

# Projevy spirituality při zvládání stresu z vysokoškolských zkoušek – případová studie

Manifestations of spirituality in coping with stress caused by university exams – case study

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**Abstrakt** Článek pojednává o spirituálním vyrovnávání se se stresem (*spiritual coping*) před vysokoškolskými zkouškami a o vztahu mezi spirituálním copingem a pocíťováním místa kontroly při zkoušce (*academic locus of control*). Výsledky vychází z kvalitativní analýzy polostrukturovaných rozhovorů s dvanácti studentkami a studenty psychologie. Všichni respondenti užívají adaptivní copingové strategie a spirituální coping využívají k posílení vnitřního *locus of control*. Konstrukce spirituálního copingu formuje víru do takové podoby, kdy jedinec vnímá kromě samotného učení se více faktorů, které může vlastní snahou ovlivnit. Zároveň spirituálním copingem nemusí být vše, co by se jím na první pohled mohlo zdát – například talismanů většina respondentů ve výzkumu užívala coby hmotnou reprezentaci sociální opory.

**Klíčová slova** spirituální coping, Academic locus of control, kvalitativní analýza, případová studie.

**Abstract** The article describes the mechanism of spiritual coping as a coping strategy for dealing with stress during an exam period in university students. The study emphasizes various manifestations of inner spirituality or religiosity and its effects on the perception of the academic locus of control (ALOC). This is a case study of perceiving the influenceability of the exam in correlation to spirituality. The study is a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews using the constructivist methodology. Twelve students of

psychology from the Faculty of Education at Charles University were interviewed about their coping mechanisms. The study explores the mechanism of transforming spiritual beliefs into a form of spiritual coping in an academic environment. The design of the study is single-blinded, meaning that the participants did not know in advance that their spiritual coping is studied. Thanks to this, authors were able to interview a sample of students including those who do not consider themselves spiritual. A concept of “equation of exam” was discovered during the qualitative analysis. The equation of exam means that controllable and uncontrollable factors were assessed by participants and the result of the equation is a feeling of gaining maximum control. Spiritual coping helps participants to cope with the uncontrollable factors by a belief that these are actually influenceable. This way, participants increased their inner locus of control over the result of the exam. Forms of spiritual coping using an external locus of control were rejected by all participants as undesirable. More complex spiritual beliefs lead to more sophisticated ways of increasing internal locus of control and subjective preparedness for the exam. The methodology used in this study leads to a finding that unspiritual people can use spiritual coping to a certain extent. The results indicate that while the use of spiritual coping varies, the form remains the same in all situations. But using spiritual coping in other life situations does not necessarily mean it will be used in an academic environment too. Two people can use the same strategy, but it does not mean it has the same meaning. A talisman is a good example. About half of the participants have experience with using a talisman. However, it serves as social support rather than spiritual. It reminds them of the close ones. Only one participant stated that they believed the talisman had power by itself. None of the participants use maladaptive coping, so it cannot be disputed that spirituality leads to a preference for adaptive coping. Even though the results of this study cannot be generalized, they could serve as a foundation for new research. Spiritual individuals do not necessarily use spiritual coping in an academic context, and at the same time, non-spiritual individuals may resort to this behavior. The results may also be correlated to anxiety caused by uncontrollable factors. This idea is worth considering in follow-up studies.

**Key words** Spiritual coping, Academic locus of control, Qualitative analysis, Case study.