

MODERATING EFFECTS OF GENDER IN THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DAILY STRESS, COPING STYLES AND HOPELESSNESS DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS

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Figure 1. Overview

Overview and Objectives

Hopelessness depression (HD) is one of the subtypes of depression with greater empirical support and includes two main components: hopelessness expectations and symptoms of HD. The HD theory assumes that a number of factors, aside from attributional style, could contribute to the development of hopelessness expectations and HD symptoms. This study examined the potential role of adolescents' daily stress and coping styles as contributing factors to HD in adolescence, and the effects of gender on these relationships (Figure 1).

Sample

Participants were 480 adolescents, 201 boys and 279 girls, with ages ranging from 13 to 17 years (M=15.05; SD=1.39), all Caucasian.

Measures

Predictor variables:

Daily Stress: Problem Questionnaire (PQ, Seiffge-Krenke, 1995)

Coping styles: Coping Across Situations Questionnaire (CASQ, Seiffge-Krenke, 1995)

Criterion variables:

Hopelessness expectations: Hopelessness Scale (HS, Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974).

Hopelessness depression symptoms: Hopelessness Depression Symptoms Questionnaire (HDSQ, Metalsky & Joiner, 1997)

Results

Table 1 shows that daily stress significantly contributed to the prediction of hopelessness expectations, with higher levels of daily stress predicting higher hopelessness expectations scores. Simple slope tests (fig. 2) revealed a significant regression slope in boys, but not in girls. Table 1 also reveals that coping styles, but not daily stress, significantly contributed to the prediction of HD symptoms. Finally, fig. 3 shows the interaction effects with gender; plotting the regression slopes of HD symptoms against active and internal coping styles for boys and girls, a virtually parallel inverse association between HD symptoms and active style in girls, and HD symptoms and internal style in boys, can be observed.

Conclusions

The main conclusion is that the relationships of daily stress and coping styles with HD are moderated by gender. Daily stress predicted hopelessness expectations in boys but not in girls which, together with the finding that girls experienced more daily stress than boys, suggest an inoculation effect in girls. It was also found a gender-dependent role of coping styles in the prediction of HD symptoms, revealing a protective effect for the active style in girls and for the internal style in boys. Consequently, interventions should be gender adapted, discouraging the use of avoidant coping strategies in favor of approach-oriented ones for both genders, but focusing on the training of active-behavioral coping strategies in girls whereas implementing internal-reflective coping strategies in boys. Taking HD as a measure of psychological maladjustment, our results suggest that girls would benefit from being more action-prone in their daily lives, while boys would benefit from being more reflection-prone.

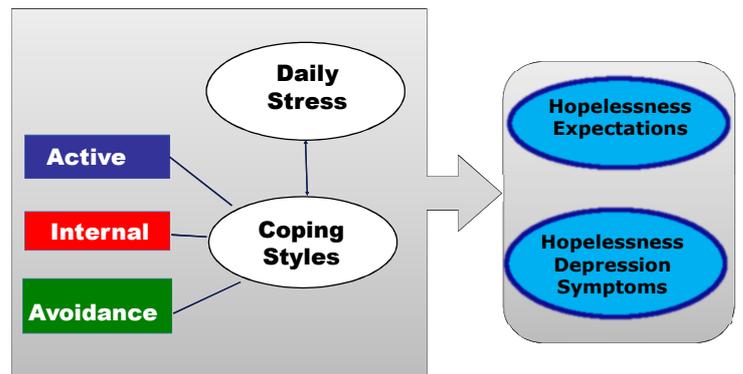


Table 1. Hierarchical multiple regressions for the prediction of hopelessness expectations and HD symptoms

	Predictors	Hopelessness expectations		HD symptoms	
		R ²	β	R ²	β
Step 1	Gender	.003	.056	.008	.087
Step 2	Daily stress	.012*	.094*	.013	.071
Step 3	Coping styles	.059***		.073***	
	Active		-.218**		-.130b
	Internal		.012		-.080
	Avoidance		.215***		.271***
Step 4	Gender moderation	.069***		.086***	
	Daily stress x Gender		-.135 ^a		.042
	Active x Gender		-.073		-.241*
	Internal x Gender		.045		.211*
	Avoidant x Gender		.100		.106

Note: *p ≤ .05; ** p ≤ .01; *** p ≤ .001; ^ap = .066; ^bp = .069.

Figure 2. Moderation by gender of the association between daily stress and hopelessness expectations

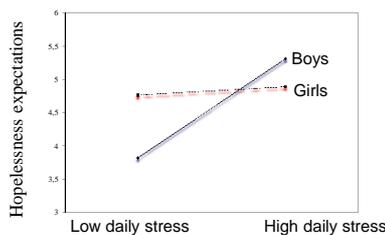


Figure 3. Moderation by gender of the associations of active and internal coping styles with HD symptoms

