

Abstract

This research project was designed to measure the effect of daily stressors and worry postponement on health behaviors (eating and sleep). It also aimed to study the role of preservative cognitions (worry and rumination) in explaining the relationship between daily stressors and health behaviors. Two studies were carried out to achieve the objectives of the present research. Study-I focused on investigating the impact of daily stressors and perseverative cognition on health behaviors cross-culturally. Study-I was conducted on 332 participants from Pakistan and the UK and was carried out in two phases. In Phase-I, baseline questionnaires i.e., demographics, Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire, Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, Penn State Worry Questionnaire, Ruminative Response Scale were completed by the participants of Pakistan and the UK and psychometrics of these measures were established. The reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were consummated for all the scales used in the study through SPSS and AMOS. Confirmatory factor analysis reported that all the scales were reliable. In Phase-II, the assessment of the Daily Diary was carried out on the participants of Pakistan and the UK. The participants were asked to complete online diaries twice a day for seven days through the daily diary research design. The hypotheses testing were carried out through HLM software, in which hierarchical linear modeling was performed. Results indicated a significant relationship between daily stressors and daily perseverative cognition on daily unhealthy snacking and daily sleep quality; and country moderated the association between daily stress-unhealthy snacking, daily worryunhealthy snacking, daily perseverative cognition (worry and rumination), and daily sleep quality. The moderating effect of the country was decomposed separately in the UK and Pakistan samples. Results revealed substantial relationships of daily stressors and daily worry with unhealthy snacking in the UK, but no significant association was found in Pakistan; Daily worry and daily rumination also have a significant impact on daily sleep quality in

Pakistan and the UK. The further analysis reported the moderating role of emotional eating on daily stressors-unhealthy snacking and daily worry- unhealthy snacking relationship in Pakistan. Study-II aimed to investigate the effect of worry postponement intervention on health behaviors (eating and sleep). Study-II was conducted on 233 participants from Pakistan and was carried out in three phases. The Pretest-Posttest experimental design was used for the study. In Phase-I, pre-test baseline survey i.e., demographics, Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire, Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, and Penn State Worry Questionnaire were completed by the participants. In Phase-II, out of 145 participants who exceeded the cut-off scores (i.e., 60) on Penn State Worry Questionnaire, 115 gave consent to take part in the study for further six consecutive days. Two groups (control and experimental) were formed to run the experiment. In Phase-III, all the participants were assessed on a survey immediately on the next day following the six days intervention. Reliability of baseline measures was established, and Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis indicated significant inter-correlations among the study variables. Results indicated that the treatment condition had moderating effects on the worry-unhealthy snacking relationship and worrysleep quality relationship. A mixed ANOVA test was applied for analyzing pre and postintervention differences. Findings showed that there were significant differences in pre intervention and post-intervention scores in the experimental group and control group on the scores of worry, emotional eating, external eating, and sleep quality. The results suggest that worry postponement significantly reduced the worry in experimental group and it is recommended to be practiced in universities and other higher education institutions in Pakistan.

Keywords. Daily stressors, health behaviors, perseverative cognition, worry, rumination, unhealthy snacking, sleep quality, worry postponement.