

Impact of Ethnic and Religious Identity on Coping Behavior in Young Adults: Cross-Cultural Research

Authors : Yuliya Kovalenko

Abstract : Given the social nature of people, it is interesting to explore strategies of responding to psycho-traumatic situations in individuals of different ethnic and religious identity. This would allow to substantially expand the idea of human behavior in general, and coping behavior, in particular. This paper investigated the weighted impact of ethnic and religious identities on the patterns of coping behavior. This cross-cultural research empirically revealed intergroup differences in coping strategies and behavior in the samples of young students and teachers of different ethnic identities (Egyptians N=216 and Ukrainians N=109) and different religious identities (Egyptian Muslims N=147 and Christians, including Egyptian Christians N=68 and Ukrainian Christians N = 109). The empirical data were obtained using the questionnaires SACS and COPE. Statistical analysis and interpretation of the results were performed with IBM SPSS-23.0. It was found that, compared to the religious identity, the ethnic identity of the subjects appeared more predictive of coping behavior. It was shown that the constant exchange of information and the unity of biological and social contributed to a more homogeneous picture in the society where Christians and Muslims were integrated into a single cultural space. It was concluded that depending on their ethnic identity, individuals would form a specific hierarchy of coping strategies resulting in a specific pattern of coping with certain stressors. The Egyptian subjects revealed the following pattern of coping with various kinds of academic stress: 'seeking social support', 'problem solving', 'adapting', 'seeking information'. The coping pattern demonstrated by the Ukrainian subjects could be presented as 'seeking information', 'adapting', 'seeking social support', 'problem solving'. There was a tendency in the group of Egyptians to engage in more collectivist coping strategies (with the predominant coping strategy 'religious coping'), in contrast to the Ukrainians who displayed more individualistic coping strategies (with 'planning' and 'active coping' as the mostly used coping strategies). At the same time, it was obvious that Ukrainians should not be unambiguously attributed to the individualistic coping behavior due to their reliance on 'seeking social support' and 'social contact'. The final conclusion was also drawn from the peculiarities of developing religious identity, including religiosity, in Egyptians (formal religious education of both Muslims and Christians) and Ukrainians (more spontaneous process): Egyptians seem to learn to resort to the religious coping, which could be an indication that, in principle, it is possible and necessary to train individuals in desirable coping behavior.

Keywords : coping behavior, cross-cultural research, ethnic and religious identity, hierarchical pattern of coping

Conference Title : ICCP 2019 : International Conference on Cross Cultural Psychology

Conference Location : Prague, Czechia

Conference Dates : September 05-06, 2019