Face, Stigma and Mental Health Influences Help-Seeking Attitudes of Macao College Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between face concerns, stigma, psychological health, and help-seeking for mental health services of Macao college students. The study gathered data from 391 students attending the University of Macau, with 277 students from Macao and 114 students from Mainland China. Participants were asked to complete questionnaires measuring attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, loss of face, self-stigma, public-stigma, and psychological health. Results showed that positive attitudes toward help-seeking were significantly negatively correlated with self-stigma, face concerns and public-stigma; there was no significant correlation with psychological distress. Psychological distress was positively correlated with face concerns, self-stigma and public-stigma. Stigma (self- and public-) was found to be significantly positively associated with face concerns, but the correlations were weak. Findings also showed that Macao students had higher levels of distress, and endorsed greater self-stigma and public-stigma than Mainland Chinese students; however, the groups did not differ in face concerns. Self-stigma was the strongest predictor of professional help-seeking. Additional findings showed that female students tended to have more positive attitudes toward help-seeking and experienced greater psychological distress than male students.

Keywords: loss of face, stigma, attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help, Asian students, Macao