

# **The Study of Occupational Stresses and Coping Methods among Special Education Teachers in Macao**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the occupational stresses and coping methods among special education teachers in Macao. This study is to interrogate the interrelationship between occupational stress and coping methods, and also focuses on analyzing how the different backgrounds influence these teachers.

The subjects are teachers who work full time in the special education organization in Macao in 2003/2004 academic year. The research tool is a questionnaire called "The Feeling of Work in Special Education Teachers". The total numbers of response are 77 subjects, which take up 84.6% of the whole subject. In this study, the population is finite and the sample is relatively big, we cannot use inferential statistical analysis which assume normal distribution. Hence, Means, Standard Deviation and Correlation were used to analyze data from the questionnaire.

The results of this study are concluded as follows:

1. The amount of work pressures that special education teachers experience falls in the mid range. Most pressure comes from "task overload", followed gradations are "professional adequacy", "teaching students", "work with parents", "work conditions" and "relationship between colleagues".
2. Coping methods that special education teachers often use are "reasonable analysis", "solving problems" and "seeking support". They seldom use the "emotional adjustment" and "escape-avoidance" methods.
3. There were big differences in the personal background variables in the occupational stresses of special education teachers: gender, age, years of teaching experience, years of teaching experience in special education, professional background, level of education, and teaching position held.
4. For coping methods, there were big differences seen regarding the personal background variables of special education teachers: gender, age, years of teaching experience, years of teaching experience in special education, professional background, level of education and teaching position held.
5. The "high stress" group uses the overall coping methods and the "solving problems", "escape-avoidance", "seeking support" and "emotional adjustment" coping methods more frequently than the "middle stress" and "lower stress" group.
6. In the study, we found that all aspects of the occupational stress and coping methods have positive correlation.

Based upon the above study, suggestions are made to the special education teachers and the special education administration in Macao. Lastly, I gave suggestions pertaining to the situation in real practice of this study for prospective study.