

Abstract

In this study, the relationship between ambivalence over emotional expression and mental health in adolescence was investigated. This study replicated the findings in King and Emmons' s study (1990) that ambivalence has negative impact on mental health and aimed to further study the relationship between ambivalence and mental health under different social contexts. The social contexts in this study referred to different kinds of people. Four hundreds and fifty-six participants from three secondary schools studying form one, three and five were asked to fill out King and Emmons's (1990) Ambivalence over Emotional Expressiveness Questionnaire (AEQ) and Emotional Expressiveness Questionnaire (EEQ) considering people in general, parents, peers and strangers. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) and other psychological well-being measures such as self-esteem and life satisfaction were administered to assess mental health. GHQ was divided into subscales of somatic symptoms, anxiety and insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression, for analysis. Results showed that strangers could be excluded when examining the effect of ambivalence on mental health. Besides, ambivalence highly associates with the subscale of anxiety and insomnia and ambivalence under peers has high predictive power to general health. The present findings have implication in understanding adolescents' emotional problems and their mental health.