Association of Anger Coping Strategies and Self-esteem among College Students

Kil-Soo Chung and Hee-Sook Sim

1Department of Nursing, Kyung-in Women’s University, Incheon, 21041, Korea; kschung@kiwu.ac.kr
2Department of Nursing Science, Pai Chai University, Daejeon, 35345, Korea; sim0941@pcu.ac.kr

Abstract

Objectives: There have been many researches on the relationship between self-esteem and aggressive behaviors. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and anger coping strategies of college students.

Methods/Statistical Analysis: The Rosenberg’s self-esteem scale and Anger Coping Inventory (ACI) were administered to all participants of 180 college students in Korea. The ACI consisted of 19 items and 5 strategies.

Findings: There were significantly positive correlations between self-esteem and problem-solving, tension-releasing among anger coping strategies. No significant correlation was found between self-esteem and the other three kinds of anger coping strategies.

Improvements/Applications: Based on the findings of this study, this research suggests that there should be more intervention to Korean nursing students in order to make them manage their anger more properly and improve their self-esteem.

Keywords: Anger Coping Strategy, College Students, Self-Esteem

1. Introduction

Many scholars have reported findings on the relationships between self-esteem and aggressive behaviors. It is generally known that low self-esteem is related to causing aggressive and violent behaviors, as well as negative consequences, such as anger, depression and anxiety.

According to a Chinese report of evaluating the relationship between Chinese students’ self-esteem and aggression by meta-analysis, all subtypes of aggression, expect verbal aggression were negative correlations with self-esteem statistically significant.

While college students are mature physically, they are not fully developed socially and psychologically. College students are experiencing complex stress and conflict for solving various problems in their college life. College years are also the period when they prepare for successful life after graduation.

In indicated that self-esteem was formed by interaction with environment and, hence, was positive or negative intentional recognition on the self as a special object. Self-esteem means to be valuable and respectful as well as to be desirable and meaningful. Self-esteem is regarded as either positive or negative emotion from various environments due to either external or internal conditions. In other words, self-esteem is of the entire emotion on the self when regarding him/her as one particular subject. Those with a positive emotion on themselves regard them and their lives to be valuable and trust themselves and exert an effort to seamlessly solve various issues they currently have. On the other hand, those with negative emotions on themselves realize lives to be dreadful and negative while avoiding various issues and becoming angry and distrustful on their environments and social lives without confident.

Self-esteem is a factor that influences on depression, misdeed and satisfaction on lives as indices for adjusted state and also on subjective well-being. Hereupon, it influences on attitudes on others and their behavior patterns and characteristics as well as emotional and psychological well-being. College students tend to accept various perspectives and values to be a member of society and

*Author for correspondence
change themselves. Therefore, they experience confusion about themselves. Such confusion evaluates themselves in various perspectives and evaluation becomes a course of establishing the self-esteem. Positive self-esteem established in this period makes one realize how they are stable in various environments while making them challenge for their dreams and pioneering their lives to lead meaningful lives.

In fact, self-esteem has been researched as a major variable that predicted problematic behaviors for a long time. Those with positive self-esteem tend to be happy and stable and also to have positive energy. However, those with negative self-esteem are not happy or stable while frequently feeling anger or irritation.

In addition, many psychologists are concerned with the research about anger of adolescents. Their researches have indicated that high level of anger and mal-adaptive expression of anger have negatively influenced on mental or physical health, school lives and interpersonal relationship of adolescents.

Therefore, it is required to precede a research in dealing with types of strategies for coping with anger used among college students and what difference they make on the self-esteem as an important variable in their emotions and lives from strategies for coping with anger.

As such, this study was conducted to explore the relation of self-esteem and anger coping strategies among nursing students in Korea.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design

This research was a descriptive cross-sectional study to determine the relation between self-esteem and anger coping strategies in Korean college students.

2.2 Subjects

Subjects in this study are 180 female college students who resided in Gyeonggi-do, Korea. Survey copies were distributed to those who were explained with the purpose of this study and agreed to participate in it and date have been collected from them for 2 weeks in June, 2015.

2.3 Measurements

The measurements were based on the Korean version of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Criteria were comprised of 4-score Liker criteria including from 1 on ‘very not likely’ to 4 on ‘very likely’ with 10 questions. Questions were comprised of 5 positive questions and 5 negative question and negative questions were calculated and graded after converting to inverse score. The higher the score was, the higher the self-esteem turned out to be. The scope of total score was from 10 to 50. Cronbach’s α of these criteria was .87.

And anger coping scale which was rating on a 5-point Likert type scale and consisted 19 items and 5 factors; 3 items of behavioral aggression, 5 items of problem-solving, 4 items of verbal aggression, 4 items of tension-releasing, 3 items of anger suppression was used.

Higher points on the scale indicate higher levels of anger coping strategies and self-esteem.

2.4 Data Analysis Method

All statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 22.0. The Pearson correlation coefficient was adopted to analyze the relationships between self-esteem and anger coping strategies.

3. Findings

As seen in Table 1, average score of perceived self-esteem was 29.10±5.12. Average scores of anger coping strategies were as follows; behavioral aggression (0.43±0.98), problem-solving (9.58±3.84), verbal aggression (4.21±2.88), tension-releasing (3.06±2.24), anger suppression (4.32±2.41).

| Variables                      | Mean | SD  | Max | Min |
|--------------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| Self-esteem                   | 29.10| 5.12| 12  | 39  |
| Anger Coping Strategies       |      |     |     |     |
| Behavioral aggression         | 0.43 | 0.98| 0   | 6   |
| Problem-solving               | 9.58 | 3.84| 0   | 20  |
| Verbal aggression             | 4.21 | 2.88| 0   | 14  |
| Tension-releasing             | 3.06 | 2.24| 0   | 12  |
| Anger suppression             | 4.32 | 2.41| 0   | 11  |

The correlation coefficients for anger coping strategies and self-esteem are shown in Table 2.
Table 2. Correlations among self-esteem and anger coping strategies (N = 180)

| Variables | Pearson Correlation |
|-----------|---------------------|
| a) Self-esteem | b) | c) | d) | e) |
| Anger Coping Strategies | | | | |
| Behavioral aggression | .014 | | | |
| Problem-solving | .329” | -.027 | | |
| Verbal aggression | .059 | .490” | -.013 | | |
| Tension-releasing strategy | .241” | .278” | .357” | -.015 | | |
| Anger suppression | -.107 | .035 | .094 | -.052 | .089 | |

There was a strong positive relationship (r = .329, p = .000) between self-esteem (29.10±5.12) and problem-solving (9.58±3.84) among anger coping strategies, respectively. And there was a weak positive relationship (r = .241, p = .001) between self-esteem and tension-releasing strategy (3.06±2.24), respectively.

Meanwhile, there was not statistically significant correlation with the other three kinds of anger coping strategies; verbal aggression, tension-releasing, anger suppression (Table 2).

And there was a strong positive relationship (r = .490, p = .000) between behavior and verbal aggression among anger coping strategies, respectively. There was a weak positive correlation (r = .278, p = .001) with tension-releasing strategy and behavior aggression strategy, respectively. Tension-releasing coping strategies about anger was a strong positive correlation (r = .490, p = .000) with problem-solving strategy, respectively.

4. Conclusion

Results showed positive correlation between self-esteem and problem-solving and tension releasing strategies among their anger coping strategies, significantly (p<.01).

Unlike previous studies indicating that those with high level of suppressing the anger turned out to have lower level of self-esteem compared to those with lower level of anger suppression while such internal suppression of anger built negative relationship with mental health, anger suppression was not statistically significant in terms of negative relationship on self-esteem in this study. Such result probably owes for the difference of criteria where tension relieving reaction as well as problem-solving reaction was added on top of expression or suppression of anger in criteria of strategies for coping with anger unlike previous criteria of anger.

In general, those with positive self-esteem tend to think positively and behave in negative circumstances, have lower level of harmful aggression on others and anti-social activities and represent well-adjusted behaviors in daily lives. On the other hand, those with negative self-esteem tend to have hostility and represent anti-social and aggressive behaviors. Those with low level of self-esteem express anger in a negative manner and expression of anger in a negative manner tends to have their self-esteem evaluated to be low by circumstances and themselves. This makes them express anger in a negative manner in a vicious cycle. However, those with high level of self-esteem tend to understand anger they feel and express it in a positively way. Such an expression makes their self-esteem improved.

The results suggest the development and operation of educational programs that promote self-esteem and anger coping strategies of Korean nursing students. Therefore, self-esteem and anger are interrelated emotions that need to be dealt with for personal growth. In addition, a strong positive relationship between self-esteem and anger coping strategies exists in order to improve self-esteem. It must be understood and promoted in their relationships in the case of nursing students.

Based on the findings of this study, this research suggests that there should be more intervention to Korean nursing students in order to make them manage their anger more properly and promote their self-esteem in order to make college students enjoy better college life.

5. Acknowledgment

This work was supported in part by the research grant of Pai Chai University in 2016.

6. References

1. Teng Z, Liu Y, Guo C. A meta-analysis of the relationship between self-esteem and aggression among Chinese students. Aggression and Violent Behavior. 2015; 21:45–54.
2. Kim SK. Life stress in freshman and adjustment to college. Korean Journal of Youth Studies. 2003; 10(2):215–37.
3. Moon WH. A study on student’s stress, coping and emotional experiences in college life. Journal of Daejeon Health Sciences College. 2011; 32:429–50.
4. Rosenberg M. Society and the adolescent self-image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 1965; 148(3671):804.
5. Cho HJ. The effects of the Tarot group counseling program on the self-esteem and anger-control of high school students. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Korea: University of Daegu Haany; 2015.
6. Jeon YS. Relationships between aggression and self-esteem of youth in rural schools. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Korea: University of Kyungsung; 2014.
7. Seo SY. The relationships among social support, anger expression style and depression of college students. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Korea: University of Hong-Ik; 2001.
8. Won HT, Lee HJ. Exploratory study of the relationship between paranoid tendency, self-concept and self-consciousness. Proceedings of KPA Conference; Seoul, Korea. 1995. p. 277–90.
9. Kho KB, Park JK. Development of the anger coping scale. Journal of Korean Neuropsychiatric Association. 2005; 44(4):477–88.
10. Jean IJ. The relation of self-control and self-esteem on the adolescent's anger level and anger expression mode. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Korea: University of Sogang; 2002.