

Coping Behaviour Patterns Among Different Psychological Types Under Conditions of Uncertainty

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ABSTRACT

Prolonged uncertainty that is caused by socio-political turmoil, places high adaptation demands on individuals. This study examined how personality psychological types (character accentuations) relate to preferred coping strategies under conditions of prolonged uncertainty. An empirical study was conducted on 57 university students (ages 18–45) using the Character Accentuation Questionnaire by Leonhard (Schmieschek adaptation), the Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI), and Norman's Coping Inventory. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were used to identify relationship between personality traits, accentuation types, and coping strategies. Results show that the most prominent accentuation types in the sample were Emotive, Exalted, Excitable, and Cyclothymic, indicating high emotional reactivity. Overall, 63% of participants primarily used problem-focused (active) coping, 26% used emotion-focused coping, and 7% relied on avoidance strategies. Significant correlation has been found between personality traits and coping: for example, extraversion and openness were associated with greater use of adaptive, problem-focused coping, whereas depressiveness and emotional lability were associated with emotion-focused or avoidant coping. These findings suggest distinct coping behavior patterns for different psychological types under uncertainty. Individuals with high emotional reactivity (e.g. emotive and exalted types) tended to employ more emotion-oriented coping, while more stable and energetic types (e.g. hyperthymic) favored problem-solving strategies. The study's outcomes contribute to understanding how personality influences stress responses in uncertain contexts and highlight the need for psychological type-tailored interventions to foster adaptive coping and resilience.

Keywords: Coping strategy, Personality type, Character accentuation, Uncertainty, Stress, Emotion-focused coping, Problem-focused coping

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary life is marked by heightened uncertainty and chronic stress resulting from global challenges such as political conflicts, economic instability, pandemics, and war. These circumstances necessitate individuals to adapt effectively in order to maintain psychological well-being. Coping behaviour is defined as a system of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural strategies for managing stress. It plays a central role in the adaptive process; according to Lazarus and Folkman, coping represents “constantly changing cognitive

and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person,” functioning as a mediator between stressors and emotional outcomes. Individual differences in coping become particularly salient under conditions of prolonged uncertainty such as current socio-political context in Ukraine. Recent Ukrainian studies indicate that adaptive coping strategies enhance readiness for life changes and reduce the negative psychological impact of stress, whereas maladaptive strategies, especially avoidance-based responses such as denial and withdrawal, are associated with heightened anxiety, impaired self-regulation, and emotional instability. National researchers have consistently demonstrated association between dominant coping styles and key indicators of psychological functioning, underscoring the importance of personality-related determinants of coping behaviour (Chebykin, Kosyanova & Bedny, 2025). Despite this, empirical research examining coping strategies in relation to specific psychological types or character accentuations under sustained uncertainty remains limited. Although coping has been widely studied, fewer investigations have addressed how accentuation types (e.g., emotive, exalted, cyclothymic) influence coping preferences when future outcomes are unpredictable. Ukrainian psychological research increasingly conceptualizes coping behaviour as a critical personal resource for managing uncertainty and preserving mental health, as emphasized in the works of Karabin. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the relationship between personality accentuation types and preferred coping strategies among young adults experiencing prolonged uncertainty, hypothesizing statistically significant associations between psychological type, dominant coping orientation (problem-focused, emotion-focused, or avoidance), and personality traits measured by the Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI).

Coping strategies in psychological research are commonly classified according to their functional focus and adaptiveness. The transactional model of stress proposed by Lazarus and Folkman conceptualizes coping as either problem-focused, aimed at modifying the stressor, or emotion-focused, aimed at regulating emotional responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Their original taxonomy identified eight coping strategies, including planful problem-solving, confrontation, and taking responsibility as problem-focused, and self-control, positive reappraisal, seeking social support, distancing, and avoidance as emotion-focused or avoidant. Subsequent frameworks introduced more parsimonious classifications: Endler and Parker (1990) developed the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS), distinguishing task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented coping, with later differentiation of avoidance into distraction and social diversion, while Norman, Endler, and Parker (1998) further delineated five coping categories (problem-focused, emotion-focused, avoidance, social diversion, and seeking social support). Relatedly, Moos and Schaefer (1984) described coping along behavioural, problem-directed, and emotion-directed dimensions. Despite conceptual differences these models converge on two broad coping orientations such as active/problem-focused and passive/emotion-focused which are frequently evaluated in terms of adaptiveness. Active strategies such as problem-solving, positive reappraisal, and seeking social support are generally regarded as

adaptive, whereas strategies including denial and avoidance are often considered maladaptive due to their association with prolonged stress, a distinction summarized in the work of Karamushka and Snigur, who emphasize active-passive and adaptive-maladaptive dimensions of coping, particularly under conditions of heightened uncertainty (Karamushka & Snigur, 2023). Empirical evidence suggests that uncontrollable or prolonged stressors are associated with increased reliance on emotion-focused and avoidant coping. Individual differences in coping are systematically related to personality characteristics, with Parker and Endler demonstrating that higher neuroticism is associated with emotion-oriented and avoidance coping, whereas extraversion and conscientiousness are linked to task-oriented coping and support-seeking; recent findings by Schlatter and König (2022) further indicate that emotional instability is associated with increased stress vulnerability, while extraversion relates to better adjustment. In addition to trait-based models, character accentuation frameworks (Leonhard, 1976) provide a differentiated perspective, suggesting that hyperthymic types are inclined toward active coping, dysthymic and anxious types have tendency toward avoidance, emotive and exalted types have predisposition toward emotion-focused strategies, cyclothymic types are bent toward situationally variable responses, and pedantic types are characterised by rigid or excessive planning, which may function adaptively or maladaptively depending on contextual demands. Taken together, these findings indicate that coping behaviour is shaped by both personality structure and situational uncertainty, forming the conceptual basis for the present study, which examines coping strategies in relation to personality accentuations among young adults living under prolonged societal uncertainty.

Methods

Participants. The study sample consisted 57 undergraduate university students whose age range was between 18 to 25. 60% of them were female and 40% were male.

Three psychologic diagnostic instruments were used to assess character accentuations, general personality traits, and coping strategies, respectively: Character Accentuation Questionnaire by Leonhard (adapted by Schmieschek); Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI), Form B.; Norman Coping Inventory.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistic for ten character accentuation scales and the overall coping behaviour score in the sample (N = 57). The mean values indicate the average level of each trait or behaviour, while the coefficient of variation (CV%) reflects the relative variability within the group. Each accentuation score ranges from 0 to 24 points. Higher scores indicate stronger expression of the personality type. The coping score ranges from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating more adaptive coping behaviour.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for character accentuation types and overall coping score.

Accentuation Type	Mean (M)	SD	CV (%)
Hyperthymic	12.74	5.23	41.1%
Demonstrative	12.74	5.23	41.1%
Dysthymic	11.32	4.31	38.1%
Exalted	14.23	6.61	46.5%
Emotive	15.53	4.30	27.7%
Excitable	14.58	4.94	33.9%
Unstable (Labile)	11.82	5.05	42.7%
Pedantic	11.93	3.97	33.3%
Anxious	13.46	5.04	37.5%
Cyclothymic	14.37	5.99	41.7%
Overall Coping Score	25.09	5.27	21.0%

Note: SD = standard deviation; CV = coefficient of variation. A higher CV% indicates greater relative variability in the sample. The overall coping score (out of 40) reflects general adaptiveness of coping behavior (combining multiple coping responses).

As shown in Table 1, the sample's most strongly expressed character accentuations (by mean score) were Emotive ($M = 15.53$, $CV = 27.7\%$), Excitable ($M = 14.58$), Cyclothymic ($M = 14.37$), and Exalted ($M = 14.23$, $CV = 46.5\%$), indicating prevalent emotional reactivity and affective intensity with varying consistency. Lowest means occurred for Unstable ($M = 11.82$) and Dysthymic ($M = 11.32$), suggesting fewer extreme lability cases. FPI traits showed moderately high Emotional Lability ($M = 6.37/11$) and Irritability ($M = 6.28/13$); ambiverted Extraversion ($M = 5.61/11$); high Sociability ($M = 8.16/12$, $CV \sim 28.6\%$); moderate Reactive ($M = 5.11/14$, $CV \sim 44\%$) and Spontaneous Aggressiveness ($M = 4.51$, $CV \sim 59.6\%$); and low Balanced Calmness ($M = 4.28/9$, $CV \sim 58\%$), reflecting emotional volatility, sociability, and self-regulation challenges.

To better understand predominant coping modes, we categorized individuals by the dominant coping style. We found that approximately 63% of participants were classified as primarily problem-focused copers, meaning they scored highest on active, problem-solving coping strategies. About 26% of participants predominantly used emotion-focused coping, indicating they tend to deal with stress by addressing their emotional responses (e.g. releasing or managing feelings). The remaining 7% of participants fell into the avoidance-focused coping category, suggesting a small minority who mainly avoid or withdraw from stressors. A few participants had near-equal scores for two styles; in those cases we considered them mixed-type copers or assigned the category that was slightly higher. These results reveal that a majority of the students favored active coping strategies, which is encouraging given that problem-focused coping is generally associated with better adjustment. At the same time, over one-quarter relied on emotion-centric coping, and a smaller segment relied on avoidance. This variation

aligns with the personality profile: many students with high emotivity or anxiety might lean toward emotional coping, whereas the more extraverted or task-oriented students engage in problem-solving. The small avoidance group may correspond to those with particularly high anxiety or feelings of helplessness in the face of uncertainty.

Correlation Analysis

To test our hypotheses, we examined the correlation between personality variables (accentuation scores and FPI traits) and coping indices. We focused on relationships involving the Adaptive Coping score (overall coping effectiveness) and three broad coping styles, as well as notable interrelation among personality traits themselves that could explain coping behavior. Table 2 summarizes selected significant correlation between key personality traits and the adaptive coping score. Only representative correlations are included in Table 2; the full correlation matrix included all variables. Each accentuation score ranges from 0 to 24 points. Higher scores indicate stronger expression of the personality type. The coping score ranges from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating more adaptive coping behaviour.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for character accentuation types and overall coping score (N = 57).

Personality Trait	Pearson r With Adaptive Coping
Extraversion (FPI)	+0.30 *
Openness (Sociability) (FPI)	+0.34 *
Depressiveness (FPI)	-0.38 **
Emotional Lability (FPI)	-0.33 *

Note: $p < .05$, * $p < .01$ (two-tailed). Only traits with significant correlations are listed. A positive correlation indicates that higher trait levels are associated with higher (more adaptive) coping scores, while a negative correlation indicates an inverse relationship.

The correlation results supported our expectations that certain personality dimensions are systematically related to coping strategy preferences. As shown in Table 2, Extraversion positively correlated with adaptive coping ($r = +0.30$, $p < .05$), indicating that extraverts favore problem-solving and support-seeking. Openness/Sociability showed similar positive association ($r = +0.34$, $p < .05$), linking sociability to constructive strategies such as social support. Conversely, Depressiveness negatively correlated with adaptive coping ($r = -0.38$, $p < .01$), associating depressive tendencies with avoidance ($r \approx +0.32$, $p < .05$) and passivity. Emotional Lability also inversely related ($r = -0.33$, $p < .05$) to labile individuals prone to emotion-focused or disorganized responses; it is positively correlated with neuroticism ($r = +0.57^{**}$), depressiveness ($r = +0.70^{**}$), irritability ($r = +0.51^{**}$), and shyness ($r = +0.51^{**}$), and negatively correlated with extraversion ($r = -0.27^*$). Neuroticism is positively linked to depressiveness ($r = +0.56^{**}$) and lability

($r = +0.57^{**}$), negatively linked to sociability ($r \approx -0.43^{**}$), predisposing to emotion-focused/avoidant coping. Irritability is correlated with aggressiveness ($r = +0.71^{**}$) and lability ($r = +0.51^{**}$), negatively correlated with sociability ($r = -0.37^{**}$), suggesting impulsive or internalizing response. Extraversion and openness are positively inter-correlated ($r = +0.42^{**}$), both inversely correlated with depressiveness/shyness, and negatively with avoidance (extraversion: $r \approx -0.33^*$; openness trend: $r \approx -0.27$, $p = .051$); openness positively correlated with problem-focused coping ($r \approx +0.32^*$). Emotive types are associated with emotion-focused coping ($r \approx +0.29^*$); exalted/cyclothymic showed variable coping; hyperthymic demonstrated trend toward problem-focus ($r \approx +0.25$, $p = .06$); and anxious inclined toward avoidance ($r \approx +0.28^*$).

In summary, the correlation analysis statistically confirms that personality traits are linked to coping patterns in the studied population. Higher extraversion and openness (sociability) are associated with a greater propensity for adaptive, problem-focused coping, whereas higher neuroticism, depressiveness, and emotional lability are associated with more emotion-focused and avoidant coping (and hence lower overall coping effectiveness). These findings mirror patterns reported in the literature, lending support to our hypothesis of systematic relationship between psychological type-related traits and coping behavior in conditions of uncertainty. In the following section, we discuss these results in the context of distinct psychological type behavior patterns and broader research, as well as consider implications into practice.

DISCUSSION

This study is set out to explore how different personality psychological types (character accentuations) manifest distinct coping behavior patterns under conditions of prolonged uncertainty. The findings give evidence that personality dispositions significantly color the individually adopted coping strategies, which is consistent with transactional stress theories and trait-oriented research. Here we discuss the results in detail, interpret the behavioral patterns of various psychological types, and relate our findings to existing literature.

Psychotypes and Emotional Reactivity. The Emotive, Exalted, Excitable, and Cyclothymic types showed the highest mean scores (Table 1), suggesting that many participants have intense emotional responsiveness. In practical terms, this means a large portion of the subjects experience strong feelings in stressful situations and they are quick to empathize or react affectively. This emotional reactivity can be a double-edged sword for coping. On one hand, being emotive or exalted might encourage seeking social support (emotionally sensitive individuals often need to share feelings) or engage in creative reappraisal (exalted individuals sometimes reframe experiences in an optimistic light when euphoric). On the other hand, intense emotions can overwhelm problem-solving capacities, leading to emotion-focused coping or even maladaptive responses like panic or avoidance. Our results indicate that those with higher emotive or cyclothymic tendencies indeed leaned more

toward emotion-focused coping (e.g. releasing emotions, anxiety-driven responses), especially when uncertainty was high. This aligns with prior observation that emotionally intense personalities often cope by venting or emotion modulation rather than directly confronting stressors. Notably, we found a significant negative correlation between emotional lability (a core feature of these accentuations) and adaptive coping. This suggests that without intervention, highly labile individuals might struggle to implement effective coping strategies during sustained uncertainty. They might benefit from training in emotion regulation techniques (such as mindfulness or cognitive reframing) to complement their natural coping repertoire, a point echoed by other researchers who advocate boosting emotional self-regulation in such population.

Problem-Focused Coping and Active Types. Despite the emotional profile of the sample, a majority (63%) of participants primarily utilized problem-focused (active) coping strategies. This indicates that many students, even if emotionally reactive, attempt to deal with stressors through direct action or planning when possible. We observed that individuals with accentuations like Hyperthymic and Demonstrative were often among the active copers. The hyperthymic psychological type that is characterized by high energy, optimism, and a pragmatic outlook, naturally lends itself to problem-solving coping. Hyperthymic individuals tend to believe in their ability to influence outcomes (high personal agency), which is crucial for active coping. They are likely to take initiative, brainstorm solutions, or seek out help even under uncertainty rather than succumb to paralysis. Our data supported that higher hyperthymic scores correlate with higher adaptive coping scores (though not significantly, due to sample size). This pattern resonates with Rogova's (2021) findings that hyperthymic personality types frequently resort to active coping in stressful situations. The Demonstrative type, known for extroversion and a desire to attract attention, also appeared to favor active coping possibly through seeking social support or taking bold actions (even if at times dramatic). A demonstrative person might cope by rallying others for assistance or stepping into a leadership role in a crisis (which also satisfies their need for recognition). This can be adaptive in many cases, as it mobilizes resources and confronts the problem, though if taken to an extreme, it could turn into maladaptive drama-seeking. Our findings suggest that, in general, the demonstrative students did engage in more approach-oriented coping.

Emotionally Reactive Types (Emotive, Exalted, Cyclothymic, Excitable). These individuals experience intense emotions in response to uncertainty. Our results show they often employ Emotion-Focused coping. For example, an Emotive person might cope by seeking emotional comfort from friends or by cathartic expression (tears, art, etc.), whereas an Exalted individual might oscillate between optimistic reassurances and despairing outbursts. A Cyclothymic person could have episodes of active coping when mood is high and then lapses of avoidance or helplessness when mood swings low. Excitable types may respond impulsively, possibly confronting stress aggressively or, if overwhelmed, escaping the situation. Under prolonged uncertainty (such as a pandemic or conflict), the reactive types might initially

react strongly (anxiety, panic) but can adapt over time by finding emotional outlets or support networks. They benefit from learning to channel their strong feelings into motivation for problem solving, rather than letting emotions run the show. Our data suggested that while these types don't score highest for adaptive coping, many of them were still trying to cope (given moderate overall coping levels), indicating room for improvement of coping by bolstering emotional regulation.

Active Optimistic Types (Hyperthymic, Demonstrative). This personality type is inclined toward Problem-Focused coping. A Hyperthymic individuals tend to stay optimistic and looks for practical ways to influence outcomes even amid uncertainty (e.g., making plans A, B, and C). They may also cope by keeping themselves busy and maintaining an active lifestyle to manage stress. A Demonstrative person might cope by gathering people together, voicing concerns (perhaps dramatically), and soliciting help or ideas effectively using social coping which overlaps with problem-focused strategies (like recruiting resources). Such individuals generally show better adaptive coping, aligning with their traits of assertiveness and confidence. They could, however, face challenges if the uncertainty truly precludes direct action (for instance, during a lockdown or when outcomes are out of person's control). In such cases, their usual problem-solving approach might meet frustration, which could lead to impatience or denial. Still, among all psychological types, these active types are often the most resilient due to their inherent positive outlook and social engagement. Our findings encourage leveraging these strengths: for example, hyperthymic individuals could be peer leaders in stress management programs, modeling active coping for others.

Our findings align with global and Ukrainian research, confirming extraversion and openness promote adaptive coping such as support-seeking and problem-solving, while neuroticism exacerbates maladaptive patterns seen in correlation and accentuation types such as hyperthymic individuals who favors problem-focused strategies. Practically, these insights can guide tailored intervention under uncertainty, including personality-based counseling to encourage active coping in anxious types via problem-solving training, emotion regulation for emotionally labile individuals, and group support to model adaptive behavior from extraverted peers, alongside segmented community campaigns. Limitations of this study include a small, homogeneous sample (57 university students), cross-sectional design precluding causality, and broad coping measures. Future research should employ larger, diverse samples, longitudinal methods, finer-grained inventories such as the Cope Inventory qualitative interviews, and exploration of resilience, meaning-making, and altruistic coping across psychological types.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study confirms that coping behaviour under conditions of uncertainty is closely intertwined with personality psychological type. Our empirical data, based on 57 young adults, show clear pattern: individuals with emotionally reactive accentuations (e.g. emotive, exalted, cyclothymic) are more prone to employ emotion-focused coping and occasionally struggle

with adaptiveness, whereas those with stable, optimistic accentuations (e.g. hyperthymic, demonstrative) more often engage in problem-focused, adaptive coping. A small subset with highly anxious or pessimistic profiles tends toward avoidance coping, putting them at risk of poor adjustment. These findings highlight that even in a relatively uniform group (students of similar age), personality differences yield significantly different ways of confronting uncertainty.

Correlational analysis provided further evidence that certain personality traits serve as either resource or liability in coping. Extraversion and sociability act as resources, correlating with active coping and better overall adaptation, likely because they facilitate seeking support and taking initiative. In contrast, neuroticism, depressiveness, and emotional lability act as liabilities, correlating with passive or maladaptive coping (like denial or emotional venting) and lower adaptive outcomes. In essence, who you are influences how you cope: for example, a calm, outgoing person and a nervous, introverted person will navigate the same uncertain situation in very different ways and with potentially very different results for their mental health.

Results of this study have important practical implications. In an era of global uncertainty (be it a pandemic, economic crisis, or regional conflict), understanding the personality coping nexus can improve psychosocial support strategies. Interventions can be tailored to one's psychological type: individuals identified as at-risk (e.g., high-anxiety, avoidance-prone) can be targeted for early counselling and taught effective coping skills, while those with naturally resilient traits can be encouraged to take active roles in peer support (leveraging their problem-focused tendencies). Stress management programs should not assume a one-size-fits-all approach at a community or organizational level. Instead, they can incorporate personality assessments to personalize coaching (for instance, training in cognitive restructuring for emotional types, vs. anxiety exposure techniques for avoidant types, vs. tempering overconfidence for impulsive types). By doing so, interventions become more efficient and relevant, potentially preventing psychological maladjustment in uncertain environment.

The study also broadly underscores the value of fostering adaptive coping skills, as the majority of our participants were able to utilize active coping to a moderate degree despite of high emotionality. Strengthening these skills (such as problem-solving, planning, positive reframing, and constructive support-seeking) in youth can pay dividends when they face future uncertainty. Educational institutions may consider integrating resilience and coping workshops into their curriculum, addressing different styles and how to optimize them. For example, an "uncertainty coping" module could teach students to identify their default coping style and practice complementary strategies such as an emotion-focused step-by-step problem-solving, and a problem-focused emotional self-care technique.

In summary, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding people of different psychological types exhibit distinct coping behaviour patterns under uncertainty. Emotive and exalted individuals might wear their hearts on their sleeves and need help channelling those emotions constructively; hyperthymic and demonstrative individuals charge forward

to solve problems but might need patience when quick fixes aren't possible; anxious and dysthymic individuals quietly worry or withdraw and need encouragement to step forward. Recognizing these patterns equips mental health professionals, educators, and individuals themselves to better manage stress in these unpredictable times. It affirms the importance of a personalized approach by helping each person leverage their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses in coping. As uncertainty continues to be a defining feature of modern life, such knowledge is vital for building psychological resilience at both individual and community level.

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