

NININS 2020**International Scientific Forum «National Interest, National Identity and National Security»****NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
COPING BEHAVIOR OF RUSSIANS AND OSSETIANS**

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Abstract

The article presents the results of a study of the national psychological characteristics of coping behavior in men and women as representatives of Russian and Ossetian ethnic groups. The sample of the study was 160 people, aged 25 to 55 years (the average age was 33.5) living in Vladikavkaz, the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. Significant differences in the preferred coping strategies among men and women of different ethnic groups are described. Knowledge and consideration of cross-cultural factors that influence the formation of the coping behavior of an individual is of great importance for interethnic interaction. They complement the ideas about the national psychological characteristics of representatives of different nationalities living in the same region, and also describe the differences in coping behavior of men and women of different ethnic groups in situations of overcoming difficult life situations. National psychological characteristics are fundamental characteristics of the public consciousness of the country's population, it is they who are the main motivators of their everyday life and daily activities, communication and interaction with other people. To know and correctly interpret them, it is mainly possible to conduct scientific comparisons and comparisons of representatives of different ethnic communities, for example, as suggested by the authors of the article, Ossetians and Russians.

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1. Introduction

“In modern science, a large number of studies appear devoted to the study of various psychological, ethnopsychological, physiological, social, and medical aspects of coping behaviour” (Gurieva, 2008, p. 79). “The ways in which a person copes with stressful situations for him is called coping strategies (or coping behavior)” (Vodopyanova, 2009, p. 7).

Currently, in psychological science, there are many different approaches to the study of coping. So, the dispositional approach (Millei, Endler, Parker) studies the relationship of stable individual and personal characteristics with resources and coping strategies. According to the ideas of the integrative approach (Carver, Moss, Scheier, Wemtraub), the choice of coping methods is determined by both personality characteristics and the characteristics of the situation. The neopsychoanalytic approach (Vaillant, Haan) considers coping as an ego-process aimed at the productive adaptation of a person in difficult life situations. From the position of a personality-oriented approach (Moos, Frydenberg, Skinner), “coping” is defined as “a changing personality trait that affects behavior in a wide range of stressful situations” (Lazarus, 2001, p. 246).

According to the definition of a domestic psychologist Kryukova (2015) “coping is a purposeful behavior that allows a person to cope with stress (difficult life situations) in ways that are appropriate to personal characteristics and situations” (p. 57). By definition, Khazova, “coping is an adaptive behavior used in stressful situations to reduce the effects of stress to regulate emotional states in order to stop, avoid, or endure the effects of a stressor.” In the works of Yaltonskiy and Sirota, coping is understood as a strategy of actions taken by a person in a situation of psychological threat, in particular, in conditions of adaptation to the disease as a threat to physical, personal and social well-being. From the point of view of Chekhlatiy and Veselova, the concept of coping should be considered as an active personal effort aimed at coping with a situation or problem.

The psychological purpose of coping behavior is to adapt a person to the requirements of an unfavorable life situation as best as possible, allowing him to master it, weaken or mitigate negative factors, and weaken the unconstructive effect of the situation.

“A literature review suggests that to date, more than 20 types of coping strategies have been identified, under which it is customary to consider the use of various methods and methods aimed at overcoming stressful situations” (Gurieva, 2014, p. 76). However, most classifications of coping behavior are based on two basic styles highlighted by foreign researchers Lazarus and Folkman (1986):

1) A problem-oriented style of coping behavior. “The subject of coping with a stressful situation analyzes what has happened, seeks help from others, and seeks additional information” (Perrez, 2001, p. 117; Shek, 2002, p. 672; Skinner, 2010, p. 230).

This style involves the following: a preliminary analysis of the problem, focusing on the search for possible ways to solve it, an individual's awareness of his abilities and features of the situation, the choice of possible alternatives to the most acceptable model of behavior, turning to his own experience in solving similar problems, practical implementation of plans (Lazarus et al., 2000, p. 186).

2) An emotionally oriented style of coping behavior involves immersion in one's own experiences, self-blaming, involving others in personal experiences. This style involves: internal aggression (anger at

oneself, guilt); external aggression (anger at others, unmotivated disruptions to loved ones); “fixation on the experience of their helplessness, inability to cope with the situation; focusing on one’s own shortcomings; apathy or irritation at everything that happens; experiencing nervous tension, breakdowns; finding opportunities for emotional relaxation” (Moos & Schaefer, 2001, p. 5; Sek, 2000, p. 159; Vitaliano, 2013, p. 351).

It is generally accepted that both styles of coping behavior are necessary for an individual and constructive ability is necessary to apply each of them depending on the complexity of the situation, because they both contribute to the physical and mental health of the individual (Vasserman, 2010, p. 176).

2. Problem Statement

Of particular interest to most researchers is the problem of coping personality behavior in the context of cultural diversity. The study of the ethnopsychological features of coping behavior is of particular relevance in connection with the fact that it contributes to a better understanding of how the person functions as a subject of activity in a multicultural environment (Amirkhan, 2008, p. 1067; Blaser et al., 1998, p. 94; Zeindr, 2000, p. 695). In psychology, there are still no clear criteria that reveal the cross-cultural characteristics of coping behavior among representatives of different ethnic groups living in Russia. “Therefore, additional comprehensive studies are so necessary to study the role of ethnopsychological, personal and social factors that contribute to the formation of constructive coping behavior among representatives of different nationalities of our country” (Afanasyeva, 2019, p. 297).

Of particular relevance is the study of the national psychological aspects of coping behavior in connection with a statement by the President Putin, that "the national question in our country is fundamental, and one of the main conditions for the very existence of Russia is civil and interethnic harmony," which can be achieved by taking into account the cross-cultural characteristics of various ethnic groups living in Russia.

3. Research Questions

The total sample size was 160 people (92 women and 68 men), aged 25 to 55 years. Based on personal ethnic identity, the following were interviewed: representatives of the Ossetian ethnic group, 81 people (32 men, 49 women); representatives of the Russian ethnic group, 79 people (36 men, 43 women). By marital status: 55 people were not married, 78 people were married, 20 people were in divorce and 7 people were widows or widowers. By the availability of education: 130 respondents had higher education, 6 people had an incomplete higher education and 24 people had a specialized secondary education (college or technical school).

The study was conducted in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, Vladikavkaz, the ethnic majority of which are Ossetians. Russians, being in the territory of this region an ethnic minority, make up a single ethnic community, preserving their ethnic identity, specific national cultural features, aware of their differences. Representatives of the Russian ethnic group living in the republic and taking part in the

study are Cossacks who have been living here for almost 100 years (41 people), as well as Russians, who came mainly during the Soviet period (38 people).

Ossetians are the people living in the Caucasus, the descendants of the Alans, the main population of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia. They also live in other areas of our country, Georgia, Turkey, Hungary and other states. The Ossetian language belongs to the Iranian group (northeastern subgroup) of the Indo-European language family. The ethnogenesis of the Ossetian people was based on the unification of the Alanian tribes with the participation of the local Caucasian Koban population.

The ancestors of the Ossetians were a highly warlike people, they constantly took part in all kinds of wars and battles, therefore socialization of the male population from a young age was aimed at forming a warrior in the first place, and a worker in the second. This left its mark on the national character of the Ossetians, having formed a strong spirit of competition among them. And up to the present, they tend to focus on high results in the areas of competition. This is especially evident in all sports that have developed in the region. Ossetians occupy first place in the number of heroes of the Soviet Union per capita during the years of World War II.

In the cultural and historical environment, a public formation has existed for a long time and has been adopted to this day — a tribal community, with families, with the manifestation of a patriarchal system. The head of the Ossetian family enjoys untouchable authority; everyone resignedly submits to him. The position of women over the years has been "ambivalent": on the one hand, they were legally disenfranchised, and on the other, they expressed deep respect, manifested in the high position of the mother in society.

Ossetians cultivated the ability to restrain feelings or the ability to hide them. This even concerned maternal feelings or fatherly love for a child. Especially when it comes to the feelings of a married couple. This phenomenon is known as custom avoidance. The life of the patriarchal family among the Ossetians was imbued with a whole system of prohibitions and conventions. So, in addition to the housekeeping skills, a girl appreciated a thorough knowledge of decency and an impeccable female reputation, so girlish modesty was cultivated. Not even unintentional touches of boys to girls were allowed. This could lead to blood feud. Young men valued courage, bravery, and perseverance.

Russian culture is usually ranked as a mixed type culture, in which there are traits of both collectivist and individualistic behavior. It is also a culture of the "feminine" type, with a high distance of power and a culture with the avoidance of uncertainty above the average level. Russians are more psychologically inclined than other peoples of Russia to change in society. They are focused on overcoming uncertainty in society through changes, social reforms. Russians are more tolerant of other nations.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main goal of the study is to compare the cross-cultural characteristics of coping behavior among representatives of Russian and Ossetian ethnic groups. Based on the purpose of the study, the following tasks are identified: a comparative analysis of the ethno-psychological characteristics of coping

behavior among representatives of Russian and Ossetian ethnic groups, as well as identifying differences in preferred coping strategies among men and women.

5. Research Methods

The study was carried out using the following set of empirical methods: the author's questionnaire with questions aimed at establishing the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, "Coping behavior in stressful situations" (developed by Endler and Parker, adapted by Kryukova) (Kryukova, 2015), "COPE stress coping questionnaire" (developed by Carver, Scheyer and Weintraub, adapted by Gordeeva, Osin, Rasskazova, Sychev, Shevyakhova) (Rasskazova et al., 2013). The research results were processed and analyzed using mathematical and statistical methods, using computer programs Excel and "SPSS.13.0", Student t-test was used.

6. Findings

According to the data obtained, representatives of the Russian ethnic group in a problem situation often use problem-oriented coping ($t = 3.18$, at $p \leq 0.01$), which includes a high degree of self-control and the presence of faith in one's own resources to overcome difficult life situations. The data obtained indicate that Russians are characterized by control of emotions and restraint, careful planning of actions and analysis of the problem prevail. Thus, Russians in a stressful situation are aimed at changing the prevailing problematic circumstances by searching for useful information and taking active steps to eliminate them.

It was determined that Russians more often than Ossetians in cases of difficult life situations use the strategy of "active control" ($t = 2.50$, at $p \leq 0.01$), suggesting phased actions aimed at overcoming a stressful situation. It was found that in the Russian sample, respondents more often resort to "social distraction" as a form of coping behavior ($t = 2.84$, with $p \leq 0.01$), in which the individual tries to be in society more often, to enter into social contacts with other people to deal with problem situations.

In turn, in the Ossetian sample, the use of emotionally oriented coping ($t = -1.98$, at $p \leq 0.05$) was more often observed, which was reflected in the excessive manifestation of one's own feelings and emotions caused by an unpleasant situation, as well as with active indignation and protest in relation to difficulties, a state of hopelessness, an experience of anger and blaming themselves and others.

The representatives of the Ossetian ethnic group are more likely to have a concentration on their own emotions ($t = -3.28$, at $p \leq 0.01$), manifested in a focus on negative emotions in case of trouble, expression of subjective experiences and demonstration of their feelings. It was determined that the respondents of the Ossetian sample are distinguished by the frequent use of "denial" as coping behavior with stress in a critical situation ($t = -3.70$, at $p \leq 0.01$). This suggests that Ossetians more often than Russians do not want to believe in what happened, and thus try to deny its reality in every possible way. Also, in the case of a difficult life situation, representatives of the Ossetian ethnic group have a "behavioral avoidance of the problem" strategy ($t = -3.42$, at $p \leq 0.01$), which differs in the refusal to achieve the desired goal and the inability to regulate efforts aimed at interacting with stressful.

Examining the individual psychological characteristics of the ethnic groups represented, it was found that Russians more clearly showed respect for others ($t = 2.50$, with $p \leq 0.01$). Perhaps this suggests that Russians tend to have a positive attitude towards others, feel the need to be near people, are responsive, understand others well, feel personal responsibility for their well-being, and tolerate shortcomings. They know how to empathize, support collective events and feel responsible for a common cause, conscientiously and responsibly carry out their assignments. Interacting with others, they try to avoid disagreements, prefer to cooperate with people than to compete.

Representatives of the Ossetian ethnic group are more characterized by self-esteem ($t = 2.53$, with $p \leq 0.01$), which is characterized by a person's desire to be independent and independent; they are always ready to defend their interests in the competition and, as a rule, strive for excellence.

According to the data obtained, men more often than women in stressful situations use problem-oriented coping ($t = -2.33$ at $p \leq 0.05$). This indicates that men are characterized by control of emotions and restraint, careful planning of actions to solve the problem and analysis of the situation prevail. Thus, men are more focused on changing the prevailing problematic circumstances by searching for useful information and action than women.

It was determined that in a stressful situation, men are more prudent ($t = -2.42$ at $p \leq 0.05$) and inquisitive ($t = -2.08$ at $p \leq 0.05$) than women. This once again suggests that men are characterized by a high level of volitional regulation of behavior and self-control.

However, it should be noted that avoidance-oriented coping ($t = -2.21$ at $p \leq 0.05$) is also more common among men. Men are more prone to distract from stressful situations for them with the help of a fun, noisy company, alcohol, tobacco and/or the use of psychoactive drugs, thereby trying to avoid contact with the surrounding reality and get away from solving existing problems.

However, it was also revealed that Russian men are more likely than Ossetian men to have a "distraction" from a problem situation ($t = 2.30$, at $p \leq 0.05$), which is reflected in the desire for a temporary departure from solving problems with the help of alcohol, medicines, immersion in your favorite business, travel, fulfillment of your cherished desires. As the results show, Russian men also more often than Ossetian men use the "avoidance of problem" coping strategy ($t = 3.61$, at $p \leq 0.01$), which implies behavior that implies ignoring thoughts of troubles, yielding, passivity and a desire to keep calm.

In turn, the dominance of emotionally-oriented coping among women was found ($t = -2.78$ at $p \leq 0.01$), which manifests itself in a focus on unpleasant emotions and feelings. The study revealed that women more often than men deny the incident ($t = -2.27$ at $p \leq 0.05$), refusing to believe in what is happening or trying to reject its reality. As the results show, in a stressful situation, women more often than men turn to God, faith and religion for help.

It was revealed that in a problem situation, women have a higher level of tension ($t = -2.29$ at $p \leq 0.05$) than men. Perhaps this suggests that women, in case of failure, can easily fall into despair or depression.

According to the study, such strategies of behavior as prevailing among Russian women include: problem solving planning ($t = 2.44$ at $p \leq 0.05$) and active coping with stress ($t = 3.22$ at $p \leq 0.05$), which indicates about the desire of Russian women to cope with a difficult stressful situation through a "focused analysis of the situation and possible behaviors, developing a strategy for resolving the problem, planning

their own actions taking into account objective conditions, past experience and available resources” (Afanasyeva, 2019, p. 297).

It was determined that coping behavior has different contents depending on ethnicity and gender. For representatives of the Russian ethnic group, socially acceptable coping strategies are: positive reevaluation, problem solving planning, self-control. In this case, the leading coping are problem-oriented. It can be assumed that the Russians are characterized by the suppression and restraint of their emotions, overcoming negative experiences due to a positive rethinking.

Ossetians, on the other hand, show a dominance of expressiveness, which is expressed in a light attitude to life, more confidence in their feelings and intuition, rather than common sense. Among them, orientation toward negative feelings and emotions associated with a problematic situation is more common. It is also necessary to answer that Ossetians are more conservative, which indicates their commitment to traditional values and orders, preserving the traditions of their ethnic group is taken as the main human value.

It should be noted that men in stressful situations more often choose constructive coping strategies, such as planning and the search for social support of an instrumental nature. This may indicate that men tend to think about how to act in relation to a difficult life situation and the development of tactics of behavior. They more often seek advice, help, or information from the social environment. However, there are ethnic differences in coping behavior among men. So, for Russian men, avoidance and social distraction are characteristic, and for Ossetian men, denial and deterrence of coping are characteristic.

Women are characterized by a predominance of emotionally-oriented coping behavior, manifested in a focus on unpleasant emotions and feelings. Women more often than men deny what happened, refusing to believe in what is happening and trying to reject its reality, tend to seek help from God, faith and religion. Also, women are more likely to respond to a problem situation with humor, laughter or a joke.

Ethnic differences in coping behavior among women were revealed.

The behavior of Russian women is characterized by self-control, in which the overcoming of negative feelings in connection with a difficult life situation occurs through targeted suppression and restraint of emotions, as well as minimizing their influence on assessing the situation and choosing a behavior strategy, high control of behavior, and the desire for self-control (Afanasyeva, 2019, p. 298). In turn, among women of the Ossetian ethnic group, concentration on emotions and their expression, as well as behavioral avoidance of the problem prevail.

7. Conclusion

National psychological characteristics are specific characteristics of the public consciousness of representatives of one or another ethnic community, are the main motivators of their everyday life and daily activities, relationships, communication and interaction with other people. They can be recognized and correctly interpreted mainly by comparison among representatives of different ethnic communities, for example, Ossetians and Russians. Knowing them helps to predict the behavior and actions of people, to see the uniqueness of their communication, relationships and interactions in various circumstances and

situations. Understanding the national psychological characteristics of Ossetians and Russians allows us to psychologically describe the originality of the culture of these peoples.

“The results of a study of the ethnopsychological and gender characteristics of coping behavior can be used to develop recommendations for the implementation of national policies in the republics of the North Caucasus” (Khudalova, 2010, p.167). Empirical results can be used in developing recommendations on the organization of socio-psychological services in multicultural regions, as well as in developing training programs in stress psychology, personality psychology, ethnic psychology, developmental psychology and developmental psychology. It is also possible to use the described data in the practice of psychological counseling for men and women experiencing difficult life situations.

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