

COPING, STRATEGY FOR ADAPTING AND MANAGING STRESS

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Abstract

The complexity of society, the variety of factors interfering in the sphere of daily interpersonal relations, have generated, generate and will generate phenomenes of stress which, in specific conditions, produce a series of dysfunctions. Stressogenic reactions have a special value in the training and resistance of the human body, thus defending the concept of coping. This article focuses on the theoretical aspects of this concept, and it is important for the employee to set up effective adaptation strategies to manage stress tolerance, minimize it, or even manage it effectively.

Key words: coping, coping strategies, stages, stress.

JEL classification: O15.

1. Introduction

Coping is a complex phenomenon with great influence both on employees and on the community in general. The more we understand how a person reacts when faced with stress factors, the more effective we can place the coping method towards more positive results.

The transaction between the individual and the situation determines the cognitive-emotional processes of stress. Stress occurs when an event is evaluated out of resources and endangering employee welfare. This answer is the result of a balance between the demands of the situation and the resources of the individual to cope. Thus, employees feel the perceived demands of their environment as stressful by promoting adaptation or coping strategies. They use a wide range of adaptation strategies, some achieving their goal of reducing negative states and facilitating adaptation to the surrounding reality, but others are driving the negative effects of the situations they face.

Coping strategies actually comprise all the types of strategies people use to eliminate or lessen an unpleasant emotion: from diverting attention to something else, to complex methods that they sometimes use without realizing (unconsciously).

2. Stress and coping strategy

Early work of Selye (1974) identified stress as "an unspecific response of the body following a situation." This has further stimulated interest in stress, identifying key stressors and coping strategies. The coping was then defined by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage the external and / or internal requirements that are assessed as taxing or overtaking a person's resources". Lazarus and Folkman (1984), as leading research leaders, described the personal perception called "assessment", along with susceptibility and threats to well-being, along with problem-based and emotional-focused responses, as aspects of stress and coping. The psychological theory of appreciation, stress and coping was presented as the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Folkman (1997) subsequently revised the model to include the results of the event and the negative feedback loops. Coping has been defined as the management of stressors (internal and external threats) through cognitive and behavioral efforts; manifested in actions, emotions and thinking responses that can be adaptive.

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Due to the various problems investigated in relation to stress and coping, a wide range of evidence identifies the influence variables used for coping mechanisms. In a particular situation, decisions or potential response options take into account details such as: the ability to respond, the influences of past experience, and the current thoughts related to them. Resonance resonances are potentially cognitive, emotional and / or behavioral (Macy, 2007).

Proactive coping efforts attempt to modify events before stress factors develop and require different skills than reactive coping (Bode, de Ridder, Bensing, 2006). When stress factors are viewed from the perspective of the challenges, a positive effect is obtained. In this context, proactivity and stress factors seen as holistic challenges require the challenge of traditional stressful outlook. When working to align stressors with positive coping responses, account must be taken of the social and cultural influences of this experience. When we ask for the most constructive answers, the development of positive skills to quickly determine a comprehensive assessment of the problem and potential solutions are warranted.

There is no simple way to establish an initial understanding and then to successfully deal with stress - due to its unique experiences that intersect in the complex structure of everyday life. A coping model or strategy that highlights the various complexities of adaptation responses can facilitate a deeper understanding of the complexity of coping.

3. Phases of coping

Coping takes place through the three stages, as follows:

- a. The first stage is the anticipation of the situation - it can be postponed or prevented by the employee.
- b. The second stage is the actual confrontation and redefinition of the situation through the confrontation.
- c. The third stage, called post-conflict, analyzes the personal significance of the situation the employee faced.

Stress does not occur in relation to the employee, not only at the level of the situation, but also in the employee-environment relationship. The qualitative and quantitative features of a stressor do not affect the intensity of stress. The negative reaction to stress is the result of the imbalance between external or internal exigencies and the employee's resources to cope with them.

Aggressive factors go through several stages that lead to amplifying or diminishing reactions, depending on how they are perceived, evaluated, and appreciated. Not all sources of stress can be considered effective stress forms, allowing tolerance even ignoring stressors. The functionality or malfunction of coping depends on who, when and how to use a particular strategy, but also the type of threat and environmental factors.

4. Coping strategies

Using the dichotomization proposed by Lazarus and Folkman, coping can be focused on emotions but also on the problem.

Emergency-centered coping refers to the attempts made by the employee to adjust their emotions as a result of a situation.

In this sense, the employee can use deferred, minimized or "fooling" strategies, ignoring the problem in the hope that it will solve by itself or with the passage of time he refuses to believe in the present negative circumstances, accepting reality as it is, thus appealing to divine help for stress to disappear. Emergency-focused stress coping strategies are considered less effective than problem-centered coping strategies because they do not provide long-term solutions, but in the short term they are considered to be beneficial to some employees.

Focusing on the problem involves the dynamic side, so employees using this resolution strategy look for stress-generating causes and act directly on them. In this way, the employee does not move away from the cause of stress but addresses his / her aspects directly. Due to the fact that the problem-focused coping strategy addresses stress-generating causes and aims to eliminate them, it is considered to be the mechanism that offers long-term solutions. As a result of stressful situations, employees are tempted to act. That is why we are dealing with the term coping, which can be defined as the way we think or act to remedy the negative aspects of a stressful situation. Thus emotion-focused coping refers to the strategies an employee adopts in front of stressors by trying to diminish or eliminate emotional responses to stressful factors, while focusing on the issue involves direct confrontation with the stress-generating source.

Coping is more than just a reaction to stress, it is a multidimensional control strategy that has the purpose of changing either the situation or the subjective thinking. Thus, positive-minded employees will assess unclear situations as not necessarily threatening, thus using forms of coping preventive and active, thus keeping them distressed at a low level.

5. Directions of coping

The directions of coping strategies can be diverse. They may work or not, depending on the situations faced by employees (table 1).

Table 1. **Directions of coping strategies**

Current number	Name of strategy direction	The significance of the strategy
1.	The double-sense direction (going along with the situation)	Strategies considered normal: discussion, compromise, agreement and disagreement, decisions
2.	Direction towards (dealing with stressful situations)	The humble attitude of the employee
3.	Direction back	Distancing from any stress-causing factor, as if anything come from outside could produce potential harm

Source: developed by the author

With complete certainty it can not be said that one of the coping strategies is better than the other. Employees are different, so they respond differently to stress. However, problem-based coping mechanisms are more useful than emotion-focused coping when the employee has at least a minimal control over the factors that cause stress.

6. The complexity model of coping

The coping complexity model describes stress factors, coping processes, and subsequently the various possible responses. The process is initiated by a stressor (stressors). Stress is defined and influenced by the social, cultural, cognitive and environmental norms and values that influence the entire coping experience. Stress experience can be present at individual, group, community or cultural level. It is also influenced by the moment, number and nature (level or importance) of the stressor (stressors) and specific personality traits involved.

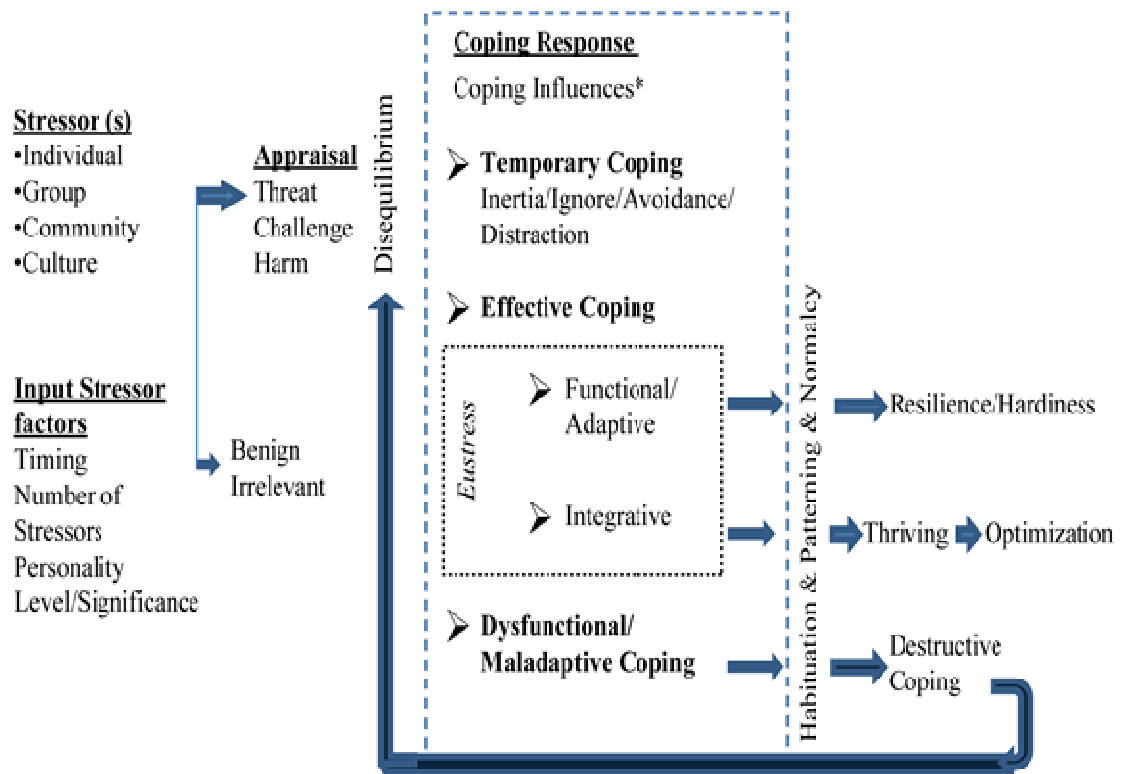
Integrated coping is used to represent "the understanding of complex issues that go beyond the boundaries of discipline and knowledge and provides opportunities to visualize phenomena from different perspectives" (King H., 2006). This integrated framework exists because of the diversity in stress types, the personality / emotional behavior of each employee and the potential ranges and response levels that result to create a result. For example, self-

esteem and emotional intelligence can mediate stress factors and stress responses (Park, H.-S., Ha, J.-H., Lee, M.-H., Lee, H.-J., 2014).

This integration aligns on systems theory that describes a perspective of integrated, interdependent and inactive parts, alongside feedback loops, as the basis of the individual, group, organization, and culture. Coping is being replaced by the new term confronting complexity due to the current revision of the concept, which includes refining the general concept and specific details. The influence table of coping outlines the factors that influence the situation and involves various dynamics, including socio-cultural, emotional, cognitive and physical aspects. Heuristic term refers to engaging or serving as a learning, discovery, or problem-solving tool through experimentation methods, especially test and error, and problem-solving exploratory techniques that use self-education techniques to improve performance.

The heuristics applied here refer to the use of a variety of styles and coping strategies that will be aligned with each specific stress problem and contextualized situation treated at that single time. Heuristic attitude exists in an integrated and complex context. Because current experiences of stressors and impacts are unique to each person or situation and are based on that person's previous experiences, an "informed (or unrecognized)" "test and error" response to that situation is exposed, a problem-solving effort specific situation.

Coping is defined as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and / or internal requirements that are assessed as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping has many layers. It starts with focusing and hiring influences, it can be short-term but assisted, here temporarily called. It can also be positive, called functional and integrated coping. Or, it may be negative, identified as a malfunction. This also leads to negative results and destructive situations for the person, group, organization and culture. "Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any request made to it (Selye, 1974)." The stressor identification and deciphering begins during the evaluation. Evaluation determines whether the stressor is considered a threat or a challenge (figure 1). This is followed by a response that can be benign and irrelevant, useful and productive, or can be harmful and destructive. If the stressor is perceived as a necessary response, then an imbalance occurs. This imbalance leads to solving or responding to coping. Temporary treatment refers to the use of an interim strategy to deal with stressors in that stressors have not been treated permanently or resolved. The problem will need to be addressed again at some point in the near future.



***Coping Influences:**

<u>Sociocultural</u>	<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Cognitive</u>	<u>Physical</u>
Seek Support	Spirituality/Religion	Clarity	Strength
Relationships	Determination	Awareness	Wellness/Illness
Role Models	Motivation	Intuition	Sleep/Rest
Appearance	Anxiety	Intelligence	Diet
Personality	Calmness	Problem Solving	Drugs
Finances	Emotional Intelligence	Reflection	
	Self-Efficacy	Resourcefulness	
	Readiness to Focus	Engagement	
	Self-Esteem	Locus of Control	

Figure 1. The complex model of the coping phenomenon

Source: Hudson K., (2016), Coping Complexity Model: Coping Stressors, Coping Influencing Factors, and Coping Responses, Psychology, 7, 300-309.

Thus, effective coping refers to the response when a person is confronted with current stressors, operating at a safe and reasonable level. Adaptive / functional function adjusts positively and constructively to the stressors that are encountered. A good result of repeated adaptive coping is the development of resilience and hardness features. Resistance results from repetitive use of adaptive coping and maintains individual well-being at a functional level in current internal and external environments (Gillespie, Chaboyer, Wallis, 2007). Resilience can result from physiological or psychological coping processes rather than external risk or protective factors (Rutter, 2006). Functional and adaptive coping describes a healthy response to the different stressors faced by them.

Coping incorporates complex, interdependent and interactive systems of socio-cultural, emotional, cognitive and physical aspects, at the highest level of integration, in order

to achieve the best possible results. "The understanding of stress would be incomplete if it is considered in one tradition isolated from the other, requiring all the biological (physiological and immunological), psychological (emotional and perceptual) and cognitive implications (King, Hegadoren, 2006).

An integrative analysis, the productive and successful response of an individual (or group, organization, society, or culture) to stress factors can improve general welfare, making the situation improved in a positive and constructive way. In repeated situations with high levels of success, it develops into resistance (Sattler, Boyd, Kirsch, 2014). Resilience can lead to prosperity. Blossoming is a real, significant, positive and positive progression that occurs because of the fact that it is confronted with stress and benefits from the lessons learned in these positive experiences. Care is a superior form of success. Even better forms of successful prosperity imply optimization. Optimization involves promoting the best goals and high standards (Clancy, 2011; Penningroth, Scott, 2012).

This model of coping complexity provides a direction for further investigation and development of coping. It would also be important to determine which specific strategies or methods of coping produce the longevity of the best and highest level of coping.

King and Hegadoren (2006) describe emotional, cognitive and physiological research approaches, contributing to understanding stress and possible ways to neglect their impact. They discuss issues related to the subjective interpretation and assessment of participants when measuring cognitive processes associated with stressful situations (in addition to the dynamic nature of moods and coping strategies). Interventions can be empirically investigated using this framework to identify both effective and inefficient coping strategies. The strategies used could then be directed to more healthy coping methods. The complexity model of coping can be used for both qualitative and quantitative research questions. It can provide a framework to guide an intervention selection of the study when studying adaptation differences.

The power of this model of complexity of coping is in its transparency, open cultural context, complexity, simplicity and clarity. A good approach requires expertise developed primarily from experience that interacts with constructive people or mentors during stressors, which contributes to the development of positive perspectives for problem solving. Coping is a complex phenomenon and involves describing various processes to provide a general understanding of this current model.

Conclusions

In most of the situations, the two ways of coping with stress, emotion-based coping and problem-based coping work together. The two types of coping are mutually supportive: emotion-based coping helps reduce the negative emotional intensity, but problem-based coping can find adaptable solutions once the inner tension and distortion of reality have diminished significantly.

It is very important to study the coping mechanisms, because in any action that we want to do to mitigate the harmful effects of distress, it is imperative to take into account the appropriateness or inadequacy of this strategy adapted to stressful situations.

It is necessary to know the strategies for adaptation to stress, for training and informing the staff confronted with the different personality characteristics and the types of professional stress. The main objective of stress management is to teach the employee some strategies to use to control stress-induced reactions in different situations.

In conclusion, it is absolutely necessary not to lose sight of the entire biopsychosocial that the human individual is and to address the problem of creating multidimensional adaptive conducts, such as the professional activities, the individual, but also the individual-activity relations.

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