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STRATEGIES TO REDUCE STRESS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH:

The relevance and significance of the research problem. Stress is a subject that is frequently addressed and extensively investigated in contemporary psychology. Over the centuries, it has captured the attention of researchers from various fields, including medicine, psychiatry, epidemiology, public health, clinical psychology, organisational psychology and sociology. The concept of stress has evolved significantly over time. This evolution is evident in the redefinition of the concept, the identification of associated reactions and consequences, and the determination of its factors [3; 4; 9; 10; 15; 17; 21; 25; 39; 34; 36; 44]. In recent decades, research has increasingly focused on developing effective psychodiagnostic instruments for assessment, as well as designing prevention and intervention strategies [1; 3; 6; 11; 14; 18; 20; 22; 27; 35]. Recent theoretical approaches define stress as a response that occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between internal or external demands and the available physical, psychological and social resources to cope with them. Stress activates a multidimensional response involving physiological reactions, cognitive evaluations, emotional experiences, and behavioural manifestations. It is influenced by personal characteristics, the nature of the stressor, the circumstances in which it occurs, available support and socio-cultural factors [3; 4; 10; 15; 16; 19; 23; 25; 29; 34; 37; 38].

According to E. Erikson, D. Levinson, D. Papalia, S. Wendkos Olds, U. Şchiopu, E. Verza, F. Golu, T. Creţu and G. Sion, youth is regarded as an important stage of human development characterised by multiple changes and challenges that make individuals vulnerable to experiencing intense stress [4; 10; 16; 22; 24; 27; 29; 38; 41, 44]. A number of factors may be behind the stress experienced by young people. These include biological changes, adaptation to a new body image, pressures related to academic demands, relationships with family, friends and peers, romantic relationships, the process of gaining independence and autonomy, uncertainty regarding life and career paths, and significant situational factors (such as changing residence, bereavement, or relationship breakdown) [5; 13; 19; 28; 31; 33; 42]. These factors are further compounded by the use of digital technologies and social media [41]. Long-term exposure to stress during the youth years is associated with negative consequences for physical and mental health, academic and professional performance, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, stress can encourage the development of unhealthy habits and risky patterns of behaviour, influencing personal development processes including the consolidation of identity, the acquisition of autonomy, and the formation of adaptive coping strategies [13]. In light of these considerations, studying stress among young adults is fundamental and highly relevant to public health and psychological science.

The research topic is positioned within the context of international, national and regional scientific concerns, as well as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary considerations. Additionally, it presents the results of previous research.

A number of rigorous studies in the field of psychology have investigated explanatory approaches to stress, conducted by scholars such as H. Selye, W. Cannon, J. Delay, R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, J. Mason, R. Launier, R. Dantzer, S. Taylor, P. Fraisse, P. Dewe, C. Cooper, M. O'Driscoll, J. Stora, S. Kobasa, R. Sapolsky, A. Duckworth, A. Ellis, J. Gordon, M. Neenan, S. Palmer, E. Scott, K. Grant, S. McMahon, S. Duffy and J. Taylor, among others [1; 2; 6; 7; 12; 13; 19; 30; 34; 35; 36]. Coping strategies and how they differ from one another have been investigated and described by R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, S. Endler, J. Parker, C. Carver, M. Scheier, J. Weintraub, L. Pearlin, C. Schooler, I. Paulhan and M. Bourgeois, among others [5; 13; 19; 21; 33]. Meanwhile, scientific interest regarding the features and causes of stress in young adults has grown significantly within the field of psychology, with notable contributions from D. Levinson, R. Havighurst, B. Neugarten, E. Erikson, G. Vaillant, S. Lupien, B. Compas, D. Papalia, S. Wendkos Olds, R. Duskin Feldman, E. Duprey, A. Ross, J. Russotti, M. Nenic, M. Matud, A. Diaz, J. Bethencourt, I. Ibáñez, U. Şchiopu and F. Golu [10; 13; 19; 26; 31; 42; 44].

In the Republic of Moldova, the phenomenon of stress, coping strategies, their particularities, as well as stress management have been the subject of numerous scientific investigations carried out by researchers such as N. Bucun, D. Antoci, I. Negură, S. Briceag, R. Cerlat, M. Pleşca, I. Racu, A. Potâng, E. Losîi, Iu. Racu, and others [2; 6; 7; 28] Also, stress has been the subject of several doctoral theses. M. Stanciu, in her doctoral thesis entitled „Negative Emotions in Adolescents and Strategies of Reducing Them”, conceptualises stress as a psychological component of the negative emotions experienced by adolescents, describing it as a psychological phenomenon conditioned by negative external or internal factors. He describes it as a psychological phenomenon influenced by negative internal or external factors. Adolescents experiencing stress show symptoms such as tension, agitation, restlessness, frustration, hostility and depression. A key finding of the study is that stress in adolescents can be reduced by involving them in psychological intervention programmes designed to diminish negative emotions and their associated effects [43]. Another doctoral study, „Reducing Perceived Stress in Competition Training of Adolescent Athletes through Relaxation Techniques” by A. Nicolescu, outlines the psychological characteristics required for effective stress management and achievement of performance goals. Adolescents in the pre-competition period tend to use less effective coping strategies. High stress levels are also associated with increased anxiety and low self-esteem. A significant scientific contribution of this research is to demonstrate that a psychological programme based on relaxation techniques can substantially reduce stress among young people

in the pre-competitive stage [32]. M. Mocanu, in her doctoral thesis entitled „The Impact of Coping Mechanisms on the Personality Profile in Adults”, highlights that adults employ three emotional and four behavioural coping mechanisms. Furthermore, men and women display distinct preferences in their choice of coping strategy: men tend to favour behavioural strategies, while women use both behavioural and emotional strategies [30]. The author identifies significant correlations between coping mechanisms and personality traits, including emotional lability, dual thinking, pessimism, optimism, and attachment. Additionally, the author proposes a psychological intervention programme that has been shown to effectively modify coping strategies and personality traits in adults [30].

In conclusion, no comprehensive studies addressing stress and coping strategies among young adults in contemporary social conditions have been conducted in the Republic of Moldova. It is therefore important to investigate how stress manifests itself and the coping strategies employed by young people, as well as the relationship between stress, coping strategies and personality traits such as self-esteem. This will improve our understanding of their emotional and psychosocial development, support adaptive functioning, and reduce the negative impact of stress on health, performance, and well-being.

Thus, the findings regarding the lack of research on stress and coping strategies among young adults highlight the following **research question**: What integrated model of psychological assessment and intervention would effectively reduce stress and promote adaptive coping strategies, supporting the harmonious development and optimal functioning of young people in all areas of life?

The aim of the research *is to examine the manifestations of stress and coping strategies among young adults of different genders and ages and to develop and validate a programme focused on reducing stress and enhancing adaptive coping strategies among this age group.*

In line with the research aim, we have proposed the following **objectives for this doctoral study**: 1) to review the scientific literature on stress, coping strategies and stress characteristics in young adults, as well as psychodiagnostic instruments used to assess stress and coping; 2) to identify the forms and levels of stress manifestation among young people of different genders and ages; 3) to determine the sources of stress experienced by this particular group; 4) to distinguish between adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies; 5) to investigate the relationships between stress levels and coping strategies, and analyse the interdependence of these strategies among young adults; 6) to examine the associations between stress levels and self-esteem/personality traits, as well as between coping strategies and self-esteem/personality traits; 7) and to design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a stress reduction programme for young adults, as well as the development of adaptive coping strategies.

The theoretical framework of the research included the following: *theoretical framework and conceptual definitions of stress* (H. Selye, W. Cannon, R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, R. Sopolsky, A. Duckworth and A. Ellis); *theoretical models of coping strategies and their types* (R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, S. Endler, J. Parker, C. Carver, M. Scheier and J. Weintraub); *perspectives on the characteristics of young adulthood* (D. Levinson, E. Erikson, G. Vaillant, S. Lupien, D. Papalia, S. Wendkos Olds, R. Duskin Feldman, U. Şchiopu and F. Golu).

The methodology of doctoral research is determined by its aims, objectives, and hypotheses, and comprises a set of integrated methods. In terms of theory, the study employed an analysis and synthesis of scientific literature in the field of psychology, as well as the hypothetical-deductive method to interpret and prove the obtained results. In the empirical framework, the research involved applying psychodiagnostic instruments and conducting observation and control experiments, as well as psychological interventions. The following statistical methods were employed for data processing and hypothesis testing: the non-parametric Mann–Whitney U test, Kendall’s τ correlation coefficient and the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The following psychological instruments are used: *the Perceived Stress Scale by S. Levenstein; the Perceived Stress Scale by S. Cohen and G. Williamson; the Individual Stress Assessment Questionnaire by J. Melgosa; the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory; the COPE Questionnaire by C. Carver, M. Scheier and J. Weintraub; the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; and the Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI).*

The research findings provide an integrative scientific approach to stress, contributing to the solution of a significant scientific problem. This approach involves examining stress manifestations among young adults of different genders and ages, identifying and describing adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies according to gender and age, and analysing the relationships between stress, coping strategies, self-esteem, and personality traits. These findings provide a solid framework for the development and implementation of an effective stress reduction programme, which has been proven to reduce stress levels and promote adaptive coping strategies.

Scientific novelty and originality. The originality of this study emerges from its theoretical and experimental investigation of stress and coping strategies among individuals aged 20 to 35. The study has enabled the development of a complex psychodiagnostic tests for evaluating stress levels, coping strategies, personality traits, and self-esteem. It has also identified patterns in the manifestation and progression of stress across young adulthood, as well as particularities relating to age and gender in adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. The relationships between stress, coping strategies, and personality traits (such as self-esteem) have been explained. Furthermore,

an intervention programme aimed at reducing stress and developing adaptive coping strategies was designed and experimentally tested.

Theoretical significance. The findings of this theoretical-experimental study substantially contribute to the fields of Developmental and Educational Psychology by providing updated and integrated knowledge on the psychosocial development of young people. The research highlights differences in stress manifestation and coping strategies according to gender and age, as well as the detailed interrelationships between stress experience, coping strategies and personality traits such as self-esteem. Alongside the data interpretations and conclusions, these findings are highly relevant for redefining and updating emotional and personality development approaches in young adults within the disciplines of Developmental Psychology and Youth Psychology.

Practical value. The theoretical concepts and principles concerning the manifestation of stress, coping strategies, and the interdependence of stress, coping strategies, self-esteem, and personality traits, as identified in the study, could provide a solid foundation for integrated and harmonious personality development. The structured, experimentally tested psychodiagnostic model can be used by clinical psychologists, psychotherapists and other specialists to effectively assess the emotional state and personality of young people and adults. The intervention programme, developed to reduce stress and improve adaptive coping strategies, can prevent and reduce stress, as well as address other emotional difficulties or personality-related issues. This programme benefits both professionals and their clients, including young people and adults.

The approval and implementation of the research findings. The scientific findings of the research were analysed and approved during meetings of the Doctoral School of Psychology and Social Work, and the Department of Psychology at the „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University in Chişinău, as well as at conferences.

Publications related to the thesis: 12 scientific papers, including 4 articles in scientific journals and 8 in the proceedings of national and international conferences.

Thesis structure. The thesis comprises abstracts in Romanian, English and Russian, an introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, **a bibliography of 285 sources, 7 appendices and 132 pages of main text.** The work contains 43 figures and 22 tables.

Keywords: stress, coping strategies, personality, gender differences, age differences, intervention programme, young adults.

CONTENT OF THE THESIS

The INTRODUCTION outlines the relevance and significance of the research topic by presenting the current state of knowledge in the field. It states the research's aims, objectives and hypotheses, and describes the results obtained in addressing a significant scientific problem. At

the same time, it conceptualises and highlights the scientific novelty of the findings, as well as the theoretical importance and practical value of the study.

Chapter 1, „*Theoretical Approaches of Stress in Young People*”, provides a comprehensive review and synthesis of the scientific literature on stress. It clarifies and characterises the concept of stress, examines the forms of reaction, and considers the factors that influence its occurrence. This theoretical chapter presents coping models, explicitly emphasising adaptive and maladaptive strategies. A significant part of the chapter is focused on analysing the characteristics of young adulthood, with a particular emphasis on its specific psychosocial development, the manifestations of stress and the coping strategies used by young people.

Theoretical analyses of stress and coping strategies have led to several key conceptualisations. Initially, stress was predominantly interpreted in biological terms by W. Cannon, H. Selye, J. Delay, J. Mason, B. McEwen, E. Stellar, S. Siegel, I. Ironson and N. Schneiderman, being considered a global response of the human body to various internal and external demands involving the activation of complex physiological mechanisms [4; 15; 38; 39; 40]. Subsequently, the concept evolved into a multidimensional theoretical framework. According to R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, S. Taylor, L. Pearlin and P. Fraisse, stress is a dynamic process resulting from the continuous interaction between environmental demands and the individual's neurophysiological, cognitive, and emotional processes [16; 23; 25; 29]. From this perspective, when there is a discrepancy between external pressures and the individual's adaptive capacities, dysfunctions occur in the self-regulatory mechanisms essential for maintaining homeostasis. In this study, *stress is conceptualised as an adaptive process that occurs when the demands of a situation exceed an individual's available resources. Stress activates physiological, cognitive and emotional mechanisms simultaneously and interdependently. This activation is influenced by the subjective interpretation of circumstances and is directed towards self-regulation and maintaining functional equilibrium.*

From a scientific perspective, coping can be defined as a process involving the cognitive approaches and behavioural responses that individuals employ to manage environmental demands, regulate emotions, support adaptation and maintain health, according to R. Lazarus, S. Folkman, S. Endler, J. Parker, C. Carver, M. Scheier and J. Weintraub. The following categories of coping strategy can be distinguished: problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance-oriented coping; adaptive and maladaptive strategies; and meaning-focused and proactive coping [4; 8; 16; 21; 24; 44].

According to D. Levinson, E. Erikson, D. Papalia, S. Wendkos Olds, R. Duskin Feldman, J. Arnett, G. Vaillant, U. Şchiopu, E. Verza, F. Golu and T. Creţu, young adulthood is a stage of human development that typically occurs between the ages of 20 and 35. This period is

characterised by significant cognitive, emotional, and social development, which provides young individuals with adaptive resources but also makes them more vulnerable to stress [5; 13;19: 26; 28; 33; 42; 45]. Young people often experience stress generated by academic challenges, social and family issues, identity and independence issues, and the emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships typical of this developmental stage.

Chapter 2, „*Experimental Investigation of Stress and Coping Strategies in Young Adults*”, outlines the experimental research design, providing a detailed description of the aims, objectives, and hypotheses, as well as the characteristics of the sample and the psychodiagnostic instruments employed. The chapter also analyses the results concerning stress manifestations among young adults of different ages and genders, as well as adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies across age groups. Furthermore, it systematically and integrally highlights and describes the interrelationships between stress levels, coping strategies, and personality traits such as self-esteem.

For the empirical investigation, a sample of 227 young employees from two commercial organisations was selected, with a balanced gender distribution: 114 men and 113 women. Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 35 years, distributed as follows: 75 aged 20–25, 78 aged 26–30 and 74 aged 31–35. The aim of the constatative experiment was *to examine manifestations of stress and identify adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies among young people of different genders and age groups. Secondly, it aimed to determine the interrelationships between stress levels, coping strategies and personality.* The proposed aim is based on the following *set of objectives*: 1) to highlight patterns and levels of stress manifestation among young adults of different ages and genders; 2) to identify stressful events experienced by young adults of different ages and genders; 3) to determine adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies among young adults of different ages and genders; 4) to investigate links between stress levels and coping strategies and analyse interdependencies among coping strategies; 5) to specify interrelationships between stress levels and self-esteem/personality traits and between coping strategies and self-esteem/personality traits.

Based on the research aim and objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. *Stress manifestations and coping strategy selection in young adulthood are influenced by gender, age, and individual developmental characteristics.*
2. *The type and frequency of stress-inducing events vary across gender and age groups.*
3. *Stress levels influence coping strategies, with individuals experiencing higher stress levels using adaptive strategies less frequently.*
4. *Coping strategies function as an interdependent system rather than in isolation.*

5. *Self-esteem determines stress levels (stress perception, perceived stress, experienced stress, and risk of illness) and influences the tendency to adopt adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies.*
6. *Certain personality traits shape both stress levels and preferences for specific coping strategies.*

The applied methodology includes scales, questionnaires and inventories designed to thoroughly assess the following aspects: stress, coping strategies and personality traits. The observational experiment employed the following instruments: *the Perceived Stress Scale (S. Levenstein and S. Cohen/G. Williamson)*, *the Individual Stress Assessment Questionnaire (J. Melgosa)*, *the Holmes–Rahe Stress Scale*, *the COPE Inventory (C. Carver, M. Scheier and J. Weintraub)*, *the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*, and *the Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI)*.

To assess stress levels in young adults, *the Perceived Stress Scale*, developed by S. Levenstein, was used. This scale enables identification of how young individuals experience and perceive everyday situations as stressful. Figure 1 shows the frequencies corresponding to low, moderate and high stress levels.

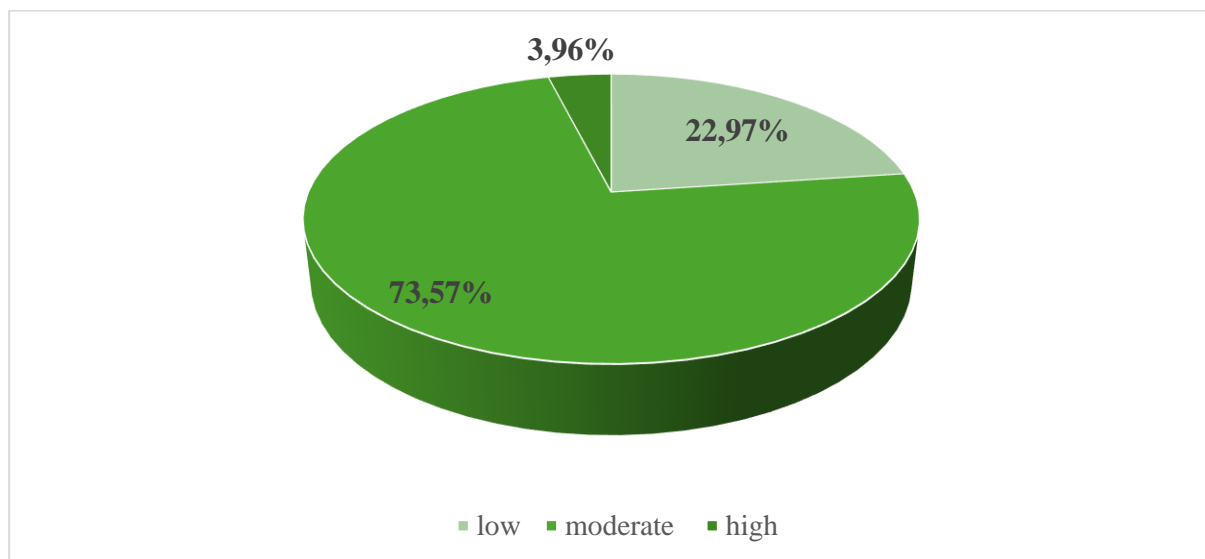


Fig. 1. Levels of stress perception among young people (%)

The most frequently observed level of stress among young people is moderate: 73.57% of participants reported experiencing this level of stress. 3.96% of respondents reported experiencing high levels of stress. Young people experiencing high levels of stress exhibit a complex set of physiological, cognitive, emotional, and behavioural changes. Their ability to concentrate is impaired, and their attention is fragmented which negatively affects memory and information processing. These individuals experience difficulty and uncertainty when making decisions. Their thoughts are persistently consumed by problematic scenarios and concerns relating to failure, setbacks, and negative consequences. This generates psychological pressure and exhaustion.

Prominent emotional experiences include anxiety, restlessness, tension and irritability. Behaviourally, these young people tend to withdraw socially, avoid stressful situations and experience a decline in professional performance. These characteristics adversely affect adaptation and efficiency in everyday life [48]. The use of non-parametric Mann–Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences in stress intensity between male and female participants ($U = 3944.50$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that males experienced higher levels of stress. This greater stress intensity among young men may indicate more pronounced physiological responses, contributing to a stronger subjective experience of stress. Furthermore, young men often face specific social expectations and role-related pressures requiring autonomy and high performance, which may increase their perceived stress levels. In contrast, young women are more likely to seek social support from family and friends, which may reduce the perception and intensity of stress. Analysis of the results using the non-parametric Mann–Whitney U test, which compared the 20–25 age group with the 26–30 age group, revealed statistically significant differences ($U = 2168.000$, $p=0.006$). Higher stress levels were recorded among the 26–30 age group. From developmental and psychological perspectives, this increased stress in the 26–30 age group can be interpreted as a consequence of transitioning to the later stage of young adulthood. This period involves consolidating one's identity, assuming increased personal and social responsibilities, and facing uncertainties about one's professional and personal future. These factors may contribute to an intensified perception and experience of stress [48].

To conduct a detailed examination of stress, we used *the Perceived Stress Scale developed by S. Cohen and G. Williamson*, as well as *the Individual Stress Assessment Questionnaire developed by J. Melgosa*. Similar results were obtained for these tests, a finding supported by the correlation coefficients between stress perception and perceived stress ($r=0.305$, $p\leq 0.01$), and between perceived stress and experienced stress ($r = 0.251$, $p\leq 0.01$). These values allow us to conclude that young people who score highly on the stress perception scale tend to obtain similar scores on the perceived stress scale. Thus, young people who score highly on *S. Levenstein's Perceived Stress Scale* also score highly on *J. Melgosa's Individual Stress Assessment Questionnaire*. The same holds true for *the Perceived Stress Scale by S. Cohen and G. Williamson* and *the Individual Stress Assessment Questionnaire by J. Melgosa*: young people with high levels of perceived stress report high and very high levels of experienced stress.

To comprehensively conceptualise stress among young people, significant life events experienced over the past 12 months were analysed. Of the 43 stress-inducing events included in *the Holmes–Rahe Life Events Scale for adults*, 42 were identified among the young participants. Young people encounter a wide range of positive and negative stress-related events, including Christmas, the holiday season, changes in eating and sleeping habits, financial changes, family

illness, and changes in habits and leisure activities. Stress-inducing situations for young men included Christmas and the holiday season, financial changes, and changes in occupation. For young women, stressors include changes in sleep schedules and eating habits, Christmas, financial changes, illness of a relative, and changes in leisure activities. Age-related differences were also observed. For participants aged 20–25, the most frequent stressors were Christmas and the holiday season, changes in eating habits and sleep patterns, financial changes, illness in the family, changes in habits, and changes in leisure activities. For participants aged 26–30, the primary stressors were Christmas and the holiday season, as well as financial changes. For participants aged 31–35, the most significant stressors were Christmas, financial changes, illness of a relative, the holidays, and minor legal infractions.

To identify the coping strategies employed by young people, the *COPE Inventory* (C. Carver, M. Scheier, and J. Weintraub) was employed. The results highlight three main categories of coping strategy: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and maladaptive. All three categories are represented among the participants in the research sample, and their frequencies are illustrated in Figure 2.

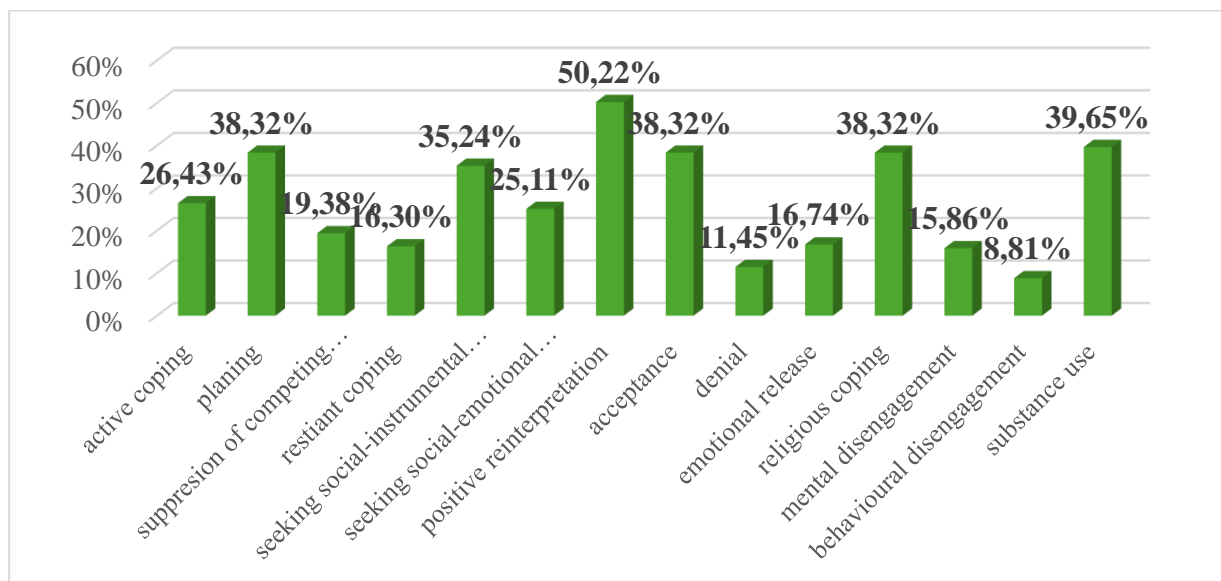


Fig. 2. Frequency of coping strategies among young people (%)

A comprehensive analysis of frequencies reveals that the two most commonly employed coping strategies among young people are positive reinterpretation (50.22%) and substance use (alcohol and medication, 39.65%). An equal proportion of participants (38.32%) reported planning, acceptance, and religious coping. The next most common strategies are seeking instrumental social support (35.24%), active coping (26.43%), seeking emotional social support (25.11%), suppression of competing activities (19.38%), emotional release (16.74%), restraint coping (16.3%), mental disengagement (15.86%), denial (11.45%), and behavioural disengagement (8.81%) [48]. Among young adults, the results indicate a predominance of

adaptive coping strategies (both problem-focused and emotion-focused) in response to stressful situations, with some notable nuances regarding the use of maladaptive strategies. The most frequently used adaptive strategies, in order of prevalence, are: positive reinterpretation (50.22%), planning (38.32%), acceptance (38.32%), religious coping (38.32%), seeking instrumental social support (35.24%), active coping (26.43%), seeking emotional social support (25.11%), suppression of competing activities (19.38%), and emotional release (16.74%). Despite different levels of use, the predominance of adaptive strategies suggests that most participants in the experimental group have functional cognitive and emotional self-regulation mechanisms. However, the findings also highlight the use of maladaptive coping strategies. The most prevalent of these is substance use (alcohol and medication), at 39.65%, followed by mental disengagement (15.86%), denial (11.45%), and behavioural disengagement (8.81%). The presence of these strategies, particularly substance use, suggests that some young people find it difficult to manage stress effectively and may require psychological support [48]. A total of 31 significant correlations were identified among coping strategies, leading to the important conclusion that young adults do not select coping strategies — whether adaptive or maladaptive — independently. Rather, they form part of a complex system of interdependent cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes. Those who employ a greater number of adaptive strategies tend to be more psychologically stable and resilient in the face of stress. Conversely, the correlations identified among maladaptive coping strategies suggest that they reinforce each other, reducing effectiveness and increasing the risk of psychological distress. Statistically significant gender differences were identified for the following coping strategies: active coping ($U=3560.50$, $p=0.000$), planning ($U=3245.50$, $p=0.000$), suppression of competing activities ($U=5029.50$, $p=0.004$), seeking instrumental social support ($U=4843.50$, $p=0.001$), positive reinterpretation ($U=3930.00$, $p=0.000$), acceptance ($U=4668.50$, $p=0.000$), denial ($U=4643.50$, $p=0.000$), and religious coping ($U=4977.50$, $p=0.003$), behaviour disengagement ($U=4750.50$, $p=0.001$) and substance use ($U=3733.50$, $p=0.000$) were observed. These differences suggest that young men more frequently exhibit maladaptive coping strategies, such as denial and behavioural disengagement, as well as substance use, while young women tend to employ adaptive strategies, including active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, seeking instrumental social support, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, and religious coping [48]. The observed gender differences in coping strategies can be explained by various factors, including biological and hormonal differences; gender-specific socialisation patterns in earlier developmental stages; the influence of social and cultural norms; unequal access to support; and the tendency of young men to be less likely to seek help.

Differences in coping strategies are observed among young people of different ages. For example, the denial strategy is selected more frequently by young people aged 31–35 than by

those aged 20–25 ($U=2229.00$, $p=0.036$). According to the Mann-Whitney U test, differences are observed in mental disengagement between the same age groups (20–25 and 31–35 years; $U=2755.5$, $p=0.940$), with young adults aged 31–35 displaying a higher frequency of mental disengagement. Similarly, the Mann-Whitney U test reveals differences in religious orientation between young adults aged 26–30 and 31–35 ($U=2190.50$, $p=0.010$): young adults aged 31–35 more frequently choose this strategy in stressful situations. These age-related differences in coping strategy selection may be explained by an increasing combination of family and career responsibilities, which may lead to higher stress levels among 31–35-year-olds. At the same time, the expansion of responsibilities at this life stage may also impact the availability of emotional resources required for selecting active and adaptive strategies, resulting in a greater reliance on less adaptive mechanisms such as denial and mental disengagement. With regard to religious coping, individuals are more likely to seek meaning and comfort in faith when faced with challenging situations as they grow older.

Personality traits among young people were examined using *the Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI)*. Figure 3 shows personality traits at different stress perception levels (low, moderate and high), as measured by the *Perceived Stress Scale (S. Levenstein)*.

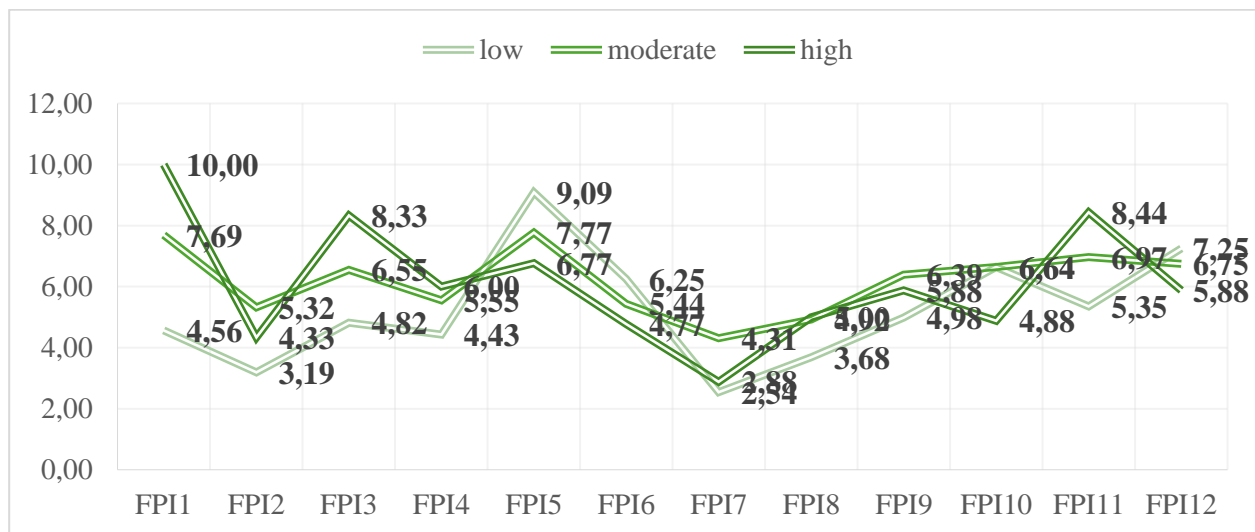


Fig. 3. Personality traits among young people with different levels of perceived stress

The average personality trait scores for young adults experiencing different levels of stress are as follows: those with low stress levels demonstrate the lowest mean scores for the following traits: neuroticism: 4.56; spontaneous aggressiveness: 3.19; depression: 4.82; dominance: 2.54; emotional lability: 5.35. Conversely, higher mean scores are observed for sociability: 9.09; extraversion–introversion: 6.64; and masculinity–femininity: 7.25 among those with low stress levels. Young people with high stress levels have low mean scores for the following personality traits: aggression: 4.33; sociability: 6.77; extraversion–introversion: 4.88; and masculinity–femininity: 5.88. Meanwhile, they have the highest scores for the following traits: spontaneous

aggression: 10; depression: 8.33; emotionality: 6; and inhibition: 5; and emotional lability: 8.44 [47].

In accordance with the correlation coefficients presented in the previous table, five statistically significant positive correlations were identified: - Stress perception and neuroticism ($r = 0.278, p \leq 0.01$); - Stress perception and spontaneous aggressiveness ($r = 0.273, p \leq 0.01$); - Stress perception and depression ($r = 0.499, p \leq 0.01$); - Stress perception and dominance ($r = 0.343, p \leq 0.01$); - Stress perception and emotional lability ($r = 0.489, p \leq 0.01$). These findings suggest that young people experiencing high levels of stress tend to exhibit higher levels of neuroticism, spontaneous aggressiveness, depression, dominance, and emotional lability. A personality profile characterised by affective irritability, tension, pessimism, impulsivity, mood disturbances, restlessness, lack of self-control, verbal aggressiveness, sadness, a desire for change, a tendency to seek sensations, sleep disturbances, somatic complaints and general distress has been associated with high stress levels [47].

Chapter 3, „*STRESS REDUCTION IN YOUNG ADULTS UNDER EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS*”, outlines the formative experiment. This experiment was designed and implemented with clear specifications for the aims, hypotheses and objectives of the stress reduction and adaptive coping development programme. The chapter also outlines the methodological principles applied when working with young adults. . It also presents and analyses the results relating to stress reduction and the development of adaptive coping strategies through multiple comparisons: between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental group; between the pre-test and post-test results of the control group; and between the post-test results of the experimental and control groups.

The aim of this stage of the doctoral research *is to develop and implement a programme that reduces stress and enhances adaptive coping strategies among young people*. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated: *implementing a structured intervention programme would lead to a significant reduction in stress levels and increased use of adaptive coping strategies among young people*.

The objectives of the psychological intervention programme are 1) to reduce physiological tension caused by stress and to restore balance between physical and mental states; 2) to optimise the cognitive appraisal and control of stressful situations by restructuring dysfunctional interpretations and enhancing self-efficacy; 3) develop emotional self-regulation skills to manage emotional reactions (e.g. anxiety, tension, and irritability) in a balanced way; 4) to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills to promote problem-focused coping strategies; 5) to enhance self-control behaviours and effective time management; 6) to improve communication

skills and the ability to seek social support; 7) to strengthen personal resources and facilitate personal development; 8) encourage engagement in healthy, relaxing activities.

The programme, which aimed to reduce stress and develop adaptive coping strategies, was designed in accordance with the following core psychological principles: *self-awareness and insight; cognitive restructuring; emotional validation; learning new behavioural patterns; sustainable change; and social support within a group context* [3; 11; 20; 22; 35; 46].

The stress-reduction programme for young people incorporated scientifically validated techniques, activities and exercises selected according to the developmental needs of young adults. These techniques were derived from various psychotherapeutic approaches. These include *cognitive behavioural approaches*, such as cognitive restructuring and problem solving; *humanistic approaches*, such as self-exploration and reflective journaling; *experiential approaches*, such as emotional awareness; *mindfulness-based interventions*, such as meditation and breathing techniques; and *psychoeducational interventions*, such as time management and social skills development. The programme included techniques to promote *self-awareness and personal development, as well as identifying stressors and applying the ABC model*. It also covered *cognitive restructuring, emotional awareness, expression and regulation, problem solving and activity planning, time management, communication skills training, strengthening social support networks, emotional and reflective journaling, relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, mindfulness meditation, as well as physical activity and sleep hygiene practices* [1; 3; 6; 11; 12; 14; 18; 20; 22; 27; 35; 46].

The results were analysed comparatively. The focus was on changes in mean scores for the experimental group between the pre-test and post-test. Average scores within the control group were also examined, as well as the differences between the two groups at the post-test stage. A key step was to compare the mean scores of the experimental group at the pre-test and post-test stages. Figure 4 shows the mean stress perception scores.

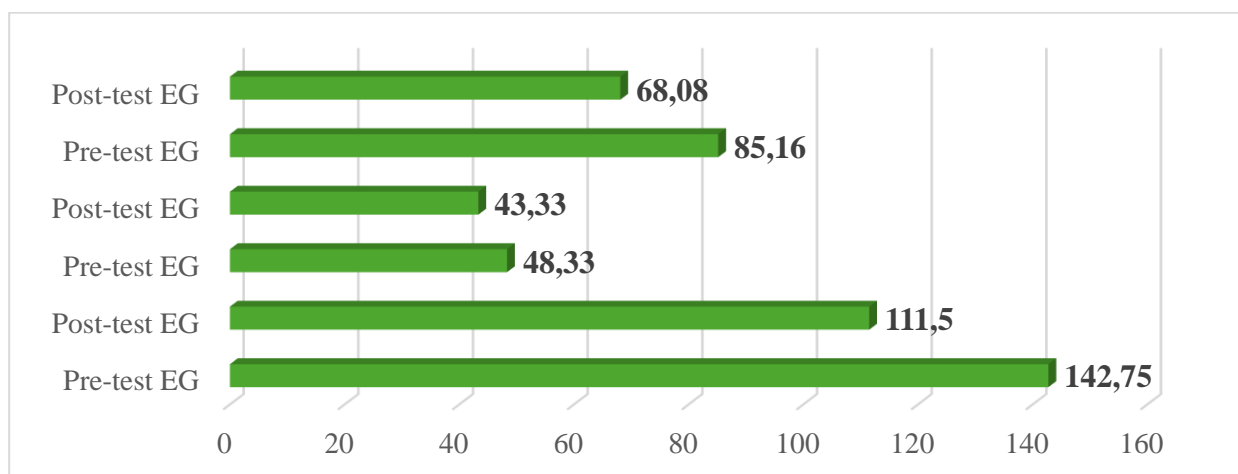


Fig. 4. Mean scores for stress perception, perceived stress and experienced stress in the experimental group at the pre- and post-test

The mean stress perception score for participants in the experimental group was 85.16 in the pre-test, whereas the mean score in the post-test was lower at 68.08. Application of the Wilcoxon test revealed a statistically significant difference in stress perception ($Z=-3.066$, $p=0.002$). As illustrated in the above figure, participants in the experimental group recorded a mean pre-test score of 48.33, which decreased to 43.33 following implementation of the stress-reduction programme. The Wilcoxon test results also demonstrate statistically significant differences in perceived stress between the pre- and post-test measurements ($Z=-3.071$, $p=0.002$). Distinct mean scores for experienced stress were observed within the experimental group between the pre-test ($M = 142.75$) and the post-test ($M = 111.50$). These differences can be attributed to the implementation of the stress-reduction programme, which aimed to increase awareness of the consequences of stress, help participants identify stressors, modify dysfunctional cognitions, develop adaptive coping strategies and improve time organisation and management. The programme also aimed to strengthen positive social relationships and encourage participants to recognise and value their personal strengths [46].

In addition to the stress analysis, Figures 5 and 6 present the mean values for adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies among the experimental group participants at pre-test and post-test.

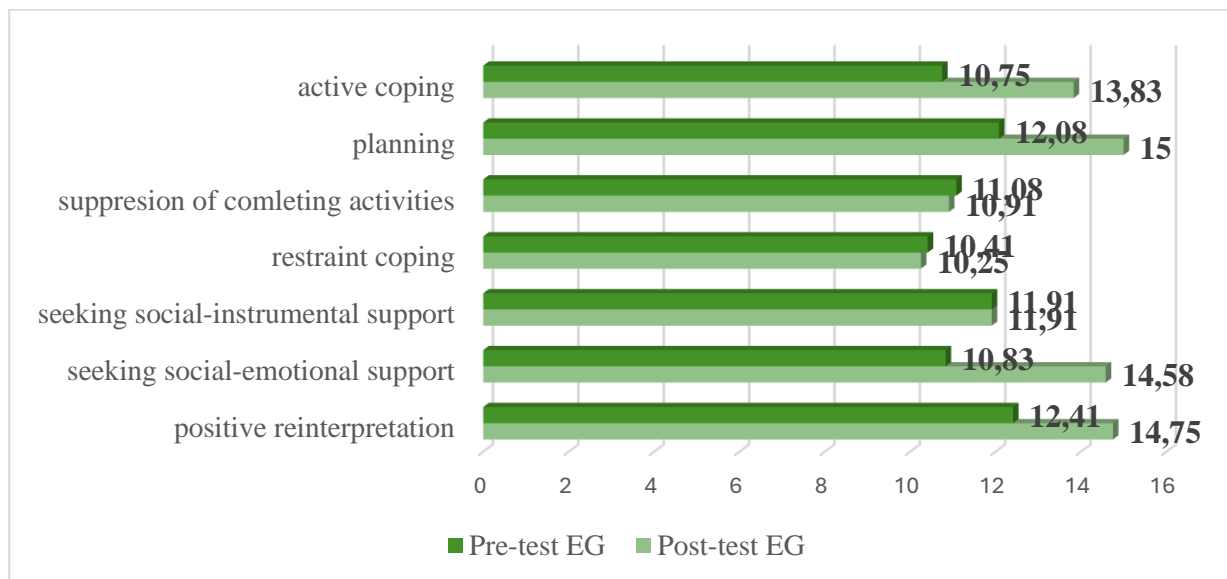


Fig. 5. Mean scores for coping strategies in the experimental group (EG) at the pre- and post-test

With regard to adaptive coping strategies, the following mean scores were recorded among young participants: active coping: EG pre-test: 10.75 and EG post-test: 13.83, planning: EG pre-test: 12.08 and EG post-test: 15.00; suppression of competing actions: EG pre-test: 11.08 and EG post-test: 10.91; restraint coping: EG pre-test: 10.41 and EG post-test: 10.25; seeking social-instrumental support: EG pre-test and EG post-test: 11.91; seeking social-emotional support: EG pre-test: 10.83 EG post-test: 14.58; positive reinterpretation: EG pre-test: 12.41 and EG post-test: 14.75. The Wilcoxon statistical test revealed significant differences in several adaptive coping

strategies between the pre- and post-test groups of young people, including active coping ($Z=3.104$, $p=0.003$), planning ($Z=2.965$, $p=0.003$), seeking social-emotional support ($Z=-2.965$, $p=0.003$), and positive reinterpretation ($Z=-2.820$, $p=0.005$). The stress reduction programme for young people included various techniques and exercises. These included proactive behavioural techniques such as planning, organising and prioritising, as well as techniques to encourage communication, express emotions, build supportive relationships and develop positive thinking. All of these techniques lead to significant changes in adaptive coping strategies.

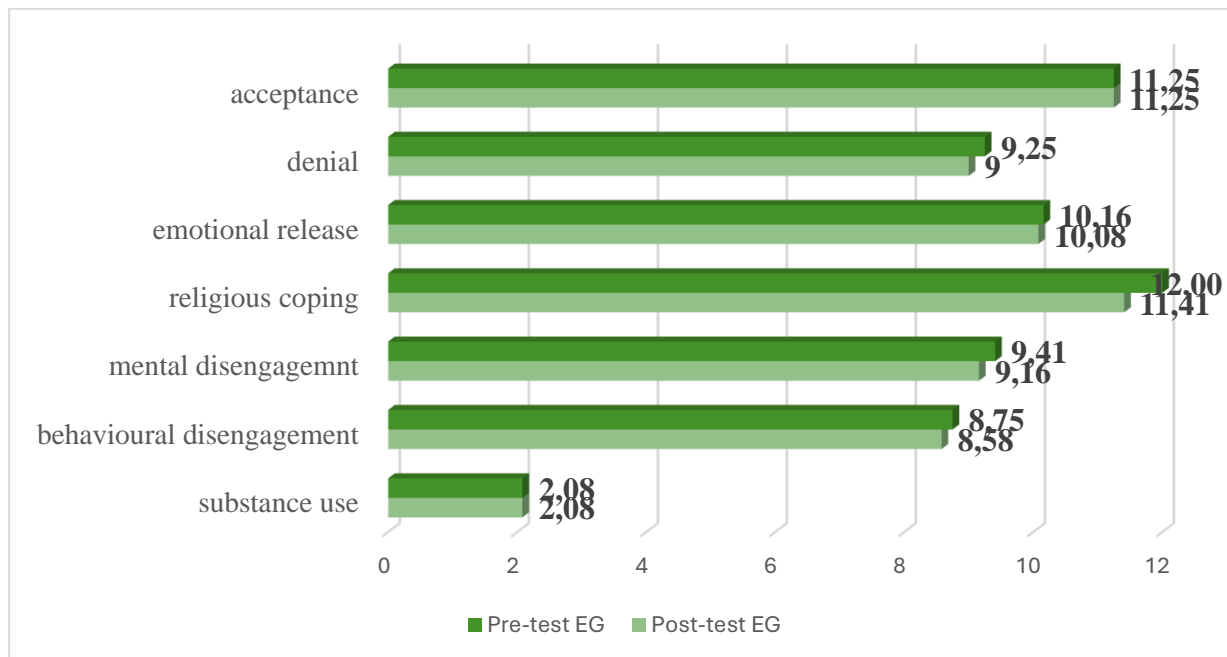


Fig. 6. Mean scores for coping strategies in the experimental group (EG) at the pre- and post-test

For adaptive strategies, the following mean scores were recorded among young adults: acceptance: 11.25 for both the EG pre- and post-test; emotional release: EG pre-test: 10.16 and EG post-test: 10.08; and religious coping: EG pre-test: 12 and EG post-test: 11.41. For maladaptive strategies, the following mean scores were observed: denial: EG pre-test: 9.25 and EG post-test: 9.00; mental disengagement: EG pre-test: 9.41 and EG post-test: 9.16; behavioural disengagement: EG pre-test: 8.75 and EG post-test: 8.58. The mean scores for the maladaptive coping strategies remained unchanged in the post-test group. This is because the stress reduction programme for young people was designed to develop adaptive coping strategies and reduce reliance on maladaptive ones. Therefore, reducing reliance on maladaptive strategies was not a direct objective of our intervention; rather, we assumed that they would diminish as a side effect. At the same time, we believe that these strategies are part of behavioural patterns that have been learned and become automatic by this age, making them more difficult to change. Achieving changes in these strategies requires more specific programmes and a much longer duration.

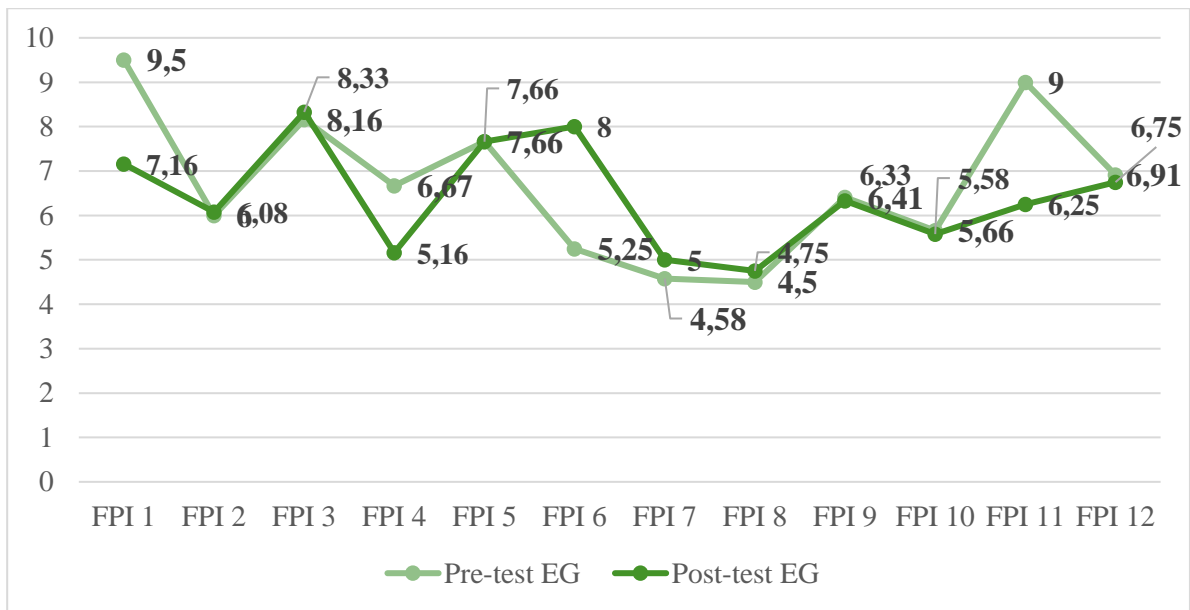


Fig. 7 Mean personality trait scores in the experimental group (EG) at the pre- and post-test

Figure 7 shows the mean scores for the personality traits observed among young people in the pre- and post-test experimental groups. The pre-test group scored an average of 9.15 (M) for neuroticism, while the post-test group scored an average of 7.16 (M). Similar mean scores were observed for spontaneous aggression in both groups (6.08 and 6.0, respectively). For depression, young people in the pre-test group scored an average of 8.16, while those in the post-test group scored an average of 8.33. Those in the pre-test group scored an average of 6.67 (M) for emotionality, while those in the post-test group scored an average of 5.16 (M). For sociability, the young people in the pre-test group scored an average of 7.66. The mean score for the post-test group was also 7.66. The pre-test group scored an average of 5.25 (M) for calmness, while the post-test group scored an average of 8.0 (M). On average, the pre-test group scored 4.58 (M) for dominance, while the post-test group scored 5.0 (M). The pre-test group scored an average of 4.5 (M) for inhibition, while the post-test group scored an average of 4.75 (M). The pre-test group scored an average of 6.41 (M) for open-mindedness, while the post-test group scored a similar average of 6.33 (M). For extraversion–introversion, the pre-test group scored an average of 5.66 (M), while the post-test group scored an average of 5.5 (M). For emotional lability, the pre-test group scored an average of 9 (M), while the post-test group scored an average of 6.25 (M). For the final trait, masculinity–femininity, the pre-test group scored an average of 6.91 (M), while the post-test group scored an average of 6.75 (M).

Including young people in the stress reduction programme enabled the introduction of techniques and exercises to promote self-awareness and the development of adaptive coping strategies. Relaxation and mindfulness were also promoted, and a safe environment and social support were provided within the group to facilitate emotional stability. Consequently, there were

changes in neuroticism, emotionality, emotional lability and temperament, with positive development observed.

Another stage of the analysis involved describing the means of the research factors — stress, adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, and personality traits — among young adults in the pre- and post-test control groups. The mean scores for stress (stress perception, perceived stress, experienced stress, and risk of illness), adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies, and personality traits among the young people in the pre-test control group did not change in the post-test situation. However, according to the Wilcoxon statistical test, a significant difference was found for emotionality ($Z=-2.060$, $p=0.039$). The more pronounced emotionality among the young people in the post-test control group can be explained by their exclusion from the stress reduction programme, causing them to react more intensely to stressful factors and circumstances. Constant stress and a lack of support from others fosters strong emotional reactivity.

The final comparison presented below is an analysis of the post-test scores of young people in the experimental and control groups. Figure 8 illustrates the stress scores (stress perception, perceived stress, and experienced stress) of the young participants.

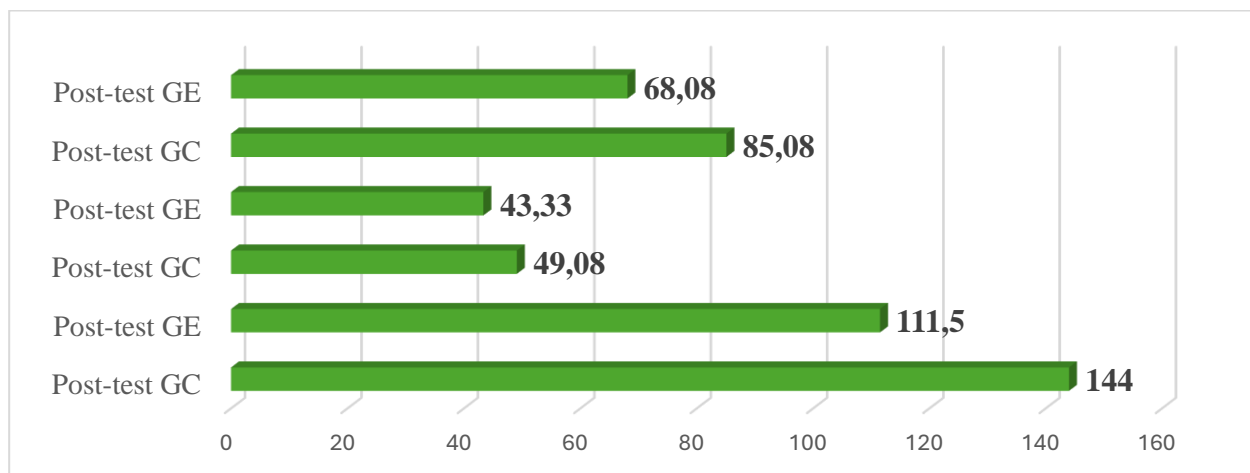


Fig. 8. Mean scores for stress perception, perceived stress and experienced stress in the experimental and control groups in the post-test

Participants in the experimental group recorded a mean post-test score of 68.08, which was lower than the mean score of 85.08 recorded by those in the control group. The Mann–Whitney U test revealed a statistically significant difference between the two groups' post-test results ($U=9$, $p=0,001$). Therefore, it can be concluded that participants in the experimental group exhibited lower stress levels than those in the control group at post-test. The respective mean scores for the two groups were 43.33 and 49.08, respectively. According to the Mann–Whitney U test for independent samples, statistically significant differences were identified between the two groups at the post-test stage ($U=14$, $p=0,002$). As shown in the above figure, the mean stress score for participants in the experimental group at the post-test stage (111.50) differs significantly from that

of the control group (144.00). The Mann–Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences ($U=0, p=0,000$) in the post-test results of young people in the experimental and control groups. These differences suggest that the changes observed in the experimental group are due to the stress-reduction programme, in which participants practised proactive behaviours and developed their own psychological resources. Techniques such as relaxation, breathing and mindfulness meditation were particularly important, as they alleviated agitation, reduced muscular tension and diminished internal rumination, anxiety and fear.

Figure 9 shows the mean adaptive coping strategy scores for the experimental and control groups at post-test.

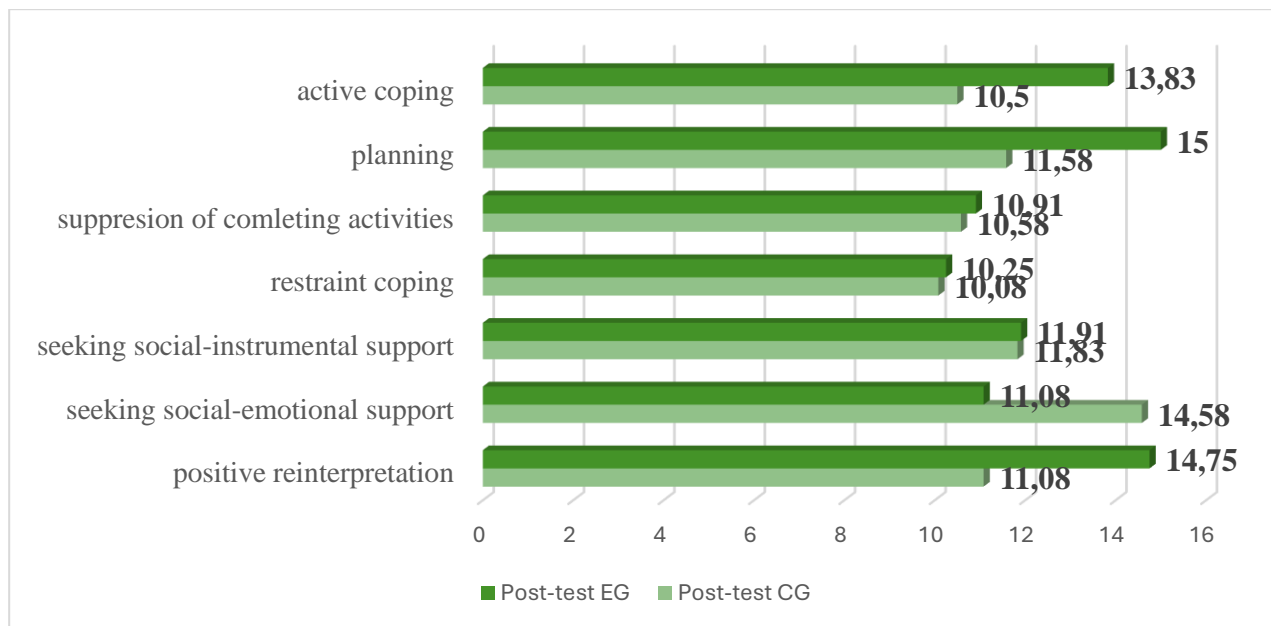


Fig. 9. Mean scores for coping strategies in the experimental and control groups in the post-test

Examining the data in Figure 9 reveals that the two groups have different mean scores for adaptive coping strategies. Regarding active coping, the experimental group achieved a mean score of 13.83 in the post-test, while the control group obtained a mean score of 10.50. Regarding planning, the experimental group achieved a mean score of 15.00, compared to 11.58 for the control group. For the suppression of competing activities strategy, the experimental group achieved a mean score of 10.91, while the control group achieved 10.58. For restraint coping, participants in the experimental group who had taken part in the stress-reduction programme achieved a mean score of 10.25, compared to 10.08 for the control group.

In terms of seeking instrumental-social support, the mean score for the experimental group was 11.91 at the post-test, compared to 11.83 for the control group. For seeking emotional -social support, the respective mean scores were 11.08 and 14.58. Statistical analysis using the Mann–Whitney U test revealed significant differences in the following: active coping ($U=16.00,$

p=0.002); planning (U=62.00, p=0.001); seeking emotional -social support (U= 24.00, p= 0.005); and positive reinterpretation (U= 6.50, p=0.007). These differences may be attributed to the stress-reduction programme, which focused on promoting positive behavioural patterns.

Figure 10 illustrates the mean score for the remaining adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies among participants in the experimental and control groups at post-test.

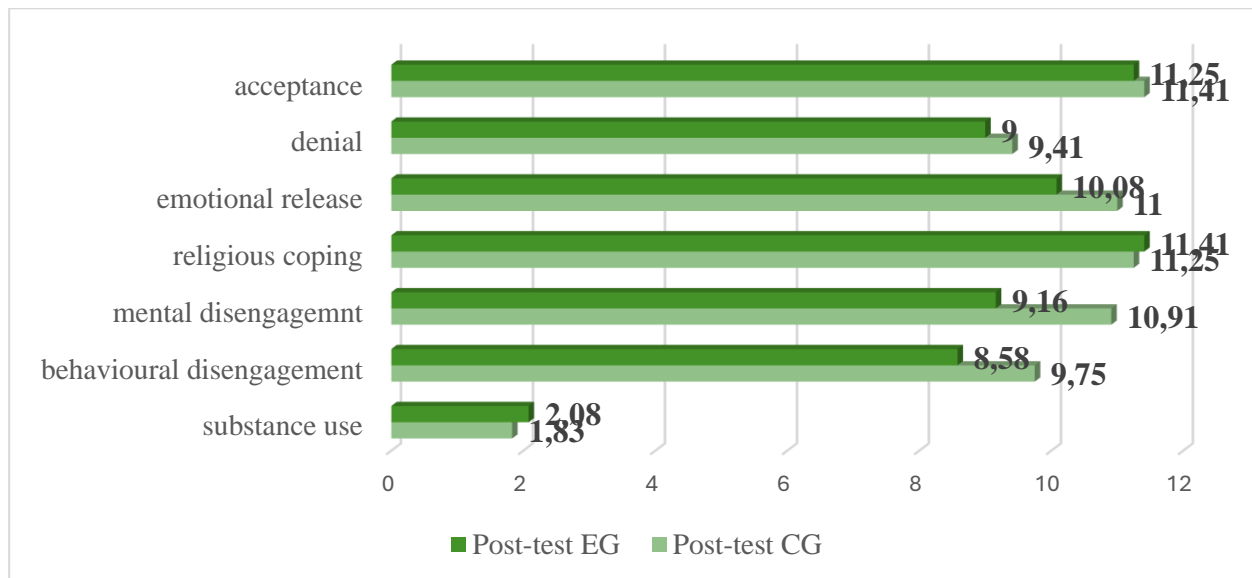


Fig. 10. Mean scores for coping strategies in the experimental and control groups in the post-test

Regarding adaptive coping strategies for acceptance, the mean post-test score for participants in the experimental group was 11.25, compared to 11.41 for the control group. For emotional release, participants in the experimental group who were included in the stress-reduction programme obtained an average score of 10.08, compared to an average score of 11.00 for the control group. For religious coping, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 11.41, while the control group obtained a mean score of 11.25. For maladaptive coping strategies, the experimental group recorded a mean score of 9.00 for denial at the post-test, while the control group recorded a mean score of 9.41. For mental disengagement, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 9.16, compared to 10.91 for the control group. For behavioural disengagement, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 8.58, compared to 9.75 for the control group.

Another coping strategy assessed was substance use (alcohol or medication). Participants in the experimental group recorded a mean score of 2.08 here, compared to 1.83 for the control group. According to the Mann–Whitney U test, statistically significant differences between the two groups were identified in terms of mental disengagement (U= 4, p= .026). These differences may be attributed to the fact that the young adults participated in a stress-reduction programme where they were taught coping mechanisms. This programme provides young people with the necessary tools to manage stress and life challenges effectively. Developing these skills can

strengthen resilience, maintain emotional balance and enable more effective coping with everyday difficulties. Furthermore, applying these mechanisms can contribute to improved mental health, enhanced interpersonal relationships and the prevention of maladaptive behaviours, thereby promoting healthy adaptation.

Figure 11 illustrates the mean personality trait scores among participants in the experimental and control groups following the post-test.

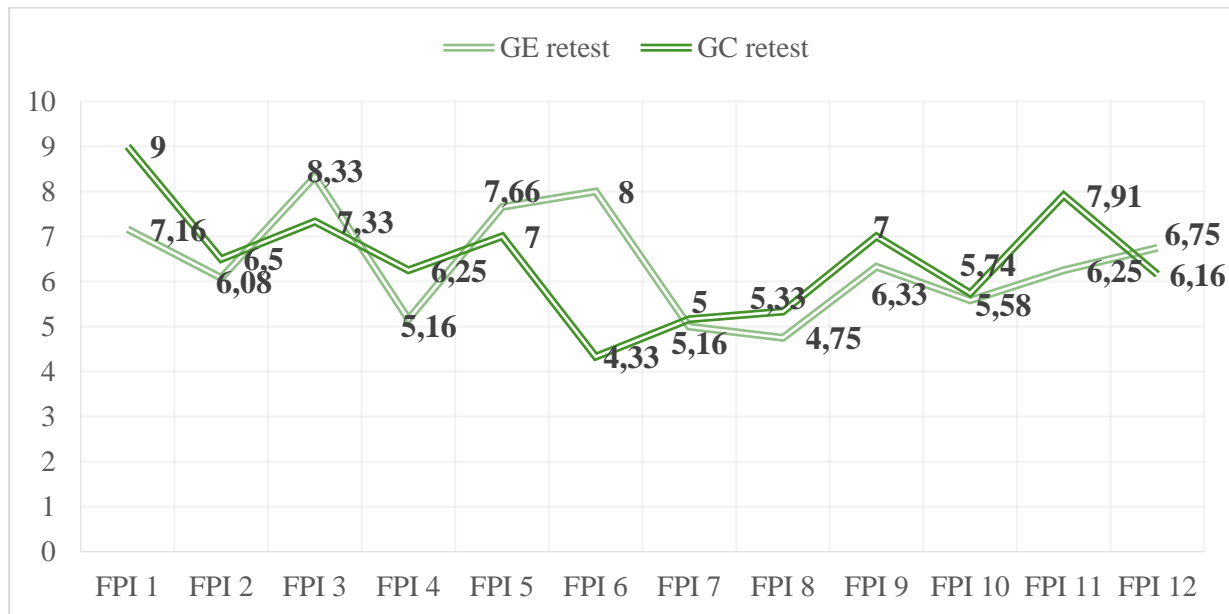


Fig. 11. Mean scores for personality traits in the experimental and control groups in the post-test

In terms of neuroticism, the mean post-test score for participants in the experimental group was 7.16, compared to 9.00 for those in the control group. Regarding spontaneous aggressiveness, the mean score for the experimental group was 6.08, compared to 6.50 for the control group. For depression, the experimental group recorded a value of 8.33, compared to 7.33 for the control group. For emotionality, the mean score for the experimental group was 5.16, compared to 6.25 for the control group. The experimental group achieved a mean score of 7.66 for sociability, compared to 7.00 for the control group. For calmness, the mean score for the experimental group was 5.00, compared to 4.33 for the control group. For dominance, the mean value for the experimental group was 5.00, compared to 5.16 for the control group. For inhibition, the experimental group obtained a mean value of 4.75, while the control group obtained 5.33. For open-mindedness, the experimental group achieved a mean score of 6.33, compared to 7.00 in the control group.

Regarding extraversion–introversion, the experimental group obtained an mean score of 5.58, compared to 5.74 in the control group. For emotional lability, the experimental group recorded a mean value of 6.25, compared to 7.91 in the control group. For the masculinity–femininity trait, the experimental group obtained a mean of 6.75, compared to 6.16 in the control

group. According to the Mann–Whitney U test, statistically significant differences in the following personality traits were identified between participants in the experimental group and the control group at the post-test stage: neuroticism (U=39.00, p=0.049), emotionality (U=37.50, p=0.043), calmness (U=3.50, p=0.000), and emotional lability (U=33.00, p=0.021).

These differences may be explained by the variety of techniques used in the psychological stress-reduction programme. By engaging in activities designed to promote personal growth, self-awareness and adaptive behavioural patterns, young participants were able to regulate their emotions more effectively and develop a more positive view of life.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present research aimed to examine the manifestations of stress and coping strategies among young adults of different genders and age groups and intervention programme was designed and implemented to reduce stress and develop adaptive coping strategies in young adults.

The following scientific conclusions can be formulated based on this theoretical–experimental study of stress and coping strategies among young people:

1. Throughout its evolution, the concept of stress has predominantly been conceptualised within a biological perspective. It has been defined as an organism's response to specific internal and external demands involving the immediate activation of physiological mechanisms. Subsequently, the explanatory framework of stress expanded to include a dynamic process arising from continuous interaction between environmental demands and an individual's neurophysiological, cognitive and emotional processes. From this perspective, when there is a discrepancy between external pressures and an individual's adaptive capacities, dysfunctions emerge in the self-regulatory mechanisms that are essential for maintaining homeostasis. The current definition of stress is that *it is an adaptive process that occurs when contextual demands and individual resources are imbalanced. The experience of stress triggers the mobilisation of physiological, cognitive and emotional mechanisms simultaneously and interdependently. These mechanisms are conditioned by the subjective evaluation of circumstances and are oriented towards self-regulation and maintaining functional equilibrium.*
2. *Stress is a common experience among young adults, typically manifesting as moderate to high-intensity feelings. Its occurrence is influenced by gender and age; male participants tend to report higher levels of stress than female participants. Higher levels of stress are observed among young adults aged 20–25 and 31–35. Female participants seem to be more susceptible to illness, with the 20–25 age group being the most vulnerable. Stress-inducing events may be positive or negative and involve changes to young people's daily lives and social structures. These changes may include: Christmas and the holiday season; changes in dietary habits;*

changes in sleep schedules; financial changes; the illness of a relative; changes in habitual behaviours; and changes in leisure activities.

3. The interpretation and analysis of stress experienced by young adults is inseparable from an examination of their coping strategies. *Among young people, both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies can be identified.* The main adaptive strategies used are positive reinterpretation, planning, acceptance, religious coping, seeking instrumental- social support, active coping and seeking emotional-social support. Maladaptive coping mechanisms adopted by young people include substance use, mental disengagement, denial and behavioural disengagement. Significant differences in preferences for coping strategies are observed with regard to the gender factor. The selection of coping strategies is shaped by gender and age; thus, male participants more frequently employ maladaptive strategies such as denial, behavioural disengagement, and the use of alcohol and medication, whereas female participants predominantly use adaptive strategies such as active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, seeking instrumental-social support, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, and religious coping. From an age-related perspective, individuals aged 31–35 demonstrate a higher prevalence of maladaptive coping strategies, including denial and mental disengagement, as well as the adaptive strategy of religious coping.
4. A significant relationship has been identified between stress intensity and coping strategies in young adults. Higher stress levels are associated with reduced use of adaptive strategies and increased reliance on maladaptive ones.
5. *Both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies function as components of an integrated, interdependent system of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes.* Using an adaptive strategy tends to encourage the use of other adaptive strategies, and a similar pattern is observed with maladaptive strategies.
6. *The findings emphasise the significant links between self-esteem, personality traits, stress and coping strategies in young people.* Low self-esteem is associated with higher stress levels and a greater reliance on maladaptive coping strategies. Those characterised by personality traits such as nervousness, spontaneous aggressiveness, depressiveness, emotionality, dominance and emotional lability tend to experience higher levels of stress. Spontaneous aggressiveness and dominance in particular influence the selection of maladaptive coping strategies.
7. *The results of the investigation have enabled the development of an integrative modelling approach to stress and coping strategies in young people. This approach elucidates how stress manifests according to gender, age, and coping strategy, as well as its interrelationship with self-esteem and personality traits.*

8. Young adults who participated in the stress-reduction programme showed significant changes in their stress levels, including perceived stress, stress perception, and experienced stress. Notable changes were also observed in their coping strategies, such as active coping, planning, seeking social- emotional support, and positive reinterpretation. Furthermore, improvements were recorded in self-esteem, as well as in personality traits such as nervousness, emotionality, calmness, and emotional liability. *These results are explained by the programme's techniques, which included functional regulation, restructuring dysfunctional cognitions, more realistic appraisal of stressful situations, improving affective awareness and developing individual psychological resources.*
9. *The involvement of young people in structured stress-reduction programmes is essential for supporting the development of a balanced personality and facilitating harmonious psychosocial adaptation.*

Recommendations for implementation:

1. Psychologists and psychotherapists may use psychodiagnostic methods to assess stress, coping strategies and personality when evaluating the psychosocial domain in young people and adults.
2. Specialists may implement the stress-reduction and adaptive coping development programme with the aim of reducing stress and addressing related psychological difficulties among adolescents, young people, and adults.
3. The principles, explanations and data presented in the study, together with its theoretical and applied contributions, could be shared among specialists (psychologists and psychotherapists) by publishing a good practice guide.

Suggestions for further research: The findings of this study are relevant to the conceptualisation of stress psychology in young people. Future research could benefit from an integrative investigation of stress across developmental stages preceding and following youth. Additionally, it would be of particular interest to extend the study of stress in young people to specific contexts, such as burnout, the digital environment and technology use.

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ADNOTARE

Vlas Irina, Modalități de diminuare a stresului la tineri. Teză de doctor în psihologie. Chișinău 2026

Structura tezei. Teza este constituită din: adnotări (în limbile română, engleză și rusă), introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografia din **285 de surse bibliografice, 7 anexe, 132 pagini de text de bază**. Lucrarea cuprinde 43 figuri și 22 tabele. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 12 articole științifice.

Cuvinte-cheie: stres, strategii de coping, personalitate, diferențe de gen, diferențe de vârstă, program de diminuare, tineri.

Domeniul de studiu: Psihologia dezvoltării, Psihologia tânărului, Psihologia stresului.

Scopul cercetării constă în a: examina manifestările stresului și a strategiilor de coping la tinerii de diferit gen și vârstă, precum elaborarea și validarea unui program orientat la diminuarea stresului și dezvoltarea strategiilor de coping adaptative la tineri. **Obiectivele cercetării:** studierea literaturii științifice cu referire la stres, strategiile de coping, caracteristicile stresului la tineri și instrumentele psihodiagnostice de examinare a stresului și strategiilor de coping; evidențierea modului și nivelurilor de manifestare a stresului la tinerii de diferit gen și vârstă; identificarea evenimentelor stresoare experimentate de tinerii de diferit gen și vârstă; determinarea strategiilor de coping adaptative și a celor dezadaptative la tinerii de diferit gen și vârstă; investigarea legăturilor dintre nivelul de stres și strategiile de coping, precum și analiza interdependențelor dintre strategiile de coping la tineri; specificarea interrelațiilor dintre nivelul de stres și stima de sine / trăsăturile de personalitate, precum și dintre strategiile de coping și stima de sine / trăsăturile de personalitate la tineri; și elaborarea, implementarea și evaluarea eficienței unui program de diminuare a stresului la tineri și dezvoltare a strategiilor de coping adaptative.

Rezultatele obținute care contribuie la soluționarea problemei științifice importante vizează o abordare și explicație științifică și integrativă a stresului prin: examinarea modului în care acesta se manifestă la tinerii de diferit gen și vârstă, evidențierea și caracterizarea strategiilor de coping adaptative și dezadaptative la tineri în funcție de gen și vârstă; analiza interrelațiilor dintre stres / strategii de coping și stima de sine / trăsături de personalitate, constatări ce prezintă fundamentul pentru elaborarea și implementarea unui program de diminuare a stresului care a contribuit la reducerea nivelului de stres, cât și la dezvoltarea strategiilor de coping adaptative.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a rezultatelor obținute rezidă din realizarea unui studiu teoretico-experimental privind stresul și strategiile de coping în rândul tinerilor cu vârste între 20 și 35 de ani. Cercetarea a permis fundamentarea unei baterii de instrumente psihodiagnostice complexe destinate examinării stresului, a strategiilor de coping și trăsăturilor de personalitate, inclusiv a stimei de sine la tineri. S-au identificat tiparele de manifestare și evoluție a stresului pe parcursul vârstei tineri (de la 20 la 35 de ani), precum și particularitățile strategiilor de coping adaptative și dezadaptative la tineri și tinere de diferită vârstă. Au fost clarificate relațiile între stres, strategiile de coping și personalitate (stima de sine și trăsăturile de personalitate) la tineri. A fost elaborat și validat experimental un model de program orientat la diminuarea stresului și dezvoltare a strategiilor de coping adaptative.

Semnificația teoretică a lucrării. Constatările studiului teoretico-experimental aduc o contribuție semnificativă la domeniile psihologia dezvoltării și psihologia educației, furnizând cunoștințe actualizate și integrate privind dezvoltarea psihosocială a tinerilor prin consemnarea diferențelor de gen și de vârstă în manifestarea stresului și a strategiilor de coping, precum și interrelațiile detaliate dintre experimentarea stresului, a strategiilor de coping și personalitatea (stima de sine și trăsăturile de personalitate) la tineri. Rezultatele cercetării, împreună cu explicațiile și concluziile formulate au o relevanță semnificativă pentru redefinirea și actualizarea abordării dezvoltării emoționale și a personalității tinerilor în contextul disciplinelor: Psihologia dezvoltării și Psihologia tânărului.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării. Conceptele și principiile teoretice identificate în cadrul cercetării privind manifestarea stresului, strategiilor de coping și interdependențele dintre stres, mecanismele de coping și stima de sine și trăsăturile de personalitate pot servi drept referințe fundamentale în procesul de consolidare și dezvoltare integrată și echilibrată a personalității. Setul cu instrumente psihodiagnostice structurat și validat experimental este robust pentru evaluarea sferei afective și a personalității la tineri și adulți putând fi utilizat de psihologi clinicieni, psihoterapeuți etc. Programul conceput pentru diminuarea stresului și dezvoltarea strategiilor de coping adaptative, poate fi aplicat atât în prevenirea și reducerea stresului, cât și în abordarea altor dificultăți emoționale sau altor probleme asociate personalității, fiind util atât specialiștilor din domeniul psihologiei, cât și beneficiarilor direcți, respectiv tinerilor și adulților.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice. Constatările științifice ale cercetării au fost integrate în procesul educațional și formativ al studenților și masteranzilor fiind utilizate în cadrul disciplinelor: Psihologia proceselor reglatorii, Psihologia tânărului, Gender psihologia, Psihologia clinică și Psihologia medicală. De asemenea, aceste rezultate au fost aplicate și în programele de formare continuă.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Влас Ирина. Способы снижения стресса в молодом возрасте. Диссертация на соискание учёной степени доктора психологии, Кишинёу 2026.

Структура диссертации. Работа состоит из: аннотаций (на румынском, английском и русском языках), введения, трех глав, общих выводов и рекомендаций, списка литературы из 285 источников, 7 приложений и 132 страниц основного текста. Работа включает 43 рисунков и 22 таблиц. Результаты исследования опубликованы в 12 научных работах.

Ключевые слова: стресс, копинг-стратегии, личность, гендерные различия, возрастные различия, программа по снижению стресса, период молодости.

Сферы исследования: Психология развития, Психология молодости, Психология стресса.

Цель исследования заключается в изучении проявлений стресса и копинг-стратегий в молодом возрасте в зависимости от пола и возраста, а также в разработке и валидации программы, направленной на снижение уровня стресса и развитие адаптивных стратегий совладения в период молодости. **Задачи исследования:** изучение научной литературы по проблеме стресса, копинг-стратегий в период молодости, а также анализ психодиагностического инструментария для исследования стресса и копинг-стратегий; выявление специфики и уровней проявления стресса в молодом возрасте в зависимости от пола и возраста; выявление стрессогенных событий, переживаемых молодыми людьми в зависимости от пола и возраста; определение адаптивных и дезадаптивных копинг-стратегий в период молодости в зависимости от пола и возраста; исследование взаимосвязи между уровнем стресса и стратегиями копинга, а также анализ взаимодействий между стратегиями копинга у молодежи; конкретизация взаимосвязей между уровнем стресса и самооценкой / личностными чертами, а также между копинг-стратегиями и самооценкой / личностными чертами в период молодости; разработка, внедрение и оценка эффективности программы по снижению стресса и развитию адаптивных копинг-стратегий в период молодости.

Решённая значимая научная проблема заключается в научном интегративном подходе к объяснению стресса через: анализ форм его проявления, характеристику адаптивных и дезадаптивных копинг-стратегий в зависимости от гендерных и возрастных факторов; выявление корреляций между стрессом / копинг-стратегией и самооценкой / личностными чертами. Данные выводы послужили фундаментом для создания и программы, способствовавшей снижению стресса и развитию адаптивных копинг-стратегий.

Научная новизна и оригинальность полученных результатов обусловлены проведением теоретико-экспериментального исследования стресса и копинг-стратегий в возрастной группе от 20 до 35 лет. Исследование позволило обосновать комплексную батарею психодиагностических инструментов для изучения стресса, копинг-стратегий и личностных черт, включая самооценку. Идентифицированы паттерны проявления и динамика стресса в период молодости (с 20 до 35 лет), а также специфика адаптивных и дезадаптивных копинг-стратегий в зависимости от пола и возраста. Уточнены взаимосвязи между стрессом, копинг-стратегиями и личностью (самооценкой и личностными чертами) в период молодости. Разработана и экспериментально проверена модель программы по снижению стресса и развития адаптивных копинг-стратегий.

Теоретическая значимость работы. Результаты проведённого теоретико-экспериментального исследования вносят существенный вклад в психологию развития и педагогическую психологию, предоставляя актуализированные и интегрированные знания о психосоциальном развитии молодёжи посредством фиксации гендерных и возрастных различий в проявлениях стресса и копинг-стратегий, а также детальных взаимосвязей между переживанием стресса, копинг-стратегиями и личностью (самооценкой и чертами личности) в молодом возрасте. Результаты исследования, наряду со сформулированными объяснениями и выводами, имеют существенное значение для пересмотра и актуализации подходов к эмоциональному и личностному развитию молодёжи в контексте таких дисциплин, как «Психология развития» и «Психология молодёжи».

Практическая значимость работы. Теоретические положения и выявленные закономерности, в ходе исследования проявлений стресса, копинг-стратегий и взаимозависимостей между стрессом, копинг-стратегий, самооценкой и чертами личности, могут служить фундаментальными ориентирами в процессе консолидации и интегративного, сбалансированного развития личности. Сконструированная и экспериментально проверенная модель психодиагностического инструментария является надёжной для оценки аффективной и личностной сфер у молодёжи и взрослых и может быть использована клиническими психологами, психотерапевтами и др. Программа разработанная для снижения уровня стресса и развития адаптивных копинг-стратегий, может применяться как для профилактики и редукации стресса, так и при работе с другими эмоциональными трудностями или личностными проблемами, будучи полезной как специалистам в области психологии, так и непосредственным бенефициарам – молодёжи и взрослым.

Внедрение научных результатов. Данные теоретико-экспериментального исследования были интегрированы в образовательный процесс подготовки студентов и магистрантов и используются в рамках следующих дисциплин: «Психология регуляторных процессов», «Психология молодости», «Гендерная психология», «Клиническая психология» и «Медицинская психология». Кроме того, данные результаты были внедрены в программы непрерывного профессионального образования (повышения квалификации).

ANNOTATION

Vlas Irina. Strategies to Reduce Stress Among Young Adults. Doctoral Thesis in Psychology. Chişinău 2026.

Thesis structure. The thesis comprises abstracts in Romanian, English and Russian, an introduction, three chapters, general conclusions and recommendations, a bibliography of **285 sources**, **7 appendices** and **132 pages of main text**. The work contains 43 figures and 22 tables. The research findings have been published in 12 scientific articles.

Keywords: stress, coping strategies, personality, gender differences, age differences, intervention programme, young adults.

Field of study: Developmental Psychology, Youth Psychology and Stress Psychology.

Aim of the research: To examine the manifestations of stress and coping strategies among young adults of different genders and ages, and implement a programme focused on reducing stress and enhancing adaptive coping strategies among this age group. **Research objectives:** to review the scientific literature on stress, coping strategies and stress characteristics in young adults, as well as psychodiagnostic instruments used to assess stress and coping; to identify the forms and levels of stress manifestation among young people of different genders and ages; to determine the sources of stress experienced by this particular group; to distinguish between adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies; to investigate the relationships between stress levels and coping strategies, as well as the interdependence among coping strategies in young adults; to examine the associations between stress levels and self-esteem/personality traits, as well as between coping strategies and self-esteem/personality traits; and to design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a stress reduction programme for young adults, as well as the development of adaptive coping strategies.

The research findings provide an integrative scientific approach to stress, contributing to the solution of a significant scientific problem. This approach involves examining stress manifestations among young adults of different genders and ages, identifying and describing adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies according to gender and age, and analyzing the relationships between stress, coping strategies, self-esteem, and personality traits. These findings provide a solid framework for the development and implementation of an effective stress reduction programme, which has been proven to reduce stress levels and promote adaptive coping strategies.

Scientific novelty and originality. The originality of this study emerges from its theoretical and experimental investigation of stress and coping strategies among individuals aged 20 to 35. The study has enabled the development of a complex psychodiagnostic tests for evaluating stress levels, coping strategies, personality traits, and self-esteem. It has also identified patterns in the manifestation and progression of stress across young adulthood, as well as particularities relating to age and gender in adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. The relationships between stress, coping strategies, and personality traits (such as self-esteem) have been explained. Furthermore, an intervention programme aimed at reducing stress and developing adaptive coping strategies was designed and experimentally tested.

Theoretical significance. The findings of this theoretical-experimental study substantially contribute to the fields of Developmental and Educational Psychology by providing updated and integrated knowledge on the psychosocial development of young people. The research highlights differences in stress manifestation and coping strategies according to gender and age, as well as the detailed interrelationships between stress experience, coping strategies and personality traits such as self-esteem. Alongside the data interpretations and conclusions, these findings are highly relevant for redefining and updating emotional and personality development approaches in young adults within the disciplines of Developmental Psychology and Youth Psychology.

Practical value. The theoretical concepts and principles concerning the manifestation of stress, coping strategies, and the interdependence of stress, coping strategies, self-esteem, and personality traits, as identified in the study, could provide a solid foundation for integrated and harmonious personality development. The structured, experimentally tested psychodiagnostic model can be used by clinical psychologists, psychotherapists and other specialists to effectively assess the emotional state and personality of young people and adults. The intervention programme, developed to reduce stress and improve adaptive coping strategies, can prevent and reduce stress, as well as address other emotional difficulties or personality-related issues. This programme benefits both professionals and their clients, including young people and adults.

Implementation of scientific findings. Research findings have been incorporated into undergraduate and postgraduate education and training programmes, and are used in courses such as „Regulatory Psychology”, „Youth Psychology”, „Gender Psychology”, „Clinical Psychology” and „Medical Psychology”. Additionally, these results have been applied in continuing professional development programmes.

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