

**COUNSELLING SERVICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN
BRITAIN: PERCEPTIONS OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian students in British universities are from varied socio-economic, and cultural backgrounds. Many of them arrived with insufficient information about life in Britain and would **ecounter difficulties** during their study. The purpose of this study is to indentify problems faced by Malaysian students, the seeking help that they when they are having problems; to identify their reasons for seeking counselling services, and preferences of Malaysian students in seeking counselling services. A questionnaire was designed by the **reseacher**. It is made up three major parts: (a) the personal background; (b) a survey about their problems and needs, and (c) a survey of attitudes of students toward counselling. The major finding of this study are: there were six problem areas faced by Malaysian students: financial problems, study problems, personal problems, adaptation problems. homesick, and depression problems. The majority of Malaysian students who had problems consulted either their own friends or their tutors. Counsellors' characteristics like gender, age, religion, culture, and race were not significant for them. The results indicated that the core conditions of empathy, genuiness, congruence and acceptance proposed by the client-centered therapy are considered by students as the most important qualities of the counsellor. The main reasons considered to going counselling is the 'counsellor' himself rather than other 'people'. Meanwhile the main reasons Malaysian students considered for not going to counselling are that they prefer to solve the problem themselves, and prefer friends who can help and understand them bettter. A framework model for multi-cultural counselling is suggested as guide for student counsellors in their work with overseas students, and suggestions are made as to how institutions of higher education can improved the services, especially counsellors' skills and knowledge.

DEDICATION

For:
Ms Awaitif Hj. Abdullah,
Mohd Fairuz, Mohd Faizal, and **Noor** Faezah

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Having been a student **counsellor** for nine years, I am interested to find out about the problems faced by Malaysian students abroad. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide an alternative outlook for counselling services especially for **cross-cultural** counselling in Malaysia.

Presently, all institutions of higher learning in Malaysia have special units providing counselling services. The general objectives of these services are to: help students whose background varies in their personal growth; assist students, so that they may function effectively and achieve success in academic situation; and create programmes and services, which may solve personal problems, and career problems faced by students (Uzir Abdul **Malek &** Azmi Shaari, 1990).

Students in any population are vitally important members of society. They represent the educational investment being made in the structure of any community's future and they will eventually form and provide, as the adults of tomorrow, the managers, administrators, professional people, technocrats, businessmen or leaders of society. During their comparative youth, or apprenticeship of learning, they reflect contemporary and developing attitudes and innovations. They can anticipate changes in social structure that often they themselves will bring about, for they experience many of the characteristic of a lifestyle that they will inevitably set about altering. As Zwingmann (1983, **p.1**) puts it: 'What they find as unpleasant they will in later years endeavour to change, what they **find** inequitable they will strive to ameliorate, and whatever they experience in their youth will always temper their adult attitude'.

The university years are for most students a period during which they take significant strides in assuming responsibility for their own decisions and for controlling and regarding their lives. The university **recognises** this by attempting to give students

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