Trapped in Self-Sabotage Patterns: The Role of Coping Styles in Early Adulthood with Emotionally Immature Parents

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Abstract:
This study aims to examine the role of coping style in early adulthood with emotionally immature parents on the level of self-sabotage. The background of this research is based on the phenomenon observed in individuals who grow up with emotionally immature parents, often facing difficulties in problem-solving and engaging in self-sabotaging behaviors. This study uses a quantitative method with simple linear regression analysis to test the relationship between coping style and self-sabotage. The results show a significant relationship between the two variables, with an internalizing coping style showing a negative correlation and an externalizing coping style showing a positive correlation with self-sabotage. The effect of coping style on Self-sabotage is recorded at twenty-one percent, with the internalizing coping style having a greater impact than the externalizing coping style. This study concludes that coping style plays an important role in shaping Self-sabotage behaviors in early adulthood with emotionally immature parents. It is hoped that this research will serve as a reference for future studies and provide further insights into the relationship between coping style and Self-sabotage in individuals with emotionally immature family backgrounds.

Keywords: *coping style, early adulthood, emotionally immature parents, self-sabotage*

1. Introduction

Self-sabotage is a subconscious behavior that hinders individuals from achieving their goals, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally. This behavior emerges when a person unintentionally or deliberately undermines their own success and well-being, often leading to a decline in quality of life and achievements (Yearwood, 2023). One form of self-sabotage is procrastination, which is known as the habit of delaying tasks or work that should be completed (Joseph, 2010). Additionally, perfectionism can also be a form of self-sabotage, occurring when individuals set overly high and unrealistic standards for their goal attainment (Conroy, Kaye, & Fifer, 2007). Impostor syndrome, a psychological phenomenon in which individuals feel undeserving of their achievements, is another manifestation of self-sabotage (Clance & Imes, 1978).

Childhood trauma, such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, is a significant contributing factor to the development of self-sabotaging behaviors in individuals. Such trauma can lower self-esteem and cause individuals to feel unworthy of establishing healthy relationships, both in personal and professional contexts (Slade, 2019; Supratiknya, 1995). Self-sabotage is also influenced by emotionally immature parenting, which leads to an inability to regulate emotions healthily and fosters maladaptive behavioral patterns (Gibson, 2015).

Although several forms of self-sabotage have been widely identified, such as procrastination and fear of success, comprehensive research measuring self-sabotage as a whole remains limited. Moreover, despite the measurement developed by Yearwood (2023)—which includes only five types of self-sabotage—there are still few instruments that assess self-sabotage in a holistic manner. Research linking self-sabotage with coping patterns in young adults raised by emotionally immature parents is also scarce, highlighting a research gap that needs to be addressed.

Self-sabotage can interfere with long-term goal attainment, including marriage, family-building, social adjustment, and career development (Hurlock, 1996; Havighurst, 1967). The primary aim of this study is to analyze the relationship and influence of coping styles on self-sabotage in emerging adults who have emotionally immature parents. Additionally, this research seeks to enrich existing literature on self-sabotage, particularly concerning the impact of coping styles and emotionally immature parenting.

This study focuses on an underexplored phenomenon, namely the influence of coping styles on self-sabotage, which develops as a consequence of emotionally immature parenting. It is expected that this research will contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between emotionally immature parenting, maladaptive coping styles, and self-sabotaging behaviors in emerging adults. As an initial step, the hypothesis of this study consists of two stages: Identifying the relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage. Measuring the impact of coping styles on self-sabotage in emerging adults.

2. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative method with a correlational approach to examine the relationship and influence of coping styles on self-sabotage in emerging adults with

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emotionally immature parents. The research population consists of adults aged 18–40 years, selected using purposive sampling based on five indicators of parental emotional immaturity: selfishness, lack of empathy, unreasonable demands, lack of emotional support, and difficulty accepting differing opinions. Participants meeting at least three of these criteria were included, resulting in 205 respondents.

The study utilizes two primary instruments: the Coping Style Scale, adapted from Gibson (2015), measuring Approach to Life, Response to Problems, Psychological Style, and Relationship Style with 18 items (r = 0.868); and the Self-Sabotage Scale, adapted from Yearwood (2023), comprising 50 items assessing procrastination, fear, perfectionism, impostor syndrome, and limiting beliefs (r = 0.963). The research procedure involved distributing the instruments to selected participants, followed by data analysis using IBM SPSS 25.0. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was conducted, and if normality assumptions were met, correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage. If a significant relationship was found, simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the impact of coping styles on self-sabotage. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how maladaptive coping styles contribute to self-sabotaging behaviors in emerging adults raised by emotionally immature parents.

3. Results

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship and influence of coping styles on self-sabotage in emerging adults with emotionally immature parents. The analysis results indicate a significant relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage in this population. The correlation test using simple linear regression analysis yielded a p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05), meaning that the first hypothesis (Ha1) is accepted, confirming a significant relationship between the two variables.

Specifically, the analysis reveals a significant negative relationship between internalized coping style and self-sabotage (r = -0.451, p = 0.000), with a moderate correlation coefficient. This suggests that the greater the tendency toward internalized coping, the higher the level of self-sabotage. On the other hand, the analysis also found a significant positive relationship between externalized coping style and self-sabotage (r = 0.433, p = 0.000), indicating that the greater the tendency toward externalized coping, the higher the level of self-sabotage.

Table 1.

Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Variable	R	R Square	F	Sig
Coping style dan *Self-sabotage*	0,462	0,213	55,087	0,000

The regression analysis results show an F-value of 55.087 with a significance level (p = 0.000 < 0.05), indicating a significant effect of coping style on self-sabotage. This effect is measured by the coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.213, meaning that 21.3% of the variation in self-sabotage can be explained by coping style. More specifically, internalized coping style contributes 20.3% to self-sabotage, while

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externalized coping style contributes 18.7%. These findings suggest that coping style plays a crucial role in influencing self-sabotaging behaviors in emerging adults raised by emotionally immature parents.

4. Discussion

The discussion of this study aims to examine the relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage in emerging adults with emotionally immature parents. The findings indicate that coping styles play a significant role in shaping self-sabotage levels. This study identifies two types of coping styles—internalized and externalized coping—which show opposite relationships with self-sabotage. Internalized coping style has a negative correlation with self-sabotage, meaning that the higher the internalized coping tendency, the lower the self-sabotage behavior, and vice versa. Conversely, externalized coping style has a positive correlation with self-sabotage, indicating that higher externalized coping tendencies lead to increased self-sabotage behaviors.

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage in emerging adults, particularly those raised by emotionally immature parents. The findings provide valuable insights for developing therapy or psychological interventions, especially for individuals with internalized coping styles, who may be at a higher risk of self-sabotage compared to those with externalized coping styles. This aligns with Gibson (2015), who suggests that individuals with internalized coping styles tend to experience guilt, excessive worry, and a heightened sense of responsibility, which can increase self-sabotage tendencies.

These findings also reinforce previous studies linking coping styles to procrastination. For example, Revelle (1997) found that impulsivity and reactivity, which are more dominant in individuals with externalized coping styles, are strongly associated with procrastination. This aligns with the results of this study, which indicate that individuals with externalized coping styles are more likely to engage in procrastination. Additionally, self-confidence plays a crucial role in determining procrastination levels, as explained by Syahnur (2021), who found that higher self-confidence leads to lower procrastination behaviors. In this context, internalized coping styles, which are associated with higher self-confidence, can help reduce procrastination behaviors.

Regarding other forms of self-sabotage, such as fear and perfectionism, the findings can be linked to psychological theories. Individuals with internalized coping styles, who tend to experience guilt and worry, are more prone to perfectionism. This aligns with Frost et al. (1990), who described perfectionism as a tendency to critically evaluate one's own behavior. Meanwhile, in externalized coping styles, reactivity and a tendency to blame others may reduce perfectionism tendencies.

Furthermore, in the case of imposter syndrome, this study found that internalized coping styles, which are strongly influenced by guilt, tend to be more vulnerable to this form of self-sabotage. This is consistent with Neureiter and Traut-Mattausch (2016), who found that fear and guilt associated with success can trigger imposter syndrome. On the other hand, externalized coping styles, which involve blaming others and focusing on external factors, are less associated with imposter syndrome.

Regarding limiting beliefs, both internalized and externalized coping styles were

found to contribute to self-limiting thoughts, causing individuals to feel incapable of solving problems independently or becoming overly dependent on others. These findings reinforce the idea that coping styles shape thought patterns that limit an individual's ability to face challenges and adapt effectively. Implications for Psychological Interventions

The results of this study have significant implications for psychological interventions. Interventions focused on self-awareness, guilt management, and self-confidence development will be highly beneficial for individuals with internalized coping styles. Meanwhile, for those with externalized coping styles, interventions emphasizing impulse control and self-reflection can help reduce self-sabotaging behaviors. This study highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage, particularly among individuals raised by emotionally immature parents. By recognizing these patterns, interventions can be tailored to suit an individual's specific coping tendencies, ultimately improving their well-being and personal development.

Overall, this study provides a new contribution to understanding the role of coping styles in shaping self-sabotaging behaviors in emerging adults. These findings serve as a foundation for future research, exploring interactions between other psychological factors related to self-sabotage and coping styles.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study indicates that coping styles play a significant role in self-sabotage among emerging adults with emotionally immature parents. The findings confirm a significant relationship between coping styles and self-sabotage, with internalized coping showing a negative correlation and externalized coping showing a positive correlation, thus supporting the first hypothesis (Ha1). Additionally, the analysis reveals that coping styles contribute 21.3% to self-sabotage, suggesting that other factors also influence self-sabotage beyond internalized and externalized coping styles. Internalized coping has a greater impact on self-sabotage (20.3%) compared to externalized coping (18.7%). Therefore, the second hypothesis (Ha2) is also accepted, stating that internalized coping plays a more significant role in increasing self-sabotage levels in emerging adults with emotionally immature parents. This study is expected to serve as preliminary research on the role of coping styles in self-sabotage levels and can be a reference for future studies exploring the same variables. Further research could compare emerging adults with emotionally mature and immature parents to deepen the understanding of differences in coping styles and self-sabotage levels, as well as expand discussions on this phenomenon.

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