

Chapter 49

The Effects of Multicultural Adolescents' Trauma and Hopelessness on Problem Behaviors in South Korea

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article was to examine the effects of multicultural adolescents' trauma and hopelessness on problem behaviors. The research subjects consisted of 108 adolescents (boys = 54, girls = 54) from multicultural families. They were adolescents aged between 12 and 20. The measures of the current study include scales for assessing adolescents' trauma, hopelessness, and problem behaviors. The data was analyzed using Pearson correlations, SPSS 21.0 program and AMOS 18.0 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Results demonstrated that multicultural adolescents' trauma, hopelessness, and problem behaviors were significantly correlated. Also, trauma had an indirect effect through hopelessness, as well as a direct effect on problem behaviors of adolescents. The importance of adolescents' cognition was identified on problem behaviors.

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INTRODUCTION

Our society has converted to multicultural society rapidly. According to the report of the Education Ministry (2015), the number of multicultural students has risen 82,536. This means a 14,530 (18%) increase compared to the previous year. For 5 years, the number of multicultural students in middle/high school has increased more than 10 times. Therefore, this study will inspect the correlation among the conflicts of identity, which was caused by difference of culture, experience of discrimination, emotional regulation, and problem behaviors.

Multicultural adolescents show a denial feature because of their bicultural atmosphere. They have not adopted themselves and harmonized with Korean culture. Further, they have various kinds of hardship, including low status of their parents, descents of poverty, and dullness of learning (Jung, 2006). In this bicultural atmosphere, their parents' sense of values and lifestyles confront them with many troubles. In particular, they have gone through what was violated by teachers or friends (Lee, 2007). Maladjustment, which occurred by process of physical, social, and mental growth became more serious than general youth (Woo, 2007). In addition to this, the troubles of emotional behavior are influenced by discriminating experiences (Kim, 2016).

Multicultural adolescents will grow as members of society through interaction with family, friends, and school. However, these kinds of prejudice and discrimination put their health, emotion, and behavior in danger seriously (Compas et al., 2001). During their childhood and adolescence, the damage of trauma that they experienced can lead to depression, anxiety, emotional uneasiness, trouble of a social nature (Jang, 2004), and internalizing and externalizing problems (Kim, 2009). In other words, if they have experienced a variety of social prejudice and stress, they go through depression more than the general youth (Yang et al., 2012; Park & Nam, 2010).

However, a review of literature on the topic of multicultural adolescents show that these studies are mostly focused on the youth's school adjustment (Kim, 2015; Park, 2010; Peck, Kim, & Jung, 2014; Shim, Lee, & Park, 2013; Jang & Chun, 2013; Jung, 2013), and sociocultural adjustment or resilience issues (Uhm, 2013; Lee & Kang, 2011; Jung & Kim, 2012). Since the youth experience a combination of biological, emotional and social changes and become more self-conscious through puberty in adolescence, a failure to establish a healthy self during this period will cause a variety of problem behaviors (Herrmann, McWhirter, & Sipsas-Herrmann, 1997; Levy, 1997). Thus, it is necessary to examine the multicultural youth's emotional and social adjustment processes. In fact, the multicultural youth showed a higher tendency of hyperactivity, aggressive or passive behaviors than the general youth (Yoo, 1999); were bullied upon by the peers due to inarticulate pronunciation or communicational difficulties, and eventually developed not only negative relationships with others but also serious maladjustment issues such as violence and larceny (Lee, 2007). In particular, those youths who had traumatic experiences during early childhood from either physical or emotional abuse showed a higher tendency to experience depression or conduct aggressive behaviors (Ahn et al., 1999). These studies show that when the multicultural adolescents – who should grow to become healthy members of our society through interactions with family, peers, and schools - are exposed to various social prejudices and suffer traumatic experiences from abuses or other stressful events, they will experience either internalization or externalization of depression, anxiety, aggressiveness, and delinquency.

Moreover, when faced with stressful events, adolescents can develop a negative perception due to hopelessness (Choi, 2004), which can further lead to emotional or behavioral issues. Hopelessness can be defined as a negative expectancy of one's future, which is based on a belief that there is no one

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