2.34305	198	-1.057 ^{NS}
Temporary	34	29.1765	5.35113		

The results presented in table 4.6 reveal the t-value of the mean scores of psychological hardiness with respect to nature of job. No significant difference in psychological hardiness between subjects of permanent and temporary nature of job is found, as the t-values ($t = -1.057$) is insignificant.

Table 4.7: Showing ANOVA of psychological hardiness across different professions:-

Psychological hardiness	Df	Mean square	F
Between groups	3	74.973	3.55*
Within groups	196	21.93	
Total	199		

*=Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The results presented in table 4.7 reveal the F -value of psychological hardiness across different professions. Significant difference in psychological hardiness across different profession is found, as the F-values ($F = 3.55$) is significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4.8: Showing Post Hoc analysis (Tukey's HSD) of psychological hardiness in different professions:-

Psychological hardiness	Profession	Mean difference	Significance
Health	Bank	2.70000	0.019*
	Education	2.42000	0.045*
	Police	1.36000	0.451 ^{NS}
Bank	Education	-0.28000	0.990 ^{NS}
	Police	-1.34000	0.464 ^{NS}
Education	Police	-1.06000	0.657 ^{NS}

*=Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The result presented in above table reveal Post Hoc analysis with respect to psychological hardiness between different professions. Significant differences in psychological hardiness were found in the groups - health with bank and education at 0.05 level of the significance. However, the Post Hoc analysis reveals no significant difference psychological hardiness in the groups- health with police, bank with education and police, and education with police.

Discussion:-

The present study examined the psychological hardiness of the personnel of different professions of Kashmir valley. It was an attempt to determine whether the psychological hardiness differ among the personnel of different sectors with respect to their gender, domiciling, economic status, family type, marital status and nature of the job. Results related to the difference between male and female subjects presented and analyzed in the above section show that the two groups do not differ significantly (Ref. Table 4.1). The reason for these results could be that there is equal footing between males and females in every walk of life as a result both the genders learn to cope every situation equally. While the difference in psychological hardiness of personnel of rural vs. urban, high salaried vs. low salaried, nuclear family vs. joint family groups, married vs. unmarried, and personnel with permanent job vs. personnel with temporary job. The analyses of the results showed that all these contrasting groups do not differ significantly (Ref. Tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6). This means that all these groups use somewhat similar coping strategies or resilience in different stressing situations.

From the above discussion it can be said that the personnel of different professions do not differ significantly with respect to their gender, domiciling, economic status, family type, marital status and nature of job. Hence, our hypothesis Ho1 is accepted.

The findings of the present study related to the difference in psychological hardiness across the personnel of different professions showed that the personnel of health sector vs. personnel of banking sector and personnel of health sector vs. personnel of education sector differ significantly (Ref. Table 4.8). It seems that personnel of health sector have high psychological resilience than either personnel of banking sector or personnel of education sector.

The reasons for these results could be that personnel of health sector are highly knowledgeable about different coping mechanisms and their appropriate use, which the personnel of other sectors may be lacking. Further, our results also show that personnel of health sector vs. personnel of police sector do not differ significantly in terms of psychological hardiness. Hence, our hypothesis Ho2 is partially rejected.

Conclusion:-

Hardiness is the ability of an individual to combat stress. Research supported the idea that hardiness contributed to mental health through coping and appraisal mechanisms (Florian, Mikulincer & Taubman, 1995). People of different professions have different culture of jobs, stressors and coping strategies. According to Kobasa (1979), hardiness is defined in terms of more specific dimensions of control, commitment and challenge characteristics that may influence both cognitive appraisal and behavior in response to stressful events. After analyzing and interpreting the data, it was concluded that psychological hardiness differs across different professions viz. bank, education, police and health. The personnel of bank and education profession have higher levels of psychological hardiness as compared to personnel of police and health profession. Health professionals have least level of psychological hardiness when comparing with bank, education and police professionals. People of different professions do not differ in psychological hardiness with respect to their gender, residential area, salary, family type, marital status, and nature to job. Male and female personnel do not differ in psychological hardiness from each other. Rural people do not differ from urban people in psychological hardiness. People of different income do not differ in psychological hardiness. Similarly, professionals of nuclear families do not differ in psychological hardiness with professionals of joint families. Married and unmarried people have same levels of psychological hardiness. Also people of permanent type of jobs do not differ in psychological hardiness with people of temporary jobs. Moreover, psychological hardiness in health professionals differs significantly with bank and education professionals. In contrast, in psychological hardiness health professionals do not differ significantly with police professionals, bank professionals with education and police professionals, and education professionals with police professionals.

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