

Gender and Age Differences in Problem Behaviors and Coping Strategies among Adolescents in Chanthaburi, Thailand

Monthana Hemchayat,¹ PhD, RN
Pinnarate Gardudom,² MSN, RN
Arunya Buntum,³ MSN, RN
Lalana Pratum,⁴ MSN, RN

Abstract

There is now an increasing interest in studying strategies of coping during childhood and adolescence since problem behaviors among this population are rising. The purpose of this study was to examine gender and age differences in problem behaviors and coping strategies among adolescents. The total participants of 2072 in this study consisted of 996 male and 1076 female students from 8 public schools in Chanthaburi, Thailand. These students were attending in Mathayomsuksa 1, 2 and 3. A mean age of the sample was 13.50 years ($SD = .97$). Problem behaviors were assessed by a questionnaire developed by the researchers, where as coping strategies were measured by a questionnaire adapted from A-COPE (Patterson & McCubbin, 1983). Data were analyzed by mean, SD ., t -test, and one-way ANOVA.

Findings revealed that adolescent boys had significantly higher in the number of problem behaviors than girls ($t = 7.17, p < .001$), while girls used coping strategies greater than boys for both positive coping strategies ($t = 9.87, p < .001$) and negative coping strategies ($t = 4.54, p < .001$). According to age, it appeared that the students in Mathayomsuksa 3 had significantly higher in the number of problem behaviors than their peers in mathayomsuksa 1 and 2 ($F_{(2,2070)} = 15.71, p < .01$). Considering coping strategies, it was found that the older adolescents indicated higher levels of negative coping use ($F_{(2,2067)} = 59.39, p < .001$).

In conclusion, this study provides evidence of problem behaviors among male and female adolescent students in middle schools as well as reveals the use of coping strategies in terms of positive and negative coping strategies. However, further studies are still needed to identify effective coping strategies reducing problem behaviors in adolescents.

Keywords: Coping, problem behavior, adolescents

¹ Nursing instructor, Department of Fundamental of Nursing, Phrapokklao Nursing College, Chanthaburi, Thailand

² Nursing instructor, Department of Community health Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing, Phrapokklao Nursing College, Chanthaburi, Thailand

³ Nursing instructor, Department of Community health Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing, Phrapokklao Nursing College, Chanthaburi, Thailand

⁴ Nursing instructor, Department of Community health Nursing and Psychiatric Nursing, Phrapokklao Nursing College, Chanthaburi, Thailand