

COPING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS AND LOAD IN MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The study is based on specific personal characteristics of managers, for instance, a relatively good choice of behavioural strategy and some practical studies as well as on phases of coping with difficult situations, appropriate and inappropriate ways of coping, coping styles focused on task, emotions and avoidance. Coping with difficult and stressful situations is today a broadly discussed topic among people from the professional public. The present study introduces our own research, experimental evaluation of working hypothesis, evaluation of research data and presentation of results. The aim is to analyse the relations between personal characteristics of managers and the use of coping strategies in difficult situations in management. The study also focuses on significant differences in the choice of selected coping strategies in connection with the basic socio-demographic characteristics of managers – sex and age. The results presented confirmed our assumption that statistically there are significant relations between sex and selected coping strategies in management. From the methodological point of view the research is based on the preparation and verification of original methods of the above mentioned topics. Each of the interviewed managers represented, in their own way, originality and provided our research original and unique results which are processed, evaluated and presented in tables and graphs.

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JEL Classification: *M12.*

1. Introduction

The study of questions, dealing with issues such as managers' personality, personal and work burden, coping with stressful situations in management, is becoming more and more popular. Its topicality and attention of researchers and scientists studying the given topic is a subject to respond questions dealing with the selection and preparation of people for managerial positions in the conditions of social relations dynamics, increasing progressive results introduced by science and technology, and their effectiveness and quality of work with a greater emphasis. (Masárová, 2013). This knowledge is transferred into the appropriate context in order to be understandable for members of the firm. Then this knowledge is applied to the issues confronted by the organization. Thus, knowledge acquisition is very important knowledge source from clients, suppliers, competitors and governmental bodies (Ramírez, Vasauskaite & Kumpikaite, 2012). The topic in the given study is worked out on the theoretical level whereas we built our work on national and international sources dealing with methods of coping with difficult and stressful situations in management. Methodological results gained from the research helped to confirm not only the effectiveness of the interactive approach while developing and validating methodologies but also the interpretation of the obtained knowledge and their application while preparing managers and recruiting new staff for managerial positions. Coping with difficult and stressful situations today is a broadly discussed topic among people from the professional public. The study explains that the answer may be useful for any layperson.

Difficult Situations in Management and Coping strategies

Interest in stress experienced in work (occupational stress) has grown significantly during the past few years. According to European Agency for Safety and Health at Work 41 million employees across all sectors suffer from occupational stress. Many observers claim that stress is reaching epidemic proportions. As a result, morbidity is increasing, work performance – reflected in poor organisation effectiveness – is decreasing and employers' costs are rising. Organisational researchers have proved that strain at work is significantly related to negative job attitudes and behaviour, which is also reflected in steep economic price (ibid.).

Eurofound surveys revealed that occupational stress is usually related to poor planning and leading. Therefore systematic attention is paid to management and prevention of occupational stress in organisation.

Managers often come across situations in which, if they want to find a suitable solution, they have to mobilize all their forces leading to either failure or success. Such situations may be represented by both critical life milestones and also problems and difficulties with which they meet more often, in some cases every single day. At first sight, these situations do not necessarily have to look difficult or stressful. Increased interest in the study of managerial behaviour under the pressure of life conditions was and still is linked with seeking effective ways of managers' adaptation to difficult conditions of dynamic lifestyle which are caused by these events (Živčicová, 2013).

Work-related stress and its coping in management bring new challenging situations as well. Based on the research of many prominent authors and comparing analysis of coping many practical recommendations were worked out for managers – for their personal, organizational and community interventions. Consequences of ineffective coping at work and results of failures of managers may lead to serious problems in companies.

Coping strategies – they may be understood as coping patterns managers use while coping with difficult situations (Oravcová, 2004). A number of authors dealing with the study of the given issue agree in defining coping and coping strategies. There are no significant differences among them. According to Atkinson coping has three strategic forms:

1. **Strategy focused on a problem solution.** This strategy includes behaviour such as a problem analysis, setting up a plan for its solution and active behaviour.
2. **Strategy focused on social support.** It is characterized by the fact that managers focus on reducing their emotions they experience in a given stressful situation whereas a change in the given situation may not necessarily happen.
3. **Strategy focused on avoidance.** This strategy is defensive and it should result in forgetting demanding situations and not admitting the fact that a certain problem exists.

Individual coping strategies are devoted in the research part of the study.

In order to cope with stressful situations, managers must develop effort regarding the difficulty and quality of the given situation whereas they need to focus on their own possibilities. "Coping" has become the word which generally represents a set of methods used while dealing with stressful and difficult situations. The term includes efforts – not only intrapsychic – to manage, tolerate, reduce and minimize internal and external requirements for managers and differences between these requirements. This involves extremely high demands that largely strain and burden managers or that exceeds those resources managers have at their disposal (Vojtovič, Krajňáková, 2013). Latest definitions explain coping as efforts of managers to manage stressful situations regardless success or failure of the process. The main part of current theories of stress is conceptions of coping processes.

Phases and Ways of Coping with Burden and Stress

Managers cannot live long in an unbalanced state with their environment which is the result of negative effects of stressors; therefore, they try to deal with the disproportionate burden. In the process of coping, represented by mental burden, three phases may be introduced (Mikolaj, 2000):

Mobilization of mental power phase is characterized by increased mental tension together

with changes in mood. It is important to reach the optimal intensity of mental tension being the condition for organization and coordination of movements and activities, resistance against stressors, possibility of applying effective capacity of reason and securing internal mental preparedness for the activity.

The onset and progress of *active solution phase* is dependent on the existence of motives to solve a burden by gradually replacing demobilizing emotions for the stimulating ones. The rate of emotional stress has a decisive role (Grenčíková, 2009). Strong or low emotional tension may lead to either over-huffiness or depression followed by failure and stress.

Finding solutions or succumbing to the pressure of a stressful situation phase is the consequence of the above mentioned two phases. Firstly, managers will not be tired and exhausted due to their psychic powers; they may tend to overuse their own powers and possibilities, their self-confidence will grow. Tiredness will appear after some time – depending on the objective level of exhaustion. Resignation, impulsiveness, strong fear, depressions, bad sleeping or any other psychosomatic diseases are only some of the problems that may arise. Succumbing to the pressure of stress may not have a long-term but a short-term character.

Coping reflects struggle with excessive load and stress which is extremely intensive and long-term and beyond the possibilities of managers. It focuses on coping with actually unusual problems whereas we have no knowledge or skills helping us to solve them; neither do we know any methods of solving. Some known ways of solving these situations are as follows (Křivohlavý, 1994):

Suitable ways of coping with stress

- Methods acquired and proved based on the knowledge of psychology of teaching – coping with fear, anxiety, etc.
- Methods developing healthy "self-understanding", power of will, self-knowledge, self-control, etc.
- Procedures enhancing the meaningfulness of your life focused on the formation of higher needs, etc.
- Procedures increasing the level of clarity, correctness and power of our own beliefs, opinions, attitudes, etc.

The so-called "deeper" approaches offer an insight into the own "I" of managers and to the "roots" of stressful situations leading to a deliberate change of ways and content of thinking and volition of managers in order to eliminate stress.

Risky (less appropriate) ways of coping with stress – these ways involve problems solutions with the help of the so-called defence mechanisms. These methods and ways apply to mechanisms of defence and escape by a non-adequate way which actually does not solve the stress. It reduces psychical tension only temporarily. Most common ways are represented by projection, rationalization, negativism, denial, isolation, regression and many more.

Inappropriate ways of coping with stress – these are represented by the consumption of alcohol, caffeine, tobacco and other soft or hard drugs. For some short time they may facilitate the escape from stressful situations but these methods do not solve them; after some time they themselves become stressors enhancing their negative influence.

Gender and age differences in coping with difficult situations

In the last decades of the 20th century when women entered the labour market in a much greater number than ever before, differences between gender began to fall, work and family appeared as a clear picture of the work – family conflict which slowly but surely replaced the stereotypical views on females and males. According to Moss (2002) conflict between work and family can be defined as "a form of inter-relationship conflicts in which the pressure from work (family) is made more difficult by the pressure from the family (work)." Therefore conflicts between family and work are a two-way or interconnected domain or they represent tasks with permeable borders. Changes in the demographic distribution of work force lead to a greater focus on questions dealing with the issues of work and family. Competing demands arising from family and work often result in conflicts of employees. Except a higher number of women and couples

where both earn and single-parent families at workplaces, the technological change and need to be constantly competitive increase the pressure on organizations and their employees alike. Even though individual data may vary depending on the income, occupation or age, these problems cut across all socio-economic levels and are felt by both males and females alike (Aluko, 2009). According to experts women are ruled by their hormones. They are more sensitive to the key stress hormone – according to certain studies even its very low amount may cause anxiety and confusion. Men, in comparison to women, are more immune thanks to their high amount of chemicals in their blood. This may explain why men are calm even in situations of a potential danger which brings women into rage. Researchers claim that a study could help explain differences in the way men and women control emotions. Women are more often depressed, they reflect signs of post-traumatic disorders and other problems than men (McCrae, 2010). Several studies dealing with the issue of differences in pro-active coping reported significant differences between men and women. According to the results of the research conducted on a sample of Canadian, Polish and Czech respondents, it is obvious that women prefer strategies in which they seek support from their environment. also found that men prefer reflexive coping. Sollár & Sollárová (2009) examined age differences in pro-active coping, active coping, reflexive coping, strategic planning, preventive coping, instrumental seeking, emotional seeking and avoidance in three different age groups. Their samples were divided into three categories – up to 18, from 18 to 34 and above 35 years of age. Statistically significant changes were found in four aspects of pro-active coping – active coping of stress, reflexive coping, strategic planning and preventive coping. In terms of statistics the highest rate of preferences was shown in the 'above 35' group. Out of the two aspects of social help, statistically the most significant role is represented by emotional seeking. The three groups did not significantly differ in the strategy of avoidance (Sollár & Sollárová, 2009).

2. Method

The present study introduces our own research, experimental evaluation of working hypothesis, evaluation of research data and presentation of results. The aim is to analyse the relations between personal characteristics of managers and the use of coping strategies in difficult situations in management. The analysis also takes into account the situational and contextual aspects of these situations. The study also focuses on significant differences in the choice of selected coping strategies in connection with the basic socio-demographic characteristics of managers – gender and age. With the help of correlation coefficients we analysed the relation between age and behavioural strategies using the COPE and CSI methodology. For the determination of significant differences in the choice of coping strategies in connection to gender and position the gained data were analysed using the T-test. The scientific research focused on the differences of average values between levels of managers for single indicators of COPE, CSI and IAS using the analysis of Oneway variance and Post Hoc comparing with the use of Tuckey test (Hančovská, 2013).

We set three phases for the research. In preparatory phase the choice of the research problem, the setting of objective, phrasing of the hypothesis, the description of methodologies, selection of the research sample, setting of the place, time and the data collection were the central points. The collecting of the objective empirical facts represented the most challenging part of the research mainly because of the respondents' busyness. In some cases we had to realize re-addressing. The obtaining of empirical material and fieldwork with the research sample were the content. The processing of research data, defining of conclusions were the final part together with evaluation, classification, comparison and processing the empirical facts by SPSS statistical program.

Research sample. The research was conducted with the help of managers working at different positions - first-level managers, second-level managers, top managers. Number of respondents 147.

Research aim - specify the relation between selected personal characteristics of managers and assessment of the alternative solution options on difficult situations in management? Specify individual coping strategies in the management in order to define concept of these strategies for coping difficult situation in the management.

The theoretical contribution is represented by the elaboration of the concept of coping in a given situation and in its practical level it is the verification of the given interactional model which may help not only the preparation of managers but also the recruitment process. The study explains that the answer may be useful for any layperson.

Research problem I. Are there any significant differences in preferences of selected coping strategies in relation to fundamental sociodemographic characteristics of managers - gender, age?

Hypothesis 1: We assume the existence of significant relations of gender differences in the context of preferences of selected coping strategies of managers.

Hypothesis 2: We assume the existence of significant relations between age and selected coping strategies of managers.

Research problem II. Are there any significant differences in preferences of selected coping strategies in various managerial positions – first degree, second degree and top managers?

Hypothesis 3: We assume significant statistical differences between levels of managers and their preference of selected coping strategies.

3. Results

The developing world has introduced new concepts and understandings of stress. Coping methods are not the same worldwide. Until recently, these questions were not easy to be answered and only some scientists knew how to raise them. Recently, several Western authors have admitted that their opinions cannot be valid worldwide and no culture has a stress or coping monopoly. With the help of clarification of critical understanding of stress and coping, analyses and synthesis of a big amount of global information and identification of understanding and methodology needed for meaningful intercultural research behaviour in other countries was compared (Wong, 2005).

In research, we specified the selected personal characteristics of managers in the context of analysing the link between these characteristics and assessment of the alternative solution options on difficult situations in management. We also specified individual coping strategies in the management in order to define concept of these strategies for coping difficult situation in the management.

In the given research we investigated and expected the existence of significant differences in the preference of selected coping strategies in relation to the basic socio-demographic characteristics of managers, namely gender and age. While determining differences in the choice of coping strategies in terms of gender and age, the given data were analysed with the help of the T-test.

The following tables represent data and outputs of socio-demographic analysis acquired from the SPSS statistical programme. These outputs deal with gender differences (H1) in the preferences of selected coping strategies of managers (COPE, CSI).

Table 1. Gender differences in behavioural strategies COPE

COPE	Male average	Female average	T-test	Significance
Distraction	2.5447	2.4733	0.836	0.404
Coping	2.7683	2.6870	1.006	0.315
Denial	2.1626	2.0153	1.713	0.088
Alcohol	1.9146	1.4504	4.601	0.000
Emotional support	2.5732	2.6336	-0.653	0.514
Practical support	2.3943	2.4733	-0.947	0.345
Disinterestedness	2.1992	1.9580	2.922	0.004
Ventilation	2.3618	2.4962	-1.599	0.111
Positivity	2.6626	2.5878	0.814	0.416
Planning	2.9553	2.8015	1.791	0.075
Humour	2.5081	2.2137	3.186	0.002
Acceptance	2.6382	2.6527	-0.173	0.862
Religion	2.2520	2.1336	1.067	0.287
Blaming	2.6220	2.6260	-0.051	0.960

Source: Own evaluation of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

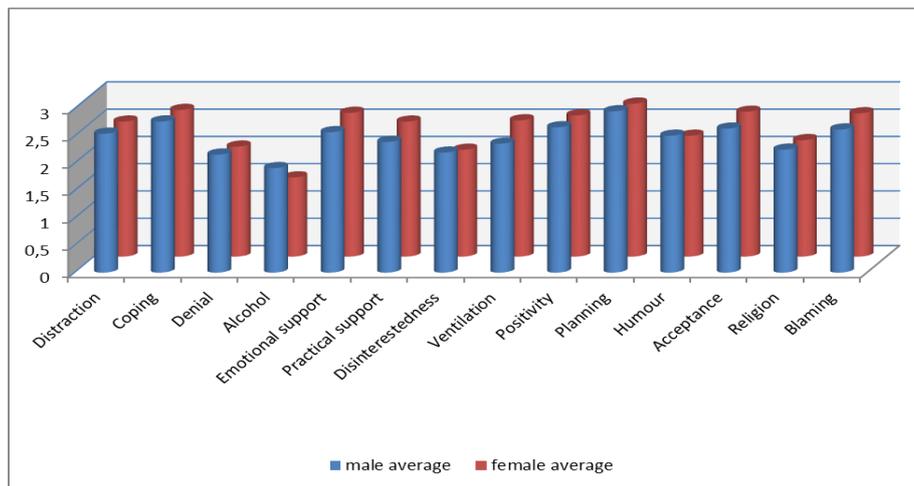


Figure 1. Gender differences in behavioural strategies COPE

Source: Own evaluation of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

A significant statistical difference was found in:

Alcohol strategy – on a four-level measurement scale men scored higher (average value 1.9146) than women (average value 1.4504); the scale shows how often they use the given strategy to cope with stress. In men these values are approaching the “I do it sometimes; this is the way I sometimes behave” strategy. In women, these values are approaching the “I never do it; I never behave this way” strategy. It can be said that men apply the alcohol strategy more often than women which basically corresponds with the expected condition.

Disinterestedness strategy – men scored higher (average value 2.1992) than women (average value 1.9580). In both men and women these values are approaching the “I do it sometimes; this is the way I sometimes behave” strategy. These findings basically document the fact that man and women alike sometimes use the strategy of disinterestedness; however, the average in men is higher.

Humour strategy – men, again, scored higher (average value 2.5081) than women (average value 2.2137). In men these values are approaching the “I do it quite often; this is the way I often behave” strategy and in women the values are approaching the “I do it sometimes; this is the way I sometimes behave” strategy. It may be said that men, while dealing with stressful situations, use the strategy of humour more often than women.

Other strategies worth mentioning are the denial strategy (0.088) and planning strategy (0.075).

Denial strategy – the difference in average values is very low (men – 2.1626 and women 2.0153). On the scale, both women and men are approaching the “I do it sometimes; this is the way I sometimes behave” strategy; however, the difference is very small. This proves that women and men would in some instances use the strategy of denial; men would use it more often.

Planning strategy – men scored higher (average value 2.9553) than women (average value 2.8015). In both categories, these values are approaching the “I do it quite often; this is the way I often behave” strategy which proves that men and women, while coping with difficult and stressful situations would use the strategy of planning quite often; men more often than women.

In terms of other behavioural strategies statistically no significant differences were observed.

Table 2. Gender differences in behavioural strategies CSI

CSI	Male average	Female average	T-test	Significance
PS	2.0273	2.0000	0.390	0.697
SS	2.2853	2.1749	1.355	0.177
A	2.6659	2.7259	-1.078	0.282

Source: Own evaluation of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

Explanation: PS – problem solution
 SS – social support
 A – avoidance

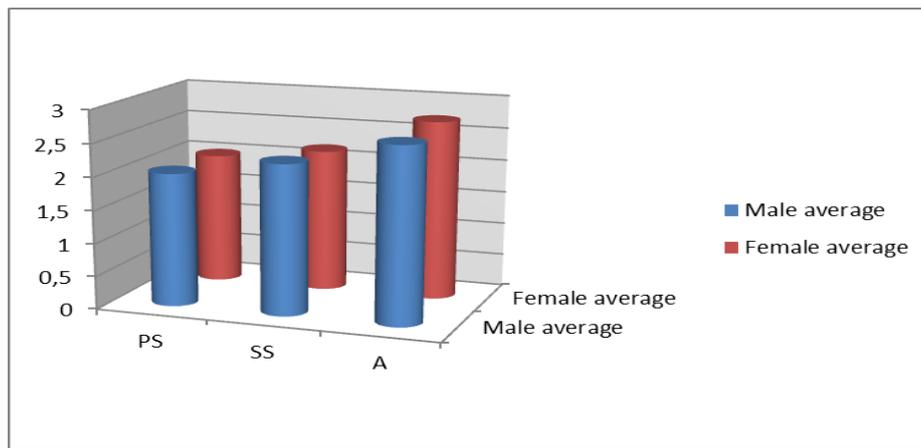


Figure 2. Gender differences in behavioural strategies CSI

Source: Own evaluation of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

In determining gender differences in CSI behavioural strategies in responses of males and females the data were analysed using the T-test and the results are presented in Table 2 and Figure 2. No statistically significant difference was observed. It may be caused by the fact that the given methodology identifies behavioural strategies in difficult and stressful situations at a very general level, for instance in comparison to the COPE methodology.

The following tables present data and outputs of the socio-demographic analysis from the SPSS statistical programme in terms of significant age links (H2) in preferences to selected coping strategies of managers (COPE, CSI). In our research focused on age and studied behavioural strategies used in difficult situations several significant links were found. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Link between age and studied behavioural strategies COPE

COPE	Age	Significance
Distraction	-0.004	0.945
Coping	0.163**	0.009
Denial	0.118	0.060
Alcohol	0.198**	0.002
Emotional support	-0.159*	0.011
Practical support	-0.001	0.986
Disinterestedness	0.019	0.760
Ventilation	0.100	0.113
Positivity	-0.043	0.494
Planning	0.164**	0.009
Humour	-0.016	0.799
Acceptance	0.020	0.746
Religion	0.001	0.982
Blaming	-0.079	0.211

Source: Own evaluation of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

Age correlated positively with strategies of coping, alcohol and planning. These findings suggest that the preference of the above mentioned strategies increases with age. Older managers, therefore, when faced with a problem, pay more attention to planning and coping than their younger colleagues. This may be due to their greater work experience and self-confidence in dealing with similar situations. At the same time they rather seek release of alcohol use.

A negative correlation was found between age and emotional support. With the increasing age the tendency to seek and rely on emotional support of social environment decreases; therefore, younger managers will prefer emotional support more often than their older colleagues. These findings may be based on the fact that younger managers do not have enough work experience and experience with dealing with stressful situations. That may be the reason why they prefer emotional support more often.

The significance level is closer to the strategy of denial (0.060) and ventilation (0.113). Both of them confirm the fact that with the increasing age managers would use these strategies more often.

Table 4. Relationship between age and assessed behavioural strategies

CSI	Age	Significance
PS	0.037	0.558
SS	0.165**	0.008
A	0.083	0.188

Source: Own assessment of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

Explanation: PS – problem solution
SS – social support
A – avoidance

In terms of analysis of a link between behavioural strategies and age based on the CSI methodology one significant yet positive correlation between age and social support was found (Table 4). With the increasing age, similarly as it has already been presented while the analysis of correlation between age and behavioural strategies using the COPE methodology, there is a decline in seeking social support as a strategy of coping with stressful situations. A significant negative correlation was not found.

Based on the findings we can suggest that hypotheses H1 and H2 were confirmed.

Strategy focused on a problem solution, which in management may be identified as the “I will manage all my work problems so that there will be a greater chance to solve them, I will look for the most optimal solution and create a schedule for the work event, I will set some goals in order to solve the situation and consider all other possibilities, I will devote my attention to the problem and go step by step in order to solve it” strategy, would be more performed by male managers than female managers. Moreover, it increases with the age of managers.

Strategy focused on social support, which in management may be identified as the “I will talk to my colleagues; I expect compassion and understanding; I solve my work problems with my family, seek company in order to talk about my problem and I also expect advice from managers with similar problems to mine” strategy, is, in comparison to the strategy of avoidance, more often performed by female managers than male managers. This strategy decreases with the age of managers.

Strategy focused on avoidance, which in management may be identified as the “I deliberately do not see the problem; I do not solve it; I am busy and do not have time to focus on it and I will do anything so that the others will see what the problem is; I am dreaming of a better future; I want to be alone and spend more time on hobbies and avoid people” strategy, would be, while solving difficult stressful situations, more performed by male managers than female managers. This strategy also increases with the age of managers.

Individual coping strategies we looked in the research part of the study.

Review of coping strategies itself can contribute to quality lifestyle. It enables individual to learn about own (and other people's) reactions to strain. If one cannot avoid stressful situations, these can be coped with, even eliminated. Some people have lifestyle that allows them to prevent the stress. They live dynamic life full of active recreation and relaxation. To prevent stress is equally important as to cope with it. Understanding the stress is one way how to do it. Person can eliminate some stressors, e.g. select only the information that are important for one's personal life, organise the time effectively, set the priorities.

Most people live under pressure and cannot prevent it. Thus it is helpful to know and apply various techniques to cope with strain. However, it must be understood that none of the above-mentioned methods of coping represents the only and the right way to deal with stress. It is appropriate to combine several techniques and respect one's individuality.

In the second part of the research we investigated the existence of significant statistical

differences between respondents at different work positions and their preferences of selected coping strategies.

Hypothesis 3: We assume significant statistical differences between levels of managers and their preference of selected coping strategies.

The following tables, namely Table 5 and Table 6, and figures, namely Figure 3 and Figure 4, present the differences in COPE and CSI behavioural strategies assessment in terms of managerial positions. Due to a higher number of variables, more than 2, we used the Oneway analysis of variance. We examined differences of behavioural strategies of first-level, second-level and top managers.

Table 5. Differences in COPE behavioural strategies in terms of managerial position

COPE	M 1 average	M 2 average	M top average	F - test	Significance
Distraction	2.4487	2.5532	2.4259	0.375	0.688
Coping	2.9487	2.8191	2.8333	0.391	0.677
Denial	2.2436	2.1383	2.1852	0.197	0.821
Alcohol	1.8077	1.9255	1.7593	0.349	0.706
Emotional support	2.4744	2.4681	2.3889	0.119	0.888
Practical support	2.3974	2.5106	2.4074	0.403	0.669
Disinterestedness	2.1667	2.0426	2.0185	0.462	0.631
Ventilation	2.4615	2.5745	2.4074	0.577	0.563
Positivity	2.5513	2.6702	2.4815	0.591	0.555
Planning	2.8718	3.0106	3.1111	0.922	0.401
Humour	2.2692	2.3404	2.3519	0.126	0.882
Acceptance	2.6026	2.5638	2.7593	0.635	0.532
Religion	2.2692	2.0851	2.2222	0.513	0.600
Blaming	2.6154	2.6383	2.3519	2.066	0.132

Source: Own assessment of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

Explanation: M1 – first-level managers
M2 – second-level managers
M top – top managers

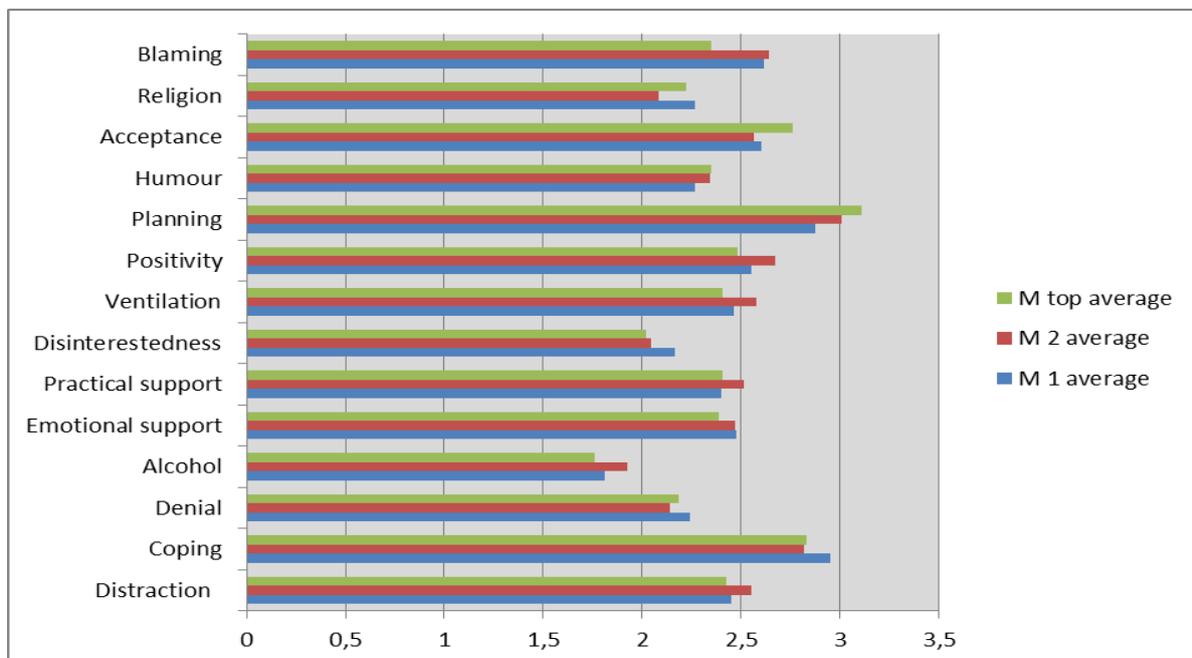


Figure 3. Differences in COPE behavioural strategies in terms of managerial position

Source: Own assessment of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

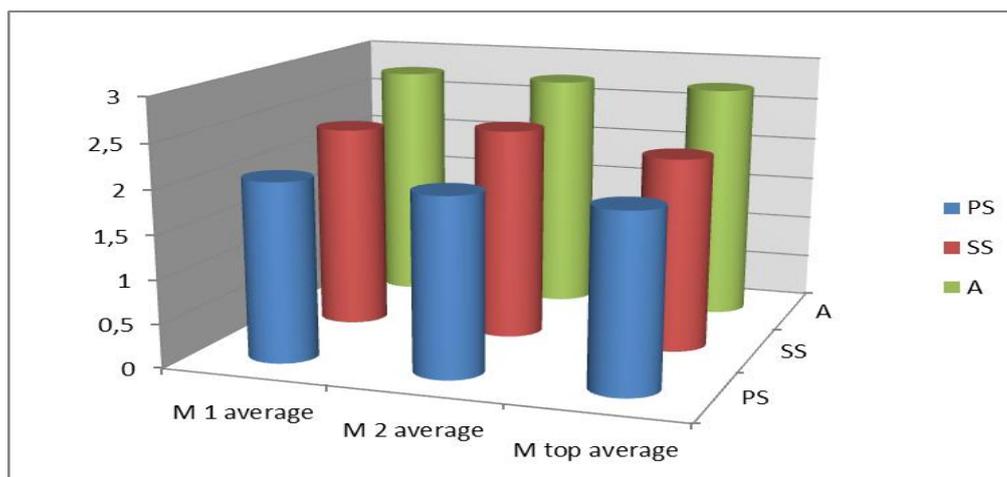
Table 6. Differences in CSI behavioural strategies in terms of managerial position

CSI	M 1 average	M 2 average	M top average	F – test	Significance
PS	2.0513	2.0271	2.0034	0.046	0.955
SS	2.3287	2.4197	2.2121	0.807	0.449
A	2.7576	2.7389	2.7239	0.047	0.954

Source: Own assessment of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

Explanation: PS – problem solution
SS – social support
A – avoidance

M1 – first-level managers
M2 – second-level managers
M top – top managers

**Figure 4.** Differences in CSI behavioural strategies in terms of managerial position

Source: Own assessment of outputs with the SPSS statistical programme

In the second part of our study we have to conclude that the H3 hypothesis was not confirmed.

Following the results of this analysis (statistically not significant differences in COPE and CSI coping strategies assessment in terms of managerial positions) we carried out a more detailed evaluation of the obtained data using the Post Hoc comparisons and Tuckey test of differences of average values between the levels of managers for COPE and CSI indicators. Despite the already mentioned detailed analysis performed by the method of Post Hoc comparison using the Tuckey test we did not find any statistically significant differences in coping strategies assessment between managers at different managerial positions. These differences, with one exception, were neither found when considering features in interpersonal behaviour. Significant differences were found only in terms of cold position. In this case, the group of top managers significantly differed from first-level or second-level managers. They evaluated this feature with a lower score which means that they consider it a more adequate one for first or second-level managers.

4. Discussion

Multidisciplinary attention focused on questions of consequences of stressful situations on mental and physical health and well-being of managers is making this question even more important. Research in managerial behaviour in stressful situations and problems in this field of knowledge focused its attention to seeking answers in at least three baselines.

1. Characteristics, identification and classification of situations which managers consider problematic and stressful. Individual approaches studying this baseline end up in specifying several important situational dimensions based on which a certain empirical taxonomy is proposed.
2. Effort to detect how managers behave, solve and manage these situations. A general

classification of methods managers use while coping with difficult and problematic situations can be created by the majority of concrete approaches in this case, similarly as in the first baseline.

3. The third baseline includes studies which analyse relations between the way of coping with stressful situations and dispositional characteristics, or situational contexts, of managers.

The common feature of the three above mentioned baselines lies in the discrepancy and ambiguity in terminology (stressful situations, burden situations, life events and difficult life events, these are only some of the terms used within the given topic) and definition of methods and ways of their solutions (Tupá, 2013).

Based on the findings we can suggest that hypotheses H1 and H2 were confirmed. Statistically significant differences in selected coping strategies in management in terms of gender and age were confirmed. Moreover, a statistically significant difference in selected strategies of coping with stressful situations with regards to age was also confirmed. Gender influence on the choice of coping strategies has also been examined in several studies; however, the results are not clear. Some older studies (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986) pointed to gender differences in coping; men used more direct and problem-oriented strategies than women while in emotionally-oriented strategies no significant changes appeared. Some further research is still dealing with relations between gender, stressful situations and coping strategies.

In the second part of our study we have to conclude that the H3 hypothesis was not confirmed. No statistically significant differences in selected coping behavioural strategies in terms of levels of managers were confirmed. In both cases presenting the differences in COPE and CSI behavioural strategies assessment in terms of managerial position using the Oneway analysis of variance no statistically significant differences were found or confirmed – neither in behavioural strategies of first-level or second-level managers nor in behavioural strategies of top managers. It may be caused by dispositions and abilities to lead and manage people. Therefore, it may be said that if a person decides to become a manager then the level of managing is not important. Their ability to manage and cope with difficult situations does not depend on the managerial position and type of difficult situations they come across. This confirms the idea of importance of subjective perception and subjective interpretation of a certain situation; a particular manager independent on the level of the managerial position. Solving questions of strategic development of enterprises may be by some top managers regarded as a negative and stressful situation and by other top managers they may be regarded as a challenge to prove their abilities. Similarly at the position of a line manager getting orders from higher levels of management; for a particular line manager a negative experience may represent a burden whereas for another one it may be a common, everyday situation. In case of first-line managers the pressure on their job performance from two superior levels may for one line manager mean a burden and stressful situation and for a different one a common everyday order which does not require increased attention.

In our research, we focused on existence of significant relations of gender and age differences in the context of preferences of selected coping strategies of managers. We also assumed significant statistical differences between levels of managers and their preference of selected coping strategies.

At the present time, this represents a serious and frequently debated topic. Its justification, timeliness and importance is a subject to increase in work responsibilities that are often realized under a pressure and time deficit. Rapidly changing trends in management practice assume the rapidly changing and adaptable manager. Not always such reality meets with the smooth result. Our presented differences in coping with difficult situations are the proof of it.

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