

# The Differences in Problem Behaviors and Coping Strategies among Adolescent Students in Schools Located in Rural and Urban Areas of Chanthaburi, Thailand

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## Abstract

### Background

Problem behaviors in adolescence are affected by several factors. Environment is considered as a significant factor on developing process during this period of life.

### Methods

This study was conducted to examine the differences in problem behaviors and coping strategies among adolescent students in schools located in rural and urban areas of Chanthaburi, Thailand. The total participants of 2,072 in this study consisted of 1,003 students in urban schools and 1,069 in rural schools. These students were attending in Mathayomsuksa 1, 2, and 3 (grade 7, 8, 9). A mean age of the sample was 13.5 ( $\pm .97$ ) years. Problem behaviors were assessed by a questionnaire developed by the researchers, where as coping strategies were measured by a questionnaire adapted from A-COPE (Petterson & McCubbin, 1983). Data were analyzed by mean, SD., t- test, and one-way ANOVA.

### Results

The results revealed that the students in urban schools had significantly higher in the number of problem behaviors than their peers in rural schools ( $t = 6.73, p < .001$ ). The problem behaviors which the students in urban schools had more frequent than the students in rural schools included 1) playing computer games more than 2 hours/day, 2) arguing with their parents, 3) putting on probation in school, 4) gambling, 5) stealing, 6) fighting, 7) annoying others, 8) thinking of killing, 9) hurting themselves, and 10) having suicide thought. It was also found that the students in urban schools used negative coping strategies greater than the students in rural schools ( $t = 3.23, p = .001$ ).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study indicates that the adolescent students in urban schools have more problem behaviors. In addition, they also employ negative coping strategies. These may result in a vicious cycle of problems. Therefore, the intervention to deter the cycle of problems for adolescents in different areas may need to design specifically for each group.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, problem behaviors, coping strategy

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