



### APPLICATION OF COPING STRATEGIES BY STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITY

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**Summary.** This paper deals with the problem of coping in psychological science, discusses coping strategies and coping resources of the individual. The results of empirical studies of coping strategies of students with low, medium and high level of communicative activity.

**Key words:** coping resources; coping strategies; communicative activity; student.

In recent decades has risen an interest to the study of a person in a difficult situation. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of the ways to overcome the negative psychological effects of a difficult situation that has given rise to a variety of research areas related to the study of so-called «coping behavior» (coping behavior). This area of psychological knowledge in foreign science is based on a deep and long-standing tradition (Haan, 1963; Lazarus, 1966, 1977; Lazarus, Folkman, 1984; Bolger, 1990; Terry, 1991; Wethington, Kessler, 1991; Wasti, Cortina, 2002; Bridges, 2003). However, questions regarding the role of personality dispositions in selecting coping strategies, sustain ability or situational coping variability still remain controversial.

Use of the term «coping» refers to terms such terms as «coping behavior», «coping strategies», «coping resources» and others. «Coping strategies» based on a number of criteria are divided into active and passive, problem-oriented and emotion-focused, cognitive, behavioral and emotional, effective and ineffective, productive and unproductive, etc.

Active form of coping behavior or active overcoming being targeted to eliminate or reduce the impact of a stressful situation is distinguished easing stress due personality with its environment. Passive form of coping behavior is defined as intrapsychic ways of coping with the arsenal of psychological defense mechanisms, which are aimed to reduce emotional stress, and not to change the stressful situation [9].

Coping behavior is based on the coping resources using coping strategies. Personality characteristics and social environment which help successfully adapt to the stresses of life are referred to coping resources. The main coping resources include self-concept, locus of control, empathy, affiliation sensitivity to rejection and cognitive resources. Cognitive coping strategies (search for information) associated with positive affectivity and emotional coping strategies (avoidance, prosecution) are associated with negative emotionality, decreased self-esteem and the deterioration of adaptation to a stressful situation [6, 7].

High anxiety individual promotes the use emotional coping strategies [10], whereas a high level of psychological maturity makes use of cognitive coping strategies [6, 7]. In psychological studies has found age dynamics in the use of coping strategies: as people grow older and entry into adulthood, with increasing age category, increases the likelihood of the use of active problem-coping strategies [11]. Considerable number of studies of coping behavior performed on samples of college age. However, application of coping strategies by students with different levels of communicative activity remain poorly understood.

One of the fundamental basic coping resources is self-concept, which promotes that the individual feels confidence in the ability to control the situation. Internal personality orientation, manifested in different spheres of life, including in the field of communication, allows an adequate



assessment of the problem situation, chosen depending on the requirements of the environment adequate coping strategies, social network, determine the type and scope of the necessary social support. Sense of control over the environment contributes to the emotional stability of the individual, taking responsibility for the events.

As a coping resource considered empathy, which includes both empathy and the ability to take someone else's point of view, allowing more clearly assess the problem and create more alternatives for its solution. Significant coping resource is also affiliation, which is expressed in the form of affection and loyalty, and in sociability, in an effort to collaborate with other people, reside with them. Affiliates need is a tool orientation in interpersonal contacts and regulates emotional, informational, financial and social support by building effective relationships.

A significant amount, if not most of human life problems, coupled with the experience of stress, have undoubtedly communicative nature, reflecting certain violations in the system of interpersonal relationships with others. There are cases when a problem situation arose is a direct consequence of the mistakes that were made in contacts with other actors in the course of communication or interaction with them. Converse is also true – a communicative activity often helps a person to prevent potential problems and crises in interpersonal relationships, and in the resolution of many difficult situations.

Taking into account existing research data coping resources of the individual we should refer to that aspect of coping, which insufficiently studied to date, it is communicative activity which is a complex multi-component psychological education [1].

Communicative activity – is a feature of integral human individuality that defines the measure of interaction with other people – partners in communication, coming from him, on his own initiative. Communicative activity provides the organi-

zation of communication with others, the construction of the communicative world of personality. It is also a projective capacity, person's willingness to initiate, carry out communication with others, to show individual psychological properties, which may be required in future situations of interaction with people.

Significant impact on the effectiveness of coping behavior of the person provides social support process in the whole [5]. According I. Y. Gurovich et al [3], social support – a form of assistance in overcoming and coping in response to the demands of people's surroundings. In addition to fundamental basic coping strategies there are an additional number of ways to problem-coping behavior. This is – the real (behavioral or cognitive) solution, search of social support, interpretation of the situation in their favor, avoidance, compassion for yourself, increasing self-esteem, emotional expression [12].

As T. L. Kryukov and E. V. Kuftyak [4] admit, the diagnosis and measurement of coping are published in a large number of publications in the Western works in psychology, and few – in Russian literature. The most widely used tool for the study of coping behavior is currently designed by E. Heim questionnaire [8], consisting of three scales containing allegations reflecting ways to overcome the difficulties of the three components of coping behavior in relation to behavioral, cognitive, emotional spheres. Types of coping behavior are united into three groups according to the degree of adaptive capacity (adaptive relatively adaptive, non-adaptive).

Researchers using this questionnaire examined in detail the typology of coping behavior depending on the adaptive features:

1. To adaptive behavioral options in the field of cooperation refer searching social support cognitive – problem analysis, installation of self-worth, increase self-esteem and self-control, a deep awareness of self, in the emotional sphere – a protest against the difficulties, optimism.





2. To maladaptive variants of coping behavior in the behavioral field refer active avoidance, retreat, refusal to solve the problems, cognitive – humility, confusion, dissimulation, ignoring, in the emotional sphere – the suppression of emotions, humility, self-blame, aggression – behaviors, characterized by depressed emotional state, hopelessness, resignation, exclusion of the other senses, experience anger and laying the blame on yourself and others.

3. To relatively adaptive variants of coping behavior in the behavioral field refer compensation, diversion, constructive activity, behavior, characterized by a desire to move away from temporary solutions to problems with alcohol, drugs. In cognitive sphere as a relatively adaptive options are considered relativity, making sense, religious – forms of thinking, aimed for assessing the difficulties in comparison with other life difficulties, giving special meaning to overcome them, faith in God and perseverance in the faith («God is with me») when confronted with difficult problems. In the emotional sphere to such variants of behavior refer emotional discharge, passive cooperation – behavior aimed to the removal of the stress associated with problems, emotional acting out, or on the transfer of responsibility to resolve the difficulties by others [2].

In this thesis, N. V. Borodina has shown that «the problem of adaptation» – is not just a process of adaptation of the organism to a new environment, but most often it is the problem of changing the image of the world and lifestyle (change position, revised roles identified a completely new mechanisms and communication). Man lives in his own world, the base of which is corresponding to step system of value-semantic structures (or generators). Changing of lifestyle is not simply an adaptation (adaptation) to the new conditions of life, but also the restructuring of all that is the world of the individual and provides its temporary location, the sense of reality of the world and its human reality. Consequently, there is no

simple adjustment to the new world, but there is the appearance of a new reality as a result of creating a new system of meanings and values (Borodin, 2009, p. 56).

In our study, devoted to the study of coping strategies of students with different levels of communicative activity, to study the tactics of students coping with stress, types of behavior in difficult situations, as well as acquaintance with ways out of difficult situations was used test by E. Heim. Communicative activity was determined using test judgments by A. I. Krupnov, allowing defining the dynamic, emotional, motivational, regulatory, productive, cognitive, evaluative-reflexive activity indicators. Applied the methods of mathematical statistics – cluster analysis K-means Cluster, correlation analysis.

The study involved 149 students Udmurt State University; the sample consisted of 62 boys and 87 girls aged 18–20 years. The sample consisted of students who combine their studies with work in high school and subjectively evaluating their situation as difficult.

The total sample of students was divided into three groups according to the levels of development of communicative activity using cluster analysis procedures. As indicators for clustering variables was taken harmonic test judgments by A. I. Krupnov. Communicative activity at a high level of development organizes and coordinates the individual psychological potential and eliminates human individual psychological limitations. Students with a high level of communicative activity are sociable, socially bold, confident, show leadership in dealing with other people. Students with an average level of communicative activity are characterized by the active type of self-regulation of sociability, have attention and show concern for others, seek to promote problem-solving group. At a low level of development activity there is a high dependence on partners in dialogue, low willingness and ability to initiate social contacts.

To identify the link between performance and communicative activity exponent's



adaptability cognitive, emotional and behavioral coping strategies was used Spearman rank correlation coefficient. Adaptability of

coping strategies was assessed as follows: adaptive – 3 points; relatively adaptive – 2 points; maladaptive – 1 point.

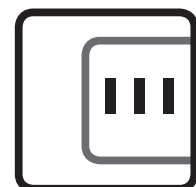
Rank correlation coefficients of significant indicators of communicative activity and coping strategies in samples of students with low, medium and high communicative activity

Indicators	Sample	Numerical coefficient	p value
Students with low communicative activity (N = 38)	1. Egocentricity – Adaptability cognitive coping strategies	-0,345	0,01
	2. Operational difficulties – Adaptability emotional coping strategies	-0,344	0,01
Students with an average of communicative activity (N = 63)	1. Personal difficulties – Adaptability cognitive coping strategies	0,272	0,01
	2. The limitations of techniques and ways of realization of sociability – Adaptability emotional coping strategies	-0,374	0,05
	3. Subjectivity – Adaptability emotional coping strategies	-0,331	0,01
	4. Subjectivity – Integrated indicator adaptive coping strategies	-0,339	0,01
Students with high communicative activity (N = 48)	1. The limitations of techniques and ways of realization of sociability – Integrated indicator adaptive coping strategies	-0,299	0,05
	2. Personal difficulties – Adaptability cognitive coping strategies	-0,292	0,05
	3. Personal difficulties – Integrated indicator adaptive coping strategies	-0,288	0,05

The results of correlation analysis were used to detect the consistency indices of communicative activity and adaptability of coping strategies in samples of students with high, medium and low communicative activity. Students with low levels of communicative activity, when they have high level of egocentric aspirations in communion characterized oriented subjects to their personal problems, the satisfaction of their own needs and interests, they have lower the probability of choosing adaptive cognitive coping strategies, and vice versa. Obviously, in difficult situations, students with low communicative activity are less prone to problem analysis and bargain sense of the situation. At higher scores on «operational difficulties» realization of communicative activity is a decrease of choice of adaptive emotional coping strategies. Accordingly, optimism, protest, emotional discharges are not typical for students with low activ-

ity and communicative difficulties communicating with others in an operational plan.

The student with the average range of communicative activity choice adaptive emotional coping strategies is accompanied by a decrease the limitations of techniques and ways of realization of sociability and subjectivity in communication. These students want to communicate with others, expressed the desire not to be alone. For them is not typical narrow circle of contacts and focus on the subject-personal sphere of communication, aimed at self-expression, self-realization and self-improvement. Selection of cognitive coping strategies of students with different communicative medium activity is consistent with the measure of personal difficulties in communication. Perhaps this is due to the fact that when students use strategies such as humility, confusion, neglect lack of focus on problem





analysis and bargain sense of the situation. In this case, focus on communication with significant others have the nature of opportunism when students tend to pass the buck to others and the manifestation of low initiative in interpersonal communication. These students prefer such strategies as cooperation, handling, altruism, constructive activity. Students with an average level of communicative activity, when they have the low subjectivity in communication, they have the greater adaptability of emotional coping strategies.

Students with high levels of communicative activity choice, when they the lower desire for solitude, they have the more pronounced constructive behavior. Choosing of adaptive cognitive coping strategies is consistent with low personal difficulties, implementing activity. In general, as shown by the results of the study, students who have no difficulty in communicating use more adaptive coping strategies. Obviously, the installations of self-worth, self-preservation, and problem analysis contribute to the success of students coping with emerging challenges. It can be assumed that the development of coping style of these students has active interaction with other people – parents, teachers, classmates, colleagues. Therefore, students need social support by important people in overcoming difficult situations in life, contributing to the development of the internal resources of the individual.

Summing up the results of empirical research, it is worth noting that the process to adapt for students to new social life and living (living in the dormitory of the University), spatial conditions, adapting to the school and the workforce is directly related to the experience of stress is in the sphere of communicative personality. Thus, it becomes apparent that students with low communicative activity experience communicative vacuum against which may be formed communicative stress state. Such states are manifested in the inability of the student to adapt to the changing socio-psychological

reality. This trend may create a lot of problems related to the dynamics of emotional, motivational and other internal psychological components that are directly related to the process of development of the individual student. Increasing communicative activity in difficult situations can help the student to change the vision of the situation and broaden the diapason of the reactions to it.

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