This study explored the effects of family background variables on coping styles, and the contribution of coping styles and locus of control to the overall adjustment of older adolescents. The objectives of this study were to develop a Canadian adaptation of the Seiffge-Krenke Adolescent Coping Style Scale; to explore the influences of family and personality variables on coping styles; to explore the influences of coping styles on overall adjustment; and to compare the influences of coping styles and locus of control. The subjects were 611 male and female Canadian university students between ages 17 and 18, who were required to complete the coping-styles scale along with other scales, some of which were consolidated into factor scores or averaged z-scores. The results suggest that family background significantly influences adolescents' coping style and that coping style is a substantial contributor to overall adjustment. (MOK)
FAMILY BACKGROUND, ADOLESCENT COPING STYLES, AND ADJUSTMENT.

Shirin Schludermann, Eduard Schludermann, & Cam-Loi Huynh
Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3T 2N2.

Poster session presented at the 14th Biennial Conference of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, Québec City, Canada, 12-16 August, 1996.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the effects of family-background variables on coping styles, and the contribution of coping styles and locus of control to the overall adjustment of older adolescents. Factor analysis of a Canadian adaptation of Seiffge-Krenke's scale of coping styles yielded two strong factors (i.e., Active Coping, Withdrawal Coping) and a weak factor (Internal Coping). A sample of 611 Canadian university students (both genders, 17-18 years) completed the coping-styles scale along with other scales, some of which were consolidated into factor scores or averaged z-scores:

1. Family Adjustment factor (Olson's Family: Adaptation, Cohesion, Strength, Satisfaction);
2. Active Family Coping fac. (Ol.'s Social Support, Seeking Help, Spiritual Support);
3. Ol.'s Reframing scale;
4. Ol.'s Passive Appraisal sc.;
5. Turner's Provision of Social Relations sc.;
6. Emotionality (Eysenck's Neuroticism, Cattell's Anxiety);
7. Eysenck's Extraversion sc.;
8. Levenson's Internal Locus of Control;
9. Le.'s External L. of C. (Chance, Powerful Others);
10. Adjustment fac. (Self Esteem [Coopersmith, Worchel], Diener's Life Satisfaction, Greenberger's Individual Adequacy, Social Adequacy, Communication, Tyler's Psychosocial Competence).

Family, personality, and social relations were conceptualized as background variables, coping styles and locus of control as mediating variables, and adjustment as an outcome variable. Active Coping Style correlated with Family Adjustment (+.42), Active Family Coping (+.42), Reframing (+.39), Social Relations (+.43), and Adjustment (+.37). Withdrawal Coping correlated with Family Adjustment (-.32), Passive Appraisal (+.43), Emotionality (+.44), External L. of C. (+.46), and Adjustment (-.48). Stepwise regression analyses identified background variables as significant predictors of coping styles:

(a) Active Coping ($R^2 = .333$) with Active Family Coping > Social...
Relations > Family Adjustment; (b) Withdrawal Coping \( (R^2 = 0.326) \) with Passive Appraisal > Emotionality. All mediating variables (Withdrawal Coping - External L. of C. + Active Coping + Internal L. of C. + Internal Coping) were significant predictors of Adjustment \( (R^2 = 0.502) \). In other regression analyses, the three coping styles \( (R^2 = 0.385) \) and the two locus of control variables \( (R^2 = 0.342) \) accounted for a similar variance in adjustment.

The results suggest that family background significantly influences adolescent's coping style and that coping style is a substantial contributor to overall adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a Canadian adaptation of the Seiffge-Krenke Adolescent Coping Styles Scale;

2. To explore the influences of family and personality variables on coping styles;

3. To explore the influences of coping styles on overall adjustment;

4. To compare the influences of coping styles and locus of control.

BACKGROUND

* Using German samples Inge Seiffge-Krenke developed a research instrument which applied 20 coping behaviors to different problem areas. Factor analyses of the 20 coping behaviors revealed 3 distinct coping styles: Active Coping, Withdrawal Coping, and Internal Coping.

* Cross-cultural studies by Seiffge-Krenke and others revealed that the factor structures of coping styles differed somewhat between German and Israeli samples.

* The present study attempted to develop an adaptation of the coping styles scale which is appropriate for Canadian adolescents.

* There is some preliminary evidence which suggests that an active coping style contributes to good adjustment and that a withdrawal coping style contributes to poor adjustment, but that issue requires further clarification.
* The present study conceptualizes family and personality variables as background variables, coping style and locus of control as mediating variables and adjustment as an outcome variable.

* The present study hypothesizes that both family variables and personality variables influence an adolescent's selection of coping style. It is thus predicted that:

(a) a functional family background and effective coping by the family is predictive of an adolescent's active coping style;

(b) passive coping of the family is predictive of an adolescent's withdrawal coping style;

(c) emotionally unstable adolescents are expected to select a withdrawal coping style.

* The present study sees the mediating influences of coping style (what an adolescent does) to be analogous to that of locus of control beliefs (what an adolescent thinks). Thus, both an active coping style and internal locus of control are expected to promote good adjustment and a withdrawal coping style and an external locus of control are expected to promote poor adjustment.

**METHOD**

**SAMPLE**

* 611 Introductory Psychology students;

* from various faculties;

* 297 males and 314 females;

* 16 to 19 years;

* in Winnipeg, Canada.

**DEVELOPMENT OF A COPING SCALE**

* Using a German sample I. Seiffge-Krenke developed a scale of coping styles: 20 coping behaviors applied to 8 problem areas (studies, teachers, parents, peers, opposite sex, self, future, leisure time). Items had 2 response categories (yes or no).

* E. and S. Schludermann adapted the coping styles scale for Canadian adolescents: 20 coping behaviors applied to 5 problem areas (academic work, parents and family members, same-sex friends, opposite-sex friends, myself). Items had 5 response categories (almost never to very often).
* Schludermann administered the Canadian version of the coping scale to 611 Canadian older adolescents and subjected the resulting data to item and factor analyses.

* The results of these analyses suggest the following:
  1. Adolescents tend to use a given coping behavior to a similar extent across different problem areas (average $r = .50$).
  2. When the 20 coping behaviors were factor analyzed separately for the five problem areas, the resulting factor structures were quite similar.
  3. The factor structures of data from male and female adolescents were very similar. It was therefore appropriate to sum the scores of a given coping behavior across problem areas and to factor analyze the set of the 20 summary scores.

* The factor analysis of the summary scores of the 20 coping behaviors resulted in two strong factors (of eight items each) which were highly replicable across problem areas and genders. One of the factors corresponded to Seiffge-Krenke's Active Coping and the other factor corresponded to her Withdrawal Coping. There was also a weak factor of 2 items which was less replicable and which somewhat resembled Seiffge-Krenke's Internal Coping.

* On the basis of the above factor analyses, Schludermann developed formulas for summing items produce Active Coping, Withdrawal Coping, and Internal Coping scores.

OTHER VARIABLES

In addition to the adapted coping styles scale, the students completed the following scales, some of which were consolidated into factor scores or averaged $z$-scores.

1. FAMILY ADJUSTMENT FACTOR: factor score consolidating
   (a) Fam. Adaptation from Olson's FACES II;
   (b) Fam. Cohesion from Olson's FACES II;
   (c) Olson's Fam. Strength;
   (d) Olson's Fam. Satisfaction.
   scales correlate from .72 to .79

2. ACTIVE FAMILY COPING FACTOR: factor score consolidating
   three scales from Olson's Family Coping instrument:
   (a) Acquiring Social Support;
   (b) Mobilizing Family to Acquire and Accept Help;
   (c) Seeking Spiritual Support;
   scales correlate from .37 to .61
(3) **REFRAMING SCALE:**
from Olson's Family Coping instrument.

(4) **PASSIVE APPRAISAL SCALE:**
from Olson's Family Coping instrument.

(5) **TURNER'S PROVISION OF SOCIAL RELATIONS SCALE:**
15 items measuring the amount of social support a person gets.

(6) **EMOTIONALITY VARIABLE:**
av. z-score consolidating
(a) Neuroticism score of Eysenck Personality Questionnaire;
(b) Cattell's Anxiety scale, 12-items shortened version;
scales correlate .76.

(7) **EXTRAVERSION SCALE:**
from Eysenck Personality Questionnaire.

(8) **INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL:**
scale from Levenson's Locus-of-Control Scale.

(9) **EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL:**
av. z-score consolidating two scales from Levenson's Locus-of-Control Scale:
(a) Chance scale;
(b) Powerful Others scale.
scales correlate .65.

(10) **ADJUSTMENT FACTOR:**
factor score consolidating:
(a) Self-Esteem variable
   (av. z-score consolidating
    10-item shortened version of Worchel's Self-Activity Instrument and 12-items shortened version of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory);
(b) Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale;
(c) Individual Adequacy Summary of Greenberger's Psychosocial Maturity Inventory;
(d) Social Adequacy Summary of Greenberger's Psychosocial Maturity Inventory;
(e) Good Communication scale of Greenberger's Psychosocial Maturity Inventory;
(f) Psychosocial Competence score of Tyler's Psychosocial Behavioral Attribute Scale.
scales load from .50 to .88 on the first principal-axes factor.
RESULTS
ANALYSES

* Background Variables:
  Family Adjustment, Active Family Coping, Reframing, Passive Appraisal, Provision of Social Relations, Emotionality, Extraversion.

* Mediating Variables:
  Active, Withdrawal and Internal Coping; Internal and External Locus of Control.

* Outcome Variable:
  Adjustment.

* Background and Outcome Variables were correlated with Mediating Variables. See Table.

CORRELATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COPING STYLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
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<td>REFRAMING</td>
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<td>PASSIVE APPRAIS</td>
<td>-.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROVIS. SOC REL</td>
<td>+.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMOTIONALITY</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXTRAVERSION</td>
<td>+.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADJUSTMENT</td>
<td>+.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All correlations stronger than +.17 or -.17 are significant at \( P < .0001 \).

* Hierarchical regressions analyses:
  (a) with three coping styles as mediating variables;
  (b) with two locus-of-control variables as mediating variables;
  (c) with three coping styles and two locus-of-control variables as mediating variables.
All variables were in standard scores;
Cut-off points for stopping regressions were \( F \)-values at \( P < .0001 \).
See Figures.
MODEL WITH COPING STYLES AS MEDIATING VARIABLES

BACKGROUND VARIABLES

- FAMILY ADJUSTMENT
- ACTIVE FAMILY COPING
- REFRAMING
- PASSIVE APPRAISAL
- PROVISION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT
- EMOTIONALITY
- EXTRAVERSION

MEDIATING VARIABLES

- ACTIVE COPING
- INTERNAL COPING
- WITHDRAWAL COPING

OUTCOME VARIABLE

- OVERALL ADJUSTMENT

1-R²=.667

1-R²=.906

1-R²=.674

1-R²=.615

Beta values significant at p < .0001
MODEL WITH LOCUS OF CONTROL AS MEDIATING VARIABLES

BACKGROUND VARIABLES

- FAMILY ADJUSTMENT

FAMILY COPING

- ACTIVE FAMILY COPING
- REFRAMING
- PASSIVE APPRAISAL
- PROVISION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

PERSONALITY

- EMOTIONALITY
- EXTRAVERSION

MEDIATING VARIABLES

1-R²=.814

- INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

1-R²=.658

- EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

OUTCOME VARIABLE

1-R²=.720

OVERALL ADJUSTMENT

1-R²=.658

Overall adjustment with beta values significant at p < .0001.
MODEL WITH COPING STYLES AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AS MEDIATING VARIABLES

OUTCOME VARIABLE

OVERALL ADJUSTMENT

1-R²= .498

MEDIATING VARIABLES

ACTIVE COPING

INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

INTERNAL COPING

WITHDRAWAL COPING

EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

BACKGROUND VARIABLES

FAMILY ADJUSTMENT

ACTIVE FAMILY COPING

REFRAMING

PASSIVE APPRAISAL

PROVISION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

EMOTIONALITY

PERSONALITY

EXTRAVERSION

Beta values significant at p < .0001
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

* Active Coping and Internal Locus of Control are predictive of good Adjustment.

* Withdrawal Coping and External Locus of Control are predictive of poor Adjustment.

* Coping Styles and Locus of Control predict Adjustment to the same extent (about a third of variance). When combined, Coping Styles and Locus of Control predict about half of the variance of Adjustment.

* The strongest predictors of Active Coping are: Active Family Coping, Provision of Social Support, and Family Adjustment.

* The strongest predictors of Withdrawal Coping are Passive Appraisal (family coping) and Emotionality.

CONCLUSIONS

(1) An adolescent’s coping style is significantly influenced by the adolescent’s family background, especially the family’s coping pattern.

(2) Emotionally unstable adolescents tend to select a withdrawal coping style which in turn tends to lead to poor adjustment.

(3) The results support the view that family background significantly influences an adolescent’s coping style and that coping style is a substantial contributor to overall adjustment.
**Title:** Family background, adolescent coping styles, and adjustment

**Author(s):** S. Schulerman, E. Schulerman, C.-L. Huynh

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**Sign here please**

**Printed Name/Position/Title:** PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

**Organization/Address:** Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, Canada, R3T 2N2

**Telephone:** (204) 474-9617
**Fax:** (204) 479-3577
**E-Mail Address:**

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XIVth Biennial Meetings of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (Quebec City, Quebec, August 12-16, 1996).
August 16, 1996

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