



## **DETRIMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF INAPPROPRIATE COPING MECHANISMS IN *MY YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION* BY OTTESSA MOSHFEGH (2018)**

**Muthia Maisyarah<sup>1</sup>, Devy Kurnia Alamsyah<sup>2</sup>**

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

Universitas Negeri Padang

email: [muthiamaisyarah99@gmail.com](mailto:muthiamaisyarah99@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This research study is about the detrimental consequences of the narrator's coping mechanisms in the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) by Ottessa Moshfegh. This study focuses on the narrator's inappropriate usage of coping mechanisms to deal with stress and pressure in her life, resulting in detrimental consequences. The study uses the psychoanalysis drive theory by Sigmund Freud and the 8 Scales of Coping Mechanisms by Folkman et al to analyze the novel. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The results of this research are divided into 2, namely the type of coping mechanism used by the narrator and the detrimental consequences that arise due to the narrator's inaccuracy in using her coping mechanism. The types of coping mechanisms used by the narrator include seeking social support, positive reappraisal, distancing, and escape-avoidance. Then, the detrimental consequences that emerge include drug dependency, emotional detachment, isolation, and lack of interest.

**Keywords:** *Coping Mechanisms, Detrimental Consequences, Stress, Inappropriate*

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The constant demands of life and unrelenting pace often make humans feel overwhelmed, leading to anxiety and internal conflicts. Thus, this serves as a reminder to take time to relax, clear our minds, and reduce the heavy burden caused by persistent stress. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize the signs of stress early and to take proactive steps to manage mental well-being before it reaches a critical point. When someone has problems, whether personal or social, it can impact their mental health. In an article released by the World Health Organization in 2022, mental disorders are a common term used to describe significant mental conditions that affect one's thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. According to Prakasa (2021), the causes of mental disorders can stem from internal factors, including genetic

<sup>1</sup> English ELLSP of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang graduated on September 2024

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer of English Department of FBS Universitas Negeri Padang



factors, family violence, and lack of support from close individuals. External factors that can cause mental disorders include life events such as bullying, social inequality, and negative influences from the social environment. Based on the data shared by the World Health Organization, in 2019, 970 million people were suffering from mental disorders, with anxiety disorders and depression being the most prevalent. Given the diverse backgrounds influencing each individual's mental condition, everyone has their own unique ways of addressing their respective issues.

Furthermore, addressing problems requires a method so that an individual does not get trapped in a depressive situation. Methods to secure oneself from stress and uncomfortable emotions can also be referred to as coping mechanisms. Maryam (2017) asserts that coping mechanisms involve activities taken by individuals to address both internal and external demands perceived as burdensome and disruptive to one's life. The purpose of employing coping mechanisms is to reduce chaos and manage existing problems. Bailey (2022), divides coping mechanisms into two categories: adaptive and maladaptive. According to her, adaptive coping mechanisms involve positive coping strategies such as engaging in sports, reading books, and meditation. In addition, Bailey stated that maladaptive coping mechanisms involve addressing problems with negative behaviors that can lead to physical harm, such as using illicit drugs, excessive alcohol consumption, and continuous escape from reality.

When facing problems that come, someone needs the ability to solve the problem. van der Kolk (2014), in his book stated that a healthy attachment in line with developing personal skills leads to a sense of control, which is essential for effectively dealing with life's challenges. When someone has a negative attachment to their problems and depends on their coping without any means to resolve them, then it could lead to the failure to avoid the possible depressive state. The condition where someone tends to harm themselves or others is often referred to as detrimental behavior.

The detrimental behavior resulting from an inappropriate coping mechanism is also described in a literary work by Ottessa Moshfegh entitled *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, published in 2018. The story tells of a main character who is unhappy with her situation and has an unpleasant past of receiving insufficient love from her parents. The character turns to relaxing activities in an attempt to find comfort from her stressful state. The novel delves into the narrator's feelings and thoughts, revealing the significant impact of unresolved emotional issues and the tendency to use inappropriate ways of coping. The main character's chosen path, intended to find peace and personal growth after trying to cope with her problem, ironically leads to negative outcomes.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

The novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh serves as the data source for this study's analysis. The study focuses on the actions of the novel's protagonists, who display unusual signs as a result of making the incorrect decision in selecting coping mechanisms as a self-healing strategy. This research uses a qualitative descriptive research method. Descriptive qualitative research,

according to Pan (2017) is a research method that presents findings through descriptive narrative rather than statistical data.

This study employs psychoanalytic theory, particularly Freud's theory of the life instinct, along with Folkman's eight scales of coping mechanisms as its methodology. Based on this methodology, the literary instruments the researcher analyzes are character, plot, and dialogue to show how Moshfegh's novel depicts the detrimental consequences of the narrator's chosen coping mechanisms. The analysis was carried out in several steps, with the initial one being data collection. After the data has been collected, the next step is to annotate the information according to the eight scales of coping mechanisms by Folkman, which serve as the primary theory for analyzing the novel.

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Research Finding

#### 1.1 Coping Mechanisms Used by the Narrator

Coping mechanisms are intended to help individuals manage the stress they experience. The coping mechanisms employed by the narrator in the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* can be observed in several ways, according to the theory proposed by Folkman et al. (1986). These include seeking social support, where the individual seeks someone for emotional support; positive reappraisal involves looking at the stressor from a positive perspective; distancing involves creating space from things that could cause stress; and escape-avoidance, where the individual escapes or avoids the stressor.

##### 1.1.1 Seeking Social Support

The first coping mechanism depicted in the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) is seeking social support. This aligns with what Folkman et al. describe, stating that seeking social support involves a person reaching out to others to receive emotional help, validation of feelings, advice, or even practical assistance. By seeking social support, individuals can gain comfort and aid in dealing with the stress they are experiencing. This mechanism is illustrated when the narrator consciously visits a psychiatrist named Dr. Tuttle, as shown in the following quote:

“I started seeing Dr. Tuttle in January 2000. It started off very innocently: I was plagued with misery, anxiety, a wish to escape the prison of my mind and body. Dr. Tuttle confirmed that this was nothing unusual. She wasn't a good doctor. I had found her name in the phone book. (p.18)

...

My plan was to lie. I'd given it careful consideration. I told her I'd been having trouble sleeping for the past six months,

and then complained of despair and nervousness in social situations. But as I was reciting my practiced speech, I realized it was somewhat true. I wasn't an insomniac, but I was miserable. Complaining to Dr. Tuttle was strangely liberating.

"I want downers, that much I know," I said frankly. "And I want something that'll put a damper on my need for company. I'm at the end of my rope," I said. "I'm an orphan, on top of it all. I probably have PTSD. My mother killed herself."

"How?" Dr. Tuttle asked.

"Slit her wrists," I lied.

"Good to know." (p.21)

From the quote above, it can be seen that the interaction between the narrator and the psychiatrist Dr. Tuttle represents one of the coping mechanisms applied by the narrator in the form of seeking social support. The narrator begins her story by describing her state of misery, anxiety, and her desire to escape from her own mind and body, highlighting a sense of isolation and profound distress. Dr. Tuttle's statement that the narrator's condition is not unusual provides a form of validation. The narrator acknowledges that her psychiatrist is not a competent doctor, despite this, she continues to see the doctor to obtain prescriptions by giving false information about her condition. This inadequacy of information provided by the narrator ultimately makes seeking social support, which should be able to overcome her situation, actually become detrimental to her mental health. What the narrator does in this novel is not appropriate because, in reality, coping mechanisms aim to get a better situation from the problems experienced but as a result, the narrator receives different treatment than she should have, allowing her to obtain stronger medication. This is due to her desire to sleep for longer periods, beyond normal sleeping hours.

When the narrator shares her grievances with someone else, it turns out to be "strangely liberating." This indicates that verbally expressing her struggles provides emotional relief. Realizing that her confessions to the psychiatrist are not entirely fabricated reveals a deeper sense of suffering and proves that she is seeking not only treatment but also emotional validation, aligning with the concept of seeking social support, where expressing one's feelings to another person can be therapeutic. Even though the support the narrator receives is not characterized by deep empathy or understanding, her decision to see a psychiatrist and share her grievances provides her with a sense of freedom, reflecting the nature of seeking social support.



### 1.1.2 Positive Reappraisal

In addition to seeking social support, the narrator in the novel employs the coping mechanism of positive reappraisal. Positive reappraisal involves reframing stressful events in a more positive light. This includes finding the silver lining, focusing on personal growth, or viewing a challenge as an opportunity. In *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, the narrator often believes that her year-long process of sleeping will yield positive results and that she will emerge as a new person, free from her past. This can be seen in the following excerpt:

“It was lunacy, this idea, that I could sleep myself into a new life. Preposterous. But there I was, approaching the depths of my journey. So far, I thought, I’d been wandering through the forest. But now I was approaching the mouth of the cave. I smelled the smoke of a fire burning deep inside. Something had to be burned and sacrificed. And then the fire would burn out and die. The smoke would clear. My eyes would adjust to the darkness, I thought. I’d find my footing. When I came out of the cave, back out into the light, when I woke up at last, everything—the whole world—would be new again.” (pp.260-261)

In the quotation above, the narrator acknowledges that her plan to sleep for a year might seem irrational and describes it as “lunacy” and “preposterous.” However, she then reframes this idea as a transformative journey. This shift in perspective is a clear example of positive reappraisal. Instead of viewing her hibernation as a negative experience, the narrator sees it as a profound and transformative process.

The forest described by the narrator represents the initial phase of her journey, while the cave symbolizes a deeper and more challenging process of transformation. The imagery of the “smoke of a fire burning deep inside” suggests a process of inner purification, where something must be “burned and sacrificed” for renewal to occur. This illustrates the narrator’s belief that her current struggles are a necessary step toward becoming a better person and starting a new chapter in her life.

The narrator’s hope that “fire would burn out and die. The smoke would clear,” and that her “eyes would adjust to the darkness” symbolizes her anticipation of finding clarity and hope through her efforts. She imagines emerging from the dark cave into a brighter place, reflecting her desire to rise again and discover a new perspective on life. Ultimately, the narrator’s belief that her current activities will lead to positive outcomes is an example of positive reappraisal, where she views her hibernation as a transformative journey that will free her from her past and lead to a new beginning.

### 1.1.3 Distancing

Another coping mechanism depicted in the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) is distancing. As stated by Folkman et al., distancing is described as an individual's effort to create space by establishing psychological distance from a stressor. In other words, it is a way to detach oneself from a stressful situation to reduce its emotional impact. The following quote supports the narrator's use of distancing as a coping mechanism:

"I wondered if those days were over now that Reva had been promoted and Ken was out of the picture. Would she suddenly grow into maturity and discard me as a relic from a failed past, the way I'd hoped to do to her when my year of sleep was over?" (p.228)

The quote reflects the possibility of Reva suddenly growing apart and abandoning the narrator as a symbol of a failed past. This highlights the narrator's fear of being left behind by her friend and the potential emotional impact she might experience. However, by framing this potential abandonment as Reva's growth and maturity, the narrator distances herself from the emotional suffering that such a situation might bring.

The narrator's hope to sever ties with her friend Reva after her year of sleep further explores the coping mechanism she has chosen, which is distancing. By planning to end her relationship with Reva, the narrator aims to eliminate reminders of the past and the associated emotional burdens. This planned distancing reflects her strategy to emotionally detach from relationships that could cause her distress. The narrator minimizes her emotional involvement and creates psychological space from potentially painful situations. This behavior aligns with Folkman et al.'s theory, which demonstrates how distancing can help individuals manage stress by reducing interactions that could be stressful.

### 1.1.4 Escape-Avoidance

In the novel, one of the other coping mechanisms employed by the narrator to deal with her problems is escape-avoidance. Escape-avoidance is a coping mechanism that involves evading or escaping from stressors by completely distancing oneself from the sources of stress. This method can include physical actions such as avoiding certain places or people, and mental actions such as diverting attention or thoughts away from stress-inducing factors. The narrator's behavior of avoiding things that cause her stress can be seen in the following quote:

"I can't point to any one event that resulted in my decision to go into hibernation. Initially, I just wanted some downers to drown out my thoughts and judgments, since the constant barrage made it hard not to hate everyone and everything. I

thought life would be more tolerable if my brain were slower to condemn the world around me. (pp. 17-18)

...

“I think my appetite would come back if I could sleep,” I said. It was a lie. I was already sleeping upwards of twelve hours, from eight to eight. I was hoping to get pills to help me sleep straight through the weekends.” (p.23)

In the quote above, the narrator’s decision to "go into hibernation" stems from her desire to escape from excessive negative emotions and disturbing thoughts. By seeking "downers to drown out my thoughts and judgments," it illustrates that the narrator has a clear intent to avoid directly addressing the sources of her stress. The narrator’s wish to numb her mind highlights the aspect of avoidance itself, where individuals prefer to escape from stress rather than confront it directly. The narrator’s statement that she hates "everyone and everything" underscores the negativity and difficulty she is experiencing. By slowing down her brain with medication in an attempt to create a more tolerable reality, she demonstrates escape-avoidance through deliberate numbness. Furthermore, when the narrator intentionally lies to obtain stronger pills to help her sleep more throughout the weekend, it further shows that she is employing escape-avoidance as a coping mechanism. Despite already engaging in excessive sleep, as stated by Folkman et al. as a form of escape-avoidance coping, the narrator still wishes for more time to sleep. This excessive sleeping represents the narrator’s effort to escape as a means to avoid confronting her problems and emotions. This approach allows her to avoid the unpleasant aspects of her life, though it does not resolve the underlying issues.

## **1.2 Detrimental Consequences of the Narrator’s Inappropriate Coping Mechanisms**

In the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018), the coping mechanisms chosen by the narrator fail to soothe her problems and instead result in profoundly detrimental consequences. The detrimental consequences are mainly caused by her reliance on prescription drugs and her year-long hibernation as her ways of coping with her mental and emotional well-being. These detrimental consequences lead to the narrator depending on drugs, experiencing emotional detachment, isolating herself, and having a lack of interest.

### **1.2.1 Drug Dependency**

In the novel, drug dependency is one of the detrimental consequences resulting from the coping mechanism chosen by the narrator. This drug dependency occurs due to the narrator’s coping choice—seeking social support by meeting with a psychiatrist named Dr. Tuttle and requesting powerful medications to facilitate her hibernation project. She intentionally lies about her true condition to the

psychiatrist, leading to an inaccurate diagnosis. The narrator's behavior of drug dependency becomes evident when she feels unable to live without her medications and believes that she might go insane if she doesn't consume them, as seen in the following quote:

“Are you a medical doctor? Are you some kind of expert? If my shit isn't back in that medicine cabinet by tonight, we are done. Our friendship is over. I will never want to see you again. That is, if I'm even alive. Did it occur to you that you might not know the whole story behind my condition? And that there would be harmful consequences if I just all of a sudden stopped taking my medicine? If I don't take it, I could go into seizures, Reva. Aneurysms. Neurotic shock. OK? Total cellular collapse! You'd feel pretty sorry if I died because of you. I don't know how you'd live with yourself then. How much puke and StairMaster would it take to get over something like that, huh? You know that killing someone you love is the ultimate self-destructive act. Grow up, Reva. Is this a cry for help? It's pretty fucking pathetic, if it is. Anyway, call me back. I'm waiting. And honestly, I don't feel very well.”

I took the two Benadryl, sat back down on the sofa and turned on the television.” (p.242)

In the above excerpt, it's evident that the narrator is furious with Reva for taking her medications. This behavior starkly reveals the narrator's dependence on various drugs she has been consuming for some time—a detrimental consequence resulting from her chosen coping mechanism: seeking social support. She even goes so far as to threaten their friendship, emphasizing the high stakes—her life hangs in the balance. The manipulation is clear; she desperately wants her medication back, regardless of the consequences. By concealing the truth about her condition from her psychiatrist, she has placed herself in a dangerous situation. Initially, seeking professional support seemed like the right path, but her deception has led her astray.

The list of potential consequences she mentioned—‘seizures, aneurysms, neurotic shock, total cellular collapse’—reveals how heavily she relies on the medications Reva took. For the narrator, these treatments aren't just about comfort; they're a lifeline. Her plea to Reva underscores her vulnerability. She genuinely believes that without her medication, she could go crazy or even die. The narrator's accusation toward Reva—that ‘killing someone you love is the ultimate self-destructive act’—is haunting. Her dependence on the drugs, triggered by her own deception, reflects self-sabotage. Seeking professional help initially aimed to alleviate her suffering, but it inadvertently led to a cycle of dependency.



### 1.2.2 Emotional Detachment

In the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018), emotional detachment emerges as one of the detrimental consequences for the narrator. This emotional detachment involves the narrator's way of intentionally disconnecting herself from the world. It occurs as a result of her positive reappraisal as a coping mechanism, which leads her to believe that her year-long hibernation will bring her a better life and allow her to be reborn as a new person. This can be seen from the symptoms exhibited by the narrator, such as her difficulty in empathizing, her tendency to avoid emotional engagement with others or her past, and her struggle to express her emotions. Her emotional detachment is reflected in this quote:

“Pondering all this down in Reva’s black room under her sad, pilly sheets, I felt nothing. I could think of feelings, emotions, but I couldn’t bring them up in me. I couldn’t even locate where my emotions came from. My brain? It made no sense. Irritation was what I knew best—a heaviness on my chest, a vibration in my neck like my head was revving up before it would rocket off my body. But that seemed directly tied to my nervous system—a physiological response. Was sadness the same kind of thing? Was joy? Was longing? Was love?”

In the time I had to kill there in the dark of Reva’s childhood bedroom, I decided I would test myself to see what was left of my emotions, what kind of shape I was in after so much sleep. My hope was that I’d healed enough over half a year’s hibernation, I’d become immune to painful memories. So I thought back to my father’s death again. I had been very emotional when it happened. I figured any tears I still had left to cry might be about him.” (pp.137-138)

The quote above reflects on the narrator’s emotional numbness in Reva’s room starkly illustrates emotional detachment as a detrimental consequence of her coping mechanisms. The narrator describes a profound inability to access or identify her own emotions despite being surrounded by the dark, somber environment of Reva’s childhood bedroom. Her musings on the nature of feelings, wondering if sadness, joy, longing, or love are physiological responses like irritation, highlight a disconnection from her emotional self. This detachment is emblematic of the failure of her coping strategies, particularly her extended period of hibernation, which she hoped would heal her but instead led to a deeper emotional void.

The narrator’s struggle to locate her emotions, reduced to mere physiological responses like irritation, underscores how her methods of avoidance, such as excessive sleep and reliance on prescription drugs, have caused her to

become emotionally numb. Her experiment to test if she still had tears left from her father's death reveals a deeper, almost clinical detachment from her grief. Instead of actively processing her sorrow, she approaches her emotional state as an object of study, indicating that her coping mechanisms have led her to view her own emotions with distance and detachment. This detachment is further demonstrated by her inability to connect with or even comprehend the spectrum of human emotions, signifying that her approach to managing her depression has only compounded her isolation. By seeking to become immune to painful memories she inadvertently exacerbates her emotional detachment, showing that her coping mechanisms have failed to foster genuine healing or connection.

### 1.2.3 Isolation

In the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh, the narrator's isolation emerges as a detrimental consequence of her chosen coping mechanism; distancing herself from the possible stressors. The protagonist decides to escape the pain and complexities of her life by embarking on a year-long experiment of extreme hibernation, using a variety of prescription medications to sleep for most of the year. This self-imposed isolation serves as a way for her to detach from her emotional struggles and the demands of the outside world. However, this coping strategy leads to several negative outcomes. The narrator's isolation deepens her disconnection from reality, causing her to lose touch with her own identity and the people around her. Her relationships deteriorate as she withdraws further into her own world, avoiding any form of meaningful interaction. The initial promise of relief and escape turns into a numbing void, where the absence of engagement with life exacerbates her sense of loneliness and alienation. Her way of isolating herself is reflected in this quote:

“I had instructed Ping Xi to bring me one large mushroom pepperoni pizza with extra cheese every Sunday afternoon. Whenever I came to, I'd drink water, eat a slice of pizza, do some sit-ups and push-ups, some squats, some lunges, put the clothes I was wearing into the washer, transfer the washed set into the dryer, put on the clean set, then take another Infermiterol. In this way, I could stay in the black until my year of rest was up. (pp.259-260)

...

Locked inside, the only way out would be through the windows. I figured that if I jumped out while I was on the Infermiterol, it would be a painless death. A blackout death. I'd either wake up safe in the apartment, or I wouldn't. It was a risk I'd take forty times, every three days. If, when I woke up in June, life still wasn't worth the trouble, I would end it. I would jump. This was the deal I made.” (p.260)

The quote above demonstrates how isolation manifests as a severe and detrimental consequence of the narrator's chosen coping mechanisms. The narrator's meticulous routine—ordering a pizza, exercising, managing laundry, and taking medication—reveals a self-imposed isolation from the external world. This routine represents more than just a physical separation from society; it symbolizes a profound emotional and psychological withdrawal. The narrator's repetition of these tasks every Sunday afternoon while under the influence of Infermiterol showcases her intentional detachment from meaningful human interaction and her commitment to living in a state of disconnection and numbness.

The ritualistic nature of her routine, coupled with her use of Infermiterol to maintain a state of emotional and mental blackness, underscores a deliberate effort to avoid confronting reality and personal problems. Her isolation is further emphasized by her physical confinement within her apartment and the dangerous contemplation of using a window as a means of escape. This contemplation of suicide as a final act of isolation highlights the extreme lengths to which the narrator is willing to go to avoid facing her emotional pain and existential crises. Moreover, the narrator's decision to endure this isolation until June illustrates her commitment to a prolonged period of self-imposed alienation and emotional suppression. This extreme isolation not only serves as a coping mechanism but also underscores the failure of her approach, as it leads her to contemplate ending her life rather than seeking constructive solutions to her distress.

#### 1.2.4 Lack of Interest

In the novel, one of the detrimental consequences of the coping mechanisms chosen by the narrator is the emergence of a lack of interest in the things around her. This lack of interest is characterized by the narrator's loss of motivation for her own life and a loss of interest in the world around her. The narrator's coping mechanisms of escaping and avoiding her problems instead of trying to understand the root causes of her depression and heal them lead to her having a lack of interest in both her own life and her surroundings. This can be seen from the symptoms exhibited by the narrator, such as her disinterest in the future and the past. Her lack of interest is illustrated in the following quote:

“ON SEPTEMBER 11, I went out and bought a new TV/VCR at Best Buy so I could record the news coverage of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers. Trevor was on a honeymoon in Barbados, I'd later learn, but Reva was lost. Reva was gone. I watched the videotape over and over to soothe myself that day. And I continue to watch it, usually on a lonely afternoon, or any other time I doubt that life is worth living, or when I need courage, or when I am bored.”  
(p. 289)

The quote above shows that the narrator's choice to buy a new TV/VCR specifically to repeatedly record and watch the footage of the plane crashing into

the Twin Towers signifies the narrator's reluctance to engage emotionally. Despite the world-changing nature of the tragedy, she treats it merely as entertainment for herself. Instead of processing the event and her own emotions, the narrator uses the footage to numb her feelings and soothe herself, while also distracting her mind from her internal struggles. The fact that the narrator finds comfort in repeatedly watching the tragic footage to soothe herself during times of loneliness, doubt, and boredom underscores she lose interest in anything around her. Her behavior of treating the footage as mere entertainment rather than a profound human tragedy highlights her becoming apathetic, demonstrating that her chosen coping strategy is ineffective for her mental state.

## 2. Discussion

This research study examines issues correlated to psychoanalysis, particularly using 8 Scales of Coping Mechanism by Folkman et al (1986) in the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) by Ottessa Moshfegh. Coping mechanisms are ways used by individuals to overcome the problems and stress they face. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), coping mechanisms involve conscious efforts to deal with situations that can trigger stress. Regardless of the final result, there is no coping strategy that is intrinsically better than another. Coping mechanisms involve managing emotions and adapting to situations that are considered difficult. Thus, individuals use various ways to face challenges in order to reduce the impact of stress on their lives. Folkman et al (1986) identified eight different scales to describe various coping strategies.

In the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*, the coping mechanisms used by the narrator to manage stress are fourfold: seeking social support, positive reappraisal, distancing, and escape-avoidance. Firstly, the narrator deals with stress by seeking social support—meeting with a psychiatrist. Secondly, she copes with her stress through positive reappraisal, viewing her year-long hibernation as a chance for rebirth into a new self. Thirdly, the narrator distances herself from her surroundings, perceiving social interactions as potential sources of increased anxiety and further stress. Lastly, she copes with her stress through escape-avoidance, seeking temporary relief from reality through drugs and sleep. By employing these strategies, she avoids the possibility of stress and shields her mind from revisiting past trauma.

However, contrary to what the theory, coping mechanisms are expected to help an individual manage and overcome their challenges—in this particular situation, they ended up failing the narrator. Instead of providing relief, the coping mechanisms she employed actually contributed to the deterioration of her mental health. This failure led to a significant decline in her well-being, as she became increasingly overwhelmed by her inability to cope effectively. Her incorrect use of coping mechanisms resulted in other negative outcomes, including reliance on substances, emotional detachment from those around her, a growing sense of isolation, and a marked lack of interest in activities.



The effectiveness of coping mechanisms largely depends on how individuals use them to manage the stressors they face in life. Everyone has different ways of dealing with stress, and strategies that are effective for one person may not be effective for another. For example, some people may find comfort in seeking social support, while others may benefit more from techniques like positive reappraisal. Misapplication or over-reliance on certain strategies can lead to detrimental consequences. This is clearly seen in the novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* by Ottessa Moshfegh. Rather than obtaining the expected outcomes, leading to deeper emotional detachment and a greater sense of disconnection from her life.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The detrimental consequences found in the novel are mainly caused by the narrator's failure to effectively use her coping mechanisms and instead address her stressors superficially. The narrator's dishonesty about her true condition to the doctor actually prevented her from getting the results she actually wanted. Firstly, drug dependency arises as the narrator seeks social support by seeing a psychiatrist but lies about her condition. This leads to a misdiagnosis from the psychiatrist and results in her receiving a prescription for very strong medication, which she becomes dependent on. Secondly, the narrator's failure to wisely use her coping mechanisms, combined with her positive reappraisal that her 'year-long hibernation project' would succeed and have a positive impact on her, leads her to repress her own desires and suppress her life instinct. Consequently, this causes emotional detachment within the narrator. Thirdly, the narrator's trait of distancing herself from stressors ultimately leads her to isolate herself. Lastly, the narrator's escape-avoidance coping mechanism, which involves avoiding things that could trigger her anxiety and stress, results in her losing motivation and interest in the life around her.

The detrimental consequences experienced by the narrator are not caused by the coping mechanisms themselves being negative for humans. On the contrary, coping mechanisms are essentially tools designed to help individuals manage pressure and stress in their lives. However, coping mechanisms can become detrimental when used improperly and not tailored to the individual's needs and conditions. In the narrator's case, instead of addressing the root of her problems and seeking appropriate solutions, she chooses to ignore them and look for shortcuts to avoid stress in her life. This results in inappropriate use of coping mechanisms, which ultimately worsens her mental and emotional state. By lying about her actual condition, she received different treatment. She consciously chose to deceive her psychiatrist to obtain stronger medication so she could sleep for longer periods than usual. This dishonesty led her to outcomes different from what she initially expected; instead of becoming a new person, she ended up becoming someone devoid of feelings. By not confronting the root issues, the narrator becomes trapped in a cycle that exacerbates her situation. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the use of healthy and effective coping mechanisms in dealing with stress and life pressures.

The author hopes that this thesis can serve as a source of knowledge and provide new insights for readers. The author acknowledges that there are limitations in this thesis that can be improved through further research. For future studies, one could use the same object of analysis but explore different topics, such as from feminist or Marxist perspectives, or even employ reader-response approaches. Beyond just changing the topic of analysis, further studies could also shift the focus to a different object while maintaining the same field of analysis—utilizing psychoanalysis and referring to the 8 Scales of Coping Mechanisms by Folkman et al.

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