PROACTIVE COPING AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The current research aims to identify the proactive coping of postgraduate students, the statistically significant differences in the proactive coping according to the variables (gender, specialization, stage).

To achieve this, the researcher adopted the proactive coping scale, which consisted of (14) paragraphs, and it was presented to a group of arbitrators to judge the validity of its paragraphs, and the psychometric properties of it were extracted by applying it to the research sample (200) graduate students at Wasit University for the year (2020-2021) according to the variables (gender, specialization, stage), and they were chosen by stratified random method, the researcher reached the following results: Postgraduate students have a proactive coping, there are no statistically significant differences in the proactive coping according to the variables (gender, specialization, stage) among graduate students. In light of the results, the researcher developed conclusions, recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: Proactive coping

I. INTRODUCTION

researcher’s attention. Also, the era in which we live is full of changes in all fields, whether technological, cultural or intellectual, and these changes result in attitudes that have a severe impact on members of society, and therefore the students, with the stressful situations they face, are considered among the most important groups. Which must be taken care of in order to face these situations, which are facing exams, relations with colleagues and professors, competition for success, dealing with the university environment and its systems, and other situations. . Proactive coping is important in eliminating a great deal of stress before it occurs. Students who have a proactive coping style tend to have fewer problems in their studies because they are well prepared for negative events, and proactive students plan to help them use appropriate techniques to reduce the impact of stress. At the same time, they will make full use of the resources available around them. Cognitively, proactive coping involves thinking including visualizing success scenarios, anticipating future problems, planning how to handle the situation and taking preventive steps to avoid disaster.

Research problem:
Postgraduate students are an important and basic segment in the university community, as postgraduate students face many challenges and difficulties such as lectures and participation in the joint activities of the curricula and many different educational tasks, and through the researcher’s contact and her presence in the social environment of postgraduate students, Researcher noticed that there are many problems and pressures that they face, such as University’s problems as a result of the university’s requirements, and psychological problems as result of thinking carefully about a situation and how to find proactive measures before it happens, and social through interaction with others, as well as the current conditions represented by the Corona pandemic and its negative effects on students in hindering their scientific career as well as converting them to distance learning and this in itself is considered A new step for students in how they communicate with professors and what they suffer from weakness in the Internet, and therefore students must find solutions to how to confront, through their readiness for stressful situations by anticipating them.

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Graduate students represent an essential segment of the university community, where graduate students face many challenges and difficulties such as lectures, participation in co-curricular activities and many different educational tasks. Difficult circumstances and situations, not only at the cognitive level but also emotionally and psychologically (Green glass, 2001:5).

The study indicated (Ślebarska, 2017) Proactive coping has an effective role in searching and obtaining a new job, as individuals who have a high level of proactive coping are more active and faster to find work than those who lack the skills of proactive coping (Ślebarska, 2017:93).

Accordingly, the problem of the current research was crystallized with the following question: Do graduate students have proactive coping?

Research importance
Taking care of human energies is important to different peoples and civilizations, especially those who are active, including postgraduate students. They are one of the important social segments in society, which have received the attention of scholars in education and psychology because they are the nation's wealth and source of strength in the face of difficulties and challenges (Al-Shakri, 2011:4).

Therefore, the concept of proactive coping is a relatively recent term in psychology, as it has been dealt with by limited and not many studies, but psychological research has begun to pay attention and study this concept recently, to identify and extract the desired benefits and positives from it and apply them in our practical life. Person efficiency (Bhattacharyya, et al, 2018: 1).

He sees (Straud, 2015), The proactive coping is an important source for protecting the personality and protects it from stress and depression and enhances psychological well-being, and there is a link between proactive and preventive coping and personal methods. The individual should not attribute the proactive coping to personal earnings, because it is a cognitive process that consists of setting goals, anticipating future opportunities and achieving goals (Strand, 2015: 60).

Proactive coping helps individuals by focusing on future goals and controlling stress, meaning that the future is the important part of their lives, and they have the ability at present to prepare for future events and the important goals that the individual sets himself, meaning that the proactive coping achieve distant goals (Zambianch & Ricci, 2014: 493).

The importance of the research can be summarized from the theoretical point of view as follows: 1 Arab study that dealt with the proactive coping, and in terms of the correlative relationship (to the knowledge of the researcher). 2 the lack of Iraqi and Arabic studies in the proactive coping, as far as the researcher knows, as it constitutes a qualitative addition to the theoretical aspect, the practical importance can also be summarized as follows: 1 The importance of the results presented by the current research that can contribute to building programs to develop the skills and abilities of graduate students at the level of proactive coping.

Research objectives:
The proactive coping of postgraduate students.
The proactive coping of postgraduate students according to the variables:
Gender (male, female), Specialization (humanitarian, scientific), Stage (Masters, Ph.D.).

Research limits:
The limits of the current research are determined by postgraduate students (Masters-PhD) at Wasit University for specializations (humanities_scientific) and of both sexes (males - females) for the academic year (2020/2021).
Define terms:

Aspinwall & Taylor (1997): Are general efforts taken in advance before a stressful situation occurs to prevent it or modify its shape before it occurs (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997: 417).

Greenglass, et al, 1999: It means the efforts of the individual and his prior preparation for coping and taking active steps to deal with it before it occurs (Greenglass et al, 1999: 8).

The second chapter: Theoretical framework.

Concept Proactive Coping: Interest in the study of facing stress began in the sixties of the last century, and the study carried out by Murphy (Murphy, 1962) is one of the first studies that used the term facing stress, to refer to the methods used by the individual in dealing with threatening situations to control them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984: 14). The concept of (coping) is how the individual deals with stressful situations and controls them. This method includes direct responses to exclude the source of the threat or indirect responses aimed at reducing tension and reducing the threat, such as denial and escape (Block H & al, 1993: 176). The concept of proactive coping appeared for the first time by (Aspinwall, 1997) in his study "A Stitch in Time: Self-Regulation and Proactive Coping". Focused on the issue of coping with future events. Proactive coping has been defined as the ability of individuals to identify future threats and use methods that may help compensate for problems at an early stage. Individuals prepare for stressful events before they occur that lead to personal growth and achievement of goals (Stiglbauer & Batinic, 2015: 249). He pointed out (Sechrist & Jones, 2005) Proactive coping involves planning for events through the use of resources to prevent or counteract the future effects of negative situations (Sechrist & Jones, 2005: 357). In addition, proactive coping also includes recognizing upcoming stressors, goal setting, and planning (Brannon & Feist, 2010: 117).

Characteristics of a proactive coping:

1. Proactive coping includes positive, multi-coping functions, such as developing or acquiring resources to prepare for potential stressors, initiating actions to eliminate potential stressful situations in the future, setting future goals and paving the way for their achievement (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003: 393).
2. The proactive coping is characterized by helping individuals to cope stressful situations, obtain positive results, and reduce the degree of tension they are exposed to during the stressful coping.

Options and resources (for example, time) can be relatively plentiful before a stressful situation occurs; after a stressor occurs or develops, options may be more restrictive Furthermore, the amounts of resources expended to resolve a potentially stressful situation can be much lower when no The problem begins and the result could be better (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004: 45). In many areas of life, people feel good results because of their proactive efforts and that proactive coping efforts prevent a potentially stressful situation from occurring or at least reduce the tension associated with this problem. Understanding proactive confrontation is important to get a more comprehensive picture of the confrontation process in Alfred (Heppner, et al, 2006: 173).

Theories explaining proactive coping:

The theory of Greenglass and others (Greenglass, et al, 1999):

The proactive individual collects resources, and takes the necessary steps to prevent the depletion of resources and can mobilize resources when needed, and these resources are information and social and emotional support, which contribute positively to building coping methods for the country (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009: 2).

According to this theory, the proactive coping contains two essential elements for the success of the coping process: 1 The individual who enjoys a proactive coping style, the course of his life is determined by him and not by external factors, as this individual bears responsibility for events, facts and situation, 2 Life is full of vast resources, and the individual who enjoys a degree of proactive coping is characterized by being able to collect resources and take steps to prevent the consumption of those resources.
resources, as well as being able to mobilize resources when needed. Thus, this individual possesses very developed social skills that enable him to carry out these operations (Green glass, et al, 1999:5). Proactive coping includes anticipating negative events, interpreting these events in a positive light or as challenges, and taking measures to implement effective, goal-focused decisions in advance (Green glass, 2008:37).

**Proactive coping has three main advantages:**

It integrates the method of proactive and preventive planning with achieving the goals of self-regulation.

They integrate proactive goal achievement with the identification and use of social resources.

Proactive confrontation is used to achieve the goal of self-regulation (Greenglass, 2001:5)

**The second axis: previous studies**

This part includes previous studies that dealt with the proactive confrontation variable:

The Vaculíková study (Vaculíková., et al, 2017):

(Evaluating the factor structure of the proactive and preventive coping of graduate students)

Evaluating the structure of the proactive coping factor and its relationship to the preventive coping among graduate student

Objective: It aimed to present the results of the evaluation process that confirm whether the measures of proactive and preventive coping are a one-dimensional structure as measured by the proactive coping inventory.

The sample: The research sample reached (125) among a sample of graduate students, their ages ranged between (23-39) years, from a private university in the southwestern United States.

**Tools:** The tool used is the proactive coping scale (Greenglass, Schwarzer, and Taubert, 1999), which consists of 14 items and four alternatives, and the preventive coping scale (Green glass, 2008) and it consists of ten items and four alternatives.

**Results:** The results showed that future-oriented behaviour does not evaluate challenges as negative threats, but rather they look at them positively and motivate individuals to overcome stressful situations, and that students can perceive difficult situations in college or on a personal level, and that both sexes (males, females) They deal with future threats by visualizing the situation and planning the next steps before the threat fully develops, and students enjoy a proactive coping (Vaculíková., et al, 2017:1).

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Procedures

This chapter includes a presentation of the procedures adopted by the researcher to achieve the objectives of her research, as it includes defining the research method, a description of the research community, selecting a representative sample, clarifying the two tools of the scale, and achieving the scientific conditions that must be met in terms of validity and stability to be valid to achieve the objectives of the research, as well as statistical methods. used for data analysis and statistical processing:

**First:** the research method

The researcher relied on the correlative descriptive approach, which depends on the study of the phenomenon as it exists in reality, and interest as a numerical description through a qualitative
expression that clarifies the characteristics of the phenomenon or a quantitative expression that shows the amount and size of the phenomenon (Al-Obaisi et al., 2014: 74).

**Second: the research population:**

The research community means a group of individuals, persons or documents, clearly and precisely defined, that the researcher is interested in studying and generalizing the results of the research to and that the community is determined by the nature and purpose of the research. (Al-Bassiouni, 2013:309). The current research community consists of postgraduate students at Wasit University (Masters and PhD) for the academic year (2020-2021), in the two specializations (scientific and human), and for both sexes (male and female), and their number is (331) students distributed over (2) faculties Humanities, with (135) male and female students, and (8) scientific faculties with (196) male and female students, and the total number of males reached (181) male and female students, at a rate of (54.68%) of the total community, and the number of females was (150) female students at a rate of (45.31%) of the total community, Table (1) among the members of the community, distributed by faculties, specialization, and gender.

**Table (1)**

Research community by gender (males - females), specialization (humanitarian - scientific) and stage (Masters - PhD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>The college</th>
<th>Masters Stage</th>
<th>PhD Stage</th>
<th>The total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>females</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for the humanities</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for pure sciences</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the sciences</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Economics</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education and Sports Science</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Third: Research sample**

It is a part taken from the original community for study, examination and analysis, and it represents the characteristics of the community in all its quantitative and qualitative components (Hamdawi, 2014: 28). The sample was chosen by the stratified random method according to the equal method, and it consisted of (200) male and female graduate students, at a rate of (42.60%) of the total population, as shown in Table (2), which presents a detail of the research sample distributed by gender and specialization.

**Table (2)**

Research sample by gender (males - females), specialization (humanitarian - scientific) and stage (Masters - PhD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masters Stage</th>
<th>The college</th>
<th>specialization</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>The total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>males</td>
<td>females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sciences</td>
<td>scientific</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for pure sciences</td>
<td>scientific</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>scientific</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fourth: Research of Tools:

To achieve the objectives of the research. It is necessary to have standards for the current research and the nature of the research community and have psychometric characteristics, so the researcher adopted the measure of proactive coping, as the standards were applied through the adoption of an electronic link due to the Corona pandemic, as the researcher faced difficulty in applying the standards, the researcher adopted an electronic link Through which the standards were published and the examinees answered them.

Proactive Coping Scale: After reviewing the literature and studies related to the topic of the research, the researcher adopted the Greenglass, et al, 1999) scale for proactive coping, which consists of (14) paragraphs and includes (4) alternatives and determines the weights of the answer (4,3,2,1), for the positive paragraphs and (1,2,3,4) for the negative paragraphs, which was adapted to suit the Iraqi environment.

Finding the validity of the items of the scale apparent validity:

Eble mentioned that the best way to ascertain the validity of the paragraphs is for several specialized arbitrators to decide their validity to measure the quality for which they were placed (Eble, 1972:555).

To verify the apparent validity of the proactive coping scale, and its suitability to the Iraqi environment, the researcher presented the scale in its initial form (Appendix 3) to (20) arbitrators specialized in educational and psychological sciences (Appendix 4), and based on the opinions of the arbitrators before the scale without making any modifications, and obtained The agreement of all arbitrators at a rate of (100%).

Statistical analysis: These procedures aim to keep the highlighted paragraph and delete the unmarked paragraph; Because a good measure must have the ability to distinguish between individuals. (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997:18).

First: Discriminating Power of Items: The discriminative strength of the item is one of the important psychometric characteristics of the items of psychological scales, especially the reference standard. Because it reveals the ability of the paragraphs to measure individual differences in the phenomenon on which the psychological measurement is based (Ebel, 1972:399).

Second: The relationship of the paragraph's degree to the total degree (internal consistency): The validity of the scale often depends on the sincerity of its paragraphs, so preparing honest paragraphs increases the validity of the scale, and in this Ebel indicates that the experimental validity of the paragraphs is necessary to reveal the accuracy of the paragraphs in measuring what they were set for (Ebel, 1972:410).

Validity and consistency are among the foundations that must be available in the scale for it to be usable (Faraj 1997: 281).

First: Validity

Validity is one of the basic means that must be taken care of when constructing psychological tests and scales. Because it is an important way to judge the validity of the scale (Al-Zahir, 1999:31).

The scale examines the extent to which its paragraphs represent the aspects of the trait that it is supposed to measure (Abdul-Rahman, 1998: 185).
The researcher used several indicators to extract the validity of them:

**Face Validity:** It means the logical analysis of the content of the scale or verification of its representation of the content to be measured (Alen & Yen, 1979: 67).

**Construct Validity:** The validity of the construction represents the preliminary or theoretical stage in the development of tests and standards, as it is directed to the service of the test itself by moving from the doubt that the test measures the characteristic that it was prepared to measure, and it deals with the relationship between the results of tests and standards and the theoretical concept that the test aims to measure (Majid, 2014: 49).

It is one of the most important types of honesty. Because it depends on empirical verification of the extent to which individuals' scores match the psychological structure of the variable to be studied (Al-Kubaisi, 2010:3).

The researcher verified the validity of the construction of the preemptive confrontation scale by calculating the discriminatory power of each paragraph and the relationship of the paragraph's degree to the total degree of the scale.

**Second: Reliability**

The researcher adopted two methods to calculate the stability, which are:

**Test-Retest method:**
To extract stability by retesting method, which indicates stability over time, the researcher applied the scale to a sample of (40) male and female students and then re-applied it after (14) days. Then the scores of the first and second applications were analyzed, and the stability coefficient was (0.77).

**Alpha Cronbach method:** The researcher extracted the alpha equation, and the reliability coefficient reached (0.79), which is an acceptable and good value indicating the homogeneity of the scale.

**The final description of the scale:** After completing the procedures for preparing the research tool, the researcher relied on extracting the results of the research on the discrimination sample of (200) male and female students, because no paragraph of the proactive coping scale fell in the statistical analysis procedures, the scale's answer degrees ranged between (the highest score is 55 - the lowest score is 15).

**Chapter Four: Presentation and interpretation of the results**

This chapter includes a presentation of the results that have been reached by the objectives of the research and the interpretation and discussion of these results according to the theoretical framework and previous studies, and then come up with a set of recommendations and proposals, and the results can be presented as follows:

**First: Results display:**

**The first objective:** to identify the proactive coping of postgraduate students to achieve this goal, the Proactive Interface Scale was applied to the members of the research sample of (200) male and female students, as the arithmetic means of the sample was (45.12) with a standard deviation of (3.60), while the hypothetical average of the scale was (35). And to know the significance of the difference between them, the t-test was used for one sample, as the calculated t-value amounted to (39.75), and when compared with the tabular t-value of (1.96) at the significance level (0.05) And the degree of freedom (199) It appeared that the research sample had a proactive confrontation, through a comparison between the arithmetic mean and the hypothetical average, as shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variable</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>Arithmetic mean</th>
<th>standard deviation</th>
<th>hypothetical mean</th>
<th>T value</th>
<th>indication 0.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proactive coping</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>45,15</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39.75</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the t-test for one sample to identify the proactive coping among graduate students

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this means that graduate students have a proactive confrontation and have a high degree of control over the
course of their lives that is determined by them and not by factors. He can take responsibility for events, facts and
situations Which is consistent with the theory (Greenglass, 1999) And a study (Vakulikova et al., 2017).

The second objective: to identify the differences in the proactive confrontation among graduate students
according to the variable of gender (male-female) and specialization (human-scientific) stage (Master's, PhD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Ss</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>q value</th>
<th>Indication level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.605</td>
<td>0.101</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialization</td>
<td>11,045</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11,045</td>
<td>1,849</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender * Specialization</td>
<td>1,805</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,805</td>
<td>0.302</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender* Stage</td>
<td>6,125</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6,125</td>
<td>1,025</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage * Specialization</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * Specialization *</td>
<td>12,005</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12,005</td>
<td>2,010</td>
<td>nonfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1146,88</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>1178,95</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The tabular percentage ratio is (3.84) at the (0.05) level

Postgraduate students, whether they are male or female, or a scientific or humanitarian specialization, a PhD or a
Master's stage, are distinguished by a proactive coping method because they work to mobilize resources and
information in preparation for facing the academic stage. They draw scenarios of success, anticipate future
problems and plan how to deal with situations and take preventive steps (Greenglass, et al, 1999).

II. CONCLUSIONS

In light of the results of this research, the researcher reached the following conclusions:

Postgraduate students have a good level in proactive confrontation

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the results and their discussion, the researcher reached several recommendations:

The Ministry of Higher Education should hold educational and awareness sessions and conferences for students
on how to face future pressures to prepare in advance to get rid of it.

Suggestions: To complement the results of this research and to develop it, the researcher suggested conducting
the following studies:

Identifying the relationship between proactive confrontation and contemplative thinking among other samples
(middle school and university).

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