

THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON THE COPING MECHANISMS USED BY ADOLESCENTS

Andreea-Cristina PLEȘEA,

„Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University from Chișinău

The main objectives of this study were to investigate the relationship between the emotional intelligence of adolescents and the coping strategies used by them, as well as to determine the socio-demographic factors that have an impact on these coping mechanisms. The research sample included a number of 220 teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17, of which 100 from the urban environment, and 120 from the rural environment. The „Diagnosis of emotional intelligence” test developed by N. Hall, the Friedman Maturity Scale and the Cognitive-Emotional Coping Questionnaire CERQ were used as research tools. The main results conclude that adolescents with a high level of emotional intelligence especially use adaptive coping mechanisms - refocusing on planning, positive reassessment, positive refocusing and putting events into perspective and are less likely to use maladaptive coping mechanisms - self-blame, catastrophizing, rumination and blaming others. It was also found that socio-demographic factors influence differently the use of cognitive-emotional coping mechanisms.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, adolescents, emotional maturity, socio-demographic factors, adaptive coping, maladaptive coping.*

IMPACTUL INTELIGENȚEI EMOȚIONALE ȘI AL FACTORILOR SOCIO-DEMOGRAFICI AȘUPRA MECANISMELOR DE COPING UTILIZATE DE ADOLESCENȚI

Prezentul studiu a avut ca și obiectiv principal stabilirea legăturii dintre nivelul inteligenței emoționale și mecanismele de coping folosite de adolescenți și evidențierea factorilor socio-demografici care influențează nivelul mecanismelor de coping. Eșantionul de cercetare a fost constituit dintr-un număr de 220 de adolescenți cu vârste cuprinse între 14 și 17 ani, dintre care 100 din mediul urban, iar 120 din mediul rural. Ca și instrumente de cercetare s-a folosit Testul „Diagnosticarea inteligenței emoționale”, elaborat de N. Hall, Scala de maturitate Friedman și Chestionarul de coping cognitiv-emoțional CERQ. Principalele rezultate conchid faptul că adolescenții cu un nivel ridicat al inteligenței emoționale utilizează îndeosebi mecanismele de coping adaptative - refocalizarea pe planificare, reevaluare pozitivă, refocalizare pozitivă și punerea în perspectivă și sunt mai puțin predispuși să folosească mecanisme de coping dezadaptative - autoculpabilizarea, catastrofarea, ruminarea și culpabilizarea celorlalți. De asemenea, s-a constatat că factorii socio-demografici influențează diferit utilizarea mecanismelor de coping cognitiv-emoțional.

Cuvinte-cheie: *inteligență emoțională, mecanisme de coping, adolescenți, maturizare emoțională, factori socio-demografici, coping adaptativ, coping dezadaptativ.*

Introduction

In the tumult of life, each person faces challenges and stressful situations that may exceed ordinary coping capacities. Understanding your own coping mechanisms and developing a varied set of adaptive approaches can help build resilience and improve your ability to cope with challenges. Coping mechanisms are used to manage emotions, to help us easily navigate through the difficulties encountered in life, to stay balanced to manage everyday challenges and to cope with life's pressure and other demands, for example external problems, such as environmental events or conditions as well as internal ones such as thoughts and emotions that exceed our available resources. There are two fundamental categories of coping mechanisms: those focused on problem solving and those focused on managing emotions. The first category refers to direct problem solving and focuses on identifying and addressing the root cause of stress, while the second type involves adjusting cognitive reactions to emotions in stressful situations by reinterpreting stressful

events [2]. Jeanne Segal argue that people with a high level of emotional intelligence achieve more success because they correctly identify and interpret their own emotions, know when and how to express their feelings, and are able to effectively manage their moods. It describes emotional intelligence as a set of skills, non-cognitive capabilities that affect a person's ability to manage demands and stressful situations in the environment [5]. Research conducted by Erözkan indicated a link or correlation among emotional intelligence levels and the coping strategies implemented, thus, individuals who are emotionally gifted can use predominantly adaptive coping mechanisms, which can contribute to a healthy approach to stress and management difficulties, while people with low emotional intelligence resort to maladaptive strategies. Studies exploring these relationships can provide important information for developing interventions and programs to promote mental health, as well as for identifying protective factors and ways to support their development in the community. Emotion regulation skills can be cultivated and improved through awareness, practice and, in some cases, therapeutic interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) [1]. Research supports the idea that how adolescents manage stress and difficulties during this crucial period of life can have a significant impact on their development and mental and physical well-being. Using effective coping strategies during adolescence can contribute to the development of a healthy and balanced ego, having a positive impact on multiple aspects of personal life. The ability to manage challenges and cope with stress can strengthen positive self-esteem and confidence in one's own abilities. Adolescents who develop adequate coping strategies tend to have fewer behavioral problems, can more effectively address challenges and avoid destructive or self-destructive behaviors.

Material and method

This study aims to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and the cognitive strategies adopted by adolescents, while also analyzing the impact of socio-demographic factors on the use of these coping mechanisms, in order to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive perspective on how they respond in various situational contexts.

Hypothesis 1: It was assumed that there is a connection between adolescents' emotional intelligence and the coping strategies they utilize.

Hypothesis 2 It was assumed that the way adolescents use coping mechanisms varies according to their gender, age and background.

To examine the connection among emotional intelligence and coping mechanisms used by adolescents, we used the following psychological research instrument:

- The „Diagnosis of emotional intelligence” test, developed by N. Hall, indicates the extent to which the adolescent feels, communicates and describes his own emotions, the ability to identify, assume and manage them. A high quotient of emotional intelligence ensures better empathy and a higher ability to understand those around you.

- Friedman maturity scale. This scale is utilized to evaluate emotional maturity by assessing emotional equilibrium or imbalance, aiming to gauge the current level of emotional intelligence. The test includes 25 items (questions) to be answered with Yes or No, each answer is associated with a certain number of points.

- The CERQ questionnaire (Cognitive-Emotional Coping Evaluation Questionnaire) which is a multidimensional tool designed to assess the cognitive coping strategies used by a person in the face of negative events or situations. This questionnaire identifies the different ways in which people can approach and manage stress or difficulties through thoughts and emotions [4].

Results and discussion

The research included a group of 220 teenagers, students from the 9th and 12th grades, aged between 14 and 17 years. Among them, 120 teenagers come from the rural environment, from a high school in the Municipality of Bucharest and 100 teenagers from the urban environment, from a high school in Brănești commune. The confirmatory experimental research was carried out between February and June 2022.

To begin with, we present the results of Spearman's non-parametric correlation analysis between variations in the use of CERQ coping mechanisms and emotional intelligence according to Hall and Friedman's model.

Table 1. Results of non-parametric Spearman correlation analysis between variations in the use of CERQ coping mechanisms and Hall and Friedman Emotional Intelligence.

Coping mechanisms SEARCH		Emotional intelligence Hall	Emotional maturity Friedman
1	Self-blame	-0.608**	-0.542**
2	Acceptance	-0.037	0.022
3	Rumination	-0.472**	-0.509**
4	Positive refocusing	0.446**	0.495**
5	Refocus on planning	0.511**	0.584**
6	Positive review	0.520**	0.543**
7	Putting it into perspective	0.435**	0.556**
8	Catastrophizing	-0.653**	-0.623**
9	Blaming others	-0.446**	-0.424**

Note: ** - $p < 0.01$.

The presented results indicate the following statistically significant relationships amongst emotional intelligence (Hall) and coping mechanisms:

Substantial positive correlation with Refocusing on planning ($r_s=0.511$; $p < 0.01$). This coping mechanism means that when faced with difficulties or problems, adolescents are able to look at the situation from various perspectives and organize themselves to cope an adverse event. This helps them stay calm and assess events objectively.

Substantial positive correlation with Positive reappraisal ($r_s=0.520$; $p < 0.01$), which means that these teenagers have the ability to give a positive connotation to a negative event in terms of personal development, considering that the experience will strengthen them, looking for the aspects constructive of it. They are also often open to learning from their experiences and constantly developing. They may be less prone to negativity and instead see every challenge as an opportunity to improve and grow.

Moderate positive correlation with Positive Refocusing ($r_s=0.446$; $p < 0.01$), which denotes an ability to direct attention to more pleasant or constructive aspects or activities, instead of exclusively focusing on the negative situations experienced. Those who use this mechanism are able to quickly stop focusing on unpleasant memories, shifting their focus to more positive or productive elements of the incident, however, they may still have moments when they may tend to become stuck in unfavorable feelings and ideas related to challenging or upsetting situations, they may feel weak or powerless and begin to doubt their own worth, which indicates the imperative of constant personal development.

Moderate positive correlation with Putting into perspective ($r_s=0.435$; $p < 0.01$). These teenagers have the ability to reduce the intensity of an event by comparing it to others and emphasizing that there are worse situations in the world. They show greater resilience in the face of overwhelming emotions and agitation caused by obstacles, due to their ability to take a broader view of situations and maintain a calm demeanor even in times of tension. However, there may still be times when they may tend to magnify or dwell on negative events without comparing them to other situations or putting them in the larger context of life. In such cases, they may experience increased levels of stress and anxiety, as focusing on negative events without relativizing them may distort their perception of reality. This can lead to a narrow and exaggerated view of current problems, making them appear more severe than they actually are.

The positive relationships identified associate high levels of Emotional Intelligence with high levels of use of CERQ adaptive mechanisms.

Hall Emotional Intelligence also correlates negatively with the following coping mechanisms:

Substantial negative correlation with Self-blame ($r_s=-0.608$; $p<0.01$). In this situation, adolescents demonstrate the ability to recognize and correctly interpret their own emotions, they are able to see things from the perspective of others and understand their feelings, which allows them to realize that they are not always to blame for negative situations and that responsibility can be shared. They communicate their emotions and concerns clearly and assertively, and seek support from others when they feel guilt becomes overwhelming.

Substantial negative correlation with Catastrophe ($r_s=-0.653$; $p<0.01$) this means that they do not tend to obsess over the seriousness of an experienced event, considering it the worst possible thing and worse than what other people have experienced. They typically approach challenging circumstances with a more resilient and balanced outlook. They may be able to identify and manage catastrophic thoughts more effectively by seeking alternative solutions and perspectives.

Moderate negative correlation with Rumination ($r_s=-0.472$; $p<0.01$) which denotes that emotionally intelligent adolescents do not constantly and obsessively focus on emotions and thoughts related to a negative event and can reframe negative thoughts and emotions in a constructive way. They are also able to direct their attention and energy to positive activities and interests without getting stuck in excessive thoughts, they can reframe negative thoughts and emotions in a constructive way. But at certain times, it is possible that instead of focusing on finding a solution, the individual may fall prey to rumination, a phenomenon that has the potential to trigger a downward spiral, gradually intensifying negative emotional states. In such cases, uncontrolled rumination can lead to a state of emotional blockage, where the person is unable to move past the negative event.

Moderate negative correlation with Blaming others ($r_s=-0.446$; $p<0.01$) means that teenagers who use this mechanism are often more aware of their own emotions and how their actions affect others, which can make them less likely to project their own mistakes or frustrations onto others. However, they may also have a tendency to project blame onto others for their own problems. For these teenagers, blaming others can become a way to avoid confronting their own emotions or to maintain a positive self-image.

The negative relationships identified associate high levels of Emotional Intelligence with low levels of use of CERQ maladaptive mechanisms.

Friedman's emotional maturity correlates substantially positively with adaptive mechanisms: Positive Refocus ($r_s=0.495$; $p<0.01$), Refocus on Planning ($r_s=0.584$; $p<0.01$), Positive Reappraisal ($r_s=0.5430$; $p<0.01$) and Perspective ($r_s=0.435$; $p<0.01$).

In addition, Friedman's Emotional Maturity has a significant negative correlation with self-blame tendency ($r_s=-0.542$; $p<0.01$), Rumination ($r_s=-0.509$; $p<0.01$), Catastrophizing ($r_s=-0.623$; $p<0.01$), and moderately negatively with the Blame others mechanism ($r_s=-0.424$; $p<0.01$).

Although adolescents with high emotional intelligence frequently resort to adaptive coping mechanisms, it is essential to emphasize that the adaptation process is not exclusively governed by it; a number of other factors also come into play that contribute significantly to shaping adaptive behavior. Thus, we confirmed hypothesis 2, according to which it is assumed that the level of coping mechanisms used by adolescents changes according to the variables of gender, age and the environment of origin.

Next, we present the comparative analysis of the distribution of the levels of manifestation of the coping mechanisms according to the socio-demographic variables: gender and environment of origin; the Mann-Whitney test was applied.

Table 2. Distribution of the manifestation levels of coping mechanisms according to the gender variable.

CERQ coping mechanisms	Male (N=110)	Female (N=110)	U	Z	p
	Average rank	Average rank			
Self-blame	110.05	109.95	5990.00	-0.13	0.897
Acceptance	122.15	98.85	4768.00	-2.81	0.005
Rumination	103.78	117.22	5311.00	-1.60	0.110

Positive refocusing	101.19	119.81	5026.00	-2.20	0.028
Refocus on planning	112.22	108.78	5861.00	-0.41	0.681
Positive review	119.25	101.75	5088.00	-2.07	0.039
Putting it into perspective	125.36	95.64	4415.00	-3.54	0.001
Catastrophizing	106.12	114.88	5568.00	-1.04	0.300
Blaming others	131.08	89.92	3786.00	-4.94	0.001

Note: *U* – Mann-Whitney test value, *Z* – standard value corresponding to the *U* value, *p* – associated statistical significance level.

Statistically significant differences were identified between boys and girls in the following coping mechanisms: A significantly higher manifestation level of Acceptance (average rank=122.15; $Z=-2.81$; $p=0.005$), Positive Reevaluation (average rank=119.25; $Z=-2.07$; $p=0.039$), Putting into perspective (average rank =125.36; $Z=-3.54$; $p=0.001$) and blaming others (average rank=131.08; $Z=-4.94$; $p=0.001$), in the case of boys. A much more pronounced degree of manifestation in the Positive Refocusing strategy (mean rank=119.15; $Z=-2.20$; $p=0.028$), in the case of girls.

Table 3. Distribution of levels of manifestation of coping mechanisms according to the variable environment of origin.

CERQ coping mechanisms	Urban (N=108)	Rural (N=112)	U	Z	p
	Average rank	Average rank			
Self-blame	131.96	89.80	3730.00	-4.99	0.001
Acceptance	95.26	125.20	4402.00	-3.61	0.001
Rumination	118.56	102.73	5178.00	-1.88	0.060
Positive refocusing	98.37	122.20	4738.00	-2.82	0.005
Refocus on planning	78.94	140.93	2640.00	-7.42	0.001
Positive review	80.50	139.43	2808.00	-6.97	0.001
Putting it into perspective	104.52	116.57	5368.00	-1.47	0.140
Catastrophizing	140.52	81.55	2806.00	-6.97	0.001
Blaming others	123.85	97.63	4606.00	-3.15	0.002

Note: *U* – Mann-Whitney test value, *Z* – standard value corresponding to the *U* value, *p* – associated statistical significance level.

Statistically significant differences were identified between adolescents depending on the environment of origin in the case of the following coping mechanisms: A significantly higher manifestation level of Self-Blame (average rank=131.96; $Z=-4.99$; $p=0.001$), Catastrophizing (average rank=140.52; $Z=-6.97$; $p=0.001$) and Blaming others (average rank=123.85 ; $Z=-3.15$; $p=0.001$), in the case of adolescents from the urban environment. A significantly higher manifestation level of Acceptance (average rank=125.20; $Z=-3.61$; $p=0.001$), Positive refocusing (mean rank=122.20; $Z=-2.82$; $p=0.005$), Refocusing through planning (mean rank=140.93; $Z=-7.42$; $p=0.001$), Positive reappraisal (mean rank=139.432; $Z=-6.97$; $p=0.001$) in the case of the rural environment.

Table 4. Correlations between coping mechanisms and age.

	Age
1 Self-blame	-0.382**
2 Acceptance	-0.178*
3 Rumination	-0.319**

4	Positive refocusing	0.327**
5	Refocus on planning	0.252**
6	Positive review	0.210**
7	Putting it into perspective	0.141*
8	Catastrophizing	-0.342**
9	Blaming others	-0.503**

Moderate and statistically significant positive correlations were observed between age and Positive Refocus ($r_s=0.327$; $p<0.01$), Refocus on Planning ($r_s=0.252$; $p<0.01$), Positive Reappraisal ($r_s=0.210$; $p<0.01$). Positive relationships associate high age level with a high level of use of adaptive coping mechanisms. Moderate and statistically significant negative correlations were observed in the case of Self-blame ($r_s=-0.382$; $p<0.01$), Rumination ($r_s=-0.319$; $p<0.01$), Catastrophizing ($r_s=-0.342$; $p<0.01$) and Blame of others ($r_s=-0.503$; $p<0.01$). Negative relationships associating a higher level of age with reduced levels of use of maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Next, we present in detail the results obtained from the ordinal logistic regression analysis for predicting the level of use of coping mechanisms according to gender, background and age.

Table 5. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for the prediction of the level of use of the coping mechanism Self-blame according to gender, environment and age.

Self-blame	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	51.63	0.001	0.209 – 0.215	-0.09	0.25	0.14	1	0.711
Environment of origin (urban)				1.10	0.25	19.13	1	0.001
Age				-0.58	0.12	24.29	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the manifestation level of Self-blame (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=51.63$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Self-blame. The predictive capacity of the model is moderate ($R^2=0.209 - 0.215$). The most important predictor is the environment of origin ($B=1.10$; $SE=0.25$; $Wald=19.13$; $p=0.001$) with a positive relationship indicating that adolescents from the urban environment show a higher level of self-blame than those from the rural environment, an aspect that confirms the difference identified in the analysis above. Another significant predictor is represented by age ($B=-0.58$; $SE=0.12$; $Wald=24.29$; $p=0.001$), a negative predictor in the sense of reducing the level of manifestation of Self-blame with increasing age. Regarding the gender difference, it does not show a differential capacity for the level of self-blame ($B=-0.09$; $Se=0.25$; $Wald=0.14$; $p=0.711$).

Table 6. Results of ordinal logistic regression analysis for predicting the level of use of the Acceptance coping mechanism according to gender, environment and age.

Acceptance	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	31.97	0.001	0.135 – 0.141	0.58	0.25	5.28	1	0.022
Environment of origin (urban)				-1.08	0.26	18.05	1	0.001
Age				-0.39	0.12	11.33	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Acceptance (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=31.97$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Acceptance. The predictive capacity of the model is low ($R^2=0.135 - 0.141$). The most important predictor is the environment of origin ($B=-1.08$; $SE=0.26$; $Wald=18.05$; $p=0.001$) with a negative relationship indicating that adolescents from the urban environment show a lower level of manifestation of Acceptance than those from the rural environment, an aspect that confirms the difference identified in the analysis above. Another significant predictor is represented by age ($B=-0.39$; $SE=0.12$; $Wald=11.33$; $p=0.001$), a negative predictor in the context of the reduction in the manifestation of acceptance as age advances. In terms of gender differences, they indicate variable capacity for acceptance control. ($B=0.58$; $Se=0.25$; $Wald=5.28$; $p=0.022$), as a positive predictor in the sense of a higher level of Acceptance in the case of boys than in the case of girls.

Table 7. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for the prediction of the level of use of the coping mechanism Rumination according to gender, environment and age.

Rumination	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	28.68	0.001	0.122–0.126	-0.58	0.25	5.45	1	0.020
Environment of origin (urban)				0.29	0.24	1.42	1	0.233
Age				-0.53	0.12	20.43	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Rumination (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=28.68$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Rumination. The predictive capacity of the model is reduced ($R^2=0.122 - 0.126$). The most important predictor is age ($B=-0.53$; $SE=0.12$; $Wald=20.43$; $p=0.001$) with a negative relationship indicating that adolescents have a lower level of manifestation of Rumination with increasing age. Regarding the gender difference, it shows the differential capacity of the level of Rumination ($B=0.58$; $Se=0.25$; $Wald=5.28$; $p=0.022$), as a positive predictor in the sense of a lower level of Rumination in the case of boys than in the case of girls.

Table 8. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for the prediction of the level of use of the coping mechanism Positive Refocus according to gender, environment and age.

Positive refocusing	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	34.22	0.001	0.144–0.148	-0.46	0.25	3.47	1	0.062
Environment of origin (urban)				-0.63	0.24	6.63	1	0.010
Age				0.50	0.12	18.63	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Positive Refocusing (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=34.22$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Positive Refocusing. The predictive capacity of the model is reduced ($R^2=0.144 - 0.148$).

The most important predictor is age ($B=0.50$; $SE=0.12$; $Wald=18.63$; $p=0.001$) with a positive relationship indicating that adolescents have a higher level of positive Refocusing with increasing age. Another significant predictor is represented by the difference in the environment of origin ($B=-0.63$; $SE=0.24$; $Wald=6.63$; $p=0.010$), a negative predictor in the sense of a lower level of manifestation in the case of adolescents from the urban environment. Regarding the gender difference, it does not show a differential capacity for the level of positive refocusing ($B=-0.46$; $Se=0.25$; $Wald=3.47$; $p=0.062$).

Table 9. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for the prediction of the level of use of the coping mechanism Refocus on planning according to gender, environment and age.

Refocus on planning	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	73.54	0.001	0.284–0.293	0.12	0.25	0.21	1	0.648
Environment of origin (urban)				-1.96	0.28	49.95	1	0.001
Age				0.45	0.12	14.72	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Refocusing through planning (measured on a 7-point ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=73.54$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Refocusing through planning. The predictive capacity of the model is moderate ($R^2=0.284 - 0.293$). The most important predictor is the environment of origin ($B=-1.96$; $SE=0.28$; $Wald=49.95$; $p=0.001$) with a negative relationship indicating that adolescents from the urban environment have a lower level of manifestation of Refocusing through planning than those from the rural environment. Another significant predictor is represented by age ($B=0.45$; $SE=0.12$; $Wald=14.72$; $p=0.001$), a positive predictor in the sense of a higher level of manifestation determined by increasing age. Regarding the gender difference, it does not show a differential capacity of the level of Refocus on planning ($B=0.12$; $Se=0.25$; $Wald=0.21$; $p=0.648$).

Table 10. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for the prediction of the level of use of the coping mechanism Positive reappraisal according to gender, environment and age.

Positive reappraisal	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	68.05	0.001	0.266–0.273	0.56	0.25	5.12	1	0.024
Environment of origin (urban)				-1.82	0.27	46.72	1	0.001
Age				0.41	0.11	13.24	1	0.024

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Positive Reappraisal (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=68.05$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Positive reappraisal. The predictive capacity of the model is moderate ($R^2=0.266 - 0.273$). The most important predictor is the environment of origin ($B=-1.82$; $SE=0.27$; $Wald=46.72$; $p=0.001$) with a negative relationship indicating that adolescents from the urban environment have a lower level of manifestation of positive reappraisal than those from the rural environment. Another significant predictor is

represented by age ($B=0.41$; $SE=0.11$; $Wald=13.24$; $p=0.001$), a positive predictor in the sense of presenting a higher level of manifestation with increasing age. Regarding the gender difference, it shows a differential capacity of the level of positive reappraisal ($B=0.56$; $Se=0.25$; $Wald=5.12$; $p=0.024$), a positive relationship that indicates a higher level of manifestation in the case of girls than in that of the boys.

Table 11. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for the prediction of the level of use of the coping mechanism Putting into perspective according to gender, environment and age.

Putting it into perspective	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	22.82	0.001	0.099	1.02	0.26	16.07	1	0.001
Environment of origin (urban)			0.102	-0.26	0.24	1.18	1	0.278
Age				0.32	0.11	7.88	1	0.005

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Putting into perspective (measured on a 7-point ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=22.82$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Putting it into perspective. The predictive capacity of the model is low ($R^2=0.099 - 0.102$). The most important predictor is the gender difference ($B=1.02$; $SE=0.26$; $Wald=16.07$; $p=0.001$) with a positive relationship indicating that boys have a higher level of manifestation than girls. The explanation being that they are taught from an early age not to be overwhelmed by strong emotions and look at problems from a broader perspective to find effective solutions. Also, another significant predictor is represented by age ($B=0.32$; $SE=0.11$; $Wald=7.88$; $p=0.005$), a positive predictor in the sense of presenting a higher level of manifestation with increasing age.

Table 12. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for predicting the level of use of the Catastrophizing coping mechanism according to gender, environment and age.

Catastrophizing	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	76.68	0.001	0.294	-0.34	0.25	1.82	1	0.177
Environment of origin (urban)			0.302	1.75	0.26	43.57	1	0.001
Age				-0.56	0.12	23.10	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of the Catastrophizing (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=76.68$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of the Catastrophizing. The predictive capacity of the model is moderate ($R^2=0.294 - 0.302$). The most important predictor is the environment of origin ($B=1.75$; $SE=0.26$; $Wald=43.57$; $p=0.001$) with a positive relationship indicating that adolescents from the urban environment have a higher level of manifestation of the Catastrophizing than those from the environment rural. Another significant predictor is represented by age ($B=-0.56$; $SE=0.12$; $Wald=23.10$; $p=0.001$), a negative predictor in the sense of presenting a lower level of manifestation with increasing age.

Table 13. Results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis for predicting the level of use of the coping mechanism Blaming others according to gender, environment and age.

Blaming others	Model fitting information		Pseudo R-square	Estimation parameters				
	RL $\chi^2(df=3)$	p	R ²	Estimate	SE	Wald χ^2	df	p
Gender (male)	90.61	0.001	0.338	1.20	0.27	20.53	1	0.001
Environment of origin (urban)			0.349	0.80	0.25	9.90	1	0.002
Age				-0.86	0.13	46.55	1	0.001

Binary logistic regression analysis applied to test the relationship between the level of manifestation of Blaming others (measured on a 7-step ordinal scale) and the independent variables: gender, background and age. The fit of the model is statistically significant ($\chi^2(df=3)=90.61$; $p=0.001$) which is why we will assume the research hypothesis regarding the impact of socio-demographic factors in determining the level of use of Blaming others. The predictive capacity of the model is high ($R^2=0.338 - 0.349$). The most important predictor is age ($B=-0.86$; $SE=0.13$; $Wald=46.55$; $p=0.001$) with a negative relationship indicating a reduction in the level of manifestation of Blaming others with increasing age. Another significant predictor is represented by the gender difference ($B=1.20$; $SE=0.27$; $Wald=20.53$; $p=0.001$), positive predictor in the sense of presenting a higher level of manifestation in the case of boys. This tendency not to own up to one's mistakes can become a way to avoid confronting one's own emotions or to maintain a positive self-image. Regarding the environment of origin, it shows a differentiating capacity of the level of Blaming others ($B=0.80$; $SE=0.25$; $Wald=9.90$; $p=0.002$), a positive relationship that indicates a higher level of manifestation in the case of teenagers from the urban environment.

Conclusions

It is widely accepted the idea that an increased emotional intelligence favors the adoption of proactive, constructive and effective approaches in managing difficult situations, at the expense of passive strategies, focused on emotional and less productive aspects. Emotional intelligence was positively correlated with effective problem-solving strategies, access to social support, cognitive appraisal ability and the ability to manage favorable emotional reactions [1, 3].

Research findings have validated the hypothesis that there is a significant link between the degree of emotional intelligence of adolescents and the coping methods they apply in the face of challenges. Therefore, it was concluded that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tend to adopt adaptive coping strategies, such as reorientation on planning, positive reappraisal, positive reorientation and perspective-taking demonstrating the ability to objectively analyze circumstances and consider multiple perspectives. They keep calm and perceive challenges as opportunities for personal development, continuously learning from lived experiences. At the same time, they demonstrate the ability to redirect their attention to constructive activities, lessening the impact of negative events by reporting more serious situations. Thus, they do not let themselves be overwhelmed by emotions and remain in control of themselves in moments of tension. Also, these adolescents are less likely to resort to maladaptive mechanisms, such as self-blame, catastrophizing, rumination or blaming others. They exhibit a profound awareness of their own emotions and their influence on others, refraining from projecting their mistakes and frustrations onto others. Approach difficulties with resilience and calmness, effectively manage catastrophic thoughts and look for alternative solutions. Change negative thoughts into a constructive way and focus attention on positive activities, thus avoiding mental blocks. They understand the perspectives and feelings of others, accepting that they are not always responsible for negative situations, thus sharing the blame fairly.

Also, in the research, it was highlighted that with increasing age, there is a probability that adolescents will achieve higher levels of adaptive coping mechanisms - positive refocusing, refocusing on planning,

positive reappraisal and putting into perspective and decrease the level maladaptive coping mechanisms - self-blame, catastrophizing and blaming others.

Gender was found to be an influential factor in the use of coping mechanisms and findings indicate that boys tend to adopt adaptive coping strategies such as acceptance and perspective taking. As maladaptive coping mechanisms they tend to blame others. Instead, girls use the coping mechanism positive refocusing and rumination.

Regarding the environment of origin, it was observed that adolescents from the urban environment use the maladaptive coping mechanism of self-blame, catastrophizing and blaming others, instead, adolescents from the rural environment use adaptive coping mechanisms - acceptance, refocusing on planning, positive reevaluation and refocusing positive. Thus, according to the conclusions listed above, we can affirm the fact that the belief persists that the implementation of programs to improve emotional intelligence could have a profound impact on the way adolescents face challenges and adapt to changes in their environment.

References:

1. ERÖZKAN A. *Exploring the relationship between perceived emotional intelligence and coping skills of undergraduate students*. In: *International Journal of Human Sciences*, 2013. p. 1537-1549.
2. LAZARUS R. S., FOLKMAN, S. *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer, 1984. 456 p. ISBN 0-8261-4191-9.
3. MOHAMMADI C. D., TORABI, C. A., GHORABI, B. *The relation between coping styles and emotional intelligence of students*. In: *Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology of Iran*, nr. 14, 2009, p. 176-183.
4. PERTE A. TINCAS, I., CERQ *Manualul de utilizare a Chestionarului de coping cognitiv-emoțional*, Cluj-Napoca, ASCR, 2010. p. 72-75, ISBN: 978-606-8244-03-7.
5. Segal Jeanne, *Dezvoltarea inteligenței emoționale*, București, Editura Teora, 1999, 186 p. ISBN 973-20-0228-x.

Author data:

Andreea-Cristina PLEȘEA, clinical psychologist, integrative psychotherapist, PhD student, Doctoral School of Educational Sciences, „Ion Creangă” State Pedagogical University in Chișinău.

ORCID: 0000-0003-3977-1059

E-mail: andreea.plesea@gmail.com

Presented on 30.09.2024