

SELF-ESTEEM AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT ATTENDING SPECIAL CLASS

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Past studies have shown that self-esteem is correlated with psychological well being, achievement and ability to cope with stressful life events. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of self-esteem and coping strategies among adolescents with hearing impairment attending special class. The comparison between level of self-esteem and coping strategies among two groups of respondents; congenital hearing loss and acquired hearing loss were discussed. A total of 17 adolescents with hearing impairment participated in this study. The respondents were selected from Sekolah Menengah Integrasi Masalah Pendengaran around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to investigate the level of self-esteem while Jambor Coping Strategies Scale was used to identify type of coping strategies used by the respondents. Descriptive analysis was used to determine the level of self-esteem and type of coping strategies used by the respondents. The findings revealed high self-esteem for both groups of respondents; congenital and acquired hearing loss. It also showed contradiction of response for items in Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. This indicated that respondents evaluate themselves differently for each personal aspect and this was influenced by external factors such as behaviours and perception from other people. Respondents with congenital hearing loss used Covering technique as their main coping strategies while respondents with acquired hearing loss used Bicultural skills. The selection of coping strategies was influenced by the effectiveness of communication and environmental factors like social interaction with normal hearing peers. Each coping strategy has their own superiority in handling communication problems. These data offer a preliminary step in understand the psychosocial aspect of hearing impaired adolescents in Malaysia. It hopes to increase people's (eg: family) awareness regarding self-esteem and coping strategies used by adolescents with hearing impairment.

Md Almi, S.N. 2011. Self-Esteem and Coping Strategies Among Adolescents with Hearing Impairment Attending Special Class. Bachelor of Speech Science Thesis. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.