Nursing students’ emotional intelligences and coping strategies

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the emotional intelligence and coping strategies for nursing students. The data was collected by questionnaires from 219 nursing students. Results of correlation showed that EI has a positive relation with problem solving coping and social support seeking coping. The findings suggest that increased feelings of control and emotional competence assist nursing students to adopt active and effective coping strategies when dealing with stress. This study highlights the potential value of facilitating the EI of nursing students.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, coping strategies, student

1 Introduction

Leading theorists have defined emotional intelligence (EI) as an intelligence comprising the ability to perceive emotions, integrate emotions to facilitate thinking, understand emotions, and to regulate or manage emotions to promote personal growth [1].

There is increasing interest in the associations of EI with health and well-being. EI has been linked to coping [2]. Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioral and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events. These processes are thought to be important psychological resources for adaptive intrapersonal and interpersonal emotional functioning [3].

The primary approaches toward the process of coping differentiate three major styles: the problem-focused coping which its difference is direct function to reduce pressures or increase stress management skills; emotional-focused coping which its difference is cognitive strategies that delay solving or removing stress factor by giving a new name and meaning; and avoidant-focused coping style which its main characteristic is to confront stress factor [4].

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Is the individual’s coping style different from stress conditions based on his emotional intelligence? The main objectives of this research were to study the relationship between EI and the coping strategies for nursing students.

2 Method

2.1 Study design

This study assesses the relationship between the emotional intelligences and coping strategies in nursing students.

2.2 Sampling and data collection

Two hundred nineteen nursing students at a university in D city took part in this study. Data were collected using face to face interview with a structured questionnaire. The participant in this study, who consented to participate, understood the purpose of this study, and had the complete capacity to verbally communicate in Korean.

2.3 Instruments

Emotional intelligence: In order to determine the coping strategy, a tool of the 16 questions was used which was developed by Jeon [5]. 7-point Likert scale was used. Higher score means positive perception of emotional intelligence.

Coping strategies: The Korean version Coping Strategy Indicator (K-CSI) of Shin [6] was used. It consists of 33 questions with the 3-point Likert scale.

2.4 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS Win 15.0 program. Descriptive statistics was determined for all demographic variables. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients were used to estimate internal consistency and reliability of the tools. Emotional intelligences and coping strategies were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The differences in emotional intelligences and coping strategies according to demographic data were analyzed using ANOVA and Scheffé test for post-hoc test. Pearson’s correlations were performed in order to identify the degree of relations of variables. General statistical techniques were used to analyze the data based on an alpha level of .05.
3 Results

3.1 Emotional intelligences and coping strategies levels

Respondents included 219 college students which aged 17-23 years. The mean age was 18.8 years (SD=.74). The sample was predominantly female (91.3%). The descriptive statistics for the nursing students’ emotional intelligences and coping strategies were done. The mean score for the emotional intelligence was 5.00 on a scale of 1-7. The score of problem-solving coping strategy was 2.13, social support seeking coping strategy was 2.25, and avoidance coping strategy was 1.76 on a scale of 1-3.

3.2 Correlation between emotional intelligences and coping strategies.

The overall mean emotional intelligence score was correlated with the mean problem solving coping strategy scores (r=.396 at p<.001) and social support seeking coping strategy scores (r=.178 at p=.008). Each of the emotional intelligence factors was significantly correlated with coping strategies, with one exceptions; the factor of avoidance coping strategy (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between emotional intelligences and coping strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional intelligences</th>
<th>Problem solving</th>
<th>Social support seeking</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>.396(&lt;.001)</td>
<td>.178(.008)</td>
<td>-.031(.648)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OEA</td>
<td>.222(.001)</td>
<td>.132(.051)</td>
<td>.011(.870)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROE</td>
<td>.119(.080)</td>
<td>.164(.016)</td>
<td>.031(.645)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UOE</td>
<td>.401(&lt;.001)</td>
<td>.130(.056)</td>
<td>-.102(.135)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEA=self-emotional appraisal; OEA=others’ emotional appraisal; ROE=regulation of emotion; UOE=use of emotion.

4 Discussion

In this study, the EI has positive relationship with problem solving coping and social support seeking coping. The findings suggest that increased feelings of control and emotional competence assist nursing students to adopt active and effective coping strategies when dealing with stress. These results which confirm the foresees of the present research and conforms to the results and necessities of findings of previous research in relation with EI [1][2][4][7]

In summary, the results of research showed that it is important that nursing educators develop a curriculum and classroom techniques that foster emotional
intelligence to enhance coping strategies of stress control. In addition, nursing educators should build strategies to support students to have emotional intelligences for coping strategies in nursing education.

References