

# Coping Strategies in Relation with Big Five Factors of Personality and Gender among Egyptian University Students

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**Abstract:** The present study examined the role of the big five-factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) in the choice of coping strategies to approach the stressful life events in the light of gender differences. NEO- PI-R Personality Inventory, and Cope Inventory were administrated on 287 Egyptian male and female university students (49 male; 238 female) aged between 17 - 23 years old with mean = 19,2 and SD = 1,14 in Menoufia University, Egypt. By Pearson correlation results showed that big five-factors were related to coping strategies, and by Stepwise Regression, it had contribution in predicting of coping strategies. MANOVA results showed that coping strategies were not affected by the interaction between the big five and gender, finally t -test results indicated that males tend to use humor as a coping strategy more than females, and female tend to use focus on and venting of emotion as a coping strategy more than males.

**Key words:** Coping strategies - Gender differences - Big five factors of personality.

## Introduction

A large proportion of contemporary coping research can be traced back to the publication of Richard Lazarus's 1966 book, Psychological Stress and the Coping Process. Previously, most research on coping had been couched in the framework of ego-psychology and the concept of defense, as exemplified by the work of Haan,1969; Menninger, 1963 and Vaillant,1977 (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000).

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They viewed coping and defensive strategies as enduring aspects of the individual, Haan, 1977 as cited in: McCrae and Costa (1986) defined personality in terms of coping and defending as "the fundamental and persistent organizational strategies that people use to interregulate various aspects of themselves". Lazarus and his colleagues have objected to this equation of coping styles with personality on both logical and empirical grounds. They have argued that a distinction must be made between dispositional and episodic variables: Whereas personality traits are enduring dispositions, coping efforts are better understood as specific behavior. Assessing or defining personality in terms of typical styles of coping not only reduces the question of whether personality influence coping, it also begs the question of whether specific coping behaviors actually cohere to form a consistent style. These questions can be addressed only if independent assessments of personality dimensions and coping behaviors are obtained (McCrae & Costa, 1986: 386).

In an attempt to answer the question whether the ways of coping in stressful situations are primarily determined by personality traits, types of stressful situations or their interaction, two dominant approaches have been developed. Within The frame work of a structural approach, the coping process is determined by individual differences and intraindividual stability, while the influence of the nature of the stressful situation is unimportant. Within this approach, there are two assumptions on how individual differences could influence coping (Kardum & Krapic, 2001).

McCrae & Costa (1986) assume that preferred coping styles can be directed from personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism, they reported that neuroticism is related significantly to the use of hostile reaction, escapist fantasy, self blame, sedation, withdrawal, wishful thinking, passivity, and indecision or what they call neurotic coping. Extraversion is related significantly to rational action, positive thinking, sub situation and restraint or problem - focused coping.

The second assumption relating to the influence of personality characteristics on coping that exist within the structural approach is that there are stable styles, dispositions or preferences for coping, people use it in stressful situations. This assumption does not deny the potential importance of personality traits to coping, but assume that there are another reasons can form stable coping preferences rather than the personality traits (Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989).

The second approach is the transactional approach, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 as cited in: Kardum & Krapic (2001).defined coping in terms of the person - environment relationship and the dynamic, interactive nature of the stressful transaction is emphasized. Individual differences and environmental factors are mainly considered under the global construct of cognitive appraisal.

Although there is a divergence of opinion about the role of personality traits in the development of relatively stable coping styles, both structural and transactional approaches agree that personality traits are important factors which are operational in the process of stress and coping (Kardum & Krapic, 2001).

One model of personality that has been found particularly useful in understanding coping is the Five-Factor Model, a broad based taxonomy of personality dimensions that arguably represent the "minimum number of traits" needed to describe personality (David & Suls, 1999: 276). These personality dimensions are Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C). Research examining the role of personality in coping strategy use has been focused on the role of N and E, resulting in only limited study of the other dimensions. However, studies that have examined all five traits suggest that these latter dimensions may add meaningfully to our understanding of the stress and coping process (Lee-Baggley, Preece, & DeLongis, 2005).

### **Personality traits as determinants of coping**

There is a general consensus that five core traits represent the basic underlying dimensions of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. **Neuroticism (N)** or trait negative affectivity refers to the degree to which an individual is prone to experience emotional distress. Individuals high on N are prone to experience negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, or anger and tend to be impulsive and self-conscious. **Extraversion (E)** refers to the degree to which an individual is dominant, gregarious, outgoing, and fun-seeking. Extraverts have a propensity to experience positive emotions and tend to be sociable, warm, cheerful, energetic, and assertive. **Openness to Experience (O)** reflects the degree to which one is intellectually curious, creative, imaginative, and open-minded. Those high on O tend to be creative, imaginative, curious, psychologically

minded, and flexible in their thinking. **Agreeableness (A)** reflects the degree to which one seeks to avoid antagonism or conflict and is easygoing and cooperative hose. Individuals high on A tend to be altruistic, acquiescent, trusting and helpful. **Conscientiousness (C)** reflects the extent to which one tends to be organized, reliable, disciplined, and responsible. Those higher on C tend to be organized, reliable, hard working, determined, and self-disciplined (As cited in: Lee-Bagglely et al., 2005; Newth & Delongis, 2004).

McCrae & Costa (1986) examined the influence of personality on coping responses, the personality dimension were only three of the five factor (neuroticism, extraversion, and openness), measured by the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R). Neuroticism was related to the increased use of hostile reaction, escapist fantasy, self blame, sedation, withdrawal, wishful thinking, passivity, and indecisiveness. Extraversion was related to rational action, positive thinking, sub situation, and restraint. Openness was positively related to the use of humor, and negatively related to the use of faith.

Costa, Somerfield and McCrae (1996:46) reported that individual high on neuroticism react badly to stress, blaming themselves and take it out on other. They engage in wishful thinking and become passive and withdrawn. Extraverts talking, joking, and relating to others. Openness related to seeking new information, and trying novel solutions. Individuals on Agreeableness become stoical and compliant. Conscientiousness was positively associated with perseverance and personal growth, and was negatively associated with a variety of passive and ineffective responses.

David & Suls (1999) investigated the role of problem appraisal and big five traits in coping with bothersome daily events. Using Coping and Problem Appraisals Scale and NEO Personality Inventory, the results indicated that higher scorers on neuroticism used emotion - focused strategies such as catharsis and relaxation. Extraversion was positively related to a variety of emotion - focused strategies - redefinition, catharsis, and religion. Openness was significantly negatively related to distraction. Conscientiousness was negatively related to religious coping. Agreeableness was unrelated to coping strategy use.

Cosway; Endler; Sadler & Deary (2000) examined both the principal

components analyses on the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations, and the Interco relations of the CISS factors with personality factors of the NEO-Five Factor Inventory and a self-reported psychological distress scale, the General Health Questionnaire. The results showed that task-oriented coping had a significant negative correlation with neuroticism, and a positive correlation with extraversion. Emotion-Oriented Coping correlated significantly with all the personality factors except for the openness. Avoidance-Oriented Coping had a significant positive correlation with extraversion.

Using the big Five Scales developed by Brebner and The coping Inventory for stressful situation, Brebner (2001) attempted to reproduce the relationships noted between the big five and stress - coping approach in Costa, Somerfield and McCrae (1996) and Berbner, 1998 studies. The results indicated that neuroticism and conscientiousness were related positively to emotion - focused coping, and task - focused coping respectively, but conscientiousness was related negatively to emotion - focused coping. Extraversion and openness were related positively to avoidance. Agreeableness was not significantly related to emotion - focused coping, task - focused coping, or avoidance.

Using Eysenk Personality questionnaire, coping styles questionnaire and scale of subjective stress, to examine the relationship between personality traits, stressful life events and coping styles, Kardum & Krapic (2001) found that extraversion had direct positive effects on problem and emotion focused coping, while neuroticism had direct positive effects on avoidance coping.

Bouchard (2003) investigated the role of cognitive appraisals of marital difficulties, and personality traits of neuroticism and openness, in the choice of coping strategies used to solve marital difficulties with a sample of 200 couples. Results showed for both genders that neuroticism was positively associated with distancing/avoidance, whereas openness was positively associated with painful problem-solving

Newth & Delongis (2004) examined individual differences in coping and associated health outcomes as they unfold across time. They found that coping strategies of cognitive reframing, emotional expression, and active problem solving were markers for extraversion. Neuroticism and Conscientiousness were positively associated with the use of emotional

expression and stoic distancing, respectively. Openness was negatively associated with the use of cognitive reframing. Agreeableness was not significantly associated with the use of active problem solving, emotional expression, cognitive reframing, or active problem solving.

Lee-Bagglely et al. (2005) examined both the direct and interactive effects of five basic personality dimensions (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) and two prevalent sources of interpersonal stress among parents living in stepfamilies, the results showed that: coping strategies of engaging in more interpersonal withdrawal, escape avoidance, self-blame, and seeking support were markers for neuroticism. The coping strategies marker for extraversion was engaging in compromise and self-blame. High scores on openness were significantly less likely to use distancing. High scores on Agreeableness were significantly less likely to engage in self-blame. Finally, Conscientiousness were significantly related to report engaging in relationship-focused coping, and using compromise, problem solving, and seeking support.

Using the coping strategies scales and the big five personality scale developed by Gabalah (2006) to investigate the relationship between coping strategies and the big five factors of personality. The author found that the coping strategy markers for neuroticism was avoidance coping. The all personality factors except neuroticism were positively related to problem - focused coping.

### **Coping and gender differences**

Although the problem - focused coping versus emotional focused coping may provide a heuristic distinction guiding the investigation of coping differences across gender. It may also the relationship between gender, coping, and outcome (Carver et al., 1989).

Riger, 1993 as cited in: Monnier (1998) has argued coping theory has been biased against women because it narrowly conceptualizes women's behavior as passive and emotional, while it conceptualizes men's behavior as active and problem oriented.

Rosario, Shinn, Morch, & Huckabee, 1988 as cited in: Sigmon; Stanton & Snyder (1995) discussed two theories that could account for gender differences in how individuals cope with stressful events. Socialization theory posits that women have been "socialized in a way

that less adequately equips them with effective coping patterns" According to this theory, women are taught to express their emotions more openly and to act in a more passive manner, whereas men are taught to approach situations in a more active, problem-focused, and instrumental manner. In contrast, role constraint theory argues that apparent gender differences in coping with stressors may be explained by gender differences in the likelihood of occupying particular social roles and the differential constraints that accompany role occupancy for women and men. Thus, socialization theory would predict that gender differences in coping strategy use would be found across situations and social roles, whereas role constraint theory would predict that if individuals occupy the same social role, gender differences in coping strategy use would disappear.

Some previous research reveals gender differences in how individuals cope with stressful situations. Carver et al. (1989) found that males were more likely to use alcohol and drugs to deal with stressful events than females. Females were more likely to use seeking emotional and instrumental social support, and they focused on vented emotions than males. Sigmon et al. (1995) found that females utilized more problem-focused strategies than males in school and family stressful situations, they employed more emotion-focused strategies than males across all situations. In addition, and females used more acceptance coping strategies than males for relationship events. Monnier; Stone. Hobfoll. & Johnson (1998) reported that females were more active in seeking out others and joining with others to approach stress, they employed more prosocially and less antisocial coping than men. In Izabela (1999) study females were significantly more likely to seek help than males and they reported using more problem focused coping than men did. Shokry study (1999) revealed that male were more likely to use seeking instrumental social support, restraint coping, suppression of competing activities, behavior disengagement, and positive reinterpretation and growth than female. Female were more likely to use seeking emotional social support and turning to religion than males to cope with stressful events. Lengua & Stormshak (2000) & Reevy & Maslach (2001) reported the same results, female tended to rely on social support to deal with stressful events. Bettina (2001) found significant gender differences in using of passive and support-seeking coping; females used more passive and

support-seeking coping than males. Gianakos (2002) reported that women were more likely to use direct action coping than were men; Males were more likely to report using alcohol as a means of coping. Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson (2003) found that women sought more social support for emotional and instrumental reactions and focused on vented emotion. Men in contrast, tended to rely more on alcohol, drugs, and humor as a way of coping. Gabalah (2006) reported that males were more likely to use problem - focused coping than female. Female were more likely to use maladaptive strategies to deal with stressful events.

In contrast, several studies have failed to find gender differences in coping strategy use, either in general or in specific types of stressful situations, Hamilton and Fagot, 1988 As cited in: Sigmon et al. (1995) found no gender differences in expressive (i.e., emotion-focused) and instrumental (i.e., problem-focused) coping strategies in undergraduate students experiencing chronic stressors. Mohamed (1995) found no gender differences in avoidance coping. Lengua & Stormshak (2000) also found no gender differences in the level of using active coping, avoidance coping, and cognitive reinterpretation.

This review of existing literature raises several issues. **First**, research on the relationship between personality and coping has found a variety of associations, but there are numerous inconsistencies between the research results. In some studies openness, for example, was related positively to seeking information (Costa et al., 1996), in Brebner study (2001) openness was related positively to avoidance, but in Cosway et al. (2000) openness was not related to avoidance. Some studies indicated that agreeableness was not related to the use of coping strategies (e.g., David & Suls, 1999; Brebner, 2000; Newth & Delongis, 2004). Others indicated that agreeableness was related positively with problem - focused coping (Gabalah, 2006), emotional - focused coping (Cosway et al., 2000).

Research is needed in which coping strategies are examined within the context of the big five model of personality in the Arab environment.

**Second**, the disparate findings in previous coping studies have raised important questions concerning gender differences and similarities in coping strategies.

**Third**, there is no studies examined coping strategies in the light of gender differences and the big five model of personality.

The present study examined all five dimensions of the Five-Factor Model of personality in an attempt to clarify the relationship between personality and coping in the light of gender differences.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is a significant relationship among personality traits and coping strategies.
2. Using coping strategies could be predicted from personality traits.
3. There is a gender differences in using coping strategies.
4. The interaction between personality traits and gender could have an effect on coping strategies use.

### **Sample**

The sample consisted of 287 Egyptian male and female university students (49 male; 238 female) aged between 17 - 23 years old with mean = 19, 2 and SD = 1, 14 in Menoufia University, Egypt.

### **Measures**

**Coping strategies:** Coping strategies was assessed by Cope Inventory (Carver et al., 1989), the Arabic version which was translated by Khalil & Elshenawy (2005). The Cope Inventory consists of 60 items measure 15 coping strategies which are: active coping, positive reappraisal planning, suppression of competing activities, seeking instrumental social support, seeking emotional social support, focus on and venting of emotion, restraint coping, behavior disengagement, mental disengagement, positive reinterpretation and growth, denial, acceptance, substance abuse, and turning to religion. The evidence concerning the test - retest reliability of the various scales came from two samples: the first was 89 students, and the correlation values ranged from, 46 to, 86; the second sample was 116 students and the values ranged from, 42 to, 89. Using Cronbach's alpha in a sample of 978 students the values were high and ranged from, 62 to, 92 except for mental disengagement scale it was below, 43. (Carver et al., 1989: 271 - 273).

The internal consistency of the Cope Inventory scales came from Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, which were conducted for each scale in Egyptian university students sample(n= 327). In general these values were acceptably high except for mental disengagement, acceptance, ffocus on and venting of emotion, and restraint coping. (See table 1):

**Table (1)**  
**Cronbach, s Alpha Reliability for Cope Inventory Scales**

<b>Coping Strategies</b>	<b>Alpha Values</b>
positive reinterpretation and growth	0,62
Mental disengagement	0,32
Focus on and venting of emotion	0,37
Seeking instrumental social support	0,57
Active coping	0,45
Denial	0,49
Turning to religion	0,52
Humor	0,64
Behavior disengagement	0,53
Restraint	0,31
Seeking emotional social support	0,68
Substance abuse	0,77
Acceptance	0,36
Suppression of competing activities	0,47
Planning	0,64

(Khalil & Elshenawy, 2005).

**Personality:** Personality was assessed by the NEO- PI-R Personality Inventory, Costa & McCrae, 1992, the Arabic version which was translated by Younis & Khalil (in press).The **NEO- PI-R** assesses five personality dimensions: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. The internal consistency of the NEO-PI-R scales came from Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, which were conducted for each scale in Egyptian university students sample(-total sample = 541: female = 289; male = 252). In general these values were acceptably high. (See table 2):

**Table (2)**  
**Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for NEO- PI-R Scales**

Scales	Female = 289	Male = 252	Total Sample = 541
N	0.784	0.790	0.792
E	0.646	0.704	0.677
O	0.490	0.454	0.475
A	0.712	0.625	0.677
C	0.850	0.848	0.848

(Younis & Khalil, in press)

## Results

**Pearson Correlation.** Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation among personality traits and coping strategies (the first hypotheses). N was positively related to mental disengagement ( $r = .214, P < .01.$ ), focus on and venting of emotion ( $r = .274, P < .01.$ ), denial ( $r = .307, P < .01.$ ), humor ( $r = .273, P < .01.$ ), and behavior disengagement ( $r = .228, P < .01.$ ). N was also negatively related to positive reinterpretation and growth ( $r = -.167, P < .01.$ ), active coping ( $r = -.181, P < .01.$ ), and planning ( $r = -.298, P < .01.$ ). E was positively related to positive reinterpretation and growth ( $r = .329, P < .01.$ ), focus on and venting of emotion ( $r = .143, P < .01.$ ), seeking instrumental social support ( $r = .194, P < .01.$ ), active coping ( $r = .225, P < .01.$ ), turning to religion ( $r = .189, P < .01.$ ), seeking emotional social support ( $r = .254, P < .01.$ ), and planning ( $r = .308, P < .01.$ ). E was also negatively related to behavior disengagement ( $r = -.327, P < .01.$ ), and substance abuse ( $r = -.239, P < .01.$ ). O was positively related to positive reinterpretation and growth ( $r = .193, P < .01.$ ), mental disengagement ( $r = .149, P < .01.$ ), focus on and venting of emotion ( $r = .240, P < .01.$ ), seeking emotional social support ( $r = .136, P < .05.$ ), and planning ( $r = .140, P < .05.$ ). A was positively related to positive reinterpretation and growth ( $r = .222, P < .01.$ ), turning to religion ( $r = .235, P < .01.$ ), and planning ( $r = .163,$

**Table (3)**  
**Pearson correlation among personality traits and coping strategies**

	N	E	O	A	C
positive reinterpretation and growth	-,167**	,329**	,193**	,222**	,325**
Mental disengagement	,214**	,029	,149**	-,013	-,062
Focus on and venting of emotion	,274**	,143**	,240**	,11	,027
Seeking instrumental social support	-,021	,194**	,036	,092	,138*
Active coping	-,181**	,225**	,043	,098	,261*
Denial	,307**	-,121	,105	-,159**	-,184**
Turning to religion	-,050	,189**	,052	,235**	,213**
humor	,273**	-,025	,074	-,162*	-,268**
Behavior disengagement	,228**	-,327**	-,111	-,243**	-,355**
restraint	,01	,04	,08	,02	,05
Seeking emotional social support	,08	,254**	,136*	,08	,08
Substance abuse	,117	-,239**	-,034	-,272	-,276**
acceptance	,05	,08	,05	,07	-,02
Suppression of competing activities	-,04	,02	,03	,02	,155*
planning	-,298**	,308**	,140*	,163**	,395**

**Note.** N = 288. N = Neuroticism, E = Extraversion, O = Openness, A = Agreeableness, and C = Conscientiousness. \* P < ,05. \*\* P < ,01.

$P < , 01.$ ). A was also negatively related to denial ( $r = -, 159, P < , 01.$ ), behavior disengagement ( $r = -, 243, P < , 01.$ ), and substance abuse ( $r = -, 272, P < , 01.$ ). C was positively related to positive reinterpretation and growth ( $r = ,325, P < ,01.$ ), seeking instrumental social support ( $r = ,138, P < ,01.$ ), active coping ( $r = ,261, P < ,01.$ ), turning to religion ( $r = ,213, P < ,01.$ ), acceptance ( $r = ,155, P < ,05.$ ). C was also negatively related to denial ( $r = -, 184, P < , 01.$ ), humor ( $r = -, 286, P < , 01.$ ), behavior disengagement ( $r = -, 355, P < , 01.$ ), and substance abuse ( $r = -, 276, P < , 01.$ ).

**Regression analysis:** table 4 shows the results of regression analysis - stepwise method which used to explore the ability of personality traits to predict the use of coping strategies (the second hypotheses). The results were as follow:

Positive reinterpretation and growth: the final model explains 11, 9% of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness (Beta = 23, 2%) and extraversion (Beta = 15, 3%) as predictor variables of using positive reinterpretation and growth strategy.

Mental disengagement: the final model explains 3, 8 % of the total variance, it includes neuroticism (Beta = 20, 2%) only as a predictor variable of using mental disengagement as a coping strategy.

Focus on and venting of emotion: the model explains 9, 6 % of the total variance, it includes neuroticism (Beta = 29, 5%) and extraversion (Beta = 19, 4%) as predictor variables of using Focus on and venting of emotion strategy.

Seeking instrumental social support: the model explains 3 % of the total variance, it includes extraversion only (Beta = 18, 3%) as predictor variable of using Seeking instrumental social support as coping strategy.

Active coping: the final model explains 6, 5 % of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness only (Beta = 26, 1%) as predictor variable of using active coping strategy.

Denial: the model explains 10, 4 % of the total variance, it includes neuroticism (Beta = 29, 1%) and Agreeableness (Beta = 15, 3%) as predictor variables of using denial as a coping strategy.

Turning to religion: the final model explains 52 % of the total

variance, it includes Agreeableness only (Beta = 23, 5%) as predictor variable of using Turning to religion as a coping strategy.

Humor: the model explains 12, 6 % of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness (Beta = 37, 9%), extraversion (Beta = 26, 5%), and neuroticism (Beta = 16, 2%) as predictor variables of using humor as a coping strategy.

Behavior disengagement: the model explains 14, 8 % of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness (Beta = 18, 2%), neuroticism (Beta = 16, 6%) and extraversion (Beta = 15, 6%) as predictor variables of using behavior disengagement as a coping strategy.

Seeking emotional social support: the model explains 7, 2 % of the total variance, it includes extraversion (Beta = 27, 3%) and neuroticism (Beta = 13, 4%) as predictor variables of using seeking emotional social support strategy.

Substance abuse: the model explains 8, 6 % of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness (Beta = 17, 3%), and Agreeableness (Beta = 16, 5%) as predictor variables of using substance abuse as a coping strategy.

Suppression of competing activities: the model explains 3, 2 % of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness (Beta = 26, 5%), and extraversion (Beta = 15, 6%) as predictor variables of using suppression of competing activities strategy.

Planning: the final model explains 17, 2 % of the total variance, it includes Conscientiousness (Beta = 33, 4%), and neuroticism (Beta = 15, 9%) as predictor variables of using planning as a coping strategy.

**Table (4) regression analysis stepwise method, predicting the coping strategies from personality traits**

Dependent y	Predictor y	Adjusted R square	Sum of Squares	f.d	Mean square	F	sig	model	B	St. Error	Beta	t	sig
Po.Re.Gr	C	.119	total	177,259	88,630	20,315	.0001	Constant	4,038	1,460	.232	2,766	.006
	E		Regression Residual	1239,055	4,363			C	2,842	.009	.153	3,084	.002
			total	1416,314				E	2,451	.012		2,028	.04
M. Disengag.	N	.038	total	60,140	60,140	12,222	.001	Constant	5,293	1,255	.202	4,216	.0001
			Regression Residual	1402,397	4,921			N	2,988	.009		3,496	.001
			total	1462,537	286								
f.emotion	N	.096	total	132,726	66,363	16,241	.0001	Constant	.418	2,006	.295	.208	.83
	E		Regression Residual	1160,445	4,086			N	4,087	.008	.194	5,148	.0001
			total	1293,171	286			E	2,982	.009		3,393	.001
i.s.o..sup	E	.030	total	50,822	50,822	9,825	.002	Constant	7,445	1,578	.183	4,718	.0001
			Regression Residual	1474,268	5,173			E	3,041	.01		3,134	.002
			total	1525,108	286								
Act.cop	C	.065	total	70,195	70,195	20,832	.000	Constant	7,243	.978	.261	7,406	.0001
			Regression Residual	960,314	3,370			C	2,724	.006		4,564	.0001
			total	1030,509	286								
Denial	N	.104	total	174,084	87,042	17,601	.001	Constant	6,381	2,082	.291	3,065	.002
	A		Regression Residual	1404,473	4,945			N	4,462	.009	.153	5,206	.000
			total	1578,557	286			A	2,71	.010		-2,735	.007
Relig. Cop.	A	.52	total	39,215	39,215	16,618	.000	Constant	9,904	1,131	.235	8,760	.000
			Regression Residual	672,534	2,360			A	2,792	.007		4,077	.000
			total	711,749	286								
Humor	C	.126	total	224,835	74,945	14,772	.000	Constant	5,199	2,376	.379	-2,189	.02
	E		Regression Residual	1435,771	5,073			C	5,02	.01	-	4,733	.000
	N		total	1660,606	286			E	4,611	.01	.265	3,521	.001
Be.diseng.	C	.148	total	261,697	87,232	17,505	.000	Constant	12,359	2,355	.182	5,249	.000
	N		Regression Residual	1410,247	4,983			C	2,42	.01	-	-2,301	.022
	E		total	1671,944	286			N	2,618	.009	.166	2,795	.006
							E	2,71	.01	.156	-9,091	.03	

**Table (4) regression analysis stepwise method, predicting the coping strategies from personality traits (cont'd)**

Dependent y	Predictor y	Adjusted R square	Sum of Squares	f.d	Mean square	F	sig	model	B	St. Error	Beta	t	sig
E.So.Sup	E	.072	164,348	2	82,174	12,064	.000	Constant	.364	2,590	.273	.141	.888
	N		1934,453	284	6,811			5,334	.01	.134	4,702	.000	
	Residual total		2098,401	286				2,360	.01		2,302	.02q	
Substance	C	.086	1221,656	2	60,828	14,413	.000	Constant	12,774	1,526	.173	8,371	.000
	A		1198,561	284	4,220			2,05	.008	-	-2,421	.01	
	Residual total		1320,216	286				2,67	.012	1,65	-2,298	.02	
SUP COMP.	C	.032	43,604	2	21,802	5,723	.04	Constant	9,431	1,364	.265	6,913	.000
	E		1081,894	284	3,809			2,892	.009	.156	3,359	.001	
	Residual total		1125,498	286				2,23	.011		-1,973	.05	
Planning	C	.172	263,862	2	131,93	30,628	.000	Constant	8,748	2,048	.334	4,271	.000
	N		1223,843	284	4,308			4,185	.007	.159	5,723	.000	
	Residual total		14,87,206	286				2,63	.009		-2,724	.007	

**Table (5)**  
**Gender differences in coping strategies use**

Coping strategies	Male		Female		t	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD		
positive reinterpretation and growth	12,65	1,7	12,63	2,3	-,53	-
Mental disengagement	9,4	2	9,7	2,3	-,71	-
Focus on and venting of emotion	10,8	1,5	11,3	2,2	-1,4	,06
Seeking instrumental social support	12,18	2,2	12,41	2,3	-,62	-
Active coping	11,7	1,7	11,66	1,9	,22	-
Denial	8,1	1,9	8,5	2,4	-,89	-
Turning to religion	14,4	1,6	14,5	1,5	-,53	-
Humor	9,08	2,1	8,03	2,4	2,7	,0006
Behavior disengagement	7,75	2,4	7,86	2,4	-,28	-
Restraint	10,46	1,9	10,43	2,09	,09	-
Seeking emotional social support	11,36	2,6	11,8	2,7	-1	-
Substance abuse	5,1	2,3	5	2,1	,47	-
Acceptance	10,48	2,1	10,71	2	-,67	-
Suppression of competing activities	10,48	1,5	10,53	2	-,15	-
Planning	12,48	1,9	12,03	2,3	1,2	-

**t- test:** table 5 shows the results of t- test which used to assess gender differences in coping strategies use (the third hypotheses). The results shows that there is a gender difference in the use of both Focus on and venting of emotion (t = 1,4, P <, 06) and humor (t = 2,7, P <, 0006).

**Multivariate analysis of Variance:** table 6 shows the results of MANOVA analysis which used to explore if the interaction between personality traits and gender have an effect on coping strategies use (the fourth hypotheses). The results show that the interaction between personality traits and gender has no effect on coping strategies use. But both of neuroticism (Wilks' lambda = , **875**, P < , 002), extraversion (Wilks' lambda = , **887**, P < , 006), and conscientiousness (Wilks' lambda = , **850**, P < , 0001) have a significant effect on the choice of coping strategies.

**Table (6)**  
**Multivariate analysis of Variance for**  
**personality variables and gender on coping strategies**

<b>factors</b>	<b>Wilks' lambda</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Intercept	,704	7,3	,000
gender	,931	1,298	-
Neuroticism	,875	2,481	,002
Extraversion	,887	2,227	,006
Openness	,941	1,084	-
Agreeableness	,929	1,327	-
Conscientiousness	,850	3,065	,000
gender* Neuroticism	,952	,871	-
gender* Extraversion	,962	,692	-
gender* Openness	,939	1,122	-
Gender* Agreeableness	,940	1,101	-
gender* Conscientiousness	,926	1,39	-

**Discussion**

The present study examined both the direct and interactive effects of five basic personality dimensions (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness) in the light of gender differences on coping responses. The findings indicated that five basic personality dimensions played an important role on the choice of coping strategies. N was positively related to focus on and venting of emotion (viewed as emotion - focused coping), humor, mental disengagement, denial, and behavior disengagement (the last strategies traditionally viewed as maladaptive strategies). N was also negatively related to positive

reinterpretation and growth, active coping, and planning (problem - focused coping). This is consistent with the characterization that those higher on N have a propensity for experiencing negative emotions (Lee - Bagglely et al., 2005) and therefore may be more likely to channel their coping efforts toward managing their disruptive emotions. They tend to cope via emotional expression (Newth & Delongis, 2004), and focus on whatever distress or upset they experiencing (focus on and venting of emotion), they engaged in a wide variety of activity that direct them from thinking about the behavior dimension or goal with which the stressor is interfering (mental disengagement), they reduce their effort to deal with the stressor, even giving up the attempt to attain goals with which the stressor is interfering (behavior disengagement), they also refuse to believe that the stressor exists or of trying to act as though the stressor is not real (denial).

Consistent with the findings of retrospective research on coping (e.g., McCrae & Costa, 1986; Cosway et al., 2000; Kardum & Kropic, 2001; Newth & Delongis, 2004), the present findings suggest that Extraverts appear to be effective and active copers in that they are more likely to use a variety of ways of coping and to do so effectively, including both emotional - focused coping (e.g., focus on and venting of emotion, positive reinterpretation and growth, turning to religion, and seeking emotional social support) and problem - focused coping (e. g, seeking instrumental social support, active coping, and planning). E was also negatively related to behavior disengagement, and substance abuse. These findings are consistent with the social nature of Extraverts, so when they have stressful life events they tend to seek social support, either for emotional or instrumental reasons and direct themselves to the problem which is the source of the stress, thinking about what steps to take and how best ways to handle it (planning), tiring to remove or circumvent the stressor or to ameliorate its effects (active coping), such coping strategies lead to positive reinterpretation and growth and in turn to a positive emotional response.

In contrast to the findings of Cosway et al. (2000) & Newth & Delongis (2004), O was positively related to emotional - focused coping (e.g., positive reinterpretation and growth, focus on and venting of emotion, seeking emotional social support), these differences may due to situational specificity in the effects of personality on coping or may due to

methodological differences between these studies and the present study. O was also positively related to and planning. These findings in general are consistent with the nature of persons with higher scores on O who tend to be psychologically minded, and flexible in their thinking, so they would be adaptive, flexible copers able to engage with others and the world around them.

Inconsistent with the findings of pervious studies (e.g., David & Suls, 1999; Brebner, 2001 & Newth & Delongis, 2004), which indicated that A was not related to coping strategies, the present findings showed that A was positively related to adaptive strategies such as positive reinterpretation and growth, turning to religion, and planning. A was also negatively related to maladaptive strategies such as denial, behavior disengagement, and substance abuse. these results suggests that those higher on A will be adaptive, try to avoid conflict by taking serious steps to solve the problem, when they have stressful life events.

Consistent with the findings of pervious studies (e.g., Costa et al., 1996; Lee-Bagley et al., 2005 & Gabalah, 2006), C was positively related to positive reinterpretation and growth, seeking instrumental social support, active coping, turning to religion, acceptance. C was also negatively related to denial, humor, behavior disengagement, and substance abuse. These findings are consistent with the nature of those higher on C who tends to be organized, reliable, hard working, determined, and self-disciplined. So when they have stressful life events they seek advice, assistance or information from others (seeking instrumental social support), to determine what steps should they take to handle the problem (active coping), while they do that they also praying to God to help them (turning to religion), they accept the presence of the problem but they try to deal with it (acceptance). Such coping strategies direct the person to manage distress emotion and solve the problem in a positive way (positive reinterpretation and growth).

The results of regression analysis - stepwise method indicated that Conscientiousness and extraversion was predictor variables of using positive reinterpretation and growth strategy, this could be explained from the nature of the two variable Conscientiousness reflects the extent to which one tends to be organized, reliable, disciplined, and responsible Extraverts have a propensity to experience positive emotions and tend to be sociable, warm, cheerful, energetic, and assertive.

Neuroticism was the only predictor variable of using mental disengagement as a coping strategy. Linking neuroticism with passive and ineffective forms of coping had been replicated in many studies (e.g., Carver et al., 1989 & McCrae & Costa, 1986). Neuroticism is a disposition for experiencing distress even in the absence of environmental stressors (Kardum & Krapic, 2001), when person with high scores on neuroticism have stressful life events, they cope badly by doing activity that direct them from thinking about the behavior dimension or goal with which the stressor is interfering.

Neuroticism and extraversion were predictor variables of using Focus on and venting of emotion strategy. Given their higher levels of negative affect, it is not surprising that those higher on N tend to cope via emotional expression (Newth & DeLongis, 2004), and focus on whatever distress or upset them experiencing. Extraverts are highly motivated to interact with others (Kardum & Krapic, 2001), when they have stressful life events, their social relationships network help them to overcome these events, they talk about their upset feelings and ventilate it (Focus on and venting of emotion), such a response may sometimes be functional (Carver et al., 1989).

Extraversion was the only predictor variable of using Seeking instrumental social support as coping strategy. This is consistent with the social nature of Extraverts, so when they have stressful life events they tend to seek advice, assistance or information from others to overcome the problem.

Conscientiousness was the only predictor variable of using active coping strategy. This is consistent with the nature of those higher on C who tends to be organized, reliable, and hard working, determined, and self-disciplined. So when they have stressful life events they take active steps to try to remove or circumvent the stressor or to ameliorate its effects. This including direct action, increasing their efforts, and trying to execute a coping attempt in stepwise fashion.

Neuroticism and Agreeableness were predictor variables of using denial as a coping strategy. The previous studies indicated that neurotic persons tended to use maladaptive coping strategies; they refuse to believe that the stressor exists or of trying to act as though the stressor is

not real. Low scorers on A can not avoid conflict or the stressful event so they denial it.

Agreeableness was the only predictor variable of using Turning to religion as a coping strategy. This is accord with the nature of this variable; high scorers on A tend to avoid conflict, or antagonism altruistic, acquiescent, trusting and helpful. When they have stressful life events, they pray to God to help them.

Conscientiousness, extraversion, and neuroticism were predictor variables of using humor as a coping strategy. Persons with low scores on C tend to be disorganized, unreliable, not disciplined, and irresponsible, so they joke about the situation they experience, not trying to solve it. When extraverts have stressful life events they talking, joking, and relating to others and this is accord with their nature. Neurotic persons try to handle the stressful situation by joking about it.

Conscientiousness, neuroticism and extraversion were predictor variables of using behavior disengagement as a coping strategy. Persons who have low scores on conscientiousness, tend to ddisorganized, unreliable, not disciplined, and irresponsible, so they tend to use a wide variety of activity that direct them from thinking about the behavior dimension or goal with which the stressor is interfering. Higher scorers on N cope badly with stressful life events; they use behavior disengagement which includes wishful thinking or fantasy, problem avoidance or escape, social withdrawal and fatalism (Livneh, 2000) to overcome the stressful event. Low scorers on E or introverts who spend more time alone, having no social relationships. When having stressful life events, can not do any thing except using behavior disengagement strategies.

Extraversion and neuroticism were predictor variables of using seeking emotional social support strategy. This is consistent with the social nature of Extraverts, who have a wide social relationships network, so when they have stressful life events they tend to seek emotional support from their friends or family. Maybe those higher on N use this strategy to express their upset emotions.

Conscientiousness and Agreeableness were predictor variables of using substance abuse as a coping strategy. Low scorers on C tend to be irresponsible, they do not try to solve the problem, but they escape from

it by substance abuse. Low scorers on a can not avoid conflict or the stressful event, but they try to do that by using substance abuse.

Conscientiousness, and extraversion were predictor variables of using suppression of competing activities strategy. High scorers on C who tend to be organized, reliable, hard working, determined, and self-disciplined, when they have stressful life events, they putting other projects aside, trying to avoid becoming distracted by other events in order to determine the suitable steps to handle the problem wisely. Low scorers on extraversion doing the same thing, try to concrete on the problem to find the suitable solution.

Conscientiousness and neuroticism were predictor variables of using planning as a coping strategy. This is accord with the characteristics of high scorers on C they are responsible persons, they think about how to cope with the stressor, and what steps should they take and how best to handle the problem. They do this with a discipline manner. Low scorers on N react in adaptive way to stressful life events, so they try to solve the problem by conscious attempts to determine the most appropriate course of action needed to directly prevent, eliminate or improve the stressful situation (Newth and Delongis, 1998). In general, painful problem solving associated with less negative emotion, more positive emotion, positive reappraisal of the stressful situation, and satisfactory outcomes (Newth and Delongis, 1998), which accord with the characteristics of Low scorers on N.

The t- test results indicated that males tend to use humor as a coping strategy more than females, this is consistent with the results of Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson (2003) study, and female tend to use Focus on and venting of emotion as a coping strategy more than males. This is consistent with the previous studies (e.g. Carver et al., 1989 & Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2003). These results can be explained in the light of socialization theory, According to this theory, women are taught to express their emotions more openly and to act in a more passive manner, than men (Sigmon et al., 1995). This is accord with the nature of the Egyptian society which encourages women to express their feeling, in contrary men can not do that, so they try to express their feeling by joking about the stressful event (Khalil & Elshenawy, 2005).

The results of MANOVA analysis showed that the interaction between personality traits and gender have no effect on coping strategies use. But both of neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness have a significant effect on the choice of coping strategies. This is consistent with

the results of Pearson correlation and regression analysis which indicated that these variables correlated with the use of coping strategies, and their ability to predict the coping strategies which the person use to approach the stressful life events, so the explanation of these results can be applied on MANOVA analysis results.

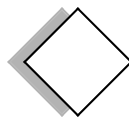
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## إستراتيجيات المجابهة وعلاقتها بكل من الأبعاد الخمسة للشخصية والنوع لدى عينة من طلاب الجامعة المصريين

أمنية إبراهيم الشناوي\*

**ملخص:** هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى معرفة دور العوامل الخمسة للشخصية في التنبؤ بأساليب مجابهة أحداث الحياة الضاغطة، وذلك في ضوء الفروق الجنسية. حيث طبقت قائمة العوامل الخمسة للشخصية لماكجراي وكوستا، وقائمة المجابهة لكارفر وآخرين على عينة تكونت من 287 من طلاب كلية الآداب - جامعة المنوفية (49 طالباً، و238 طالبة) بمدى عمري يراوح بين 17 - 23 سنة. وقد أظهرت النتائج ما يلي:

- ارتباط الأبعاد الخمسة للشخصية ارتباطاً دالاً بأساليب المجابهة (ما عدا التحفظ والتقبل).

- تختلف أبعاد الشخصية المنبئة لكل أسلوب من أساليب المجابهة.

- لا يوجد تفاعل بين الجنس وأبعاد الشخصية في التأثير على أساليب المجابهة.

- توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسط درجات الذكور ومتوسط

درجات الإناث في استخدام أساليب المرح والتركيز والتنفيس الانفعالي.

وقد نوقشت النتائج في ضوء الإطار النظري والدراسات السابقة.

**مصطلحات البحث:** إستراتيجيات المجابهة - الفروق الجنسية - الأبعاد

الخمس للشخصية

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