

Self-esteem and coping strategies: a study on how Macau youth cope with peer problems

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how Macau youth cope with peer problems and their levels of self-esteem in order to investigate the relationships between coping strategies of peer problems and self-esteem. A sample of 497 youths who studied at Junior 1 and Senior 1 from three Catholic Schools in Macau were asked to complete the COPE scale for peer problems and Self-esteem Inventory (SEI). The t-test, One-way ANOVA, and Pearson's Product-moment Correlation analysis were used to analyze the data and the results were shown as below:

1. The results indicated that there was no gender difference on problem-focused coping strategy and avoidance coping strategy were found in the study. However, females were found to use emotion-focused coping strategy more frequently than males.
2. There was no age difference on using emotion-focused coping strategy and avoidance coping strategy. But the results showed a significant increase in using problem-focused strategy among growing age.
3. The study showed that Macau youths commonly had quite high levels of self-esteem and there was no gender difference in the levels of self-esteem.
4. The results also showed that 13-14 years old youth had the lowest self esteem and above 19 years old had the highest self-esteem among the overall participants.
5. The youths who had the higher self-esteem used more problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies, and less avoidance coping strategies than those who had the lower self-esteem.

Finally, according to the conclusion, implications and future research suggestions were also discussed in the study.

Key words: Peer problems, coping strategies, self-esteem, Macau youth