

**Maša Tonković Grabovac**

*Centre for Croatian Studies*

**Anita Lauri Korajlija**

*Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities*

**Emina Nezirević**



# Recovery from Work

*Is it yet Another Name for  
Work-Stress Coping Strategies?*

**37<sup>TH</sup> STAR  
CONFERENCE**

— Stress and Anxiety in the Changing Society —

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# Recovery from Work

- stressful work situations -> poor psychological well-being & health problems
  - Important role of recovery from work
- has received much scientific attention in recent occupational health psychology literature (Sonnentag et al.)
- a process during which individual functional systems that have been called upon during a stressful experience return to their prestressor levels (Meijman & Mulder, 1998)
- persons may differ with respect to the specific activities they experience as recovering while the underlying psychological experiences crucial for recovery may be relatively uniform



# Consequences of Recovery Activities

- research (Sonnentag, 2003) confirmed beneficial effects of recovery from work not only on employees'

- well-being
- health
- life satisfaction
- sleep

but also on work-related outcomes such as

- work engagement
- proactive behaviour.



# Recovery Experiences

- 4 different recovery experiences during leisure time (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007)
  1. Psychological Detachment from Work
    - mentally switching off
  2. Relaxation
    - activities aiming to achieve state of low activation and increased positive effect
  3. Mastery Experiences
    - off-job activities that distract from the job by providing challenging experiences and learning opportunities in other domains -> opportunities for experiencing competence and proficiency
  4. Control During Leisure Time
    - degree to which a person can decide which activity to pursue during leisure time, as well as when and how to pursue this activity



# Yet another Name for Coping Strategies?

- even though authors assume that these experiences could be predicted by coping strategies, the overlap between the two domains has not been thoroughly investigated

	Problem-focused coping	Emotion-focused coping	Other coping strategies
Psychological detachment	0	+	+
Relaxation	0	+	0
Mastery	+	+	0
Control	+	+	0

Hypothesized Relations Between Recovery Experiences and Coping Strategies (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007)



# Aims

1. to examine the relationship between recovery experiences and coping strategies
2. to examine incremental validity of recovery from work over coping strategies to predict work stress



# Method

- Participants

- 420 Croatian employees of heterogeneous demographical and occupational profiles
  - 62% F
  - age: M=33,3 (from 19 to 64)
  - tenure: M=9,4 years (from 6 months to 39 years); M=7,2 years on the current position
  - working hours/week: M=42,8
  - 2/3 white collar
  - mostly married (58%) without children (63%)

- Procedure

- online study with anonymous participation
- participants recruited via social network and e-mail
  - Condition: working MIN 20hours/week; 6 months on the same position





# Method

- Measures

- Job-related Affective Well-being Scale (JAWS-20; Van Katwyk et al., 2000), 20 items
  - 2 subscales
    - Positive emotions – „*My job made me feel SATISFIED.*”
    - Negative emotions – „*My job made me feel ANGRY.*”
- The Recovery Experience Questionnaire (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007); 16 items
  - 4 subscales
    - Psychological Detachment – „*I forget about work.*”
    - Relaxation – „*I kick back and relax.*”
    - Mastery Experiences – „*I learn new things.*”
    - Control – „*I decide my own schedule.*”





# Method

- Measures

- Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE-60; Carver et al., 1989), 60 items, 15 coping strategies

- Frame of reference: stressful situations „at work”

- 3 (FA -> 4) subscales

- 1. Problem-focused coping

- active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint, and use of instrumental social support

- 2. Emotion-focused coping

- A. Adaptive: use of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, and acceptance

- B. Maladaptive: religious coping and denial

- 3. Other coping strategies: Withdrawal/Avoidance

- focus on venting of emotions, behavioral and mental disengagement

- sociodemographic data



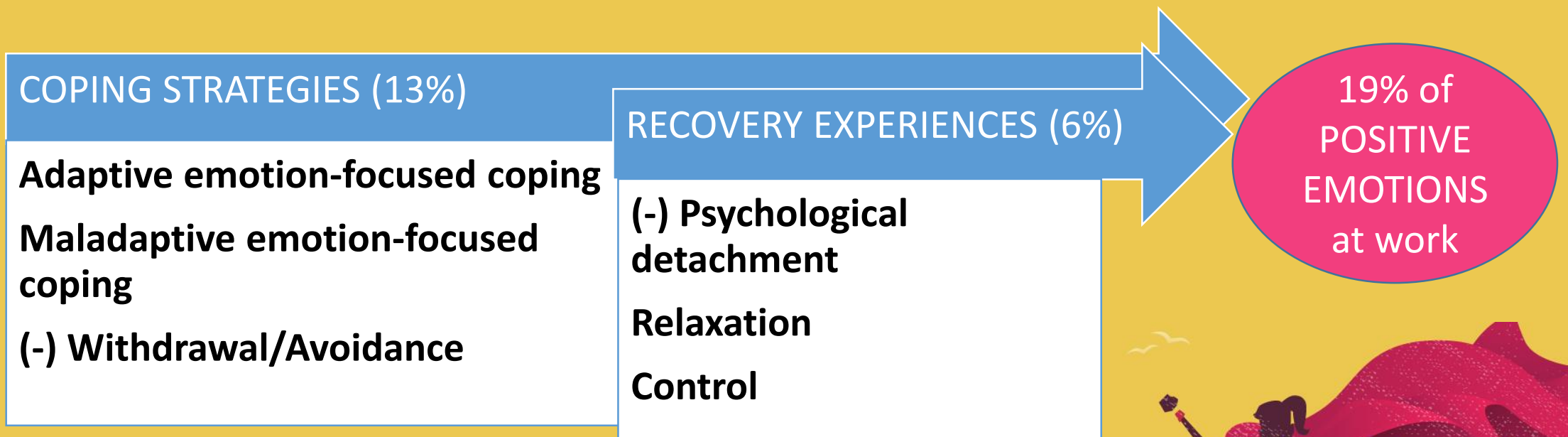
# Results

## 1. relationship between recovery experiences and coping strategies

r	Problem-focused coping	Emotion-focused coping (Adaptive)	Emotion-focused coping (Maladaptive)	Withdrawal /Avoidance
Psychological detachment	- (0)	- (+)	-,18	-,10 (+)
Relaxation	,13 (0)	<b>,11 (+)</b>	-,26	-,17 (0)
Mastery	<b>,20 (+)</b>	<b>,19 (+)</b>	-	- (0)
Control	<b>,11 (+)</b>	<b>,15 (+)</b>	-,18	-,12 (0)

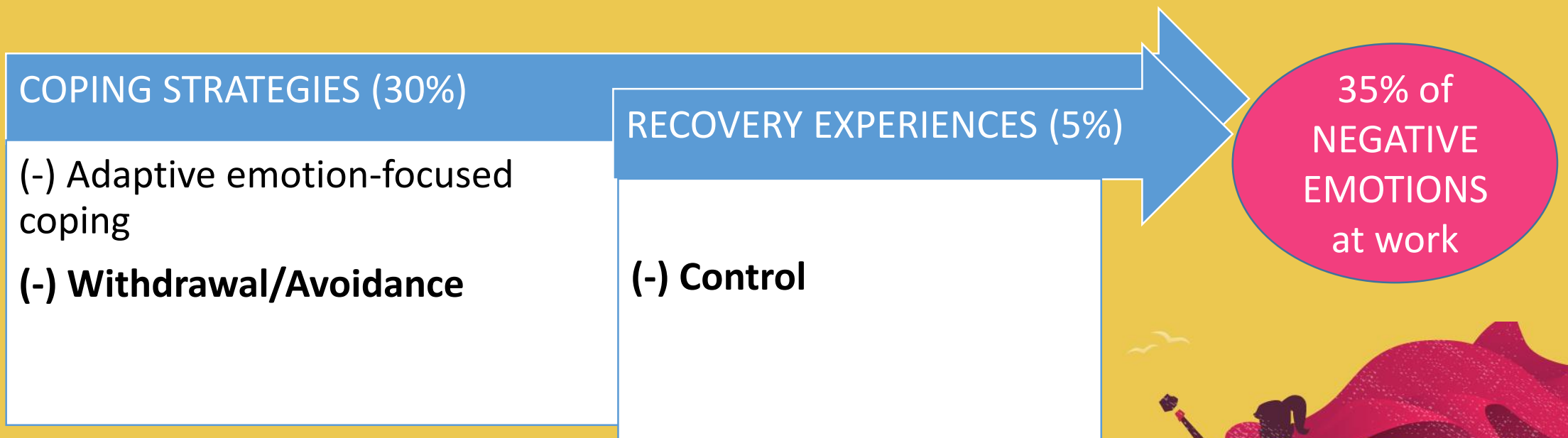
# Results

- incremental validity of recovery from work over coping strategies to predict POSITIVE emotions at work (hierarchical regression analysis)



# Results

- incremental validity of recovery from work over coping strategies to predict **NEGATIVE** emotions at work (hierarchical regression analysis)



# Conclusion

1. significant but low correlations between recovery experiences and coping strategies
2. incremental validity of recovery from work over coping strategies in prediction of both positive and negative emotions at work

-> findings support the idea that recovery from work is a concept that deserves to be

- further investigated in research on work stress
- enhanced in anti-stress practical interventions



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[masa.tonkovic.grabovac@hrstud.hr](mailto:masa.tonkovic.grabovac@hrstud.hr)

