# A Project Study on Meaning- Making Coping

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**The project idea**

The purpose of this project is to implement international studies on meaning-making coping among people who have been affected by cancer; this in order to understand the influence of culture on the use of these methods. The term " meaning-making coping" is used to describe the coping methods related to existential questions, i.e., the whole spectrum of religious, spiritual (religious-spiritual and not religious-spiritual) and existential coping methods. The study is conducted in Sweden, China, South Korea, Turkey and Japan, Malaysia, Brazil and Philippines. It is on the process of conducting in Portugal and aimed to do the study in Iran, and Poland.

The project builds on two previous projects: a) a qualitative study on "Religious and spiritual coping methods among cancer sufferers in Sweden" (2000-2006). The grant was obtained from the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Sciences- FAS. Results have been published in the form of two monographs and an article. Final report has been sent. b) a survey on "Religious and spiritual coping methods among cancer sufferers in Sweden" (2010-2012).

Existential relevance for human well-being has been highlighted in recent decades. However, when I completed my survey of religious and spiritual coping methods in 2009, there were not any empirical study that showed the extent to which spirituality, rather than denominational religiosity, played the role of coping in serious crises. In the few studies that had been done had been focused on religious people. Many studies in this field, even internationally, had neglected the non-religious populations. Already in 2001-2004, I conducted a qualitative study to answer the question "what is the role of spiritual coping methods (even the non-religious) in life-threatening crises?" And "what is the role of culture in the selection of these methods." I had interviewed 51 cancer patients, religious and non-religious men and women 25-83 years of age (Ahmadi 2006). All had been socialized in the Swedish cultural environment. This exploratory study was used to design a more extensive quantitative study of cancer patients, men and women. I have been in 2009 conducted a quantitative study to examine the extent to which the results obtained in the qualitative study among patients with cancer in Sweden applies to a wider population of cancer patients in this country. The design of the new quantitative study I have, in addition to questions from the previous qualitative survey study also used a RCOPE questionnaire (designed by Kenneth I. Pargament). Surveys were distributed to various cancer organizations; 2355 people diagnosed with cancer responded. The majority of respondents (71%) were 59+.

**Main purpose and specific issues**

The goal of the international project is to study which meaning-making coping methods are used in different cultures. We also want to see what new meaning-making methods that can be found, in order to develop our theory about the importance of culture in coping.

**Method:**

The study in each country is conducted in two steps:

1. A qualitative semi-structured interview studies with persons who suffer from cancer is conducted. Each researcher team uses as a basis the interview questions that have been used in the Swedish study; questions, however, are modified based on a socio-cultural perspective which is used also in the comparative analysis of the collected data.

Selection: The informants (15-50 persons) selected from among male and female cancer patients aged 18 years and older. None of the participants should be chosen for their interest in religion or spirituality.

1. On the basis of the result of the qualitative study, a quantitative study will be conducted.

**Ethical considerations**

The aim and the questionnaire which is used in this project are checked by the Ethical committee (EPN) in Sweden and are approved.

The four general requirements for research are taken into consideration carefully. These are the information requirement, the requirement of consent, confidentiality requirements and usage requirements. All researchers have a rich experience in research among vulnerable people and are aware that in these studies dealt with sensitive information consideration should be given to the ethical rules.

In certain countries since the country’s law requires a local an additional ethical permission the permission is applied.

The four general requirements for research will be met with some modification. These are the information requirement, the requirement of consent, confidentiality requirements and usage requirements. All researchers have experience in research among vulnerable people and are aware that in these studies dealt with sensitive information and that consideration should be given to the highest degree of ethical rules.

**Researchers in the Project**

**Swedish study:**

1. Fereshteh Ahmadi, Ph. D. Full professor in Sociology, Faculty of Health and Occupational Studies, Department of Social Work and Psychology, University of Gävle, Sweden.
2. Nader Ahmadi, Ph.D. Full professor in Sociology, Faculty of Health and Occupational Studies, Department of Social Work and Psychology, University of Gävle. Nader Ahmadi is pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Gävle, Sweden.
3. Sam Larsson, Ph.D. Full professor in Social work, Faculty of Health and Occupational Studies, Department of Social Work and Psychology, University of Gävle.

**Korean Study:**

1. Kyung Mee Kim, Ph.D. in School of Social Welfare at University of Kansas in USA. She works at the Department of Social Welfare, Soongsil University, Seoul, South Korea.
2. Jisung Park, Ph.D. in Socil Welfare, aging studies, at State University of New York at Albany. She works as a researcher at the School of Social Welfare Chief Research fellow, Retirement Research Center, Samsung Life Insurance. Seoul, South Korea.

**Chinese study**

1. Chen Weijia, Ph.D., in Social Welfare, Postdoctoral Research Fellow,Chinese Academy of Social Science, Beijing, China.

**Turkish study**

1. Pelin Erbil, Ph.D in psychology, Oncology Clinic, Humanity Psychiatry, Istanbul, Turkey.
2. Önver, A. Cetrez, Associate professor. Ph.D. in Psychology of Religion and Cultural Psychology, Lecturer at the Faculty of Theology, Uppsala University, Sweden. Deputy Director Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Turkey.
3. Asli Ortakmac, President of Cancer Survivors Association, Istanbul, Turkey.

**Malaysian study**

1. Nur Atikah Mohamed Hussin, Ph.D in Social Work; lecturer at the Social Work Department, School of Social Sciences. Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
2. Mohd Taufik Mohammad, Ph. D. in Social Work; lecturer at the Social Work Department, School of Social Sciences.Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

**Philippian study**

1. Mae- Lanie, O. Poblete , Ph. D. student, College of Nursing, MSU- Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City, Philippines.

**Brazilian study**

1. Mary Rute G. Esperandio, Professor and psychologist. Department of Theology and Bioethics .Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, Brazil.
2. Julia M. C. FerreiraPontifical . Ph.D. student. Department of Psychology, Catholic University of Parana (PUCPR), Brazil.

**Portuguese study**

1. Paula Mena Matos, Professor of Pychology, Department of Psychology and education, University of Porto, Portugal.

**Japanese study**

1. Hiroko Kase, Ph.D. in Human Sciences, Professor of Gerontology, Department of Health Science and Social Welfare, Faculty of Human Sciences , Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.
2. Yi Xiaohe, MS student in Gerontology, Department of Health Science and Social Welfare, Faculty of Human Sciences , Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan.
3. Chizuko Saito, Professor in religion and Psychology, Department of Social system Studies, Doshisha Women’s college of Liberal Arts. Kyoto, Japan.

**Iranian study**

1. Mohammad Khodayarifard. Professor of clinical child Psychology and the Dean of the Faculty of Department of the Psychology and Education at the Tehran University, Iran.
2. Abdollah Khorami-Markani, Ph.D. Khoy Faculty of Medical Sciences, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Urmia, Iran.
3. Bagher Ghobari-Bonab, Ph.D. Faculty of Psychology and Education, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
4. Saeid Zandi, Ph.D. student Faculty of Psychology and Education, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.
5. Gholam Hossein Javanmard, Associate Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, Psychology Department, Payam Noor University of Iran.

# Publications Concerning Project meaning-making coping

## **Book:**

1. Ahmadi, Fereshteh & Ahmadi, Nader (2018- accepted), Existential Meaning-Making for Coping with Serious Illness: Studies in Secular and Religious Societies. Routledge.
2. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2015) (red.). Coping with Cancer in Sweden – A Search for Meaning. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.
3. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2008). *Kultur och Hälsa*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
4. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2006). *Culture, Religion and Spirituality in Coping; The Example of Cancer Patients in Sweden.* Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

## **Chapter in book:**

1. Coping och arbetsliv: Arbetsliv som en coping-strategi i Ahmadi, Fereshteh & Larsson, Sam. 2014. *Hälsa, livsmiljö och arbetsliv – ett socialt arbete perspektiv (Health, Living envirenmetn and Workings life (A Social Work Perspective)*. Gävle University Press: 52-77.
2. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2010). “Kultuuriperspektiiviline uurimus Rootsi vähipatsientide religioossetest ja vaimsetest toimetulekumeetoditest” (A study of the religious and spiritual coping methods among Swedish cancer patients from a cultural perspective) i P. Paal & E. Kalmre  
   (eds.) *Inimene, tervis ja haigused. Terviseteemaline artiklikogumik "Medica".* /Human Health and Illness from Cultural Perspective.  
   Tänapäeva folkloorist 9/ Contemporary Folklore 9  
   Tartu 2010: ELM Scholarly Press
3. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2008). “kulturens indvirkning på åndlig coping med kraef” (The impact of cancer in coping with cancer) i N. C. Hvidt & C. Johansen (red.) *kan bjerge flytte Troen* (Can the mountain move the faith?). Copenhagen: Gyldenda, Nordisk forlag: 211-232.

## **International referee articles:**

1. Ahmadi, F. Mohamed Hussin, N. A. Taufik Mohammad, M. (submitted 2017) Religion, Culture and Meaning- Making Coping: A study among Cancer Patients in Malaysia. *Journal of Religion and Health.*
2. Ahmadi, F., Certez Ö., A.Erbil, P., Ahmadi, N., Ortak, A. (2017) A Survey Study among Cancer Patients in Turkey: Meaning-making Coping. *Illness, Crisis and Loss*. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1054137317720751
3. Ahmadi, F. Erbil, P., Ahmadi, N, Certez Ö. A. (submitted 2016) Religion, Culture and Meaning-making coping: a study among cancer patients in Turkey. Journal of Religion and Health.
4. Ahmadi, F, Park, J, Kim, K. M. & Ahmadi, N. (2017), Meaning-making coping among cancer patients in Sweden and South Korea: A comparative perspective. Journal of religion and Health. 'Online First'  
   [http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10943-017-0383-3](http://www.springer.com/-/3/AVsMuCRXCYMfo4g26FzZ)
5. Ahmadi, N., Ahmadi, F. Erbil, P., Certez, Ö. A. (2016), Religious meaning-making coping in Turkey: a study among cancer patients. *Illness, Crisis and Loss*. Article first published online: October 6, 2016 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1054137316672042>. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1054137316672042
6. Ahmadi, F.; Park, J.; Mee Kim, K. & Ahmadi, N. (2016) Exploring existential coping resources: the perspective of Koreans with cancer. Journal of Religion and Health.

(http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10943-016-0219-6?wt\_mc=internal.event.1.SEM.ArticleAuthorOnlineFirst)

1. Ahmadi, N. & Ahmadi, F. (2015). The Use of Religious Coping Methods in a Secular Society: A survey study among cancer patients in Sweden. Illness, Crisis & Loss. 1054137315614513, first published on November 18, 2015 as doi:10.1177/1054137315614513
2. Ahmadi, F. & Ahmadi, N. (2013). Nature as the Most Important Coping Strategy among Cancer Patients: A Swedish Survey. Journal of Religion and Health 52(4):1177-90.
3. Fereshteh Ahmadi, Jisung Park, Kyung Mee Kim, & Nader Ahmadi (submitted 2016), Meaning-making coping among cancer patients in Sweden and South Korea: A comparative perspective. Journal of religion and Health.
4. Ahmadi, Fereshteh, Erbil, Pelin, Ahmadi, Nader & Cetrez, A. Önver . (submitted 2016). Religion, culture and meaning making coping: a study among cancer patients in Turkey. Journal of religion and Health.

## **Related essays (partly based on the project in question):**

1. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2016). Coping with Cancer through Music :Three Studies among Cancer Patients in Sweden, in Mandana Hashefi, Music Therapy in the management of Medical Conditions Mandana Hashefi. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
2. Ahmadi, Fereshteh (2013). Music as a method of coping with cancer: a qualitative study among cancer patients in Sweden. *Art and health*. 5(2):152-165.

(To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2013.780087)

1. Ahmadi, Fereshteh (2010). Song lyrics and the alteration of self-image. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, 20(3):225-241.
2. Ahamdi, Fereshteh. & Norberg, Maria. (2010). Aggressiv musik som copingstrategi (Aggressive music as a coping method) *Socialmedicinsk tidskrift* 87(2):78-86) (Journal of Social Medicine*), Tema Kultur och hälsa.*
3. Ahmadi, Fereshteh. (2009). Hard and Heavy Music: Can It Make a Difference in the Young Cancer Patients’ Life? Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy, 9(2). (A referee online journal). Retrieved July 2, 2009, from http://www.voices.no/mainissues/mi40009000302.php