

The Utilization of Counseling Services by International Students in Relation to Their Academic and Social Adjustment Issues
 (Penggunaan Perkhidmatan Kaunseling oleh Pelajar Antarabangsa dalam Hubungan Terhadap Isu Akademik dan Penyesuaian Sosial)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the utilization of counseling services among International Students who struggle with academic and social adjustment issue with a focus on the Republic of China and Indonesian population at one university in Malaysia. The study examined descriptive information regarding the use of counseling services and the relationship to international students' academic and social adjustment. In addition, the statistical relationship between the academic and social adjustment of Chinese and Indonesian students and their utilization and non-utilization of counseling services was examined. The study found that the more students went to counseling services, the less academic and social adjustment issues among international students, and the better they coped with adjustment issues. Also, the results of this study indicate that friends and academic advisors were the most preferred source to get advice about adjustment issues rather than psychological helps at the university health center. This research area will be beneficial for the university in their understanding of Chinese and Indonesian student needs, responsiveness to their needs through more culturally responsive counseling services and the promotion of the use of those counseling services as a psychological help in the future.

Keywords: counseling services, academic adjustment, social adjustment, help seeking behaviors, international students

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penyelidikan ini adalah untuk mengkaji penggunaan perkhidmatan kaunseling di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa yang berhadapan dengan masalah penyesuaian akademik dan social. Kajian ini berfokus pada pelajar daripada Republik China dan Indonesia di salah sebuah universiti di Malaysia. Kajian ini mengkaji maklumat deskriptif mengenai penggunaan perkhidmatan kaunseling dan hubungan dengan penyesuaian akademik dan sosial pelajar antarabangsa. Di samping itu, hubungan statistik antara penyesuaian akademik dan sosial pelajar Negara China dan Indonesia dengan penggunaan perkhidmatan kaunseling di universiti. Kajian mendapati bahawa semakin banyak pelajar melawat ke perkhidmatan kaunseling, semakin kurang masalah penyesuaian akademik dan sosial di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa, dan semakin baik mereka mengatasi masalah penyesuaian di universiti. Selain itu juga, hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa rakan dan penasihat akademik adalah sumber yang paling disukai untuk mendapatkan nasihat mengenai masalah penyesuaian berbanding mendapat bantuan psikologi daripada Pusat Kaunseling universiti. Penyelidikan ini dilihat memberi faedah kepada universiti dalam pemahaman mereka tentang keperluan pelajar dari Tanah Besar China dan Negara Jiran Indonesia. Ia juga boleh mewujudkan langkah responsif terhadap keperluan mereka melalui perkhidmatan kaunseling yang lebih mengutamakan budaya serta mempromosi penggunaan perkhidmatan kaunseling tersebut sebagai pertolongan psikologi di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: perkhidmatan kaunseling, penyesuaian akademik, penyesuaian sosial, tingkah laku mencari pertolongan, pelajar antarabangsa

INTRODUCTION

In Asian culture, it is known that the practice of seeing a counselor and utilizing these services is not very popular. The society perceives psychological counseling and those who see counselors negatively. It is very different from the Western people, where people go to see counselors because they think it is really helpful to them. The study conducted regarding Chinese and Indonesian students and their utilization of counseling services at the university to see the pattern of how the students make use of these services. In this research, the study examined the pattern of the utilization of counseling services among the students in relation to their academic and social adjustment.

As more international students are enrolled in Malaysia campuses, some of them might face unique challenges in their college experiences. These challenges are often related to their academic and social adjustment. Wu, Garza & Guzman (2015) found that the major academic problems for international students include English language proficiency, understanding lectures, participating in class discussion, and preparing written documents and oral discussions. The social problems found among international students that were usually mentioned included understanding social customs, making friends, relationships with the opposite sex, and being accepted by social groups. The academic and social adjustments were ranked high on the list of the adjustment problems among international students (Galloway & Jenkins, 2009).

The purpose of this study is to explore the utilization of counseling services by international students focusing on Chinese and Indonesian students for their academic and adjustment issues in a university in Malaysia. On the other hand, the study sample includes in Chinese and Indonesian students because both of these groups share similar cultural backgrounds. Their cultural characteristics are almost equal with regard to the nature of their language and cultural heritage, history, values and beliefs. There are similarities between these populations because they came from similar ethnic backgrounds called the Nusantara or Malay World (Clark, 2012). According to historical accounts, the same cultural integration took place around Java Sea (Indonesia) and later in the Straits of Malacca (Malaysia), known as the Sea of Melayu. This Austronesia and later Nusantara culture extended to the shores of the South China Sea (Evers, 2014). It is interesting to know the pattern of adjustment with regard to their shared cultural backgrounds as both populations are from Asian countries. Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto (2001) indicated a traditional perspective,

values and beliefs in most Asian countries where they tend to view family as more important than the individual and where seeking help for psychological problems is considered causing shame for the family. It is truly a contrast with Western countries where seeking professional help, especially counselors and psychotherapists, is considered acceptable and is often encouraged (Zhang, & Dixon, 2003).

Research Objectives and Questions

The research objective was to explore the pattern of utilizing counseling services in relationship to academic and social adjustment issues among international students, with a particular focus on Chinese and Indonesian students. The research identified the level of academic and social adjustment issues among international student participants in the study. The study went on to examine the effect of counseling services on the student participants where the resolution of their academic and social adjustment issues was concerned. This effect was measured by examining the relationship of counseling experiences with academic and social adjustment issues.

The research questions were both descriptive and inferential. This study was guided by a single main question with six related sub-questions. This question set is outlined in the sections that follow.

The main question for this study was, "What is the relationship of the utilization of counseling services by Chinese and Indonesian students to their academic and social adjustment issues in Malaysia university?"

Sub-questions.

The sub-questions for this study were:

- i. What is the pattern of utilization of counseling services by Chinese and Indonesian students in relation to their academic issues in Malaysia?
- ii. What is the pattern of utilization of counseling services by Chinese and Indonesian students in their social adjustment issues in Malaysia?
- iii. What are the levels of academic issues among Chinese and Indonesian students in Malaysia?
- iv. What are the levels of social adjustment issues among Chinese and Indonesian students in Malaysia?
- v. Is there a relationship between counseling experiences and academic issues for Chinese and Indonesian who received counseling services?
- vi. Is there a relationship between counseling experiences and social adjustment for Chinese

and Indonesian students who received counseling services?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Galloway and Jenkins (2009) found that academic and social adjustment issues are ranked at the top of the adjustment problems list, not only by international students, but these same adjustment issues are also acknowledged by faculty and administrative as they relate their perceptions of international students. According to Mori (2000), the most commonly reported personal /social concerns of international students involve social isolation, loneliness, homesickness, irritability and tiredness.

Furthermore, Yi, Lin & Kishimoto (2003) reports that academic adjustment, social adjustment, depression and anxiety were the major concern of the international students. Nillson et al., (2004) also listed academic and social adjustment variables among the top list of presenting problems for international students with the symptoms of depression, down, blue, unhappy, problems selecting a major, lack of information about self, unsure of interest, low self-esteem and self-confidence, and loneliness. The findings also conclude that making a good grade was another concern among international students. Effective study skills and how to address language and cultural barriers in the classroom can easily be included in an outreach campaign.

Interestingly, the study that compared local students and international students indicated that international students are more likely to be diagnosed with academic problems than local college students (Mitchell, Greenwood, & Gugliemi, 2007). The study presumes that the anxiety about academics may be due to the unique demands of studying in foreign countries. The findings suggest that programs designed to address the most commonly reported concerns in the context of academic achievement and adjustment may be a better, more relevant way of engaging international students than focusing on personal problems and the affective state which results from isolation. Because international students were twice as likely to be referred by professors and other professionals on campus, counseling centers should educate faculty, staff and international students about available services and provide information about how international students can access mental health treatment (Mitchell, Greenwood, & Guglielmi, 2007).

However, little is known about how international students manage these challenges and struggles. There is some evidence of utilization of on campus resources such as the Office of International

Students, Counseling, as well as student organizations, sport clubs and Career Services. It is also interesting to highlight the underutilization of counseling services by international students since many of them did not highlight counseling as a viable support that is available for them (Zhai, 2004). It is important that counselors help international students handle academic stress effectively by increasing their awareness and utilization of counseling services (Nina, 2009). The lack of the information about counseling services in the university may be one reason why students do not take the action to use this service (Jean, Garry & Doreen, 2008). What remains to be explored, however, is the pattern of international students in utilizing counseling services and the effects past counseling experiences have had on their academic and social adjustment issues. This is an important aspect of the international student experience that we should pay attention to. Some international students tend to view counseling as an inappropriate source of help (Becker et al., 2018). Those who have attended counseling often have a lower return rate after the initial session compared to local college students (Pedrelli 2015). Unfortunately, this study did not report the reason why international students had a lower return rate than local students in this particular study.

When analyzed, a limited number of studies have focused on the use of counseling centers by international students who study in Malaysia. Tilliman (2007) found that only smallest percentage of international students used counseling center services, while most of them did not. They asserted that this difference occurred because of understanding issues, international students' ability to deal with racism, preference for long-term goals over short-term, immediate needs and, non-traditional ways of seeking help. Barletta & Kobayashi (2007) similarly suggested that a low number of international students tend to use available mental health services because of culture and language differences and engagement between counselors and students. Leong and Kalibatseva (2011) also suggested that those international students who do not seek our mental health services are more likely than local students to terminate psychological treatment prematurely. Another study showed that international students tended to have few (e.g., fewer than five) individual counseling sessions. The result indicated that seventy-percent of those who were no-shows for their counseling appointment did so after a single session (Yakushko, Davidson, & Martens, 2008). They also found that only 2 percent of the international students at the university sought counseling services. Those who did seek services presented with concerns about depression, assertiveness, academic major

selection, and anxiety. This research indicated one of the students dropped out of treatment after the initial session. For those who did continue in counseling, no information was provided about what factor influenced longer treatment or the reasons that students chose to terminate treatment. Kronholz (2014) suggested that counseling use patterns change over time and need to be constantly monitored.

METHODOLOGY

Setting and Participants

This study focused on Chinese and Indonesian undergraduate and graduate students at one Malaysian university who enrolled in 2018 until 2020. The demographic factors that were included in this research are country of origin, age, level of education, current GPA, academic level (undergraduate and graduate levels), residency, number of friends, college experience at the university. The participants were asked to complete an online survey.

Data Sources

The study used questionnaires/surveys to collect the data. The surveys contained close-ended questions and attitude questions to measure social and academic adjustment issues and utilization of counseling services. To measure counseling services awareness and use, students reported on four items. The responses for the first three items were measured on yes or no scales: 1) "Before filling out this survey, did you know that the university has counseling services for all students? 2) Have you ever used on-campus counseling services? and 3) Have you ever used off-campus counseling services? The final item asked about students' preference for who they had sought help from if they had not sought help from a counselor.

The questionnaire that was used in this research consisted of four parts which were labeled as: A) Demographic Factors, B) Counseling Services/ Counseling Experiences C) Academic Adjustment, and D) Social Adjustment. The demographic factors that were included were: 1) Sex; male and female, 2) Level of program; English course/Malaysian University English Test (MUET), Undergraduate and Graduate, 3) Country of Origin, and 4) Grade Point Average (GPA). This research adapted a subscale of the Student Adjustment College Questionnaire (SACQ) by Baker & Siryk (1984) to measure academic and social adjustment issues. Generally, the Academic Adjustment

Subscale which is The Inventory of College Students' Recent Life Experience – ICSRLE by Kohn, Lafreniere, & Gurevich (1990) was used to measure a student's success at coping with characteristics of the college experience. The Social Adjustment Subscale contains 35 items relevant to the interpersonal societal demands of college and the ICSRLE has 48 items in total. The questionnaire took about 20 to 30 minutes to complete all four parts. Both of the instruments reported in good internal consistency levels, $\alpha = .80$ and $\alpha = .86$.

Data Collection

The study invited both Chinese and Indonesian students enrolled at the Malaysia university to participate in the study during one semester in year of 2020. The students who were invited to participate were students who had an active status in university enrollment for current academic year. The Investigator contacted the president of the International Student Associations at the university in Malaysia. The president agreed to participate in the recruitment process for the study. They recruited participants via email using the students' university emails, all students who volunteered to were assured that their participation would be anonymous, given that they completed the surveys on-line and the results were only available to the investigator with a participant number designation. All students were also made aware that choosing to participate or not to participate would in no way impact them personally or academically and that if they decided to withdraw after beginning the study, they could do so at any time without penalty. Those students who responded to the email had identification numbers automatically assigned to them by the online survey site. Participation in the survey was completely anonymous.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used as the analytic tool to examine the data in this study. The study reported means for descriptive questions (Question Sets 1, 2 and 3). A descriptive analysis of the descriptive question set (Question Set 4) was conducted using a Pearson Correlation to determine whether or not there was a relationship between counseling services and academic and adjustment issues that international students had experienced. The independent variable in this study was the counseling services and the dependent variables were academic issues and social adjustment issues among the students. This was an effort to identify new or unique relationships between these two elements in the international student's life

and the counseling services the student sought, if any.

RESULTS

Table 1 provides an overview of the percentage and number of Malaysian and Indonesian students in regard to several demographic factors in this study. As you can see, the majority of Chinese and Indonesian students are over 28 years old (56.5%, n=13). It indicates that over half of the participants in this study were adults. In random sampling, this study includes almost equal numbers of participants males and females, male was (43.5%, n =10) and female (56.5%, n=13).

It is also important to note that the majority of the participants in the study were graduate students, with 73.9% (n=17) undergraduate students and only 26.1% (n=6) undergraduate students. Even though there was a huge gap between the numbers of undergraduate participants relative to the number of graduate student participants, it is consistent with the ratio of Indonesian and Chinese undergraduates to graduate students enrolled at the university. Typically, there are more

graduate students than undergraduate students in each program.

The results of the study indicated that most of Chinese and Indonesian students at the university who participated in the study were still in the stage of adjustment and adaptation to a new place because the majority of them have been living in Malaysia less than 5 years. In fact, over half of the Chinese and Indonesian student participants have been living in Malaysia for only 1 to 6 months, 56.5%, n=13. Only 1 individual reported living in the Malaysia more than 5 years. The typical participants have been living in Malaysia between 1 to 2 years (26.1%, n=6) and 3 to 4 years (13.0%, n=3).

Finally, it was interesting to know that most of the Chinese and Indonesian students preferred to live off-campus than on-campus. It indicates a huge difference between both places; residence hall is 17.4%, n=4 and off-campus is 82.6%, n=19. 87%, n=20 students reported that they felt a sense of community where they lived and only 13%, n=3 students reported the opposite.

TABLE 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographics	Percentage% (N)
Age	
below 18 years old	4.3% (1)
18-22 years old	26.1%(6)
22-26 years old	13.0%(3)
over 28 years old	56.5 % (13)
Gender	
Male	43.5% (10)
Female	56.5%(13)
Level of Education	
Graduate	73.9%(17)
Undergraduate	26.1%(6)
Duration of stay	
1-6 months	56.5%(13)
1-2 years	26.1%(6)
3-4 years	13.0%(3)
more than 5 years	4.3% (1)
Reside	
Residence hall	17.4% (4)
Off-campus	82.6% (19)

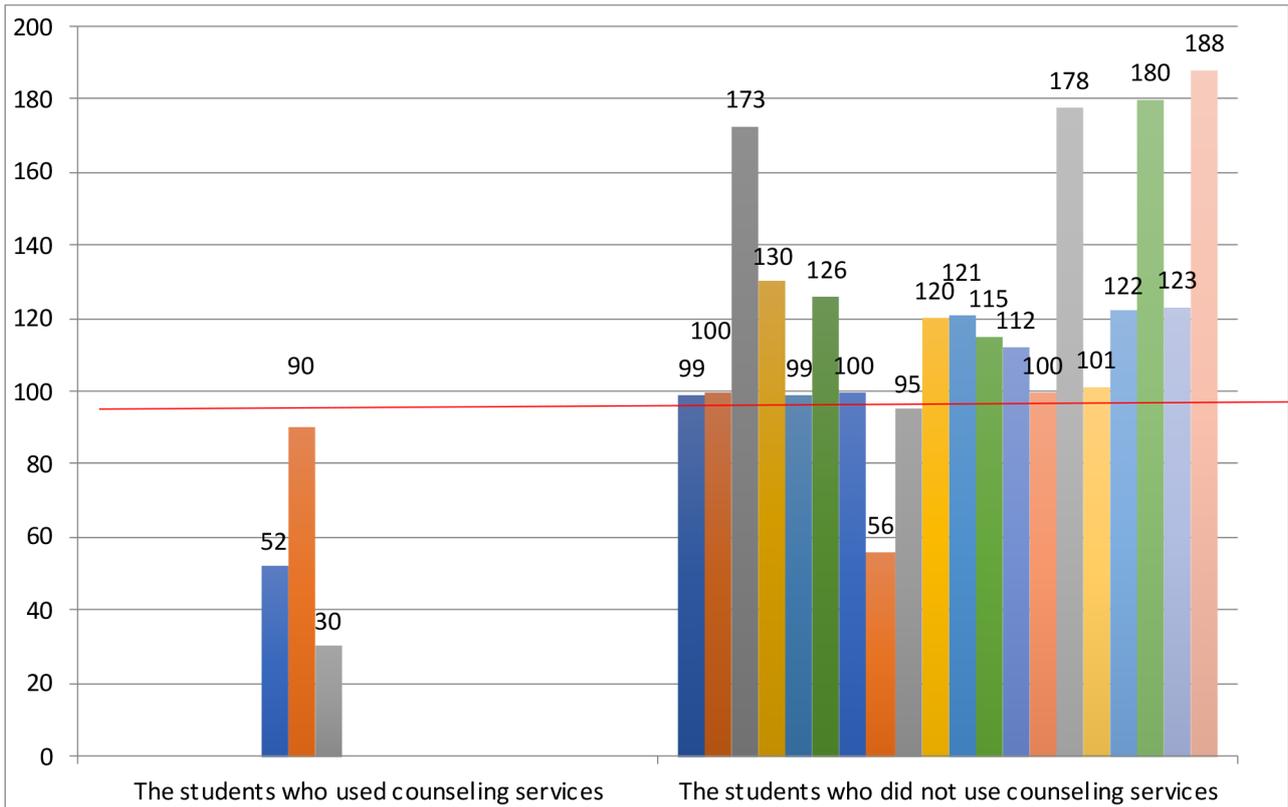


FIGURE 1. The Pattern of Utilization of Counseling Services by Chinese and Indonesian in Relation to Their Academic Issues.

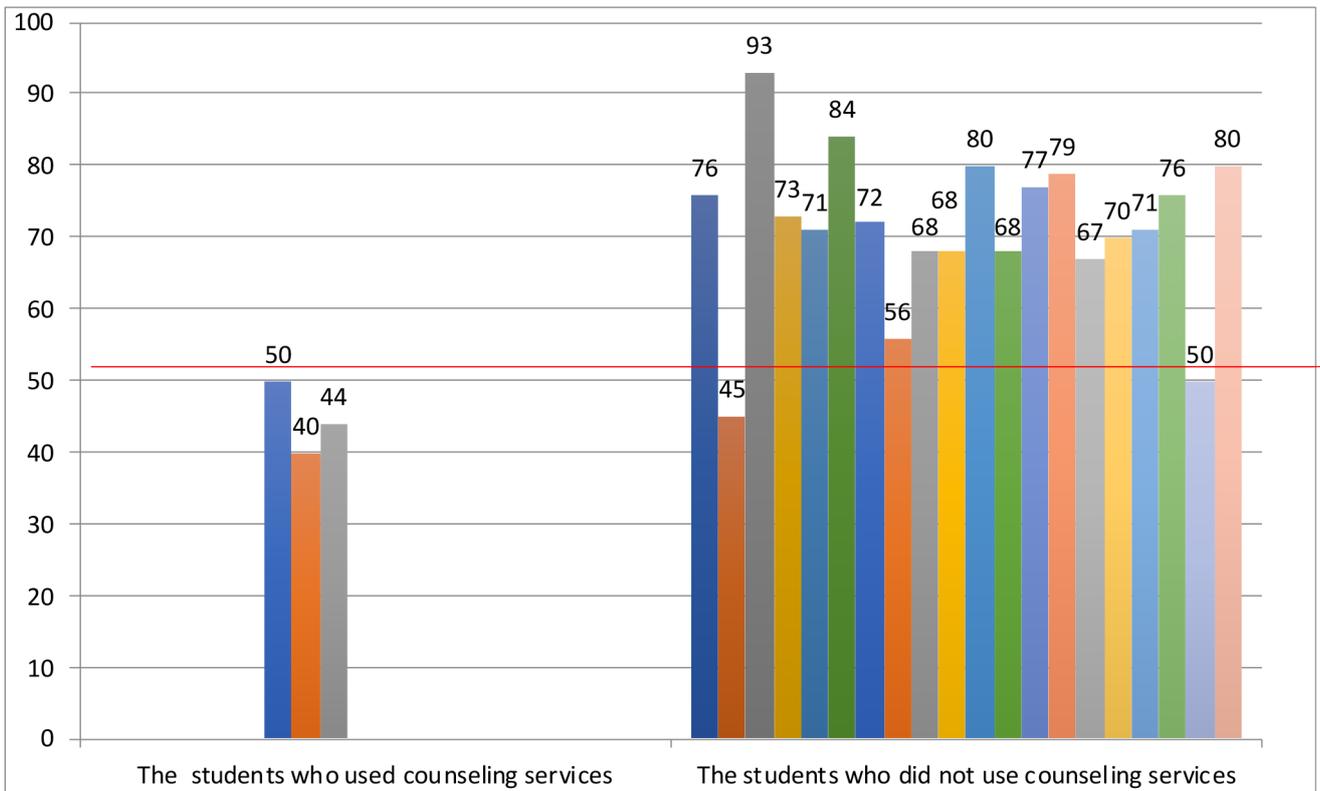


FIGURE 2. The Pattern of Utilization of Counseling Services by Chinese and Indonesian in Relation to Their Social Adjustment.

The figure 1 above explains the pattern of utilization among Malaysian and Indonesian students in relation to academic issues. The findings indicate that there were a small number of students who went to the counseling services. Three out of 23 participants reported that they were using on-campus counseling services, and none of participants had gone to off-campus counseling since they had been in Malaysia. As we can see in Figure 1, even though it was a small number of the students who went to counseling services, there was a positive impact their academic issues and concerns in general. All of the students who went to the counseling services had academic adjustment issues that were below. This indicates that all students who went to the counseling were able to address their academic adjustment issues well. According to the Academic Stress Inventory, ICSRLE-Modified [22], students who have a score in the range of 1 to 96 are classified as high academic adjustment and they are able to address their circumstances in healthy ways, however, the students who have scores in the range of 97-192 have a problematic academic stress adjustment

and have need of psychological support. In conclusion, the results indicate that students who used counseling services had fewer academic issues. Their score were 30, 52 and 90 respectively compared to most of the other students who did not use counseling services (all of them, their score were above 96).

Figure 2 above presents the pattern of utilization of counseling services among Chinese and Indonesian students at the Malaysian University in relation to their social adjustment issues. Surprisingly, the results show a similar pattern as academic adjustment issues in Figure 1. Those students who went to the counseling services indicated minimum social adjustment issues. According to the Social Adjustment to College Scale-Modified, participants who score below 52 can be interpreted as having minimum academic adjustment issues as compared to people who have above 53. Those three students who went to the counseling services had scores below 52; their scores were 50, 40 and 44 respectively. However, there were only 2 students out of 20 students who did not use counseling reports low academic adjustment issue.

TABLE 2. Level of Academic Adjustment Among Chinese and Indonesian Students

Level of Academic Adjustment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
In Last Month		
Low	12	52.17%
High	11	47.83%
Since arriving in Malaysia		
Low	18	78.26%
High	5	21.74%

In order to measure the level of academic adjustment issues among Chinese and Indonesian students at a Malaysia university, there were two scales to measure intensity of experience over the past month; in the last month and since arriving in Malaysia. This was done purposefully in an effort to allow the researcher to examine the time factors that possibly influenced academic adjustment among international students, particularly Chinese and Indonesian students. As is evident in Table 2, the pattern of difficulties with academic adjustment increased when students first arrived in Malaysia and then declined across time

as students attended university. It is clearly seen that the percentage of low academic adjustment increased from the previous month (52.17%, n=12) to (78.26%, n=18), since they first arrived at the university. This finding made a lot of sense because it was normal that the students realized new challenges, identified new pressures and juggled new difficulties when school began. At the same time, the percentage of students who had a high academic adjustment declined from (47.83%, n=11) to (21.74, n=5). This is likely for the same reasons that some students reported a decline in their academic adjustment when school began.

TABLE 3. Level of Academic Adjustment Among Chinese and Indonesian Students

Level of Social Adjustment	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	18	78.26%
High	5	21.74%

Table 3 shows the level of social adjustment among Chinese and Indonesian students in the university. In this study, there were 78.26% (n=18) students who had a low level of social adjustment, while only 21.74% (n=5) of students had a high level of social adjustment. It can be concluded that, more than 50% of the students reported experiencing social adjustment issues at the university. This trend definitely needs some attention from the university administration and counselors at the health center to provide an intervention for international students who struggle with their social adjustment.

In this study, the Pearson correlation analysis

is used to measure the relationship between counseling experience and academic and social adjustment. This result found a negative relationship between these variables. In other words, there was a negative significant relationship between counseling experience and academic adjustment ($r = -.549, p < .001$) as well as counseling experience and social adjustment ($r = -.658, p < .001$) among China and Indonesian students at the university. The more students went to counseling services at the university the less academic and social adjustment issues there were among Chinese and Indonesian students, and the better they coped with adjustment issues.

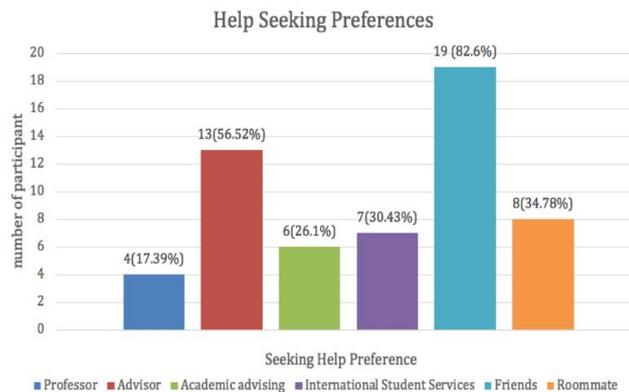


FIGURE 3. The Pattern of Help Seeking Preferences Among Chinese and Indonesian Students

Figure 3 above presents the pattern of help seeking preferences among Chinese and Indonesian students in Malaysia university. The top preference among the Chinese and Indonesian students who participated in this study was to seek help from their friends; 19 out of 23 participants (82.6%) chose friend to get help. Next, an advisor in their department was the second option for them to get help if they had any academic and social adjustment problems. It was about 13 (56.52%) participants who chose an advisor to get help academically and socially. Academic advising (26.1%, n=6), International Student Services (30.43%, n=7) and roommate (34.78%, n=8) are the other help

seeking preference rates for among Chinese and Indonesian student participants. Surprisingly, Chinese and Indonesian students prefer less help from professors at the Malaysian university. Only 4 (17.39%) out of 23 participants chose professor as the individual they would seek out in order to get help.

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether Chinese and Indonesian students who utilized counseling services experienced less academic and social adjustment issues than those who did not use these services. As predicted, the results indicated that students who were not utilizing the counseling services reported significantly higher levels of academic

adjustment issues than students who went to counseling services. In the findings, we can say that the majority of Chinese and Indonesian students have difficulties with academic and social adjusting issues in a new learning environment. Unfortunately, more than the half of students did not fully utilize the counseling services provided at the university counseling center as an alternative way to help them with their academic and social adjustment issues. Some students, particularly from Asian cultures may view seeking counseling or self-discourse as shameful, embarrassing and promoting a sense of failure (Kim, Atkinson & Umemoto, 2001). This may explain the results of a low level of accessing counseling services at the Malaysia university among Chinese and Indonesian students. Takeuchi & Sakagami (2018) found that generally also happens due to the stigma associated with mental problems; as a result, international students are not likely to seek out psychological help.

Furthermore, this study reports a negative relationship between the utilization of counseling with academic and social adjustment issues. The results of this study revealed that when students made use of counseling services, it did help them to cope with adjustment issues academically and socially. This finding is supported by Kilinc and Granello (2003) study which found that the international students with prior counseling experiences were more positive in personality, attitudes, and coping skills than those who were without counseling experiences.

Moreover, the results of this study indicate that friends and academic advisors were the most preferred source to get advice about adjustment issues. This study appears to lend further support to studies conducted by Nguyen et. al., (2009) where they noted that friends and advisors were consistently preferred sources for help with personal matters. Most of the Chinese and Indonesian students have met with their friends to share personal and academic problems because they are having in the similar identity and culture. In this case, Chen & Nakazawa (2009) explained that Asian students usually prefer individuals who have the same identity background for a self-disclosure. They did not trust the stranger, as they might misinterpret what they say. As a result of that, they will go and find people who share the same background with them to get advice.

It is important to note that special efforts are made at this institution to help international students to be more aware of counseling services. For example, the counseling center hired a counselor who had expertise with international students to coordinate international student counseling programs and services. That counselor should participate in various international

organization activities to help international students to become more aware of the counseling services available to them. Reaching out to the international students may increase student awareness of the counseling services and may help to build up the credibility of the counseling center (Kronholz, 2014). Future studies should examine how many Malaysian and Indonesian students are not going to counseling services at the university because the university does not offer culturally responsive outreach and/or programs. This is a research gap that could contribute to the university health center administration awareness of the need to increase the utilization of counseling services among Chinese and Indonesian students in the Malaysia university.

Several limitations of the study should be addressed. The sample was small, self-selected (those who responded to an e-mail request), and included only Chinese and Indonesian students studying at the university. Thus, the sample may not be generalized to other international students. The results of the current study provide additional information about the impact of the utilization of counseling services on their academic and social issues adjustment, but there is a need for more work to be done. Future researchers should focus their attention on identifying ways increase international students' awareness and utilization of counseling services.

CONCLUSION

Based on a wealth of information available in previous studies, international students are identified as having challenges and difficulties in universities and colleges in Malaysia. Most of the studies concluded that international students face culture differences, language barriers, adaptation, and, adjustment issues in Malaysia, even though the language is much alike. These unique challenges may create psychological disturbances and also affect academic performance, which then becomes a major priority for them. I have seen these problems must be put into an intervention by looking at available resource in the university. As noted earlier, counseling services is one of the available resources at the university. Basically, they offer several forms of counseling such as individual counseling, group counseling, testing and psychological consultation.

Providing a good education is an essential at the university counseling center, but the university leaders have to be more attuned to the needs of an increasingly growing number of international students, such as Chinese from the Republic of China and Indonesians, in their learning community. The

university has a responsibility to provide a healthy environment for them since these groups struggle to make both social and academic adjustments in new learning environment. This study provides support to help the university, especially the administration and the university counseling center, to initiate programs and outreach about the use of counseling services in order to cope with their adjustment issues.

The researcher's observation has been that most of students from Chinese and Indonesia who have adjustment problems share their struggle among friends rather than seeking professional help, especially counseling services at the university counseling center. In this study, the researchers wanted to test the hypothesis by recruiting a Chinese and Indonesian sample regarding the use of counseling services and to examine the relationship among major issues of international students to discover the pattern of counseling service utilization and adjustment issues.

As we all know, mostly universities in Malaysia are providing better facilities and education services for all community, locally and internationally. As a country who is an educational hub in this region and has an outstanding reputation among international students who seek degrees in Malaysia, all the universities have a firm reason to empower the counseling services to meet the demand of international students and help them with a smoother adjustment to their academic and social life in Malaysia. The recommended improvement efforts in the provision of services for international students are: 1) increasing the promotion to seek helps at the university health center and 2) university leaders need to support all counseling programs by allocating resources to help international students adapt to their lives in Malaysia higher education.

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