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The Impact of Self-Efficacy and Cognitive Appraisal on Coping Adaptability in Military Recruits: A Test of a Model and its Impact on Organisational Outcomes

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Abstract

The present research aimed to test a model of adaptation in RNZAF recruits which was similar in structure to transactional models of stress such as Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model. Using a longitudinal design and dispositional measures the study assessed the impact of general self-efficacy and cognitive appraisal at the start of recruit training on coping adaptability at the end of training. These variables were also assessed as to their impact on organisationally relevant variables including organisational commitment, perceived performance improvement and readiness for next career phase. Overall the study had two broad aims. The first was to confirm the relationships between appraisal, coping adaptability and outcomes as previously shown in transactional models of stress and coping. The second aim was to discover how self-efficacy impacted on the model, more specifically, whether it acted as a moderator, mediator or antecedent to the appraisal – coping relationship.

The results confirmed that challenge appraisal was associated with better organisational outcomes, this relationship was fully mediated by coping adaptability. Self-efficacy was strongly correlated with challenge appraisal however did not moderate the appraisal – coping relationship nor did it mediate the appraisal – coping adaptability relationship. The direct relationship between self-efficacy and coping adaptability was however, fully mediated by challenge appraisal.

Threat appraisal did not demonstrate strong relationships with the remaining variables in this sample. Additionally, general self-efficacy, challenge appraisal and coping adaptability were associated with organisational commitment and readiness but not with performance improvement.
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