

Moderation role of proactive coping between psychological place attachment and its mental health consequences in sojourners

Rida Muhammad Akbar, Muhammad Naveed Riaz

Abstract

Objective: To investigate the interaction effect of psychological place attachment and proactive coping on psychological distress and mental well-being in sojourners.

Methods: The cross-sectional study was conducted from July 12, 2019 to July 12, 2020 at University of Sargodha, Pakistan and comprised academic sojourners who stay in a place for a limited period of time. Data was collected using four self-reporting tools: Psychological Place Attachment Scale, Proactive Coping Inventory, Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale and Kasler Psychological Distress Scale. Data was analysed using SPSS 24.

Results: Of the 300 subjects, 181 (60.3%) were females; 164 (54.7%) were from Punjab; and 261 (87%) were aged 17-22 years. Proactive coping, preventive coping and reflective coping significantly moderated the relationship between affective and psychological distress ($p < 0.05$). Proactive coping and reflective coping significantly moderated the relationship between affective bonding and mental well-being ($p < 0.05$). Proactive coping, preventive coping and avoidance coping significantly moderated the relationship between home meaning and psychological distress ($p < 0.05$). Proactive coping moderated the relationship between home meaning and psychological distress. Proactive coping and reflective coping moderated the relationship between place identity and psychological distress ($p < 0.05$). Proactive coping moderated the relationship between place identity and mental well-being ($p < 0.05$). Instrumental support-seeking moderated the relationship between place dependence and psychological distress ($p < 0.05$). Preventive coping and reflective coping moderated the relationship between psychological place attachment and psychological distress ($p < 0.05$). Reflective coping, strategic planning and preventive coping significantly moderated the relationship between psychological place attachment and mental well-being ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Positive coping strategies were effective in re-educating the negative impacts of place attachment on well-being and buffering against psychological distress.

Keywords: Affective bonding, Home meaning, Rootedness, Proactive coping, Reflective coping, Strategic planning, Instrumental support-seeking, Emotional support-seeking, Avoidance coping. (JPMA 71: 2531; 2021)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.02-336>

Introduction

Theories of attachment have been illustrating the impact of human attachments on physical and mental health. In the last decade, the construct of attachment was extended in terms of "place attachment" in general and "psychological place attachment" in particular. Place attachment with residency condition speaks of passionate bonds to a home domain, as based on the genuine importance of a living place.¹ Contrary to the interpersonal attachment, the psychological place attachment focussed on the attachment of human beings with their residential places. Just like interpersonal attachments, empirical work on psychological place attachment confirmed the impact of this unique type of attachment on the mental health of individuals shifting from one place (place of origin) to the other (place of temporary stay). Pakistan is a combination of several sub-cultures, which, despite numerous similarities, that have multiple distinctive cultural traits.

Thus, when members of one sub-cultural group shifts from one province to the other, they face mental health challenges. The existing body of scientific knowledge is evident that psychological place attachment directly affects the well-being of sojourners, the term used for those who move from one place and settle in another place for a limited period. In more specific terms, psychological place attachment mars well-being and escalates level of psychological distress. Mental well-being is defined as people having the ability to battle to build up harmony among life nervousness and individual and social interests.² Psychological distress is defined as agitated suffering depicted by symptoms of hopelessness, like lost interest, harshness, bitterness, and uneasiness, like nervousness and tense feelings.³

The above-cited evidences conform the impact of psychological place attachment on the mental health-related outcomes of academic sojourners. One step ahead of it is that when sojourners' well-being and level of distress is affected by their memories of their place attachment

Department of Psychology, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.

Correspondence: Rida Muhammad Akbar. e-mail: ridaakbar45@gmail.com

with their place of origin, and they intentionally make use of some proactive coping strategy to deal with the heightened risk to their mental health. Proactive coping is viewed as having different positive capacities to advance well-being and prosperity.⁴ Individual traits and attachment advancement with a particular place is a disregarded area of research.⁵ The current study was planned to investigate the interaction effect of psychological place attachment and proactive coping on psychological distress and mental well-being in academic sojourners, or university students who shift from one place to the other for academic purposes.

Subjects and Method

The cross-sectional study was conducted from July 12, 2019 to July 12, 2020 at University of Sargodha, Pakistan and comprised academic sojourners. An ERC approval has been taken from committee. The sample size was calculated using G-power calculator⁶ and the sample was raised using purposive sampling technique from among academic sojourners of either gender aged 17-28 years belonging to different provinces of Pakistan and temporarily staying in local hostels away from their place of origin. First of all, the heads of different hostels and departments were approached, and, with their permission, superintendents were approached who helped in approaching potential subjects. Informed consent was taken from each participant, and those who did not volunteer to participate were excluded.

Data was collected using various tools. Psychological Place Attachment Scale (PPAS) measured place attachment. It consists of 20 items and five subscales. Each subscale consists of 4 items measured on 5-point Likert response. A high score shows the high level of psychological place attachment and vice versa. High internal consistency and high construct and factorial reliability has been reported for PPAS.¹

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) included 10 items related to feelings in the most recent 30 days. Scores are then summed up with the most extreme score of 50 demonstrating serious misery, and the base score of 10 showing no trouble. Cronbach's alpha of K10 is 0.88.⁷

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) has 14 items with 5 response categories. The scale is scored by summing up individual responses. The items are all worded positively and cover both feeling and functioning aspects of mental well-being. The psychological properties represent high reliabilities, face and content validity, with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.89.⁸

The Proactive Coping Inventory has 55 items and seven subscales. Alpha reliability for each subscale is >0.75 which is good evidence. Three items are needed to reverse code. The scale has good content and construct validity.⁸

Data was analysed using SPSS 24. Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients and Pearson correlation were calculated for all variables. Linear and multiple regression analyses were conducted to find out the mental health outcomes of psychological place attachment of the subjects.

Results

Of the 300 subjects, 181(60.3%) were females; 164(54.7%) were from Punjab; and 261(87%) were aged 17-22 years (Table-1).

Pearson correlation, alpha coefficients and normality statistics of most of the variables were significant (Table-2).

All moderations for psychological distress were significant except place dependence-instrumental support seeking, and rootedness-emotional support seeking, while all moderations for mental well-being were significant except affective bonding-proactive coping (Table-3).

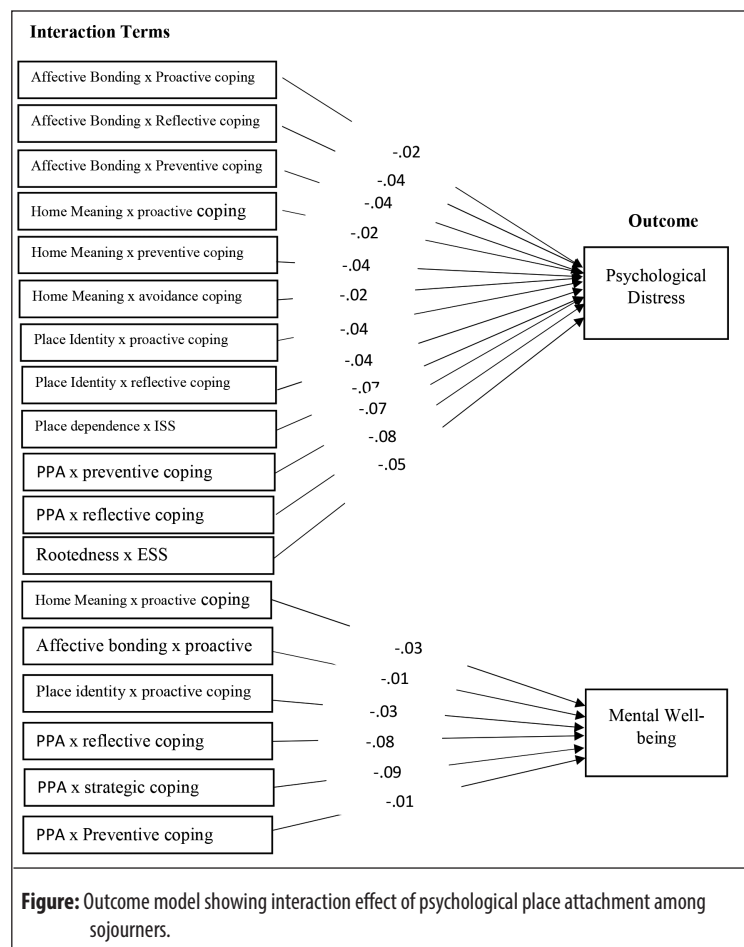


Table-1: Characteristics of participants.

Demographic variables		n (%)
Gender		
Boys		119 (39.7)
Girls		181 (60.3)
Family System		
Nuclear		142 (47.3)
Joint		158 (52.7)
Residence		
Urban		181 (60.3)
Rural		118 (39.3)
Birth order		
First		70 (23.3)
Second		105 (35.0)
Last One		104 (33.7)
Only One		24 (8.0)
Province		
Punjab		164 (54.7)
Sindh		19 (6.3)
KP		41 (13.7)
Balochistan (FATA)		54 (18.0)
Gilgit-Baltistan		22 (7.35)
Age (years)		
17-22		261 (87.0)
23-28		39 (13.0)

KP: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; FATA: Federally-administered tribal area.

Table-3: Interaction effect of psychological place attachment and outcomes among sojourners.

Interactions	B	R ²	F	ΔR ²	ΔF
[a] Outcome: Psychological distress					
Affective bonding x proactive coping	-.02	.18	24.40***	.01	4.00**
Affective bonding x reflective coping	-.04	.15	18.31***	.02	7.47***
Affective bonding x preventive coping	-.04	.07	7.63***	.01	5.25*
Home meaning x proactive coping	-.02	.46	84.08**	.01	4.54*
Home meaning x preventive coping	-.04	.36	55.39***	.02	10.35***
Home meaning x avoidance coping	-.02	.18	21.97***	.01	4.18*
Place identity x proactive coping	-.04	.07	8.39***	.02	7.52**
Place identity x reflective coping	-.04	.03	3.25*	.02	6.81**
Place dependence x instrumental support seeking	-.07	.46	78.04***	.01	.99
Psychological place attachment x preventive coping	-.07	.20	24.99***	.02	19.63**
Psychological place attachment x reflective coping	-.08	.14	17.23**	.03	4.66*
Rootedness x emotional support seeking	-.05	.01	1.34	.03	.95
[b] Outcome: Mental well-being					
Home meaning x proactive coping	-.03	.45	81.84***	.01	3.34*
Affective bonding x proactive coping	-.01	.04	5.09**	.01	.15
Place identity x proactive coping	-.03	.07	8.42***	.02	8.20**
Psychological place attachment x reflective coping	-.08	.14	17.33**	.05	4.67**
Psychological place attachment x strategic coping	-.09	.33	48.58**	.01	2.52*
Psychological place attachment x preventive coping	-.01	.20	25.61***	.07	2.93*

Table-2: Pearson correlation, alpha coefficients and normality statistics of variables..

Variables	Pearson Correlations																Normality Statistics	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Sleekness	Kurtosis
1. Place Attachment	-	.61***	.65***	.8***	.88***	.81***	.03***	.34***	.34***	.34**	.26	.18	.20	.26*	.22*	.24*	.04	-.40
2. Affective Bonding		-	.22**	.46***	.36***	.27	.05	.47***	.53***	.50***	.50***	.31*	.38**	.28*	.32*	.45***	-.05	-.50
3. Home Meaning			-	.38**	.44***	.57***	.13	.20	.07	.09	.11	.00	-.03	.17	-.01	-.02	-.18	-.51
4. Place Identity				-	.72**	.47***	.06***	.33**	.41***	.39***	.30**	.31**	.29*	.35*	.26**	.15*	-.02	-.82
5. Place Dependence					-	.73**	.09**	.10	.10*	.10**	.03	.02*	.03**	.09**	.17**	.13***	-.13	-.68
6. Rootedness						-	.03	.16*	.16	.22	.11	.05	.08	.11	.08	.17	-.30	-.57
7. Psychological Distress							-	.41**	.35**	.36**	.38*	.29*	.31*	.23	.11	-.19	-.84	1.12
8. Mental Well-being								-	.71***	.68***	.65**	.64***	.59**	.39**	.22*	.19***	-.61	-.00
9. Proactive Coping Inventory									-	.81***	.84***	.72***	.87**	.74**	.57*	.34**	-.39	.18
10. Proactive Coping										-	.69***	.62**	.63***	.39**	.39***	.18**	-.75	1.02
11. Reflective Coping											-	.66***	.68***	.51**	.30**	.08***	.28	2.71
12. Strategic Planning												-	.71**	.29**	.16***	.15*	-.41	-.16
13. Preventive Coping													-	.56	.44	.24	-.33	-.01
14. Instrumental Support seeking														-	.68***	.27*	-.55	.26
15. Emotional Support Seeking															-	.38*	-.38	-.10
16. Avoidance Coping																-	-.30	-.46

Note. Alpha coefficients are given in diagonals; *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

All moderation interaction are elaborated in the given figure (Figure).

Discussion

It was hypothesized that proactive coping, reflective coping and preventive coping were likely to moderate the relationship between affective bonding and psychological distress. The results supported the hypothesis. The level of psychological distress can be decreased by undertaking proactive coping measures.

Reflective coping is about imitation and inspection about a diversity of possible behavioural substitutes, including thinking, solving problems and resources, and making hypothetical solution of action.⁹

Preventive coping foresees potential stressors and plans before these stressors grow completely. It alludes to a potential danger in future by thinking about understanding, expectation or learning. Proactive coping does not depend on risk, but is driven by objective

endeavouring.⁹

The second moderation hypothesis was that proactive coping and reflective coping would moderate the relationship between affective bonding and mental well-being. It was also supported by the results. Research shows a significant proof for aggregation of muddling elements, repeats, and future chronicity in youthful grown-ups with emotional wellness issues.¹⁰ Conversely, positive educational encounters may, among other things, give the individual significant assets for coping well enough with existence changes.

The third moderation hypothesis was that proactive coping, preventive coping and avoidance coping would moderate the relationship between home meaning and psychological distress. Home meaning includes the basic necessities and sense of the home, such as lessening, feeling greeted, feeling safe, and as the place being viewed as one's home and person develop bonding with place.¹¹ Avoidance coping is an act in a challenging situation by postponing.⁹

The fourth moderation hypothesis was that proactive coping was likely to moderate the relationship between home meaning and mental well-being. Engagement relationships, meaning and purpose, achievement or mastery, mental health are all domains of mental well-being.¹² This evidence not only supports the hypothesis, but confirms the previous hypothesis about psychological distress and psychological place attachment. Another hypothesis was that instrumental support-seeking moderated the relationship between place dependence and psychological distress. Place dependence includes understanding and being familiar to the facilities being available in the home or the most wanted place in the facility. Most of those emotions toward the vital place are positive, like feeling love, happiness, joy, pride, and happiness once visiting (or thinking about) one's place. However, people will generally hold negative feelings toward their vital places after they represent painful recollections or once the place has disappeared or changed.¹³

The other moderation hypothesis was that preventive coping and reflective coping moderated the relationship between psychological place attachment and psychological distress. It was supported by data.

In terms of limitations, the current study used no measure to control social desirability. Also, common method variance, and single-source data with no cross rated measure were also limitations. The study could have also

extended itself to other areas like professional sojourners, but that was not done.

Despite the limitations, the current study was an applied research which can be helpful in understanding the impact of some effective and ineffective coping strategies in the continuum of place attachment and its outcomes.

Conclusion

Positive coping strategies were effective in re-educating the negative impacts of place attachment on well-being and buffering against psychological distress.

Disclaimer: None.

Conflict of Interest: None.

Source of Funding: None.

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