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Research article

Gender Features of Coping Strategies in Men and Women

Olga A. Ovsyanik^{ID}, Albina A. Nesterova^{ID}✉, Natalia V. Sidyacheva^{ID}Moscow Region State Pedagogical University,
24 Very Voloshinoy St, Mytishi, 141014, Russian Federation✉ anesterova77@rambler.ru

Abstract. The effectiveness of coping behavior depends not only on a successful strategy but also on the individual characteristics of a person. Age, sex, intelligence, social status, gender identity – all these influence the coping ability and resilience of an individual. In modern psychological research, there is some confusion between the concepts of ‘sex’ and ‘gender.’ Despite numerous studies on male and female coping strategies, gender differences in coping behavior are still poorly understood. The purpose of the study was to analyze gender-specific coping strategies of middle-aged men and women. Russian men and women (N = 286) were divided by gender (masculine, androgynous, feminine). The research was made using The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BPRT) and Lazarus & Folkman’s Test Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ). This study employed a cross-sectional design. Differences among the groups were assessed using the Kruskal – Wallis H test, Mann – Whitney U test and Student t-test. The specificity of coping behavior was found to be determined by the gender identity of the study participants. The results of the present study support the gender differences hypothesis, since people with differences in biological sexual identity (male and female) use gender-specific coping strategies (masculine, feminine, or androgynous) if their gender orientations are the same. The research of masculinity, androgyny and femininity can become an important step in the long-term study of coping behavior and the basis for a better understanding of the dynamics of human behavior in a stressful situation.

Key words: sex, gender, men, women, middle-age, masculine, feminine, androgynous

Introduction

Coping behavior has been extensively studied in modern scientific literature around the world. In particular, there have been fruitful discussions about the definition and conceptualization of ‘coping behavior’ (Villada et al., 2017; Van den Brande et al., 2016). Various concepts are based on the theory of situational approach, interactionism, theory of transactional analysis, etc. A significant contribution to the development of views on the coping behavior of a person have been made by both international and Russian scientists, such as: R. Lazarus и S. Folkman, N. Haan, A. Billing, R. Moos, H. Weber, K. Coplick, P. Vitaliano, S.K. Nar-

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tova-Bochaver, I.G. Sizova, S.I. Filippchenkova, E.P. Belinskaya, T.L. Kryukova, E.A. Sergienko and others.

Let us now consider some basic concepts of coping behavior.

N. Haan represents coping behavior as one of the methods of psychological defense that a person uses to relieve mental stress. In this case, coping behavior is identified with coping outcomes (Haan, 1982).

A. Billings and R. Moos suggest that coping behavior is a personality trait, a kind of response to stressful events, and it is constant (Moos, Billings, 1982). They argue that in crisis situations a person uses coping, which is aimed at:

- cognitive assessment (reassessment) of the situation;
- resolution of problems; and
- emotional disincentive.

R.S. Lazarus, A.D. Kanner and S. Folkman believe that coping behavior is a dynamic process. The peculiarity of this process is determined by real situations and the stage of conflict that arises when a person clashes with the world. Each form of coping behavior is a coping strategy aimed at solving specific goals (Lazarus et al., 1980). These authors identify two main coping functions that people use in various situations to cope with stress:

- problem-focused coping, aimed at relieving stress in relation to the person and the environment;
- emotion-focused coping, aimed at relieving emotional stress (it is used if a person is not able to change stressful situations).

The scientists believe that it is necessary to take into account both functions, since the emotional-behavioral and cognitive components of personality form different combinations (Lazarus, Folkman, 1984). They also distinguish between active and passive coping behaviors. For example, active coping behavior is aimed at eliminating or avoiding a threat (through fighting or retreating) and is designed to change a stressful relationship with the physical or social environment

In Russian psychological research, there is still no terminological consistency in the designation of this research area or the use of the definitions ‘coping’, ‘coping behavior’, ‘psychological coping’ and ‘coping strategy’. Psychologists use the terms ‘coping behavior’ and ‘coping’ interchangeably. It can be inconvenient in cases when psychologists do not study specific behavior. Most of Russian scientists understand ‘coping’ as a personal way of interacting with an uncomfortable situation (external or internal), which leads, in terms of a person, to the unity of subjective significance and psychological opportunity. The definition of ‘coping behavior’ can represent a very wide range of personal activity from unconscious psychological defenses to purposeful overcoming of crises. It can be interpreted as a process of psychological coping and overcoming of uncomfortable situations (Belinskaya, 2009).

In general, most researchers in the world adhere to a uniform classification of ways to cope with stress, namely:

- behavioral responses that influence the situation;
- cognitive strategy aimed at reassessing situations;
- efforts to control or relieve emotional stress (Mahmoudi, Yzkan, 2016).

The effectiveness of coping with adverse life events depends on the right strategy and the individual characteristics of the person. Age, sex, gender, intel-

lect, character, and social status can be predictors of the use of coping strategy. There may also be predictors of maladaptation and viability that affect coping behavior (Borisova, Gulakova, 2018; Nesterova, Suslova, 2014).

Different sex-dependent coping strategies were studied by L.K. Tamres, who proved that men and women had different coping strategies (Tamres, 2002). In coping processes, women were more likely than men to express negative feelings such as sadness, melancholy and depression (Zeman, Garber, 1996; Graves et al., 2021). Men, on the other hand, tended to express anger (Seidler et al., 2021).

In addition, R. Lippa argued that men and women perceived emotions differently. Men were more sensitive to internal signals; however, women were more sensitive to external signals. Usually, women showed their emotions in different ways: facial expression, verbal expression and physiological response (Lippa, 2005). This line of research suggests that women are more likely to cope with stress by using emotion-focused coping strategies than men.

At the same time, many researchers believe that our way of expressing emotions is not an innate quality; therefore, emotions can be characteristic of any sex group. Features of expressing emotions are the result of gender stereotypes in men and women, which they study during their lives. The gender stereotype demonstrates the expression of emotions.

Therefore, differences in the expression of emotions can be better explained by social role or gender role theory (Eagly, Wood, 2012). According to A. Eagly's theory, behavior is influenced by gender roles when a culture approves of gender stereotypes and forms firm expectations based on these stereotypes.

The authors suggest that gender differences in behavior derive from sex differences, and to the extent that the social roles of 'woman' and 'man' are defined in each culture. Using these social roles, people adapt better to the society in which they live and choose the most 'acceptable' behavior strategies for a given society and sex. A particularly crucial factor is the choice of a person's social role (gender identity).

Some women, for example, choose a masculine gender identity as a social criterion; therefore, we can assume that such women will use masculine coping strategies.

Sandra Bem insisted on the existence of 'androgynous identity' conception, which stated that people could use good masculine and feminine social roles. They would prefer the most appropriate and adaptive in each situation (Bem, 1993; Starr, Zurbriggen, 2017). It is important to note that, in the context of this study, S. Nolen-Hoeksema argued that "being active and ignoring one's moods are part of the masculine stereotypes", and that "adhering to the sex-typed behaviors or sex stereotype is socially reinforced" (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987).

Psychological research has shown that masculine people (men and women) are more efficient and flexible in their ability to cope with different situations than feminine people (Bakhet, 2021; Spangenberg, Lategan, 1993). Scientists have found a link between gender identity and problem-focused coping: only masculinity, but not femininity, is associated with the 'problem-solving' strategy. Individuals with masculine orientation are more likely to use problem-solving coping and are also oriented toward active and effective problem solving (Brems, Johnson, 1989). A positive correlation has also been highlighted between feminine orientation and rumination (Broderick, Korteland, 2004).

In Russia, gender issues of coping behavior are studied by such scientists as A.A. Bakanova¹, E.R. Isaeva (2009), O.N. Volkova, E.G. Kossova, E.I. Chekhlaty (2005). But most of these scientists write about *gender* and do not see any difference between *sex* and *gender*. Moreover, they often confuse these concepts. In their gender studies, these authors refer to differences in coping behavior between men and women, but not between people with different gender identities: feminine, masculine and androgynous.

Most research in gender differences in stress and coping postulate that the concepts of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ should be distinguished in relation to personal behavioral characteristics, including coping (Connell, 2011; Lipińska-Grobelny, 2011; Mayor, 2015; Ovsyanik, 2013; Sachkova, Timoshina, 2016; Sinnott, Shifren, 2001; Vafaei et al., 2014; Vafaei et al., 2016; and others).

According to S.K. Nartova-Bochaver, women (and feminine men) tend to use more emotion-focused strategies than men (and masculine women) (Nartova-Bochaver, 1997). L.B. Kuznetsova studied the coping behavior of older people and found them to be gender-sensitive. Older feminine people demonstrated the highest values of the *positive reassessment scale*. They might be more inclined to come to terms with the situation, accepting it, highlighting the positive side, the lessons to be learned from the episode.

Coping in androgynous people is characterized as more active, striving to change the problematic situation. This is reflected in the prevalence of active coping strategies such as ‘planful problems solving’, ‘seeking social support’ and ‘confrontative coping’ (Kuznetsova, 2015).

In their research of coping behavior among teenagers with different gender identities, A.V. Varabina and T.V. Egorova came to the conclusion that androgynous teenagers had a wider range of effective coping strategies and more effective resources to overcome stress and reduce its negative impact (Varabina, Egorova, 2016).

In a study of military personnel conducted by I. Bobnar, the masculine participants reported unproductive coping strategies such as aggression and emotional explosion. The masculine subjects (20.5%) suffered stress deeply in the form of a complex of somatic, behavioral and emotional experiences. The androgynous subjects (24%) tended to suppress emotions, 60.3% of them felt acutely stressed (which was three times more as compared to the masculine group). The feminine group of the subjects in situations of professional stress reported social support, suppression of emotions and altruism to a greater extent than in the other two groups. Most of this group (62.5%) had a high level of sensitivity and low level of *stress resistance* (Bodnar, Bodnar, 2016).

Thus, it is obvious that the gender aspect of coping strategies has been studied superficially. Moreover, a clear distinction between sex- and gender-specific coping behaviors will probably be required. This study analyses the gender specificity of coping. To fully understand how gender impacts experiences of stress and coping, more research is needed. Previous studies have used small samples from specific demographics, such as college students, teenagers, athletes, and oth-

¹ Bakanova, A.A. *Existential context of overcoming crisis situations in mature age*. Retrieved May 14, 2022, from <http://hpsy.ru/public/x1174.htm>

ers. The purpose of this study is to analyze how middle-aged people with different gender identities (feminine, androgynous and masculine) cope with stress.

Scientific novelty of our research lies in a new look at the different coping strategies used by men and women. We believe that the differences are determined by gender, but not sex, and show that gender prevails over sex.

Methods

The goal of our research is to define the gender-specific coping strategies of middle-aged men and women.

The research objectives are as follows:

- to determine the main coping strategies for men and women;
- to determine the main coping strategies of feminine, androgynous and masculine middle-aged men and women; and
- to perform a comparative analysis of coping strategies for the different gender groups of men and women.

Participants. The study involved 286 persons (144 men and 142 women) from the Moscow and Ulyanovsk regions (Russian Federation) aged 45 to 54 years (mean age = 48 years; SD = 7.10). The sample was equalized by the level of education and marital status and included only the indigenous people of Russia to exclude additional factors of adaptation in migration situations.

The participants were assessed for the normality of data distribution (using Pearson's chi squared test), which allowed us to use both non-parametric and parametric methods of comparative analysis. In smaller comparison groups, preference was given to the nonparametric test.

Research hypothesis. The coping strategies of men and women with masculine, feminine and androgynous gender identities differ.

Research procedure. At the first stage, the coping strategies were compared in the groups of men and women (biological sex). At the second stage, the diversification of the used coping strategies in the three groups of men and three groups of women (feminine, masculine, and androgynous) was considered.

Coping was assessed at the strategy level by using R. Lazarus and S. Folkman's *Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ)* which was adapted in Russian by T.L. Hook, E.V. Kuftyak and M.S. Zamyshlyeva, and further standardized at the St. Petersburg Bekhterev Psychoneurological Research Institute (Wasserman et al., 2008). We also used *The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI)* to measure gender roles (Ilin, 2010). This questionnaire included three scales: masculinity, femininity and androgyny.

The median was calculated for each coping strategy in the different groups, and Kruskal – Wallis tests were used to compare the results in the three sub-groups (feminine, masculine, androgynous). On larger samples (more than 100 people), Student's parametric test was used for comparison, since such samples allowed us to apply this method even without checking for a normal distribution (the law of large numbers, which says that the probability of deviation of the mean over a large sample from the mathematical expectation tends to zero). In smaller samples, the Mann – Whitney *U*-test was used to compare the two groups.

Results

In the first series of studies, the calculations were performed separately for the male and female participants. The mean values and standard deviations for the indicators of the sample characteristics are presented in Table 1. No significant differences were found between males and females, except for the levels of manifestation of ‘positive reappraisal’.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and Mann – Whitney U-test for the coping strategies between women and men

Coping strategy	Total N = 286			
	Mean + σ Women n = 142	Mean + σ Men n = 144	t	p
Confrontative coping	14.8 + 2.8	10.8 + 2.5	1.07	>0.05
Distancing	9.5 + 2.6	15.5 + 2.3	-1.73	>0.05
Self-controlling	9.6 + 3.6	12.3 + 3.1	-0.57	>0.05
Seeking social support	14.7 + 3.6	10.6 + 1.9	1.01	>0.05
Escape – avoidance	13.6 + 2.8	12.6 + 2.2	0.28	>0.05
Accepting responsibility	9.9 + 3.4	11.2 + 3.6	-0.26	>0.05
Planful problem solving	9.6 + 2.1	15.2 + 3.1	-1.50	>0.05
Positive reappraisal	15.1 + 2.3	7.9 + 2.6	2.07	<0.05

Figures on the other scales do not have significant differences. The table shows that the female subjects more often resorted to such strategies as ‘positive reappraisal’, ‘confrontative coping’, ‘escape – avoidance’, and ‘seeking social support’. Other strategies were used by them with less frequency.

The male subjects were more likely to use ‘distancing’, ‘Planful problem solving’, ‘escape – avoidance’ and ‘self-controlling’. They tended to be in control of their emotions and put more effort into problem solving.

Thus, we can observe different preferences for coping strategies in the male and female subjects.

However, this division of coping strategies (based on sexual differences) is not very revealing, so we have identified particular gender coping strategies.

Comparison of the subjects by their gender identities confirms significant differences among the groups in their use of coping strategies (Mann – Whitney U-test; $p < 0.05$).

An analysis of the coping strategies used by the masculine men and women showed that the indicators of the scales ‘distancing’, ‘self-controlling’ and ‘escape – avoidance’ had no significant differences (Table 2).

Therefore, these coping strategies were gender-specific for the masculine group. Moreover, they were used in the masculine groups more often than all the others.

These characteristics were determined by the ‘sex’ of the participants. In particular, the women used the strategy of ‘positive reappraisal’ more often than men; whereas they resorted to the strategy of ‘planful problem solving’ to a lesser extent.

The masculine men were less likely to use the strategies of ‘positive reappraisal’ and ‘seeking social support’ but more likely to choose the general masculine strategies of ‘planful problem solving’.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and Mann – Whitney U-test for the coping strategies in the masculine subjects

Coping strategy	Total N = 96		U	p
	Mean + σ Women n = 47	Mean + σ Men n = 49		
Confrontative coping	17.6 + 2.7	14.9 + 1.8	568	<0.05
Distancing	15.8 + 2.3	17.8 + 1.2	1020	>0.05
Self-controlling	13.9 + 4.5	11.3 + 1.7	612	>0.05
Seeking social support	11.2 + 2.3	6.0 + 1.3	332	<0.05
Escape – avoidance	17.9 + 2.0	15.1 + 2.6	1043	>0.05
Accepting responsibility	11.7 + 3.3	11.9 + 3.8	1181	>0.05
Planful problem solving	6.1 + 1.7	12.1 + 2.4	217	<0.05
Positive reappraisal	13.5 + 1.1	9.6 + 2.0	513	<0.05

Both masculine groups expressed the strategy of ‘confrontative coping’.

An analysis of coping strategies of the androgynous men and women revealed their gender patterns (Table 3).

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and Mann – Whitney U-test for the coping strategies in the androgynous people

Coping strategy	Total N = 100		U	p
	Mean + σ Women n = 49	Mean + σ Men n = 51		
Confrontative coping	13.8 + 2.6	8.9 + 2.1	416	<0.05
Distancing	6.5 + 2.1	12.8 + 2.3	322	<0.05
Self-controlling	9.2 + 2.4	14.9 + 3.0	511	<0.05
Seeking social support	16.5 + 5.3	11.2 + 2.3	613	>0.05
Escape – avoidance	14.8 + 3.3	6.9 + 2.0	482	<0.05
Accepting responsibility	10.7 + 4.2	11.2 + 3.3	1011	>0.05
Planful problem solving	13.6 + 2.5	16.5 + 4.0	988	>0.05
Positive reappraisal	14.7 + 2.3	7.6 + 2.7	489	<0.05

In particular, the androgynous men and women did not have significant differences in their use of coping strategies such as ‘seeking social support’, ‘planful problem solving’ and ‘accepting responsibility’. These strategies were chosen by them quite often.

However, on the other scales we can observe significant sex-dependent differences. For example, the androgynous women rarely used the strategy of ‘distancing’ while the androgynous men rarely used the strategy of ‘confrontative coping’. Most often, in addition to the general strategies, the androgynous women used the strategy of ‘positive reappraisal’ and the androgynous men preferred ‘self-controlling’.

An analysis of the coping strategies of the feminine men and women made it possible to conclude that they had no significant differences in their choice of the strategies of ‘confrontative coping’, ‘self-controlling’ and ‘accepting responsibility’ (Table 4).

Table 4

Descriptive statistics and Mann – Whitney U-test for the coping strategies in the feminine people

Coping strategy	Total N = 90			U	p
	Mean + σ Women n = 46	Mean + σ Men n = 44			
Confrontative coping	8.7 + 3.2	12.9 + 3.6		690	>0.05
Distancing	6.2 + 3.4	15.8 + 3.3		117	<0.05
Self-controlling	8.4 + 3.8	7.7 + 4.5		1064	>0.05
Seeking social support	16.3 + 3.2	8.7 + 2.1		376	<0.05
Escape – avoidance	8.1 + 3.2	15.9 + 2.1		428	<0.05
Accepting responsibility	7.2 + 2.6	10.4 + 3.7		1201	>0.05
Planful problem solving	9.1 + 2.2	16.7 + 3.0		511	<0.05
Positive reappraisal	17.2 + 3.3	6.5 + 3.1		96	<0.05

The feminine men and women rarely used the strategy of ‘self-controlling’ and ‘accepting responsibility’. The feminine women frequently used the strategy of ‘seeking social support’ and ‘positive reappraisal’ but they rarely resorted to ‘distancing’ and ‘escape – avoidance’. The feminine men often used the strategies of ‘distancing’ and ‘planful problem solving’ but they seldom used ‘positive reappraisal’.

Next, we used the Kruskal-Wallis *H* test to compare the three groups. Table 5 provides an overview of the coping preferences of the female participants, who had different gender identities. In particular, the androgynous and feminine women often used the strategy of ‘seeking social support’, which was not the case with the masculine women. The masculine and androgynous women often used the strategy of ‘escape – avoidance’ but the feminine women did not. The androgynous and feminine women rarely used the strategy of ‘distancing’ while the masculine women often did so. The strategy of ‘planful problem solving’ was frequently used by the androgynous women; however, it was rarely used by the masculine women. The androgynous women quite often chose the strategy of ‘confrontative coping’ but in the group of masculine women, the rates were even higher.

Table 5

Descriptive statistics and the Kruskal – Wallis H-test for the coping strategies used by the women

Coping strategy	Total N = 142			p
	Mean + σ Masculine n = 47	Mean + σ Androgynous n = 49	Mean + σ Feminine n = 46	
Confrontative coping	17.6 + 3.2	13.8 + 2.6	12.9 + 2.7	<0.05
Distancing	15.8 + 2.3	6.5 + 2.1	6.2 + 3.4	<0.05
Self-controlling	11.3 + 4.5	9.2 + 2.4	8.4 + 3.8	>0.05
Seeking social support	11.2 + 2.3	16.5 + 5.3	16.3 + 3.2	<0.05
Escape – avoidance	17.9 + 2.0	14.8 + 3.3	8.1 + 3.2	<0.05
Accepting responsibility	11.7 + 3.3	10.7 + 4.2	7.2 + 2.6	>0.05
Planful problem solving	6.1 + 1.7	13.6 + 2.5	9.1 + 2.2	<0.05
Positive reappraisal	13.5 + 1.1	14.7 + 2.3	17.2 + 3.3	<0.05

An analysis of the gender-dependent coping strategies among the men showed their uneven use (Table 6).

Table 6

Descriptive statistics and the Kruskal – Wallis *H*-test for the coping strategies used by the men

Coping strategy	Total N = 144			<i>p</i>
	Mean + σ Masculine N = 49	Mean + σ Androgynous N = 51	Mean + σ Feminine N = 44	
Confrontative coping	14.9 + 3.6	8.9 + 1.8	8.7 + 2.1	<0.05
Distancing	17.8 + 1.2	12.8 + 2.3	15.8 + 3.3	<0.05
Self-controlling	14.3 + 1.7	14.9 + 3.0	7.7 + 4.5	<0.05
Seeking social support	6.0 + 1.3	11.2 + 2.3	8.7 + 2.1	>0.05
Escape – avoidance	15.1 + 2.6	6.9 + 2.0	15.9 + 2.1	<0.05
Accepting responsibility	11.9 + 3.8	11.2 + 3.3	10.4 + 3.7	>0.05
Planful problem solving	12.1 + 2.4	16.5 + 4.0	16.7 + 3.0	<0.05
Positive reappraisal	9.6 + 2.0	7.6 + 2.7	6.5 + 3.1	>0.05

The masculine and androgynous men often used the strategy of ‘self-controlling’, but the feminine men did not. The masculine and feminine men often used the strategy of ‘escape – avoidance’, but this was not the case with the androgynous men. The masculine men were more likely to show ‘confrontative coping’ than the feminine and androgynous men, as had been expected.

The masculine men, unlike the androgynous and feminine ones, more often resorted to ‘planful problem solving’ ($p < 0.05$). At the same time, the feminine men reported lower levels of ‘positive reappraisal’ ($p < 0.05$). Throughout the sample of the men in the different gender groups, the strategy of ‘distancing’ is clearly expressed; however, in the masculine group, its mean value is statistically significantly higher. ‘Positive reappraisal’ is the least frequently used in the entire group of the men, regardless of their gender identities.

Discussion

The study has shown that dividing people by gender can be helpful in revealing significant qualitative differences in the coping strategies chosen by men and women. Dividing people by sex has outlined variations the coping strategies used.

As for the study participants, the masculine men and women were more likely to choose the strategies of ‘distancing’, ‘self-controlling’ and ‘escape – avoidance’, while the androgynous men and women mainly used such strategies as ‘seeking social support’ and ‘planful problem solving’. In the feminine group, there were the most differences in the use of the coping strategies between the men and women, which may indicate that this group was more susceptible to the effects of social stereotyping and attribution of certain roles and forms of social behavior. In today’s society, a man with feminine characteristics is in most cases viewed as having masculine behavior. This is in line with foreign studies that suggest that feminine men are more likely to be blamed and even abused for their behavior (Mayer, 2018). In the group of the feminine men, the strategies of ‘distancing’ and ‘escape – avoidance’ predominate (as in the group of masculine people), while this predominance is not observed in the group of the feminine women.

Thus, the data reviewed in this study suggest that understanding one’s gender role orientation (identity), rather than biological sex, can be helpful in under-

standing many of our perceptions and behaviors. The discrepancies between the concepts of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ can be seen as evidence of not only biological but also cultural differences in coping and the role of social and psychological resources.

The representatives of the *masculine group* often use confrontation to cope with the situation. They also try to overcome negative experiences and problems by subjectively reducing their significance and the degree of emotional involvement in problems. They use the techniques of intellectual rationalization, switching attention, suspension, humor, depreciation etc. They also aim to suppress and restrain emotions, minimize their influence, when assessing the situation or choosing a behavioral strategy, and use highly controlling and self-controlling behaviors. The masculine people try to hide their experiences, motivations and emotions in crisis situation. Their experiences can also look like avoidance: denial of problems, dreams, unrealistic expectations, distractions, etc. In stressful situations, they use these strategies to deny or ignore the problem, evade responsibility and act to resolve the difficulties, demonstrating passivity, impatience or temper tantrums, immersing in fantasies, overeating or drinking alcohol to reduce the painful emotional stress.

The representatives of the *androgynous group* try to solve problems by attracting external (social) resources, research information, emotional and effective support. They use interaction with other people, seeking attention, advice, sympathy or recommendations from experts and friends who are more competitive. They need emotional support, which manifests the desire to be heard, to receive empathetic response, to distance themselves from their experiences with anyone. The androgynous people try to overcome the problem by analyzing the situation and possible behaviors; they develop strategies for solving the problem and plan their own actions, taking into account objective conditions, past experience and available resources.

The *feminine men and women* try to overcome negative experiences by positively rethinking the problem, addressing the problem as a stimulus for personal growth. However, they rarely exhibit purposeful behavioral activity. In this group, the men with a feminine gender identity still try to conform more to the stereotypical behavior of a ‘man’ accepted in society. The activities of this the representatives of this group can be aimed either at changing the situation or at acting out negative emotions in connection with the difficulties that have arisen. This may be accompanied by impulsive behavior (sometimes with elements of hostility and conflict), hostility, difficulties in planning actions, predicting their results, behavioral strategies, or unjustified persistence.

Conclusion

Our research has shown that it is not possible to fully explore coping strategies by considering men and women only as biological *sexes*. We should see their *gender*, which influences their coping behavior. For gender shows to a greater extent the cultural and social behavior of people.

It can also be concluded that the selected coping strategies for men and women should not be considered without taking into account their gender features.

The results of the study showed that the men and women of the same gender identity did not have large differences in their use of coping strategies. However, we noted differences in the coping strategies of the different gender groups. The feminine men and women more often used the coping strategies of ‘confrontation’ and ‘positive reappraisal’ compared to that of ‘self-controlling’. The masculine men and women were more likely to resort to the strategies of ‘distancing’, ‘self-controlling’ and ‘escape – avoidance’. And the androgynous men and women preferred the strategies of ‘seeking social support’ and ‘planful problem solving’.

The research of masculinity, androgyny and femininity can become an important step in the long-term study of coping behavior and the basis for a better understanding of the dynamics of human behavior in a stressful situation, taking into account socio-psychological characteristics.

Our data are consistent with the results of modern research in the field of gender psychology. Thus, scientists from Germany, Tristan Marhenke and Roland Imhoff, having studied 514 men and women of mature age, found that it was gender, but not sex, that was a more significant factor in determining various socio-psychological characteristics in human behavior (Marhenke, Imhoff, 2019).

Involving various methodological approaches of social psychology can be helpful in studying in more detail the influence of gender identity on the adaptive capacity and resilience of a person.

Practical significance of the study. The results confirm the need to take into account social gender in studies of coping behaviors. It is important for psychologists to have an idea of the specifics of coping strategies of people not only of different genders and ages, but also of different gender identities. Gender is culturally conditioned and determines how a person will cope with stressors, according to his or her ideas and social attitudes. Combining the use of both sex and gender factors in research will make it possible to more accurately present the scheme of assistance to people in difficult life situations. Knowing the gender identity of adults, a practical psychologist will be able to choose the right coping strategy when consulting a client.

In addition, this study suggests that the authors of other studies should not confuse the two concepts, ‘sex’ and ‘gender’, when considering both socio-cultural and biological predictors of social behavior of a modern person.

In the future, it is necessary to study the gender specificity of the response to stress as well as the resources of each gender group. Further research will be aimed at finding specific styles of necessary social support and internal resources for resilience.

Limitation of the study. We acknowledge the limited nature of our study. The limitation was caused by a small number of independent variables (only the coping strategies proposed by Lazarus and Folkman). Future research could try to explore the relationships between gender identity and outcome constructs such as coping, resilience, endurance, and so on.

The masculine, feminine and androgynous groups in our sample were almost equal, since we chose them from a larger general population. It was important for us that all the gender groups (masculine, feminine and androgynous) be represented equally. At the same time, it should be noted that our previous

studies, as well as studies of domestic and foreign authors, increasingly frequently show that the gender identification of modern men and women tends to androgyny. Usually, in large samples (especially in female populations), people identify themselves to a greater extent as representatives of the androgynous type (Antonova, Ivanova, 2016; García Vega et al., 2017; Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1996; Ovsyanik, 2013). This may have introduced some limitations to our study.

The limited sample size of our study did not allow us to include men and women of other age groups as well as representatives of various social strata of the population.

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Bio notes:

Olga A. Ovsyanik, Dr.Sc. in Psychology, is Associate Professor, Department of Social Psychology, Moscow Region State Pedagogical University (Mytishi, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0003-0274-1702, Scopus ID: 57191878196, Researcher ID: S-8469-2016, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 7718-3237. E-mail: Ovsianik@mail.ru

Albina A. Nesterova, Dr.Sc. in Psychology, is Associate Professor, Department of Social Psychology, Moscow Region State Pedagogical University (Mytishi, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0002-7830-9337, Scopus ID: 56719360200, Researcher ID: AAD-8250-2019, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 2844-3800. E-mail: anesterova77@rambler.ru

Natalia V. Sidyacheva, PhD in Psychology, is Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Social Psychology, Moscow Region State Pedagogical University (Mytishi, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0001-6454-964X, Researcher ID: AAK-6122-2020, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 8064-3142. E-mail: sidna@bk.ru

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Исследовательская статья

Гендерные особенности копинг-стратегий мужчин и женщин

О.А. Овсяник , А.А. Нестерова  , Н.В. Сидячева 

Московский государственный областной педагогический университет,
Российская Федерация, 141014, Мытищи, ул. Веры Волошиной, д. 24

 anesterova77@rambler.ru

Аннотация. Эффективность совладающего поведения зависит от применения успешных стратегий, а также от индивидуальных особенностей человека. Возраст, пол, интеллект, социальный статус, гендерная идентичность – все эти факторы могут влиять

на способность справляться с трудностями и психологическую устойчивость каждого человека. В современных психологических исследованиях встречается путаница между понятиями «пол» и «гендер». Несмотря на существование множества исследований копинг-стратегий мужчин и женщин, различия копинг-поведения в зависимости от гендера мало изучены. Цель исследования – анализ гендерно-специфических копинг-стратегий мужчин и женщин среднего возраста. Выборка российских мужчин и женщин ($N = 286$) была разделена по гендерному признаку на три подгруппы: маскулинная, андрогинная, фемининная. Для диагностики использовались тест гендерных ролей С. Бем (The Bem Sex-Role Inventory, BPRТ) и опросник копинг-стратегий Лазаруса и Фолкмана (Test Ways of Coping Questionnaire, WCQ) в русскоязычных адаптациях. Полученные результаты подтверждают гипотезу о том, что гендерная идентичность может определять специфику копинг-поведения людей: люди с различиями в биологической половой идентичности (мужчины и женщины) используют гендерно-специфические стратегии совладания (маскулинная, андрогинная, фемининная), если их гендерные ориентации совпадают. Исследование маскулинности, андрогинности и фемининности может способствовать изучению особенностей копинг-поведения и стать основой для лучшего понимания динамики поведения человека в стрессовой ситуации.

Ключевые слова: пол, гендер, мужчины, женщины, средний возраст, маскулинность, фемининность, андрогинность

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Сведения об авторах:

Овсяник Ольга Александровна, доктор психологических наук, доцент, профессор кафедры социальной психологии, Московский государственный областной педагогический университет (Мытищи, Россия). ORCID: 0000-0003-0274-1702, Scopus ID: 57191878196, Researcher ID: S-8469-2016, eLIBRARY SPIN-код: 7718-3237. E-mail: ovsianik@mail.ru

Нестерова Альбина Александровна, доктор психологических наук, доцент, профессор кафедры социальной психологии, Московский государственный областной педагогический университет (Мытищи, Россия). ORCID: 0000-0002-7830-9337, Scopus ID: 56719360200, Researcher ID: AAD-8250-2019, eLIBRARY SPIN-code: 2844-3800. E-mail: anesterova77@rambler.ru

Сидячева Наталья Владимировна, кандидат психологических наук, доцент, заведующий кафедрой социальной психологии, Московский государственный областной педагогический университет (Мытищи, Россия). ORCID: 0000-0001-6454-964X, Researcher ID: AAK-6122-2020, eLIBRARY SPIN-код: 8064-3142. E-mail: sidna@bk.ru