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Adolescents in Private Schools Cope Better

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Reviewed by John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on October 30, 2010

Public versus private education — it's a decision many parents grapple with when considering the best route for their children.

New research out of the University of Granada now points to an emotional advantage for adolescents who attend private school in that they appear to be able to cope better with problems than their public school counterparts.

Led by Ma Paz Bermúdez and Inmaculada Teva y Gualberto Buena-Casal, both professors with the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Granada, the researchers suggest that educational framework may affect student behavior.

Bermúdez noted that "the results obtained show that the type of education center may affect students' behavior, due to the different social, cultural or education structure that each center has."

Researchers found that adolescents attending private schools not only utilize more efficient strategies to cope with problems, they also use emotion-oriented and problem-oriented coping.

By using emotion-oriented coping, adolescents in private schools utilized strategies that were based on their relationships with others such as seeking out support from spiritual groups, talking with friends or identifying professional help.

With problem-oriented coping, these students more frequently employed strategies that would align with solving the problem that existed. In this case, the students may have used deep concentration, focused on the positive or sought out physical entertainment such as sports.

The study encompassed 4,456 Spanish students between the ages of 13 and 18. Of this sample, 47.3 percent were male, and 52.7 percent were female.

The breakout of public to private school enrollment consisted of 67.6 percent at public schools and 32.4 percent at private schools.

Researchers suggested that "when adolescents cope poorly with a problem, this may lead them to high-risk behaviors such as drug abuse, crime or sexual risk behavior," and in light of this study they suggest that "future researchers should analyze how the type of strategy employed by adolescents in public and private schools affects their actual behavior in specific risky situations, such as drug abuse, sexuality, etc."

While this study suggests better coping skills for children who attend private schools, other recent studies revealed that student in public schools perform just as well academically than their private school counterparts, and in some subjects, better.

Findings from this recent study out of the University of Granada were recently published in the journal *Psicotema*.

Source: [University of Granada](#)

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