

The Effect of Emotion Self-Confidence and Perceived Social Support on Hong Kong Higher-Education Students' Suicide-Related Emotional Experiences

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Abstract : There is growing public concern over the increasing prevalence of student suicide in Hong Kong. Some identify the problem with insufficient social support, while some attribute it to the vast fluctuations in emotional experience and the hindrances to emotion-regulation, both typical of adolescence and emerging adulthood. This study is thus designed to explore the respective effect of perceived social support and emotion self-confidence, on positive emotions and negative emotions. Fifty-seven Hong Kong higher-education students (17 males, 40 females) aged between 18 and 25 ($M = 21.78$) responded to an online questionnaire consisted of self-reported measures of perceived social support, emotional self-confidence, positive emotions, and negative emotions. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed that emotional self-confidence positively associated with positive emotions and negatively with negative emotions, while perceived social support positively associated with positive emotions but was not related to negative emotions. Perceived social support and emotional self-confidence both predicted positive emotions, but did not interact to predict any emotional outcome. It is concluded that students' positive and negative emotional experiences are closely related to their emotion-regulation process. But for social support, its effect is merely protective, meaning that although perceived social support generally promotes positive emotions, it alone does not suffice to alleviate students' negative emotions. These conclusions carry profound implications to suicide prevention practices, including that most existing suicide prevention campaigns should advance from merely fostering mutual support to directly promoting adaptive coping of emotional negativity.

Keywords : emerging adulthood, emotional self-confidence, hong kong, perceived social support, suicide prevention

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