

# Hope and Coping Strategies as Predictors for Mental Health amongst Malaysians

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Mental health has deteriorated ever since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The present study examined the predicting roles of hope and coping strategies (active coping, planning, seeking instrumental social support, seeking emotional social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance, and humour) on mental health (depression and anxiety) amongst Malaysian adults, using cross-sectional survey design. This study was conducted between 26th April 2021 and 6th May 2021. A total of 224 Malaysians (58.9% females and 41.1% males; 53.2% working and 46.8% non-working individuals; mean age = 26.5 years) participated in this study through convenience sampling method. Participants were required to fill in four surveys (demographic data form, Adult Hope Scale [AHS], the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced [COPE] inventory, and Depression, Anxiety, and Stress scale [DASS-21]) measuring demographic characteristics, level of hope, core coping strategies, and the levels of depression and anxiety of the participants respectively, via Google Forms. Simple Linear Regression analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 22.0. Results revealed that hope predicted a lower level of depression and anxiety. Furthermore, planning, and positive reinterpretation and growth predicted a lower level of depression. However, surprisingly, acceptance, and humour coping strategies predicted higher levels of depression and anxiety. Implications on healthcare management were discussed in order to provide better support for those with mental health challenges during the pandemic. In conclusion, it is vital to master selective healthy coping strategies and maintain high level of hope to improve mental health during the pandemic.

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