

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND COGNITIVE SCHEMAS SPECIFIC TO POLICE OFFICERS FROM THE OPERATIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE ROMANIAN POLICE

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Abstract: *This study aims to identify the cognitive schemas and the coping mechanisms in newly employed staff within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, at the level of a police subunit, in order to come up with a training program which increases their resilience to institutional demands. The group that took part in this survey consisted of 275 individuals, both agents and police officers, graduates of post-high school studies/relevant university studies or persons employed from external sources. Two research tools were applied, and they aided in the identification of the connection between the cognitive schemas and the coping strategies in order to design a new institutional intervention program whose goal is to mitigate the early non-adaptive cognitive schemas and the development of adaptive coping mechanisms.*

Keywords: *stress, police officers, coping strategies, cognitive patterns, institutional intervention program.*

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1. Introduction

The police officer represents a public servant with a special status that carries out his/her activity within the Police Force and who, while fulfilling his/her work tasks or duties, usually wears a uniform and possesses a firearm. A number of roles are attributed to the police officer's status, together with many rights, obligations, responsibilities and interdictions. The particularities of their status are represented by the duties and obligations they have in their interactions with the citizens and with other public institutions. What is more, they have to carry a firearm during various missions and may be exposed to special risks. The status of being part of the police force is attained once the oath of faith is sworn and the first rank is granted (police agent/police officer).

The law enforcers, irrespective of the firearm they carry, constantly undertake a state of hypervigilance and stress while carrying out their professional duties. The stages in which the demands attributed to the staff working within the Ministry of Internal Affairs may surpass their ability to respond adequately (both physically and mentally) and may vary in length and frequency. The constant action of stress factors on employees that carry out their duties or missions which require intense mental demands can manifest, when no effective coping strategy is employed, as: "exhaustion, slower mental processing, confusion, hesitation, increased sensitivity, anger, uncertainty, overreaction, heightened response to fear" (Dumitran, D., 2021). A prolonged exposure to a state of mental and physical stress may inevitably lead to behavioral, emotional, mental and physical alterations. In the absence

of an effective stress management strategy and of some adaptive cognitive schemas, the possibility of obtaining or maintaining professional efficiency is significantly diminished.

In order to ensure the adaptation to institutional requirements and to maximize the existing potential, the identification of the right coping strategies and emotional and cognitive schemas is essential. The conformation to the status of police officer brings about a series of significant modifications both in their professional and social aspects of life. Social interactions also change. During work hours, police officers usually intervene in situations where they register a lot of negative emotions in order to prevent the escalation of conflicts or to solve problems within the confines of the law. They are thus exposed, in most situations, to intense feelings of fear, pain or impending death. Exposure to critical incidents may be reflected both within the physical and mental planes. Not knowing the specificities of the cases which they will be confronted with in the hours that follow makes the police officers' activity one in which the emotional load may fluctuate greatly when bearing in mind their complexity and intensity.

In order to manage the critical situations as effectively as possible, the organization can anticipate the needs of its newer employees by including them in a program which aims to mentally train them so that they are able to manage sudden, unexpected events where uncertain, unclear elements outnumber the circumstances which are familiar, namely those situations which don't allow the classic stages of the decision-making process to unfold. By knowing the cognitive schemas and the strategies of coping with stressful situations on behalf of the newly appointed staff from the very beginning may we help the organization establish an institutional endeavor which, in turn, increases the resilience of police officers.

The acknowledgement of the effects when analyzing the interactions between cognitive schemas that carry a dysfunctional potential and the ineffective coping mechanisms of the newly employed staff and their identification in the behavior of subordinates and employees represent an important aspect of the labor managers who can use this vital information when implementing efficient intervention strategies.

2. Literature Review

The professional studies regarding cognitive schemas are rather limited when we take into consideration the police environment and even less so when we correlate it to stress management and the impact study on professional activity. The necessity of this endeavor lies precisely inside this informational deficit and the impact which it may have on the organization and the people that carry out their activities within this institution. The concept of cognitive schemas is defined as: "a range of topics regarding the self and the relationships with other people which usually develops during childhood, which are elaborated throughout adulthood and may be dysfunctional to some extent" (Young, J., 2003, quoted by David, D., 2020).

The same author, within the pages of the same essay, underlines the fact that these cognitive schemas are "responsible for generating a strong emotional distress" which leads to non-conformity both for the self and for those around. They are stable behavioral patterns resulting from the interaction between the innate aspects of personality and those aspects which pertain to the environment where an individual develops; these aspects are activated in various life contexts, thus influencing the way in which the subjects perceive and interpret

reality; they are convictions which can limit the capacity for adaptation and emotional self-tuning that each individual bears within, hence contributing to a less harmonious development of these subjects.

The cognitive schemas mentioned earlier, although deeply ingrained due to daily experiences and social interactions, “continue to develop and transform throughout life” (Lemme, B.H., 2006). And yet, the human brain bears that feature which, by means of these cognitive schemas, enables it to select the information that it comes into contact with by focusing on the data being coordinated with the content of such schemas and by ignoring the information that contradict it; “the cognitive schemas affect the thinking process and are used to organize knowledge, to guide behavior, to predict probable events and to understand the current experiences and organize knowledge. These mental frameworks also determine the exclusion of pertinent information in order to focus only on those elements which confirm preexisting beliefs and ideas” (Popescu, M.A., 2021). What’s more, “the pattern which is activated under the influence of circumstance determines the processing particularities of information coming from the exterior and its assessment, given the pre-existing non-adaptive beliefs which are coupled with the symbolizing process of subjective experience” (Pleşca, M., 2025).

The activation of cognitive schemas in a new professional environment which brings about countless challenges is important, first of all, due to impact it generates on the way in which newly recruited police officers/police agents must face unexpected situations. Starting off from the idea that the means of managing these situations are based on “the mobilized thoughts and behaviors necessary to manage both internal and external stressful situations” (Folkman, S. & Moskowitz, J.T., 2004), it is important to identify the stress management strategies like the connection between the two concepts in order to ensure an easy adaptation process to the institutional requirements when it comes to the new employees.

The access to the profession of police officer, when talking about new recruits, is associated with stress factors which the new members of the organization are required to find effective management solutions and coping strategies which are defined as “a set of relatively stable features which determine the individual’s behavior as a response to stress” (Algorani, E.B. & Gupta, V., 2023). The coping strategies are both emotional and behavioral when dealing with professional situations which young recruits need to solve by applying both functional strategies and also dysfunctional ones, these being directly connected to specific cognitive patterns.

In broader terms, scientific research distinguishes, when talking about coping strategies, between problem solving strategies and strategies aimed at tuning the emotions associated with stress-generating events, active coping strategies (meant to change the nature of stress-generating agents) and event-avoiding coping strategies. Using one strategy or the other depends on the characteristics of the stress-generating factors and on each person’s style. Generically speaking, “the active coping strategies (...) are designed to be much better methods and possibilities to navigate events and the avoidant ones may come up as psychological risk factors in stressful everyday events” (Stavila, A. & Calancea, A., 2017).

Starting from the study of the key concepts of this paper and anticipating the events which they may have on a police officer’s activity, we therefore consider that the identification and the familiarity of these individual particularities in the stage following the recruitment phase represents a useful instrument in the hands of both the managers who can adapt their relationship approach to the specificities of the individuals they need to support throughout

the process of institutional adaptation and the professionals who provide counseling to the leadership of the respective institutions when it comes to psychological matters.

3. Methodology

Scope of Research:

The aim of this research paper is to identify the main coping strategies employed by the new members of the Police Force who carry out professional activities in that line of work which presupposes following orders and participating in missions that require intense mental activity and the connection between these stress management strategies and cognitive schemas (cognitive and emotional patterns).

Hypotheses:

1. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas **(the rejection-separation dimension)**.
2. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas **(the autonomy and performance dimension)**.
3. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas **(the dependence-on-others dimension)**.
4. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas **(the limit-deficiency dimension)**.
5. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas **(the hypervigilance and inhibition dimension)**.

Group of subjects:

The total number of participants in the survey was: 275 police officers that are newly employed within a unit which is subordinated to the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police Force, out of which 220 are males (80,29% and 54 are females (19,71%). The subjects that took part in this research are aged between 18 and 46, most of them falling within the category of 20 to 25 year olds.

When talking about the professional body the respondents belong to, most of them are police agents (91,24%), the rest being police officers (8,76%). All of them were employed after graduation from a relevant post-high-school studies institution/from the Police Academy or after passing a test while pertaining to an external source.

Instruments used:

Within this study, we applied two research instruments. The **SACS scale** for strategic approach to coping (Garnefski, N. et.al, 2010). This tool is made up of a number of 52 items with through which we can identify different types of behavioral coping/how a person reacts when confronted with a stressful problem:

- **Assertive action**-the approach to the situation happens directly, authentically, while the person pursues his/her goals without causing any harm to others (the active-passive dimension).

- **Social interactions**-the method of dealing with a situation together with others while the person takes their needs into consideration (the prosocial-antisocial dimension).
- **Seeking social support**-when trying to overcome stressful situations, the individual appeals to the support of others, seeks the advice of close friends or of those that can provide a new perspective/alternative to the problems he/she needs to solve (the prosocial-antisocial dimension).
- **Cautious action**-the strategy through which the subject takes all the necessary cautious actions, analyses all options for action, weighs in both the risks and the benefits with the purpose of protecting himself/herself from danger (the prosocial-antisocial dimension).
- **Instinctive action**-the person relies on intuition when solving problems and acts based on the spur of the moment (the prosocial-antisocial dimension).
- **Avoidance**-the person is involved in other actions, withdraws from the situation, waiting for problems to go away on their own (the active-passive dimension).
- **Indirect action**-the subject solves problems in a “non-transparent” way but allows the others to believe that everything is under control through manipulation (the direct-indirect dimension).
- **Antisocial action**-is manifested through the pursuit of their own interests even if this means pursuing actions against the interest of others (the prosocial-antisocial dimension).
- **Aggressive action**-refers to a swift, decisive action by means of which the subject takes control of the situation in an aggressive, hostile manner, either verbally or physically (the prosocial-antisocial dimension).

Each of the 9 subscales consists of a number of 4 to 9 items; the 52 statements are tackled by the subjects with the help of a 5-stage Likert scale (1-“never”, (...), 5-“very often”).

The cognitive schemas questionnaire YSQ3 (Young, J., 2003, quoted in Trip, S., 2006). The instrument, which is applied to the Romanian population, is made up of a number of 18 scales. These can be grouped in 5 domains:

1. Separation and rejection-this domain refers to the certainty or the assumption that the needs of security, safety, care, sympathy, acceptance and respect will not be fulfilled. This first domain is made up of five schemas:

- *Emotional depraving*-measures the degree to which the person considers that his/her emotional needs of care, understanding (sympathy) and protection (guidance) are not met.
- *Abandonment*-assesses the degree in which the person considers that he/she is not being offered emotional support, the protection which he/she needs and that the others would abandon him/her for somebody else.
- *Mistrust/Abuse*-measures the degree to which the person considers that, in the end, the others will hurt, cheat, abuse, humiliate him/her or lie/cause pain to him/her.
- *Social isolation/Estrangement*-assesses the degree in which the person considers himself/herself to be different, that he/she cannot be part of a group and feels isolated from others.

- *Defect (Flaw)/Shame*-measures the degree to which the person considers he/she is worthless, unwanted and inferior compared to others in some important aspects of life. If other people saw this, the person believes he/she would receive their appreciation.

2. Autonomy and performance - the domain of weak autonomy and low performance refers to the perception of one's own inability to survive and function independently. The following schemes pertain to this domain:

- *Failure*-assesses the degree to which the person considers he/she is incapable of doing anything well, that inevitably he/she will make a mistake or fail in important areas of life and that he/she is less successful than others.
- *Dependency/incompetence*-measures the degree to which the person considers that he/she is incapable of fulfilling his/her duties without considerable help from others.
- *Vulnerability to sickness and bad situations*-assesses the exacerbated fear of the person relating to diseases, imminent catastrophes or events which can happen at any time and cannot be prevented.
- *Protectionism/infantile ego*-assesses the degree to which the person considers that he/she is incapable to live and be happy without the support and protection by a loved one.

3. Dependency on others - the domain is characterized by the excessive focus on satisfying other people's needs and desires at the expense of one's own such needs and desires, with the aim of receiving love and approval from those around. The schemas that make up this domain are:

- *Subjugation*-measures the degree to which the person excessively obeys the control of other people, hindering his/her own needs, desires or emotions in order to avoid anger, abandonment or other negative consequences.
- *Self-sacrifice*-assesses the excessive fixation on the primacy of the satisfaction of other people's needs at the expense of his/her own in order to avoid the others' displeasure and to maintain the relationship with these people.
- *Seeking approval/acknowledgement*-assesses the exaggerated search for approval, acknowledgement or attention from others, which hinders self-development.

4. Limit deficiency - this is the domain which contains schemas regarding faulty limits and refers to the lack of ability to establish or a lack of quality in establishing inner limits and responsibilities towards others and of long-term goals. There are difficulties in respecting other people's rights, in establishing and reaching realistic personal goals. Two schemas are part of this domain:

- *Entitlement/grandeur*-measures the belief according to which the person is superior to others and therefore can claim special rights and privileges.
- *Insufficient self-control/self-discipline*-assesses the degree to which the person considers it difficult to be disciplined and composed in reaching his/her goals, that he/she doesn't possess enough control over the impulses and emotions and that he/she has a low tolerance to frustration.

5. Hypervigilance and inhibition - the fifth domain is represented by hypervigilance and inhibition. The feelings, impulses, spontaneous choices are not expressed, and the person

doesn't believe that he/she has the right to be happy, relaxed. Health and close relationships therefore tend to suffer. The schemes for the fifth domain are:

- *Emotional inhibition*-measures the degree of actions, feelings and spontaneous communication inhibition in order to avoid other people's disapproval, the feelings of shame and loss of control over one's own impulses.
- *Non-realistic standards/hypercriticism*-assesses the belief according to which a person must achieve very high interiorizing standards for their behavior and performance in order to avoid other people's criticism.
- *Negativity/passivism (passive attitude)*-measures the excessive focus on the negative aspects of life and the minimization of the positive aspects.
- *Penalty*-assesses the belief that people should be severely criticized and punished for their mistakes.

The instrument contains a number of 114 statements where the test subjects are requested to analyze each of these statement with the help of the 6-stage scale (1-"totally untrue in my case" (...) 6-"describes me perfectly"). Each scale is made up of 5 to 14 items. The application of questionnaires, the data collection and the data analysis and interpretation took place between August and October 2025.

4. Results and Discussion

Testing the hypotheses:

1. We have estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas (the separation-rejection dimension).

The statistic analysis of the correlation enables us to make the following observations:

- We register a statistically significant correlation of medium intensity, in inverse proportion, between abandonment and assertive action ($r=-.324$, $p<0,01$) and some statistically significant correlations of medium intensity, directly proportional, between: cautious action and mistrust/abuse ($r=.301$, $p<0,01$), instinctual action and mistrust/abuse ($r=.311$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and abandonment ($r=.349$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and mistrust/abuse ($r=.391$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and mistrust/abuse ($r=.410$, $p<0,01$) and antisocial action and abandonment, respectively ($r=.313$, $p<0,01$).
- We thus obtain statistically significant correlations, of weak intensity and in inverse proportion between: assertive action and emotional deprivation ($r=-.169$, $p<0,05$), assertive action and social isolation/estrangement ($r=-.157$, $p<0,05$), assertive action and defect/shame ($r=-.256$, $p<0,01$) and statistically significant correlations of weak intensity and directly proportional between: social relationship and mistrust/abuse ($r=.152$, $p<0,05$), avoidance and abandonment ($r=.292$, $p<0,01$), avoidance and defect/shame ($r=.213$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and emotional deprivation ($r=.235$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and emotional deprivation ($r=.213$, $p<0,01$), aggressive action and abandonment ($r=.154$, $p<0,05$) and aggressive action and mistrust/abuse respectively ($r=.209$, $p<0,01$).

Table 1. Correlation between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas (the separation-rejection dimension):

	Emotional deprivation	Abandonment	Mistrust/Abuse	Social isolation/Estrangement	Defect/Shame
Assertive action	-.169*	-.324**	-.104	-.157*	-.256**
Social interactions	-.139	-.037	.152*	.004	-.134
Seeking emotional support	-.101	.051	.077	.024	-.058
Cautious action	-.029	.014	.301**	.002	-.052
Instinctual action	.129	.027	.311**	.087	.097
Avoidance	.134	.292**	.163*	.126	.213**
Indirect action	.235**	.349**	.391**	.111	.180*
Antisocial action	.236**	.313**	.410**	.058	.145*
Aggressive action	.181*	.154*	.209**	.035	.127

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own interpretation

All these significant correlations lead to the drawing of some conclusions with practical implications in the domain of National Safety and Order: the more the subjects consider that their needs of social validation are satisfied, that they are understood, supported and they appreciate that they are an integrated part of a collective, the more we notice the tendency to express their needs, feelings and thoughts in a respectful manner, without neglecting the needs of others. On the other hand, the subjects' beliefs that their needs for emotional support are not satisfied, together with the state of vigilance resulting from mistrust may lead to the placement of one's own interests before the collective ones. We notice the tendency for those coping strategies with non-adaptive potential to manifest in subjects that possess thinking patterns which are specific to abandonment, emotional deprivation and mistrust.

2. We estimated that there is a significant relation between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas (the autonomy and performance dimension).

If we analyze the connections within this hypothesis, we shall only extract those that are statistically significant:

- We register a statistically significant correlation of weak intensity, in inverse proportion, between failure and assertive action ($r = -.352$, $p < 0,01$).
- We obtain statistically significant correlations of weak intensity, in inverse proportion, between: assertive action and dependency/incompetence ($r = -.217$, $p < 0,01$), assertive action and vulnerability to crises and sickness ($r = -.209$, $p < 0,01$), assertive action and perfectionism/juvenile ego ($r = -.217$, $p < 0,01$) and statistically significant correlation of

weak intensity, which are directly proportional, between: seeking social support and perfectionism/juvenile ego ($r=.202$, $p<0,01$), avoidance and failure ($r=.171$, $p<0,05$), avoidance and dependence/incompetence ($r=.189$, $p<0,01$), avoidance and vulnerability to crises and disease ($r=.147$, $p<0,05$), avoidance and perfectionism/juvenile ego ($r=.155$, $p<0,05$), indirect action and failure ($r=.260$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and dependence/incompetence ($r=.170$, $p<0,05$), indirect action and vulnerability to crises and sickness ($r=.203$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and perfectionism/juvenile ego ($r=.244$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and failure ($r=.255$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and dependence/incompetence ($r=.154$, $p<0,05$), antisocial action and vulnerability to crises and sickness ($r=.177$, $p<0,05$), antisocial action and perfectionism/juvenile ego ($r=.254$, $p<0,01$).

Table 2. Correlations between the coping strategies and cognitive schemas (the autonomy and performance dimension).

	Failure	Dependency/Incompetence	Vulnerability to crises and sickness	Perfectionism/Juvenile ego
Assertive action	-.352**	-.217**	-.209**	-.218**
Social relationship	-.027	.029	-.017	.072
Seeking emotional support	.012	-.030	.035	.202**
Cautious action	-.076	.054	.059	.117
Instinctual action	.003	.065	.047	.073
Avoidance	.171*	.189**	.147*	.155*
Indirect action	.260**	.170*	.203**	.244**
Antisocial action	.225**	.154*	.177*	.254**
Aggressive action	-.001	.088	.120	.154*
** <i>. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</i>				
* <i>. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).</i>				

Source: Own interpretation

We can interpret the correlations we obtained in this manner: if the subjects hold personal beliefs regarding the fact that they cannot handle the professional demands in the absence of support from others or that they didn't assimilate enough knowledge and didn't grasp the necessary skills in order to comply with the institutional needs, then we notice the tendency to approach the situations in a manner that is not assertive. The beliefs that refer to one's own inability to function independently without any major support from other people can be correlated with indirect coping strategies or with those strategies pertaining to the antisocial sphere.

3. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas (the dependence-on-others dimension).

Table 3. Correlations between the coping strategies and cognitive schemas (the dependence-on-others dimension)

	Self-sacrifice	Seeking approval/recognition	Subjugation
Assertive action	.073	-.174*	-.167*
Social interactions	.392**	.183**	.154*
Seeking social support	.260**	.258**	.122
Cautious action	.207**	.280**	.091
Instinctive action	.173*	.237**	-.056
Avoidance	.119	.313**	.109
Indirect action	.280**	.390**	.266**
Antisocial action	.131	.370**	.035
Aggressive action	.163*	.290**	-.004

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Source: Own interpretation

For this hypothesis, we have the following statistically significant correlations:

- Statistically significant correlations with average intensity which are directly proportional between: social interactions and self-sacrifice ($r=.392$, $p<0,01$), avoidance and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.313$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.370$, $p<0,01$).
- Statistically significant correlations of weak intensity which are in inverse proportion between: assertive action and seeking approval/recognition ($r=-.174$, $p<0,05$), assertive action and subjugation ($r=-.167$, $p<0,05$) and statistically significant correlations of weak intensity which are directly proportional between: social interactions and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.183$, $p<0,01$), social interactions and subjugation ($r=.154$, $p<0,05$), seeking emotional support and self-sacrifice ($r=.260$, $p<0,01$), seeking social support and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.258$, $p<0,01$), cautious action and self-sacrifice ($r=.207$, $p<0,01$), cautious action and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.280$, $p<0,01$), instinctive action and self-sacrifice ($r=.173$, $p<0,05$), instinctive action and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.237$, $p<0,01$), aggressive action and self-sacrifice ($r=.280$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and subjugation ($r=.266$, $p<0,01$), aggressive action and self-sacrifice ($r=.163$, $p<0,05$), aggressive action and seeking approval/recognition ($r=.290$, $p<0,01$).

In this case we also have numerous correlations which validate our work hypothesis. If the subjects' cognitive schemas emphasize the focalization on satisfying the needs of others

to the disadvantage of one's own necessities, together with the suppression of one's own necessities and desires, there is a tendency that the manifested coping strategies are passive-aggressive (avoidance), direct-indirect (indirect action) or prosocial-antisocial (antisocial action). Seeking approval from others is the cognitive schema which is in inverse correlation with assertiveness as a coping strategy, while the rest register only direct correlation between seeking recognition and each of the coping strategies employed within the S.A.C.S. questionnaire.

4. We estimated that there is a significant relationship between the coping strategies and cognitive schemas (limit deficiency dimension).

Table 4. Correlations between the coping strategies and cognitive schemas (the limit deficiency dimension):

	Entitlement/Grandeur	Insufficient self-control/self-discipline
Assertive action	-.164*	-.256**
Social interaction	.016	-.034
Seeking social support	.112	-.046
Cautious action	.122	.003
Instinctive action	.199**	.026
Avoidance	.221**	.203**
Indirect action	.279**	.148*
Antisocial action	.284**	.158*
Aggressive action	.229**	.061

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Source: Own interpretation

When considering this work hypothesis, we do not register statistically relevant correlations of average intensity, irrespective of the symbol of the correlation.

Nevertheless, we have low intensity correlations which are in inverse proportion between: assertive action and entitlement/grandeur ($r = -.164$, $p < 0,05$), assertive action and insufficient self-control/self-discipline ($r = -.256$, $p < 0,01$) and statistically significant correlations of weak intensity which are directly proportional between: instinctive action and entitlement/grandeur ($r = .199$, $p < 0,01$), avoidance and entitlement/grandeur ($r = .221$, $p < 0,01$), avoidance and insufficient self-control/self-discipline ($r = .221$, $p < 0,01$), indirect action and entitlement/grandeur ($r = .279$, $p < 0,01$), indirect action and insufficient self-control/self-discipline ($r = .148$, $p < 0,05$), antisocial action and entitlement/grandeur ($r = .248$, $p < 0,01$), antisocial action and insufficient self-control/self-discipline ($r = .158$, $p < 0,05$), aggressive action and entitlement/grandeur ($r = .229$, $p < 0,01$).

By summarizing the aforementioned correlations, we can safely state that, if the respondents are characterized by those beliefs pertaining to insufficient discipline and control in achieving one's goals and insufficient impulse control and weak tolerance to frustrations, then we witness the tendency for the management of stressful situations to be accomplished by means of indirect/aggressive strategies or by avoiding stressful factors altogether.

5. We estimated that there is a significant connection between the coping strategies and the cognitive schemas (the hypervigilance and inhibition dimension).

Table 5. Correlation between the coping strategies and cognitive schemas (the hypervigilance and inhibition dimension).

	Emotional inhibition	Non-realist standards/Hypercriticism	Negativism/Passive attitude	Penalty
Assertive action	-.095	.127	-.322**	-.197**
Social interactions	.110	.158*	-.011	.044
Seeking social support	.110	.060	.000	.013
Cautious action	.263**	.200**	.110	.157*
Instinctive action	.209**	.283**	.139	.177*
Avoidance	.129	.254**	.187**	.136
Indirect action	.366**	.349**	.314**	.326**
Antisocial action	.357**	.233**	.277**	.429**
Aggressive action	.255**	.239**	.132	.237**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Source: Own interpretation

When discussing this hypothesis, we can record the following statistically significant correlations:

- A statistically significant correlation of average intensity which is in inverse proportion between: assertiveness and negativism ($r=-.322$, $p<0,01$) and statistically significant correlations of average intensity which are directly proportional between indirect action and emotional inhibition ($r=.366$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and unrealistic standards/hypercriticism ($r+.349$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and negativism/passive attitude ($r=.314$, $p<0,01$), indirect action and penalty ($r=.326$, $p<0,01$) and antisocial action and emotional inhibition ($r=.357$, $p<0,01$).
- Statistically significant correlations of weak intensity which are in inverse proportion between: assertive action and penalty ($r=.197$, $p<0,01$) and statistically significant correlations of weak intensity which are directly proportional between: social interactions and unrealistic standards/hypercriticism ($r=.158$, $p<0,05$), cautious action and emotional inhibition ($r=.263$, $p<0,01$), cautious action and unrealistic

standards/hypercriticism ($r=.200$, $p<0,01$), instinctive action and emotional inhibition ($r=.209$, $p<0,01$), instinctive action and unrealistic standards/hypercriticism ($r=.283$, $p<0,01$), avoidance and unrealistic standards/hypercriticism ($r=.254$, $p<0,01$), avoidance and negativism/passive attitude ($r=.187$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and unrealistic standards/hypercriticism ($r=.233$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and negativism/passive attitude ($r=.277$, $p<0,01$), antisocial action and penalty ($r=.429$, $p<0,01$), aggressive action and emotional inhibition ($r=.290$, $p<0,01$), aggressive action and unrealistic standards/hypercriticism ($r=.290$, $p<0,01$), aggressive action and penalty ($r=.237$, $p<0,01$).

To sum up the data mentioned above, we observe that our hypothesis is confirmed for the most part, bearing significant connections between the dysfunctional beliefs of the subjects with unrealistic standards, the punishments that must be inflicted on others or those beliefs regarding the inhibition of emotions, thoughts and feelings and the coping strategies (indirect/antisocial/aggressive/indistinctive actions etc.).

5. Conclusions

This research has enabled the identification and the analysis of those coping strategies used by the employees that are part of a Police subunit and the connection between thought patterns regarding one's self and the interaction with others. Thus, we have acknowledged that: the approach regarding stressful situations in an assertive way is significantly correlated and in inverse proportion with the majority of the cognitive schemas (14 out of 18), bearing some exceptions when talking about: mistrust/abuse, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrealistic standards/hypercriticism; the stress management strategies (the prosocial dimension: social interactions, seeking social support, cautious action) are correlated with cognitive schemas like: seeking approval/recognition, self-sacrifice, mistrust, unrealistic standards/hypercriticism, emotional inhibition; the stress management strategies (the antisocial dimension: instinctive, antisocial and aggressive actions) are correlated, among other things, with cognitive schemas regarding failure, mistrust, abandonment, vindication/grandeur, negativism/passive attitude, unrealistic standards/hypercriticism etc.

This study, through the results that we noticed, represents a valuable institutional resource in the sense that it may constitute a starting point of new future criteria for selecting police officers. When discussing the staff that is already working within the Police force, the results of this research may constitute a starting point for the creation of an organizational intervention program which aims to change the coping strategies which bear a non-adaptive potential and to apply the psychological assistance recovery techniques in those subjects identified as bearing dysfunctional cognitive schemas. Moreover, the conclusions of this research can be valued at leadership level or with the staff that has the possibility to apply valuable information when interacting with subordinates.

6. References

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