UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

FEARS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP AMONG STUDENTS

CHAI MING SING

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By

CHAI MING SING

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UPM

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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CHAI MING SING

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Chairman: Mohd Yusoff bin Haji Ahmad, M. Sc.

Faculty: Educational Studies

The rate of utilisation of the counselling and guidance services in schools is minimal in spite of the availability of these services No extensive studies have been done in Malaysia to show the relationship of factors that are related to psychological help-seeking among school students

The present study is a combination of correlational and causal-comparative research The relationships of fears of psychological treatment, attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help, and the likelihood of seeking counselling were investigated Besides that, the differences in terms of sex, ethnicity, prior contact with a counsellor and help seeking history with regards to the three variables mentioned earlier were also examined

Four secondary schools were selected randomly from the list of 20 schools with at least one full-time school counsellor each, in the division of Kuching and Samarahan, Sarawak Then, a stratified random sampling method was used to choose a sample of 320 students from these four schools They comprised of 135 Malays, 132 Chinese, and 47 Dayaks 47 9% of the sample were males whereas 52 1% were females

Correlational analyses revealed that fears of psychological treatment and attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help were positively correlated to the likelihood of seeking counselling Significant differences in fears of psychological treatment, attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help, and the likelihood of seeking counselling were found for sex and help seeking history (except for attitudes), but not ethnicity and prior contact with a counsellor (except for the likelihood of seeking counselling) Besides that, results also showed that the types of problems contributed 22% of the variance in the likelihood of seeking counselling and students had the greatest likelihood of seeking counselling for academic related problems

To promote the utilisation of counselling and guidance services in schools, school counsellors may have to focus on academic problems faced by students Various steps may have to be taken to foster favourable attitudes and reduce fears towards the counselling and guidance services in students especially among the others-referred group and the treatment-avoider group

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KETAKUTAN TERHADAP RAWATAN PSIKOLOGI DAN SIKAP TERHADAP BANTUAN PSIKOLOGI DI KALANGAN PELAJAR

Oleh

CHAI MING SING

Mei 2000

Pengerusi: Mohd Yusoff Bin Haji Ahmad, M.S

Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan

Penggunaan Perkhidmatan Bimbingan dan Kaunseling di sekolah adalah pada kadar yang minimum walaupun perkhidmatan ini boleh diperoleh pada bila-bila masa Setakat ini, belum ada kajian yang meluas di Malaysia yang menunjukkan hubungan antara faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengan penerimaan bantuan psikologi di kalangan pelajar

Kajian ini merupakan gabungan antara kajian perhubungan dengan perbandingan Hubungan di antara ketakutan terhadap rawatan psikologi, sikap terhadap permintaan bantuan psikologi, dan kemungkinan untuk menerima kaunseling dikaji Di samping itu, perbezaan min untuk ketiga-tiga pembolehubah dari segi jantina, bangsa, pengalaman berjumpa dengan kaunselor dan sejarah penerimaan bantuan kaunseling juga dikaji

Empat buah sekolah menengah yang mempunyai kaunselor telah dipilih secara rawak dari sejumlah 20 buah sekolah di Bahagian Kuching dan Samaarahan, Sarawak Kaedah pensampelan secara rawak bertingkat-tingkat digunakan untuk memilih sejumlah 320 orang pelajar dari empat buah sekolah tersebut Sampel ini terdiri daripada 135 Melayu, 132 Cina, dan 47 Dayak 47 9% daripada sampel itu adalah lelaki manakala 52 1% yang lain adalah perempuan

Analisis data menunjukkan bahawa ketakutan terhadap rawatan psikologi dan sikap terhadap penerimaan bantuan psikologi mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan terhadap keinginan untuk menerima kaunseling Terdapat perbezaan min yang signifikan untuk ketiga-tiga pembolehubah utama dari segi jantina dan sejarah penerimaan bantuan (kecuali untuk sikap), tetapi tidak untuk bangsa dan pengalaman berjumpa dengan kaunselor (kecuali untuk keinginan menerima kaunseling) Selain itu, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa jenis masalah menyumbangkan 22% variasi dalam keinginan untuk menerima kaunseling Pelajar-pelajar mempunyai keinginan yang paling tinggi menerima kaunseling bagi masalah yang berkaitan dengan akademik

Untuk meningkatkan penggunaan Perkhidmatan Bimbingan dan Kaunseling di sekolah, kaunselor sekolah perlu memberi fokus kepada masalah akademik yang dihadapi oleh para pelajar Pelbagai langkah perlu diambil untuk meningkatkan sikap positif sementara mengurangkan ketakutan pelajar terhadap Perkhidmatan Bimbingan dan Kaunseling terutamanya merka yang dirujuk dan mereka yang mengelakkan diri daripada menerima perkhidmatan itu

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ATSPPHS	Attitudes Towards Seeking Professional Psychological Help
df	Degree of Freedom
F	Computed Value of F test
HSD	Honest Significant Difference
LSC	Likelihood of Seeking Counselling
M	Mean
MS	Mean Square
N	Total Number in a Sample
n	Number in a Sub-sample
p	Probability
r	Pearson Moment Product Correlation
SD	Standard Deviation
SS	Sum of Squares
t	Computed value of t test
TAPS	Thoughts About Psychotherapy Survey

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Malaysia, the guidance and counselling services in schools were officially introduced in 1964 when the Malaysian Education Ministry issued the circular letter KP5209/35/9(4) requesting every school authority to appoint at least one school guidance teacher The main function of the guidance teacher was to offer career and academic guidance

During the initial stage of the development and growth of the guidance and counselling services in schools, very little information was given to help the guidance teachers define their roles in schools In 1984, a guidebook entitled "Panduan Pelaksanaan Perkhidmatan Bimbingan dan Kaunseling Di Sekolah Menengah" (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1984) was published It contained information regarding the concept, philosophy and objectives of the counselling and guidance programmes in schools Besides that, it also provided guidelines for the implementation of the counselling and guidance programmes in schools, which were very helpful to the guidance teachers as well as school administrators

There were ten types of services suggested by the above guidebook under the counselling and guidance programmes, namely:

1) Individual inventory and student record service
2) Information service
3) Group guidance service
4) Counselling service
5) Placement service
6) Drug preventive education service
7) Consultation and referral service
8) Conference with parents service
9) Resources co-ordination service
10) Evaluation service.

A list of counselling and guidance teachers' tasks in regard to each service mentioned above was also suggested in the mentioned guidebook. The counselling and guidance teachers were requested to set their priorities of services according to situations and needs of students in their respective schools and communities.

As the country progresses into a more developed era which brings about changes in almost every aspect of life, students in the secondary schools may find difficulties in coping with new challenges and pressure in life. Consequently, they face a lot of personal, social and academic problems. Cases of juvenile delinquencies and social ills among youngsters are increasing in the Malaysian society. For instance, the local newspaper, Utusan Malaysia reported that

majority of juvenile crime cases were committed by adolescents between the age of 16 and 18. About 61.73% of students involved in crime activities between 1993 and 1995 were students of upper secondary school ("Pelajar Menengah Atas Ramai Terlibat Jenayah," 1996). In another newspaper report, it was stated that 80% of drug addicts in the country were youths of age between 15 and 35. About 3.1% of them began their addiction while they were in school whereas about 31.7% of drug addicts began their addiction while they were below 19 years old ("Penagih Baru Dikesan," 1998).

The increment of adolescent and youth problems especially among school students was alarming. This has compelled the Education Ministry to look seriously into the functions of school counselling and guidance programmes. In schools, a comprehensive counselling and guidance programme should cover the educational, career, personal and social development of the students. Apart from that, the prevention and remedial aspects of students should not be neglected (Schmidt, 1993). Prevention and remedial programmes such as counselling and group guidance services are very important in reducing the number of problems faced by students. This may indirectly help to prevent disciplinary problems in schools as well as social ills in the society.

Under the present education system, every secondary school in Malaysia has a counselling and guidance unit. Each school has been provided with at least one full-time counsellor or counselling and guidance teacher taking charge of the counselling and guidance unit in the school since 1996. Due to the increase of

problems and cases of social ills among adolescents, the Education Ministry has placed a lot of emphasis on the functions of the school counsellors to curb these problems

Many psychologists and counsellors also hold the opinion that counselling can help to curb social ills For instance, Suradi Salim (1998) mentioned that appropriate and well-planned counselling and guidance programmes in schools can help students to make right decisions in lives and develop towards positive mental health Likewise, many teachers who favour the psychological approach in dealing with students' discipline problems also agree that counselling can help to mould students' characters and behaviours It is undeniable that this approach may take a long way in order for changes to occur in students Consequently, those teachers, who adopt disciplinary styles in helping students change their behaviours, would like to see changes occur within a shorter period of time Thus, they would view counselling as a less effective measure in helping the school authority to curb with discipline problems among students

Despite the differences in opinion regarding the importance of counselling and guidance services, these services have been accepted gradually by the various school communities The importance and acceptance of the counselling services in schools was highlighted by a research done on the status and effectiveness of the counselling and guidance services in secondary schools by Sidek, Mohd Yusoff, Nordin and Shamshuddin (1995) In this research study, 2807 respondents were chosen at random from the government secondary schools at

the state capital of Kedah, Terengganu, Federal Territory and Malacca They found that the counselling service was perceived to be the most important service by respondents, including principals, counsellors, teachers and students This positive perception towards the counselling services shows that most people have gradually accepted the services in schools In view of the importance of roles of counsellors and counselling services, the Education Ministry officially issued a circular letter of appointment of full time school counsellors and counsellors' task list in 1997 (Surat Pekeliling KP(BS)859/IId VIII/(56), 1997) This is to ensure that counsellors have ample time and opportunities to play their prominent roles in schools and to carry out their counselling and guidance services effectively

Although counselling is perceived as an important service by the school community, the utilisation of the service was not encouraging If we take a look at the schools in Malaysia, the role played by school counsellors in giving counselling services may be minimal because many students do not approach the school counsellors voluntarily for academic, personal or social problems Many students who are potential clients with problems do not become actual clients Students who become clients in schools are mainly those who are referred by school administrators or other staff members In other words, they come to see the counsellor involuntarily If they can, they will try by all means to avoid or prevent themselves from receiving psychological help from the school counsellor For instance, Halimi Abd Manaf (1982) in his case study of students' problems and the importance of counselling service centre, reported that 43 3% of students had academic problems, 20 8% of students had financial