



COPING STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTATION TO A FOREIGN CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>The article is devoted to the topical issue of adaptation to a foreign cultural environment and the connection between the success of adaptation and the use of various coping strategies: it summarizes theoretical provisions on the adaptation process, the concepts of "stress" and "coping strategies". It describes various approaches to adaptation as a stressful situation and the classification of coping strategies. The processes of coping and adaptation necessary for a comprehensive analysis of the situation of a person's stay in a new culture are considered. The connection between the choice of the type of coping strategy (cognitive, emotional or behavioral) and the use of certain acculturation strategies is shown. It is emphasized that successful adaptation requires social and psychological work with the processes and phenomena that determine the use of effective coping strategies.</p>	<p>Adaptation, stress, coping behavior, coping.</p>

Introduction

Stress can be called any event that disrupts the interaction of a person with the environment. For us, the most interesting interpretation of stress is that of transactional analysis, i.e. the process of continuous interaction between a person and the surrounding world. Within the framework of this approach, A. Baum defines stress as a negative experience accompanied by the corresponding emotional, biochemical, physiological, cognitive and behavioral adaptation of the individual [1].

The model proposed by R. Lazarus identifies the following stages of this process: awareness of a stressful event and assessment of one's ability to overcome the negative impact of this event; the emergence of stress-related emotions and cognitive processes in a person; the implementation of certain actions aimed at adaptation and overcoming the situation (coping). Thus, we consider stress as a dynamic process, the interaction of a person and the environment [2].

In connection with the consideration of the concept of "stress", such a concept as "coping" is important. Coping is an individual way of a person's interaction with a situation in accordance with the logic of the situation, its significance for the person and his psychological characteristics and capabilities. R. Lazarus and S. Folkman were the first to use the concept of "coping" in the framework of stress psychology. They define this concept as behavioral and cognitive efforts to influence external or internal demands that the subject evaluates as exceeding the resources of the individual. The fundamental function of coping, therefore, is to alleviate the subjective discomfort that an individual

experiences in a stressful situation. The authors identify two directions for overcoming stress: solving the problem and changing one's own attitudes towards the situation.

A. Billings and R. Moos distinguish three ways of coping: assessment of the situation, intervention in the situation and avoidance.

Based on these classifications, the taxonomy of coping strategies by M. Perret and M. Reichart was also created. These authors propose the following types of coping strategies:

- coping focused on the situation: active influence; escape (withdrawal); passivity;
- coping focused on representation: information search; "suppression of information";
- coping aimed at changing volitional orientation or assessment: reassessment of the situation; change of intentions/goals [2].

In answering the question of whether a person always reacts the same way in different stressful situations, we approach such a concept as "stress coping styles" or "coping behavior strategies". At the beginning of the development of the problematic of coping behavior, it was assumed that it is practically impossible to predict the use of certain coping strategies by an individual based on personal characteristics. This was explained by the fact that a person resorts to coping in stressful, extreme situations that differ from everyday life, and, accordingly, it is situational factors that have the greatest influence on the choice of a coping strategy, and not established stable preferences for the use of certain strategies. However, researchers do not deny the possibility of the presence of some relatively stable coping styles in people, manifested in human behavior in stressful situations quite stably. Thus, if we are talking about predicting global results, and not about human behavior in a specific situation, we can turn to the study of the stylistic features of coping.

Intercultural adaptation, as defined by T.G. Stefanenko, is "...a complex process, in the case of successful completion of which a person achieves conformity (compatibility) with a new cultural environment" [3, p. 332].

The criteria for the effectiveness of coping are associated with the mental well-being of the subject. Effective coping is characterized by a decrease in a person's anxiety, a change in psychosomatic symptoms and irritability, and relief from depression [3]. As we can see, these states also describe the state of a person's psychological adaptation in a new culture. Accordingly, successful coping in a situation of a new culture can be correlated with successful adaptation.

In his works, K. Ward divides adaptation to a new cultural environment into two types: psychological and socio-cultural. "Psychological adaptation is mainly based on affective reactions associated with feelings of well-being or satisfaction in the process of cross-cultural movement. "Socio-cultural adaptation refers to the area of behavior and determines the ability to "match" or effectively interact with a new cultural environment" [4, p. 661].

The processes of intercultural adaptation have been studied by many scientists. Various schemes have been developed, using which researchers have tried to determine and explain the mechanisms of this process, its structure, stages, and criteria for assessing successful or unsuccessful adaptation.

Among the models of successful adaptation, we can highlight those in which adaptation is considered as stress. M. Hammer, V.B. Gudikunst and R.L. Weissman, for example, developed a three-factor model of adaptation, in which they took into account:

1. the ability to overcome psychological stress;
2. the ability to communicate effectively;
3. the ability to establish interpersonal relationships [4].

One of the theoretical approaches to the adaptation process is based on the “stress – coping – adaptation” scheme, in which a person achieves conformity with culture as a result of going through a difficult process of coping with the stress of being in a new culture [5].

In connection with the consideration of the adaptation situation as stressful, the concept of “acculturation stress” is introduced, which is associated with a person’s reaction to changing life circumstances, when the roots of these changes lie in entering into intercultural interaction. As symptoms of acculturation stress, J. Berry identifies an increase in the level of depression (which is associated with a feeling of separation from one's culture) and anxiety (which is associated with insecurity, a situation of uncertainty, which characterizes staying in a new culture) [5]. The concept of acculturation stress is based on the concept of cultural shock introduced by K. Oberg. However, we need to differentiate these concepts: the concept of "acculturation stress" is more preferable due to the fact that the phenomenon of shock carries exclusively negative consequences of encountering a new cultural environment. When we talk about "acculturation stress", this concept also includes the possibility of a favorable outcome, the use of coping behavior and, accordingly, overcoming stress, getting out of a stressful situation with a positive result [5].

- integration (each of the interacting groups retains its culture, but at the same time they establish close contacts with each other);

- assimilation (the group loses its culture, but maintains contacts with another culture);

- separatism (the group retains its culture, refuses contacts with another group);

- marginalization (the group loses its culture, but does not establish close contacts with another culture) [5].

In studies of acculturation stress, it was found that these acculturation strategies used by migrants are associated with coping strategies.

Thus, P. Schmitz showed that the acculturation strategy of “integration” positively correlates with problem-oriented coping; the use of the “separatism” strategy by a migrant is positively associated with an orientation toward emotions and an avoidance strategy, and the adaptation strategy of “assimilation” positively correlates with problem-oriented coping and coping oriented toward emotions [5]. Thus, coping in general helps a person to adapt as best as possible to the demands of a situation, to extinguish the stressful effect of a situation. When considering the process of adaptation to a foreign cultural environment as a special situation in which a person needs to meet its requirements, we can talk about coping (i.e., an overcoming strategy) in the process of adaptation to a new culture. Therefore, we can say that a joint consideration of such processes as coping and adaptation is necessary for a comprehensive analysis of the situation of a person’s stay in a new culture, as well as for facilitating the process of adaptation to a foreign cultural environment.

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