

Abstract

INTRODUCTION. Recent studies have examined the motivation for university students to seek professional help after the anti-ELAB movement and COVID-19 pandemic in Hong Kong. We proposed a moderated mediation model to examine the relationship between pandemic stress, unrest stress, and motivation to seek professional help among university students in Hong Kong, with depressive symptoms as the mediator, positive coping as the first-stage moderator, and self-perception of counselling service (in terms of effectiveness, timeliness, and affordability) as the second-stage moderators.

METHODS. Moderated mediation analysis was conducted with the 95 college participants using the Variable System (VS) software under the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) framework.

RESULTS. The analysis reveals a direct effect of pandemic stress on motivation to seek professional help, while positive coping moderates the effect of unrest stress on the development of depressive symptoms and perceived affordability moderates the effect of depressive symptoms on the motivation to seek professional help. No significant effect is observed in other pathways.

IMPLICATIONS. The present study has a methodological implication for future epidemiological studies and practical implication in the aspects of policymaking and post-traumatic intervention.

Keywords: *Moderated Mediation, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), COVID-19, anti-ELAB movement, Motivation*