

## Review of the book by E.V. Volkova & I.O. Kuvaeva “Coping Intelligence: Differentiation and Integration Approach”

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**Abstract:** Book by E.V. Volkova and I.O. Kuvaev presents to the readers a fundamentally new approach to the study of stress and coping within the framework of a single multi-level dynamic Stress & Coping System, starting with biochemical processes and ending with a multinational society. The central concept of the approach being developed is Coping Intelligence, which is defined by the authors as a special form of organizing the experience of overcoming stressful situations, allowing the subject to maintain health potential and increase the potential for personal development in unstable living conditions. Through the prism of the Differentiation-Integration theory (DI-theory), classical and modern theories of the psychology of stress and coping, as well as the latest biochemical studies of human stability in stressful situations, are reviewed and systematized. The analysis and synthesis of a large array of data carried out by the authors indicates that in stressful living conditions, coping intelligence is a key factor in the success of human life. The monograph will be useful to psychologists, psychophysicologists, sociologists, biochemists, as well as specialists in the field of personalized medicine and human resources services.

**Keywords:** Coping Intelligence, Nation's Coping Intelligence, Stress & Coping System, Coping Behavior Performance

Since Hans Selye described the general adaptation syndrome (Selye, 1956), the term Stress has not left the pages of psychological journals and monographs. A lot has been written about psychological stress and coping with it, including PhD and master's theses in psychological and medical sciences. The literature describes the phenomenology of psychological stress, the phenomenology of defense mechanisms and coping behavior, describes a maladaptive model of coping behavior, correlates defense mechanisms and strategies for coping with stress, describes group defense mechanisms and a collective strategy for coping with stress, and much more. All of the above, raises

doubts about the opportunity to say anything new in the psychological study of stress and coping with it. However, this monograph refutes this doubt. Its authors actually proceed from the term proposed earlier by A.V. Libina (Libina, 2008), but significantly expand its meaning. The authors of the monograph follow their own scientific path, offering an original view of both the problem of psychological stress and its consequences, and the problem of coping with stress. The scientific relevance of the work is ensured by a comprehensive consideration of the “Stress & Coping System” and taking into account its hierarchical organization. Practical relevance is based on the development and

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testing of tools for assessing the conceptualization of stressful situations and coping with stress.

The monograph includes 3 parts, divided into 9 chapters. Part 1 deals with the phenomenology of Coping Intelligence. The first chapter examines the properties of Coping Intelligence, the fundamental dimensions of the Stress & Coping System (SCS) and its subsystems (including in the context of organizational stress), and describes the biochemical level of the SCS. The authors proposed a multidimensional model of Coping Intelligence. In the second chapter, the conceptualization of stress is considered in the context of the subject's mental experience of coping; are presented the level organization of the concept Stress and the structure of verbal-semantic regulation of behavior in stressful situations. Chapter three is devoted to the study of the relationship between Coping Intelligence and the productivity of behavior in stressful situations. This chapter covers various concepts of coping such as transactional theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), multi-axis model (Hobfoll, 1998), resource-congruent model (Wong, 1993; Wong, et al., 2006). The relationship between cognitive assessment of a stressful situation and coping strategies is examined. The author's criteria for the coping behavior performance are presented. In the fourth chapter, the authors consider the sociocultural level of Coping Intelligence: they analyze the meaning of the word Stress in different languages (Russian, Armenian, Tatar, Chinese, and Turkish); present the results of cross-cultural studies of coping with stress and notions about stress in young people.

Part two is devoted to the research methodology of Coping Intelligence. Chapter 5 describes the procedure the developing tools for assessing the conceptualization of stressful situations and provides examples. An important advantage of the tools developed by the author is their focus on identifying implicit representation of stress and the use of

methods for quantifying the measure of differentiation and hierarchical organization of the concept "Stress". Chapter 6 describes methods for assessing behavior in stressful situations. The authors analyze the structure and content of coping behavior questionnaires, such as the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988), the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (COPE; Carver et al., 1989), the Multidimensional Coping Inventory (MCI; Endler & Parker, 1990), the Adolescent Coping Scale (ACS; Frydenberg, Lewis, 1993), the Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS; Hobfoll et al., 1994), the Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI; Greenglass et al., 1999), and the Cross-Cultural Coping Scale Questionnaire (CCCS; Kuo, et.al, 2006). The authors propose a scheme for analyzing coping behavior based on Coping Intelligence.

The third part is devoted to presenting the results of an empirical study of the conceptualization of stressful situations and coping behavior among young people of close ethnocultural groups, namely, Russians, Armenians, Tatars, Chinese, and Turks. Chapter seven describes the features of the mental experience of overcoming stressful situations, the severity of the spatial, sensory, and emotional-evaluative modalities of the concept of Stress, the measure of differentiation and the measure of hierarchy of this concept among young people of different ethnocultural groups. The eighth chapter examines cross-cultural differences in coping with stress between students of socio-humanitarian specialties of different ethnocultural groups. Chapter Nine describes the types of relationships between the modalities of the concept Stress and coping strategies, as well as between the measure of differentiation of the concept Stress and coping. Linear (increasing and decreasing) and nonlinear (U-shaped and inverted U-shaped) dependencies have been identified, which show that it is impossible to endlessly use such productive coping as work and achievements, there is a limit, while the

unproductive strategy of self-blame has no limit. The data obtained convincingly indicate that the measure of differentiation and the measure of hierarchy in the representation of a stressful situation are key factors in the effectiveness of coping behavior. That is, the more diverse signs of a stressful situation (*causes, state, consequences, process, and management*) a person is able to identify and build relationships between them, the wider the repertoire of coping he/she uses in order to maintain the potential for health, development, and more successfully cope with the problem solving. I would like to note that in the third part of the monograph, an original methodological approach to the study of stress and coping among representatives of different cultures is verified. It was found that coping behavior is significantly related to the measure of differentiation of stress representations, and the higher it is, the more coordinated the interaction of different copings is with each other. It should be emphasized that the measure of differentiation of stress representation primarily affects the strategy for managing a stressful situation, while the spectrum of influence of the measure of hierarchy of visual representations of stress is much wider, it affects both the management of a stressful situation and the strategies of emotional regulation and avoidance. An important advantage of this monograph is the consideration of stress and coping within a single multi-level dynamic system, starting from biochemical processes and ending with a multinational society. Thus, analyzing the success of overcoming challenges in various cultural contexts, the authors justify the need to introduce a new World Development Indicator, namely Coping Intelligence of the Nation (Volkova, Kuvaeva, 2023). The authors emphasized, that “a nation copes with challenges if all the forces of society unite and act in concert, in other words, the nation acts as a collective entity (Collective Subject)” (Volkova et. al., 2022, p. 5). The authors identify four dimensions

of a Coping-Intelligence of the Nation (NCI):

- (1) extensive experience in overcoming global challenges;
- (2) nation's traditions and values;
- (3) creative people capable of overcoming new challenges;
- (4) a strong leader who draws on the nation's values.

I believe that the book by E.V. Volkova and I.O. Kuvaeva “Coping intelligence: differentiation and integration approach” will be of interest to a wide range of researchers and practitioners.

#### **CRedit author statement:**

The author has read and approved the final version and bear responsibility for all aspects of the publication.

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#### **Highlight:**

- Coping Intelligence is a form of organizing the experience of overcoming stressful situations, allowing the subject to maintain health potential and increase the potential for personal development in unstable living conditions.
- The measure of differentiation of stress representation primarily affects the strategy for managing a stressful situation.
- The measure of hierarchy of visual representations of stress is much wider, it affects both the management of a stressful situation and the strategies of emotional regulation and avoidance.
- Coping-Intelligence of the Nation (NCI) is the measure of a nation's cohesion to overcome global challenges.

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