

The Score



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IGNORE STORMY FORECASTS, PREDICT INSTEAD FOR FAIRER CONDITIONS

*Harold Reiter, Kelly Dore &
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For admissions officers, college registrars, and college applicants in the United States, storm clouds have been gathering, as two weather fronts threaten to collide. On the one front, diversity and equitable access to higher education represent a compelling state interest. No less a body than the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) noted that “student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and “better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society, and better prepares them as professionals,”” citing benefits in education, business, the military, and as a training ground for the Nation’s future leaders (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003). On another front, groups like Students for Fair Admissions (2023) maintain that “a student’s race and ethnicity should not be factors that either harm or help that student to gain admission to a competitive university.” Mindful of constitutional protection of individual rights, SCOTUS has allowed affirmative action processes but only within tight limits, defined to include the necessity to withstand strict scrutiny, be narrowly tailored, encompass multiple elements of diversity, consider available alternatives, occur in good faith, and be time-limited (*Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 1978; *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, 2013, 2016). Commenting in 2003, exactly 25 years after the first SCOTUS affirmative action ruling in *Bakke*, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor stated, “the court expects that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the affirmative action interest approved today.” Her words never held any practical force, and she would later walk them back, stating “that may have been a misjudgment,” (Thomas, 2019) but even so her words reflected discomfiture with the existing conditions.

With arguments presented before SCOTUS by the plaintiff Students for Fair Admissions and defendants Harvard University and University of North Carolina, and with publication of judgment anticipated later this spring, clouds do indeed seem to be gathering (Strauss, 2023). The crux of the initial lawsuit against the universities was their focus on personal metrics to the detriment of quantitative academic measures like test scores, grade point average (GPA), and academic honors. Had standardized test scores and grade point average been used exclusively for admissions decisions, fewer Asian American applicants would have been denied entry. They are nonplussed by dilution of standardized tests by seemingly less objective mission-aligned holistic metrics, and prefer reliance on traditional standardized tests, despite their well-documented moderate to large group differences (Davis et al., 2013). They point to authoritative review largely confirming these tests to be unbiased (Sackett et al., 2013). Two of the strongest pieces of that evidence are that the SAT does not underpredict future performance by members of less advantaged groups, and that the lower proportion of disadvantaged groups selected to colleges is strongly influenced by the lower applicant proportions from those groups.

Both these arguments can be reasonably challenged. The human resources literature clearly demonstrates that perceptions of procedural unfairness have a deleterious impact on likelihood of members of

disadvantaged groups to apply (Schmit & Ryan, 1997). As for predicting future performance of members of disadvantaged groups, MCAT does not under-predict their successful graduation at four years and national licensure success on first attempt but does under-predict for their ultimate success at five years and by second attempt, respectively (Davis et al., 2013). Despite coming from less privileged environmental and educational backgrounds, they ultimately have the same success rates (Davis et al., 2013). They have the equal ability to succeed, merely needing time to close the achievement gap.

Should SCOTUS rule as anticipated, the two storm fronts of diversity and traditional test dependence threaten to converge. Of three priorities – diversity, legality, and use of traditional standardized tests – admissions officers and college registrars can choose two, but not all three. Seeing the oncoming collision, they are increasingly choosing diversity and legality, and making applications test-optional (FairTest, 2023), releasing themselves from those tests' dependence on achievement and moderate to large group differences.

This Hobson's choice is, however, artificial. The authors of this paper have collaborated with others to create several tests with small or negligible group differences. Successful creation of group-neutral tests is dependent upon avoidance of construct-irrelevant contaminations that introduce group differences. Within a conceptual framework of test content, test format, and test delivery, we present an approach to contamination avoidance for those interested in creating tests with small to negligible group differences.

Test Content

In the first decade of the twentieth century, in response to a call to identify French schoolchildren in need of greater educational supports, Alfred Binet and Theodore Simon created tests of intelligence (Binet, 1905). Between 2005 and 2011 test versions, Binet was successful in excluding questions dependent upon educational and environmental factors, but derivatives through Lewis Terman, Arthur Otis and David Wechsler, and through to contemporary tests, reintroduced questions focusing on knowing rather than thinking. We have, as a result, superb tests of achievement, but not of ability. Uncontaminated measurement of ability requires avoidance of content dependent upon educational and environmental factors. Accordingly, test questions on a test of cognitive ability should not require academic knowledge. Verbal and quantitative test questions should be solvable using any language. Content should be carefully reviewed to ensure avoidance of cultural or linguistic bias. Equitable assessment can be achieved if we rely on tests that measure how well a student thinks in a way that is not confounded by what a student knows (Naglieri, Brulles, & Lansdowne, 2022; Naglieri & Bardos, 1997; Wechsler & Naglieri, 2006).

Test Format

In tests like GAMA (Naglieri & Bardos, 1997), Wechsler Nonverbal (Wechsler & Naglieri, 2006), and NNAT 3 (Naglieri, Brulles, & Lansdowne, 2022), non-verbal approaches to both stems and responses sidestep the unintended contributions of verbal skills, resulting in absence of group differences (Selvamenan et al., 2020). Similar findings were seen with Casper AVR (Dore et al., 2009; Dore et al., 2017), a constructed-response situational judgment test adapted to include audiovisual as well as typed responses. Health professional school applicants were required to complete the typed responses to a dozen scenarios, of which eight were presented as video stems and four as written stems. At the conclusion of the test, volunteers self-identified their race/culture and provided audiovisual responses to different, but similarly styled scenarios. Group differences for typed response Casper (moderate and small Cohen's d for Black and Hispanic/Latino respectively) were smaller than those typically found in standard achievement tests (large and moderate Cohen's d respectively) (Juster et al., 2019), but dropped to negligible with audiovisual responses, regardless

of whether raters scored based upon the audiovisual responses themselves or their auto-transcriptions (Reiter et al., 2021). The negligible group differences with both auto-transcription and audiovisual responses suggested that the reduction of group differences could be readily explained by avoidance of writing/typing skills and could not be readily explained by rater over-compensation for bias, as had been suggested elsewhere (Lievens et al., 2019).

Test Delivery

For many aspects of the Covid-19 era, the pandemic has acted as an accelerant rather than as a precipitant. The world was already slowly moving towards online testing, due to its singular benefit of improved access, as defined by ease and cost of attendance (avoidance of requisite travel to computer on public access test centers) and reduction in cost of test administration and test result provision (Naglieri et al., 2004). These benefits are further driven by enhanced scalability. For those groups disproportionately affected by less advantageous environmental factors, online testing can markedly decrease differences in access. Appropriate attention must be given to issues of test-taker authentication and monitoring; scalability of these processes is critical to safeguard low test cost and hence protect hard-won access. The same is true where constructed-response testing is used. The group difference reductions seen with audiovisual responses could potentially be undercut by either poorly scalable ratings expenditures driving up test administration costs, or by dependence on auto-transcriptions for test-taker groups with multilingual backgrounds. Both concerns, fortunately, are likely to diminish over time given rapidly advancing technologies.

It is critical to realize that avoidance of any one concern described above is insufficient. All must be addressed. The size of the group differences will be driven by the most rate-limiting step. As described above (Juster et al., 2019), typed-response Casper had eight video stems and four typed stems. One might reasonably expect that the group differences would be less for the portion of the test (video stems) which had avoided the need for reading comprehension. Alas, that was not the case, as the group differences were identical for both test portions. Regardless of the stem format, all responses for both portions were typed, dependent upon writing skill.

A further caution should be given, in the event of successful entry of significant numbers of highly able but lower achievement-level trainees, as this will place a marked burden on programs to provide resources to “level up” those students. Such efforts already exist, in small numbers, which strain limited resources (Thomson et al., 2003). As interested parties of post-secondary education, retrospectively we might ask ourselves to what extent our willingness historically to use standardized tests with large group differences was fueled by fear of that burden. Prospectively, we should ask ourselves how we can better scale that levelling up process, so that we can more aggressively embrace emerging standardized tests that carry small or negligible group differences.

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STRESS, ADAPTIVE COPING AND OUTCOMES: PILOT TESTING OF NEW MODEL

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*No picture was available for Melanie Bevington

Abstract

Two studies tested a model whereby hassles-exposure mediates the impact of adaptive coping on outcomes partially and the effects of major life events fully. In Study 1, undergraduate volunteers ($N = 177$) answered measures of daily hassles, adaptive coping, and academic, personal-emotional and social adjustment to university. In Study 2, undergraduate volunteers ($N = 120$) answered measures of major life events, hassles, adaptive coping, perceived stress, psychiatric symptomatology and somatization. Path analysis supported the mediation model in both studies, and also demonstrated that adaptive coping is a useful personal quality for dealing effectively with stress.

Keywords: stress, coping, outcome, mediation, mental health, somatization

This article reports two tests of a model whereby hassles partially mediate the effects of adaptive coping on outcomes. That is, it attempts to determine whether adaptive coping could reduce adverse outcomes and contribute to positive ones, partly by diminishing people's exposure or negative response to hassles. We use the tentative word, "could", because our studies are cross-sectional, rendering causal inference inconclusive. Correspondingly, we titled this article a "pilot testing". Elsewhere, we rejected an obvious alternative model, that adaptive coping mitigates the adverse impact of hassles by showing that hassles and adaptive coping both strongly affect outcomes, positive and negative *without* interacting (Kohn & O'Brien, 1997; Kohn et al, 2023).

Hassles are mundane irritants, frustrations, and setbacks which, taken singly, have little adverse impact, but cumulatively, are important sources of stress, e.g. time-pressure, interpersonal conflicts and cash-flow problems (Kanner et al., 1981). As to coping, research suggests that problem-focused coping works better with stressors seen as controllable and emotion-focused coping with ones considered uncontrollable (Ben Zur et al., 2005; Conway & Terry, 1992; Forsythe & Compas, 1987; Zakowski et al., 2001) in accordance with the goodness-of-fit hypothesis (Forsythe & Compas, 1987; Zakowski et al., 2001). This may explain why *individual* coping styles add little to stressor-exposure alone in accounting for outcomes (Day & Livingstone, 2001; Kohn et al., 1994; Lu, 1991; Nakano, 1991).

Superficially, the goodness of fit hypothesis and supporting data undercut the usefulness of individual coping measures. Our theoretical response is *adaptive* coping, a dispositional individual-difference variable (Kohn, 1996; Kohn et al., 2003). This is consistency of responding in a stress-reducing manner to stressful situations and of acting to prevent them from arising to begin with. In other words, adaptive coping is both reactive and preventive (Kohn & Filardo, 2003; Schwarzer and Knoll (2003). Theoretically, it combines three elements: sound judgment in

assessing stressful situations for controllability, and deciding *how* best to cope with them; determination to act on one's judgment, despite personal inertia and social opposition; and self-control in regulating one's emotional response to stress and avoiding counterproductive emotional responses to stressors, e.g. outbursts at work superiors or legal authorities. Adaptive coping thus reflects not mere flexibility, but rather consistently appropriate and, therefore, generally effective flexibility.

The mediation hypothesis implies that the beneficial effects of adaptive coping on outcome are partially mediated through hassles exposure. This is because adaptive copers tend to minimize their exposure to hassles, experience them less intensely, or both. As well, they are predisposed to maintain better adjustment and morale regardless of level of stress-exposure, hence the direct unmediated impact of adaptive coping on outcome. Presumably, this reflects adaptive copers' prior history of reduced exposure or emotional response to hassles via mediation.

STUDY 1

Study 1 tested the mediation model with three positive-outcome variables: personal-emotional, academic and social adjustment to university by undergraduates. The predictors were adaptive coping and hassles. The mediation model predicted that hassles would partially mediate the effects of adaptive coping on all three kinds of adjustment. A serious limitation of Study 1 (like Study 2) is that it's cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. This limits the conclusiveness of causal inferences from a well-fitting model.

Because the mediation model does not directly deal with correlated structural errors, we treated these empirically. In practical terms, such correlations between structural errors mean that predictors missing from the model for pairs of criterion variables are not independent, i.e., that the criterion variables either shared some of the same missing predictors or that the missing predictors correlated across criterion variables. For instance, social support (Taylor, 2011) which was not part of the model could be a missing predictor for any pair of criterion variables.

Method

The participants were 178 volunteering undergraduate psychology students at York University, 34 men and 144 women. (The large female preponderance was characteristic there at the time of data collection.) Participants ranged in age from 18 to 24 ($M = 21.26$, $SD = 1.34$).

After a brief explanation to prospective participants, those volunteering signed a consent form. They then responded to the following materials in the order indicated: demographic information, the Personal Functioning Inventory (PFI; Kohn et al., 2003), the Inventory of College Students' Recent Life Experiences (ICSRLE; Kohn et al., 1990) and the expanded version of the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk., 1986). Participants then received a verbal debriefing that explained the study more thoroughly than the initial explanation and consent form had.

The PFI, a 30-item balanced measure of adaptive coping, exhibited strong internal consistency and stability as well as correlating negatively with perceived stress, positively with problem-solving confidence and self-ratings for adaptive coping, and, to demonstrate discriminant validity, no significant relationship with abstract curiosity (Kohn et al., 2003). The ICSRLE, a 49-item hassles scale, has shown good internal consistency and high positive correlations with Cohen et al.'s (1983) Perceived Stress Scale (Kohn et al., 1990). The expanded version of the SACQ (Baker & Siryk., 1986), a 69-item scale, consists of subscales for

personal/emotional, academic and social adjustment plus institutional attachment (We omitted institutional attachment from our analyses because it shares items with social and academic adjustment.) The SACQ showed acceptable reliabilities, ranging from 0.79 to 0.92, for all subscales. Baker and Siryk (1984) demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity for the original version via correlations between the subscales with criteria that were more relevant to one particular subscale than to the others, e. g. freshman grade-point average for academic adjustment. Validation of the extended version included a high rate, 78%, of correct self-identification of strength or weakness in whatever areas of adjustment an interviewed student had an extreme SACQ score.

Major analysis for the mediation model was via path analysis. Data screening, means, *SDs*, reliabilities and correlations are based on SPSS 26 and path analyses on the student version of LISREL 9.1.

Results and Discussion

Data Screening. Data screening revealed one multivariate outlier. Accordingly, we excluded them from all further analyses, leaving an effective *N* of 177.

Correlations, Descriptives and Reliabilities. Means, *SDs*, correlations and reliabilities appear in Table 1. All reliabilities proved acceptable, ranging from 0.79 for the SACQ's personal/emotional adjustment subscale to 0.88 for the PFI. Hassles and adaptive coping showed a moderate negative correlation. Whereas hassles correlated negatively with personal-emotional, academic and social adjustment, adaptive coping related positively to all three. Finally, the three adjustment subscales intercorrelated positively.

Path Analysis. We made no initial assumptions about whether any of the structural errors for the criterion variables were correlated. Accordingly, we tested four versions of our model. Model 1.1 which assumed no correlations among criterion variables fit poorly as Table 4 shows. The largest *Modification Index* in this model, 14.58, was for correlated structural errors for social adjustment and academic adjustment. Accordingly, we freed this correlation in Model 1.2 which Table 2 shows also fit poorly in terms of chi-square and *RMSEA* values. Because the highest *Modification Index* in Model 1.2, 83.03, was for the correlation between structural errors for personal adjustment and academic adjustment, we freed this correlation in Model 1.3. The result was distinctly improved fit, as Table 2 shows; however, there remained a significant *Modification Index*, 4.93, $p < 0.05$ for the correlation between structural errors for social adjustment and personal adjustment. When we freed this correlation in Model 1.4, the fit achieved thereby proved perfect, $\chi^2(1, N = 177) = 0.00, p = 1.00$.

The fact that freeing parameters one by one rendered earlier models nested within later ones permitted use of the subtractive chi-square method to test the significance of improved fit for each change. All models after Model 1.1 showed significantly improved fit over their immediate predecessors. Chi-square values, with 1 *df* for each change, were as follows: 15.30, $p < 0.001$ for Model 1.1 to Model 1.2; 10.91, $p < .001$ for Model 1.2 to Model 1.3; and 5.05, $p < 0.05$ for Model 1.3 to Model 1.4.

Although perfect fit is gratuitous at 0 *df*, this is not so from 1 *df* up, as Cramer (2003) illustrated. Nonetheless, it would be reassuring to show that the basic model still fits acceptably with the inclusion of more predictors with more missing paths and hence more degrees of freedom. We also wished to establish generalizability from positive to negative outcomes. Study 2 addresses these issues.

The estimated paths for the final model appear in Figure 1. All were statistically significant. Despite the model's perfect fit, the squared multiple correlations for endogenous variables were quite modest: 0.18 for hassles, 0.38 for personal emotional adjustment, 0.22 for academic adjustment and 0.17 for social adjustment. The substantial contributions of adaptive coping to hassles and to all three adjustment variables nevertheless contrasts sharply with the weak contributions of coping measures to outcomes in earlier research (Day & Livingstone, 2001; Kohn et al., 1994; Lu, 1991; Nakano, 1991). Notably, the hypothesized mediation effects for adaptive coping through hassles to adjustment all proved significant: 0.21 for academic, $z = 3.20$, $p = 0.0014$; 0.12 for social, $z = 2.14$, $p = 0.0324$; and 0.19 for personal, $z = 4.06$, $p < 0.00006$.

STUDY 2

Study 2 used three criterion variables: perceived stress, psychiatric symptomatology and somatization. It also included major life events as an exogenous predictor.

Major life events are dramatic negative occurrences which, even singly are commonly expected to have considerable adverse impact, e.g. bereavement, and criminal victimization. Surprisingly, research clearly indicates that, cumulatively, hassles over a week to a month are far more impactful than cumulative major life events over six months to two years (Chamberlain & Zika, 1990; Chan & Lee, 1992; de Benedittis & Lorenzetti, 1992; Fernandez & Sheffield, 1995, 1996; Kanner et al., 1981; Landreville & Vezina, 1992; Lewis et al., 2015). In fact, several studies concluded that hassles *fully* mediate the impact of major life events on adverse outcome (Fernandez & Sheffield, 1996; Johnson & Sherman, 1997; Rowlison, 1992; Stefanek et al., 2012).

An important difference between major life events and hassles is this: Whereas one can view major life events as mere happenstance, this is not so for hassles. There is little correlation between individual major life events because there's little reason why, for example, bereavement and criminal victimization should correlate. (In fact, the alpha reliability of the major-life events measure in Study 2 was merely 0.11.) In contrast, hassles measures have proven to be both internally consistent and stable over time (Chamberlain & Zika, 1990; Da Costa et al., 1999; Fillion et al., 2001; Hannan et al., 2015; Hazel & Hankin, 2014; Kao & Lynn, 2009; Kohn & Filardo, 2003; Travis et al., 2003; Vollrath, 2000). This makes it seem possible that adaptive coping affects both how well one deals with hassles and how many one encounters. This accords with Schwarzer and Knoll's (2003) view that coping has reactive and preventive aspects.

The mediation model posits that hassles mediate the effects of both adaptive coping and major life events on adverse outcomes. We assume mediation to be partial for adaptive coping for reasons stated above and full for major life events as per the literature (Fernandez & Sheffield, 1996; Johnson & Sherman, 1997; Rowlison, 1992; Stefanek et al., Spiel, 2012).

Method

The participants were 128 volunteering introductory psychology students at York University, 24 men, 103 women and one person who didn't indicate gender on the questionnaire. (Again, the substantial female preponderance was characteristic of introductory psychology classes at York University at time of testing). Participants' mean age was 21.02 ($SD = 4.49$).

After hearing the study explained, and filling out the consent form, volunteers responded

to the following in the order indicated: demographic information; the ICSRLE (Kohn et al., 1990); the List of Threatening Experiences (LTE; Brugha, et al., 1985), a 12-item checklist of major life events which are both common, and "moderate to marked" in long-term threat; the PFI (Kohn, et al., 2003); the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983), a 14-item measure of subjective distress; the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-21 (HSCL-21; Green et al., 1988), a 21-item measure of psychiatric symptomatology; and the Health Problem Inventory-Revised (HPI-R; Kohn et al., 1994), a 20-item measure of recent experience with minor physical ailments (e.g., colds, digestive upsets and flu). The ICSRLE, PSS, HSCL-21 and HPI-R were all time-referenced to the past month, and the LTE to the past six months. Responses to the LTE simply indicated having had the itemized experience (*Yes*) or not (*No*).

We described the psychometric information for the ICSRLE and PFI in Study 1. The LTE has demonstrated strong consistency of respondents' reports over a one-day interval and strong agreement with the reports of collaterals (Brugha & Cragg, 1990). These authors also showed that respondents viewed the events listed as "moderate to marked" in long-term threat. The PSS and the HSCL-21 have adequate test-retest and internal-consistency reliabilities (Cohen et al., 1983; Deane et al., 1992, respectively). As for validity, the PSS correlates predictably with life-events scores, clinical symptomatology and utilization of health services (Cohen et al., 1983). The HSCL-21 has proven to distinguish clinical and nonclinical populations, to reflect therapeutic progress, and to correlate with measures of anxiety as well as psychiatrically rated symptomatology (Deane et al., 1992). Finally, the HPI-R shows good internal consistency, represents 20 of the most commonly reported minor physical ailments, and correlates positively with hassles (Kohn, Gurevich et al., 1994; Kohn et al., 1997). The HSCL-21 includes several items with somatic concerns. In fact, its content apparently reflects three factors: subjective distress, somatic distress and concerns about one's effectiveness (Cepeda-Benito & Gleaves, 2000; Green et al., 1988).

Results

Data Screening. Data screening revealed that the HSCL-21 and HPI showed substantial positive skew ($z = 3.58$, $p = .0004$ and $z = 3.30$, $p = .001$, respectively) and identified eight univariate outliers, all on the LTE. Accordingly, we removed the outliers, leaving an effective N of 120, and subjected HSCL-21 and HPI scores to the common-log transformation, which reduced skew effectively ($z = 0.28$, $p = 0.78$ and $z = -0.87$, $p = 0.38$, respectively).

Correlations, Descriptives and Reliabilities. Table 3 shows the means, SD s, alpha reliabilities and intercorrelations for the major variables. All reliabilities were adequate, save the LTE's, as reported, which we deemed "not applicable" for reasons stated.

The LTE exhibited weak but significant positive correlations with the ICSRLE, Lg10 HSCL-21 and Lg10HPI. The ICSRLE and PFI correlated moderately highly with all three adverse-outcome measures, positively for the ICSRLE and negatively for the PFI. The ICSRLE and PFI showed a moderately strong negative relationship. Finally, the three outcome measures all intercorrelated positively.

Path Analysis. The original version of the mediation model showed unacceptable fit as Table 4 shows. The *Modification Index* for the correlation between structural errors for Lg10HSCL-21 and Lg10 HPI was large at 35.86. Accordingly, we freed this correlation in our final model for which we can offer a plausible explanation, namely that the HSCL-21 has some content which reflects somatic distress, the defining content of the HPI. Anyhow, Table 4 shows that Model 2.2, showed excellent fit to the data. Furthermore, the chi-square difference test with 1 df , took a value of 35.86, $p < 0.001$, indicating significant improvement for Model 2.2 over Model 2.1.

The final model appears in Figure 2. It is notable that the path from the LTE to the ICSRLE does not meet the usual criterion for statistical significance. The path coefficient is 0.15, $z = 1.83$, $p = .0672$ (two-tailed). The decision to retain this path reflects two considerations. First, our sample size is modest for a path analysis. Second, several published studies found that major life events affect exposure to daily hassles (e.g., Fernandez & Sheffield, 1996; Johnson & Sherman, 1997; Rowlison, 1992; Stefanek et al., 2012). These circumstances make a Type 2 error for this path plausible.

The final model, shown in Figure 2, showed excellent fit to the data: $\chi^2(7, N = 120) = 7.05$, $p = 0.4239$; $CFI = 1.00$; $SRMR = .0387$ and $RMSEA = 0.00753$. Furthermore, it accounted for substantial variability in its endogenous variables: 0.23 for the ICSRLE, 0.52 for PSS, 0.50 for Lg10HSCL-21 and 0.25 for Lg10HPI. It is notable that these values generally exceed those found in Study 1. Again, the substantial contributions of adaptive coping to all three outcome variables contrasts sharply with the weak correlations of individual coping measures with outcomes in earlier research (Day & Livingstone, 2001; Kohn et al., 1994; Lu, 1991; Nakano, 1991). Also, the hypothesized mediation effects for adaptive coping through hassles to outcomes all proved significant: -0.21 for PSS, $z = -4.20$, $p < 0.00006$; -0.21 for Lg10HSCL, $z = -4.19$, $p < 0.00006$; and -0.16 for Lg10HPI, $z = 3.29$, $p = 0.0011$. Regrettably, the results for mediation of major life events through hassles approached but didn't meet the usual 0.05 criterion for significance: .070 for PSS, $z = 1.78$, $p = 0.075$; 0.071 for Lg10HSCL, $p = 0.075$; and 0.054 for Lg10HPI, $z = 1.69$, $p = 0.091$. Again, we choose to retain these effects in the model because of the extensive literature supporting them, our modest N and their close approximation to statistical significance.

General Discussion

Our work was designed to test the hypothesis that hassles mediate the effects of major life events fully and adaptive coping partially on outcomes. The results are quantitatively consistent with the mediation hypothesis vis-à-vis both positive and negative outcomes. These results do not, however, prove the validity of our mediation path models. What they do show is that our models fit their respective datasets, making them clearly preferable to alternatives that do not.

The results also indicate that the concept of adaptive coping may prove more valuable predictively than earlier more specific coping-style constructs like problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Carver et al., 1989; Endler & Parker, 1990a, 1990b; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) as well as avoidance-focused coping (Carver et al., 1989; Endler & Parker, 1990; Miller, 1990). This is because the concept of adaptive coping enables one to deal with the apparent fact that which coping style works best depends on the controllability of immediate stressors (Ben Zur et al., 2005; Conway & Terry, 1992; Forsythe & Compas, 1987; Zakowski et al., 2001). As to the argument that goodness-of-fit theory explains why traditional coping measures add so little to the prediction of adverse outcomes over and above stressor-exposure (Day & Livingstone, 2001; Kohn et al. 1994; Lu, 1991; Nakano, 1991), we found the PFI to contribute substantially to all outcomes, positive and negative, with its combination of direct and indirect effects.

Our studies have limitations aside from being cross-sectional. One is that the sample sizes, notably for Study 2, are modest for path-analytic research. Another is that we found it necessary in Study 2 to include pathways that failed to achieve the usual standard of statistical significance. Both studies could use replication and extension. For example, one could incorporate additional predictors such as, say, social support (Taylor, 2011).

Finally, our work also has practical implications. Seemingly, having both reactive and preventive aspects makes adaptive coping a particularly valuable quality to enhance via, say, stress-management programs. The development and testing of ways to achieve this should prove worthwhile.

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Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations for Study 1

	1	2	3	4	5
1) ICSRLE	—	—	—	—	—
2) PFI	-.42*	—	—	—	—
3) PERSADJ	-.51*	.52*	—	—	—
4) ACADADJ	-.39*	.39*	.48*	—	—
5) SOCADJ	-.30*	.38*	.37*	.42*	—
Mean	97.52	100.35	83.76	134.35	118.16
SD	16.05	14.68	19.28	26.67	23.47
Alpha	.87	.88	.79	.86	.83

Note.
 ICSRLE =
 Inventory
 of College
 Students'
 Recent
 Life

Experiences; PFI = Personal Functioning Inventory; PERSADJ = Personal Adjustment; ACADADJ = Academic Adjustment; SOCADJ = Social Adjustment. N = 177.

* $p < .01$

Table 2

Progressive Modifications from Initial Model (1.1) to Final Model (1.4) in Study 1

Model	χ^2	df	p	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
1.1	31.26	4	< .0005	.911	.196	.0844
1.2	15.96	3	.0012	.958	.156	.0593
1.3	5.05	2	.0802	.990	.093	.0336
1.4	0.00	1	1.0000	—	—	—

Note. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual.

Table 3*Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities and Correlations for Study 2*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1) LTE	—	—	—	—	—	—
2) ICSRLE	.21*	—	—	—	—	—
3) PFI	.14	-.46**	—	—	—	—
4) PSS	.16	.64**	-.58**	—	—	—
5) Lg10 HSCL	.21*	.64**	-.57**	.61**	—	—
6) Lg10 HPI	.21*	.46**	-.39**	.44**	.69**	—
Mean	1.88	99.35	95.46	27.86	1.61	1.52
SD	1.25	17.29	14.50	6.92	.10	.09
Alpha	NA	.87	.84	.78	.79	.77

Note. LTE = List of Threatening Experiences; ICSRLE = Inventory of College Students' Recent Life Experiences; PFI = Personal Functioning Inventory; PSS = Perceived Stress Scale; Lg10HSCL = Log 10 Hopkins Symptom Checklist 21; Lg10HPI = Log 10 Health Problem Inventory. NA =Not Applicable. Note that, whereas means, SDs and correlations for Lg10 HSCL and Lg10 HPI are based on transformed data, their reliabilities reflect raw data.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

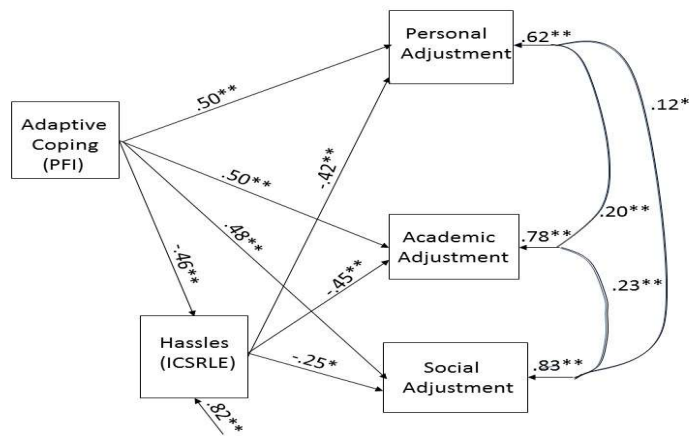
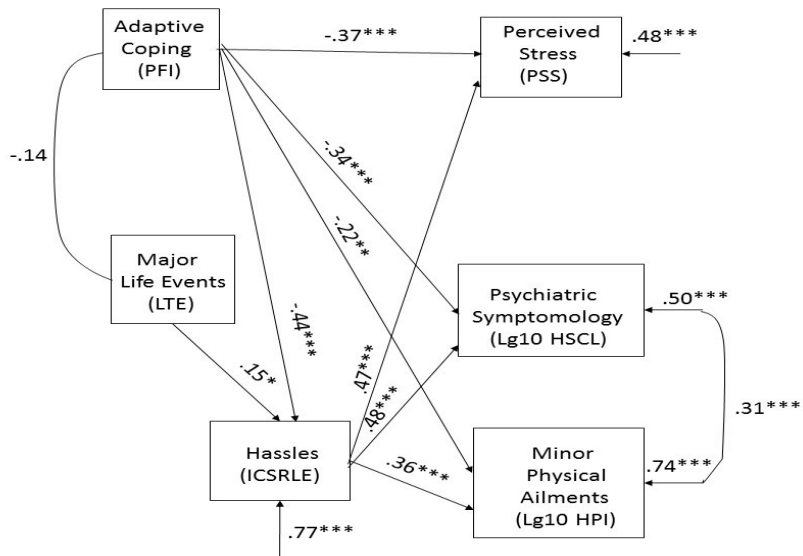
Table 4*Progressive Modification from Initial Model (2.1) to Final Model (2.2) in Study 2*

Model	χ^2	df	P	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
2.1	42.37	7	< .0005	.904	.205	.079
2.2	6.51	6	.3686	.999	.027	.040

Note. Key to abbreviations appears in Table 2.

Figure 1. Path Diagram for Final Mediation Model, Study 1

Note. All three adjustment variables come from the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire. For key to abbreviations, see Table 1. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

**Figure 2.** Path diagram for Final Mediation Model,

Note. For key to abbreviations, see Table 3. * $p < 0.07$ ** $p < 0.02$ *** $p < 0.01$



Heidi Levitt

THE JOURNAL OF *QUALITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY* - EDITOR SPOTLIGHT

Heidi Levitt

Tell us a bit about your background: What is your area of research? What are the most relevant experiences you are bringing to the role of editor? I feel fortunate to be a qualitative and mixed methods researcher at a time when the field has been flourishing and excitement about these methods has been expanding so rapidly. From 2017-2018, I was president of *Society of Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology (SQIP)*, section of Division 5 of the American Psychological Association (APA; *Quantitative and Qualitative Methods*). I chaired the task forces that developed the SQIP recommendations for reviewing and designing qualitative research, working with Sue Motulsky, Fred Wertz, Susan Morrow and Joe Ponterotto (Levitt et al., 2017). In addition, I chaired the inaugural APA journal article reporting standards (JARS) task force for qualitative, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods, working with Michael Bamberg, John Creswell, David Frost, Ruthellen Josselson, and Carola Suárez-Orozco (Levitt et al., 2018). To disseminate this work, I developed an APA video (<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/how-to-review-manuscripts>) on reviewing qualitative methods. These initiatives informed the 7th edition of the Publication Manual of the APA which, for the first time, includes guidance on reporting qualitative and mixed methods (APA, 2020). In the year it was published, our 2018 JARS article was the most downloaded article across all 89 APA journals—indicative of the strong interest in qualitative research in psychology at present and the pressing need for our journal. These experiences all have strengthened my belief that methods should be tailored to researchers' aims, their topics and participants, and their philosophical perspectives—a belief that informs my editorship. My own programs of research have focused on psychotherapy research and research on sexual and gender minoritized populations and has been driven by a social justice mission that considers how to empower clients (e.g., Levitt

et al., 2016), to conceptualize the functions of LGBTQ+ genders (e.g., Levitt, 2019), and to create accessible interventions (e.g., Levitt et al., 2021). In addition, I engage in methodological writing on qualitative and critical methods (e.g., Levitt, 2020). These programs of research all engage qualitative and mixed methods and have led me to deeply value methodological pluralism in psychological science.

Briefly, what are your main priorities? For example, what type of scholarship would you like to see in the journal, and what kind of content are you hoping to attract? *Qualitative Psychology* is known for the constructive and collegial tone of its reviews, its inclusion of social justice and critical qualitative research, its support for emerging qualitative researchers, and for publishing high-quality research. I appreciate the contributions of the current and past editorial boards of *Qualitative Psychology*, and of its founding editor, Ruthellen Josselson. I am thrilled to be working with a strong team of associate editors, Drs. Roberto Abreu, Leeat Granek, Suzanne Kirschner, and Jenny Pak, to develop articles that reflect current and pioneering practices in the field. Our journal has a history of publishing research from critical (e.g., feminist, multicultural, anti-racist, critical disability, decolonizing, queer, stigma-focused) perspectives and forms of research from diverse epistemological approaches and participatory methods. These forms of research center the voices and experiences of under-represented and minoritized communities and individuals and further a socially just psychology. We welcome submissions to our journal from these approaches, especially as they address methodological issues related to this work. In addition, we will continue to host special issues and sections that provide exemplars of current topics studied via qualitative research and examine methodological issues related to the formulation and execution of qualitative research.

Why is this journal important for the field? What is its relevance to society/public health? Qualitative methods are being embraced in psychology like never before. Researchers are recognizing that their use adds depth of understanding to programs of research and leads to guidance, interventions, and findings that are tailored to the specific characteristics, dynamics, and contexts of a set of people or issue. These methodologies have long been associated with exploring subjectivity, communication, meaning-making, and social practices. They have been key in feminist, multicultural, anti-racist, stigma-focused and decolonizing approaches to research. At the same time, they have arisen in a context in which their logic is often misunderstood and their value may not be fully recognized. *Qualitative Psychology* is an outlet that generates advocacy for qualitative methods, methodological guidance, and models of strong qualitative research in use. By broadening the types of investigation that occur in our discipline, we can ask new questions, solve problems, improve public health, and facilitate societal justice in the world.

Do you have plans for a special issue or changes to the editorial process? Have you introduced or are you planning to introduce any changes? There are some new changes in the works. In coordination with SQIP (with thanks to Nisha Gupta), we have been developing channels to promote the articles, special sections and special issues in *Qualitative Psychology* via both APA and SQIP social media. SQIP salons have fostered online conversations that have drawn much interest in our society and abroad (see www.sqip.org). We are planning to continue the use of salons to draw attention to our authors' work long after it has been published. For qualitative methods news, you can sign on at Instagram: @sqip_ap, on Facebook: @qualpsy, or on Twitter: @QualPsy. To keep on top of the latest research in qualitative psychology, you can sign up at www.apa.org/pubs/journals/qua to receive *Qualitative Psychology* alert emails three times per year that share article information from newly released journal issues.

As a new initiative, we will be developing a recurring feature to *QP* that will be called *Methodological Retrospectives*. In this series of articles, advanced methodologists will reflect upon the development and evolution of their methodologies and in relation to personal, professional, research, and social changes. These papers will be reflexive introductions to a methodology, will document the historical evolution of methods across time, will examine methods as culturally responsive, and will provide expert advice on how

contemporary researchers can best adapt an approach for varied projects, participants, contexts, and aims. They will provide orientations to methodological approaches, useful as course material in qualitative methods courses, and will be listed on our *Qualitative Psychology* website.

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