

Cultural Barriers to Counseling Help-Seeking Among Chinese High School Students in Surakarta Indonesia: An Ethnographic Study (Exploring Trust, Stigma and Negative Attitudes)

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Abstract

In an attempt to address personal and social problems, help-seeking behavior in counseling may be influenced by cultural values. This study aimed to analyze the barriers to seeking counseling among Chinese students in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. The research method used a qualitative ethnographic research design. The data collection technique was in-depth interviews with 15 Chinese students, 6 school counselors, 2 parents, and 3 Chinese cultural experts. Interview data has been processed and analyzed using NVivo 12. The results of this study found that there were 3 themes of cultural barriers for Chinese students in Surakarta Indonesia, namely distrust of the counselor's competence in solving student problems, negative stigma about students who carry out counseling activities and negative attitudes towards counseling activities that contrary to the family's collective traditional values of Chinese ethnicity. Theoretically, recommendations for this study that multicultural counseling and cross-cultural peer group counseling based on Chinese culture need to be developed, while practically, counselors need to improve their professional competence and cross-cultural counseling personality, especially Chinese cultural values. The urgency and benefits of this research are that it provides a theoretical foundation for counselors to develop cross-cultural counseling theory and, practically, offers in-depth information about the cultural barriers faced by ethnic Chinese students in their help-seeking behavior.

Keywords: chinese, counseling, help-seeking behaviors

Abstrak

Dalam upaya untuk mengatasi masalah pribadi dan sosial, perilaku mencari bantuan dalam konseling dapat dipengaruhi oleh nilai-nilai budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hambatan mencari konseling di kalangan mahasiswa Tionghoa di Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. Metode penelitian menggunakan desain penelitian etnografi kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data adalah wawancara mendalam dengan 15 siswa Tiongkok, 6 konselor sekolah, 2 orang tua, dan 3 ahli budaya Tiongkok. Data wawancara telah diproses dan dianalisis menggunakan NVivo 12. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan bahwa terdapat 3 tema hambatan budaya bagi mahasiswa Tionghoa di Surakarta Indonesia, yaitu ketidakpercayaan terhadap kompetensi konselor dalam memecahkan masalah mahasiswa, stigma negatif terhadap mahasiswa yang melakukan kegiatan konseling dan sikap negatif terhadap kegiatan konseling yang bertentangan dengan nilai-nilai tradisional keluarga etnis Tionghoa. Secara teoritis, rekomendasi untuk penelitian ini bahwa konseling multikultural dan konseling kelompok sebaya lintas budaya berdasarkan budaya Tionghoa perlu dikembangkan, sedangkan secara praktis, konselor perlu meningkatkan kompetensi profesional dan kepribadian konseling lintas budaya, terutama nilai-nilai budaya Tionghoa. Urgensi dan manfaat dari penelitian ini adalah memberikan landasan teoritis bagi konselor untuk mengembangkan teori konseling lintas budaya dan, secara praktis, menawarkan informasi mendalam tentang hambatan budaya yang dihadapi oleh siswa etnis Tionghoa dalam perilaku mencari bantuan mereka.

Kata kunci: cina, konseling, perilaku mencari bantuan

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INTRODUCTION

Counseling services are important for students, as many face academic problems, learning disabilities, and test-related stress (Qadeer et al., 2019). Based on I-NAMHS data in 2022, 5.5% of Indonesian teenagers experienced depression (Wahdi et al, 2022). Basic Health Research data, as for emotional mental disorders with symptoms of depression and anxiety, around 6%. (Ayuningtyas et al, 2018). The prevalence of adolescents in Indonesia with mental health disorders is 9.4% (Pratiwi & Djuwita, 2022). The results of research on adolescents in high schools in Aceh found that 70% experienced symptoms of depression, 60% hyperactivity, 40% had peer problems, 64% showed abnormal behavior, 76% showed abnormal prosocial strength (Putri et al, 2025). Meanwhile, research in Jakarta, Indonesia, shows that the resilience ability of Chinese students is 3% high, 83% medium, and 13% moderate (Febriani et al, 2024). Research in Java, Indonesia, shows that Chinese society experiences high levels of discrimination (Daniel & Sugiyanto, 2023).

This shows that the Chinese ethnic community in Indonesia also experiences a prevalence of mental health disorders that require treatment by a professional counselor. In Surakarta, Indonesia, in 2018, 4.07% experienced depression, 5.51% experienced mental disorders (Kemenkes, 2018). As many as 8% of Surakarta residents experienced sexual and psychological violence (Dzahabiyya et al, 2022). When left unaddressed, these issues can lead to maladaptive behaviors (Health et al, 2016). Therefore, counseling services were needed that have the potential to reduce the risk of students experiencing worse and less adaptive mental health problems. Counseling may improve mental health, reduce stress, solve personal problems, develop awareness about self-growth, happiness, and self-confidence (Vidourek et al., 2014), decrease suicidal tendencies (McDermott et al, 2017), build adaptive behaviors (Aubut et al., 2021), and solve emotional problems (Picco et al., 2016). Counselors, using their professional knowledge, can guide college students in solving their problems (Li et al, 2019). A counseling service from a professional counselor can help solve a problem. Previous research shows that counselling has a significant positive association with students' mental health (Cao et al., 2022). Help-seeking behavior toward counseling was influenced by students' cultural and social norms as counselees (Seamark, 2018). Cross-cultural studies on help-seeking are also necessary to clarify students' barriers to seeking counseling services (Arnault, 2009).

However, many people who experience mental disorders do not help-seek counseling from professionals for certain ethnic cultural reasons. Many people avoid counseling services even when they cannot solve their problems on their own. Some factors have been reported to be the barrier to individuals' counseling help-seeking behavior, including social stigma, family factors, self-image, lack of knowledge of the counseling process, belief (Topkaya, 2015), family characters, types of problems, demographic factors (Vogel et al., 2007), and being ashamed and afraid (Yang et al, 2016). However, from a cultural perspective, barriers to help-seeking behaviors appear to vary. In the Chinese context, Chinese adolescents are rationally aware of psychological problems for which they should seek professional psychological help. However, they emotionally refuse to seek help due to their personal stigma, subjective and social norms, and attitude toward help-seeking behaviors (Wang & Xia, 2017). Sun, states that helps from alternative groups come from family members or close friends (21.8%), religious community (16.9%), and self-help using book (8.9), while those expecting from professionals may come from psychiatrist (2.3%), general practitioner (17.5%), clinical



psychologist (12.8%), and social workers or counselors (12.0%) (Sun et al., 2017). Sun's findings highlight the fact that the tendency to seek help from professionals was lower than the tendency to seek help from alternative groups.

This shows that professional counselors are not the main priority for seeking counseling help, but peers or family. Male students of Chinese ethnicity have attitudes that are significantly less positive toward seeking mental health services than do female students. (Chen.H.et al.2020). These results indicate that female adolescents have more positive attitudes towards counseling services than males, and differences in gender background are a component of the culture of a particular ethnic group, especially the Chinese ethnic group. Perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, self-efficacy, and cues to action were significantly correlated with behavioral intention to seek help (Wang et al., 2024). Research by Nurfadilah found that many Indonesian students have negative attitudes toward psychological services (Nurfadilah et al. 2021). In the Chinese ethnic community in Java, there is a positive correlation between perceived discrimination and feelings of shame and worthlessness, which were interpreted as painful (Daniel et al, 2023).

The Chinese ethnic group, as a minority ethnic community of immigrants in Indonesia among the indigenous ethnic groups, creates a feeling of inferiority and discrimination, resulting in feelings of shame in interacting with the indigenous ethnic group. Thus, not all students take advantage of opportunities to seek help through school counseling services. Price and Dalglish stated that help-seeking behaviors mostly stem from informal sources, including family (Price & Dalglish, 2013). As many as 1785 Chinese respondents in China among help-seeking sources utilized by participants, informal help was sought most frequently (72.9%), followed by hotline/Internet assistance (14.3%), mental health professionals (MHPs) (7.9%), and general physicians (GPs) (3.7%) (Fang Shu et al, 2019).

The use of informal or family counseling sources shows that, in the Chinese ethnic tradition, there are reasons for cultural beliefs about relationships between family members, compared with professional counselors. In another study, Chinese students reported refusing to seek professional psychological help (Wang & Xia, 2017). This was reinforced by Hwang's view that seeking help is contrary to the concept of face-saving, or *Mianzi*, in Chinese culture, which protects one's face to preserve self-esteem (Hwang, 1987). Moreover, Chinese Confucian teachings emphasize 'xiao,' which refers to obedience to parents or filial piety, where a child is obliged to obey their parents and ancestors (Ho, 1994). This teaching is contrary to the expectation that students seek counseling when facing problems. The data confirms the gap between the high prevalence of mental health disorders in the Chinese ethnic community and the need to seek help from professional counselors. Moreover, in Surakarta, three ethnic groups live together and mingle in one educational institution: the Chinese, Javanese, and Arabs.

Therefore, this study is important for exploring cultural barriers to the help-seeking behavior of ethnic Chinese in a school community in Surakarta, which is home to ethnic Chinese, ethnic Arabs, and ethnic Javanese. Are there cultural barriers to the help-seeking behavior of ethnic Chinese students from different cultural backgrounds? What cultural barriers influence the counseling help-seeking behavior with counselors? The findings of this study are expected to contribute to efforts to promote and provide professional counseling or mental health services that consider the cultural aspects of



students from diverse ethnic backgrounds and the counselors' backgrounds. What cultural barriers influence the counseling help-seeking behavior with counselors?

METHOD

This quasi-qualitative study used an ethnographic design and involved students from Chinese schools, school counselors, and cultural practitioners. Participants were third generation Chinese high school students born in Indonesia, school counselors, and cultural practitioners. The snowball sampling technique was used to randomly select participants from the four data sources, with the number of participants increasing with the redundancy level. Participants in this study were 15 Chinese students (10 females, 5 males), 6 Chinese school counselors, 3 cultural practitioners, and 2 cultural experts from the Chinese lecture.

The researcher in this study acted as the research instrument. An interview guideline comprising three basic questions was used. The questions dealt with 1) Chinese students' perception of the urgency of counseling, 2) Their help-seeking behavior for counseling services at school, and 3) barriers to students' counseling help-seeking behaviors at school. These basic questions were developed based on interview responses to reveal barriers to counseling help-seeking behaviors. Example of students' interview guides :1) Have you ever experienced a problem? 2) Who do you usually look to for problem-solving resources? 3) What is your reason for not consulting a counselor about your problem?, and 4) What do you think from your ethnic cultural perspective about consulting a counselor?

The first stage of this study was an in-depth interview with Chinese, students and school counselors in junior and senior high schools in Surakarta to examine their help-seeking behaviors. Data were collected by approaching schools with, Chinese, students and conducting an in-depth interview on counselors' help-seeking behaviors. The collected data were transcribed, imported into NVivo 12, coded, visualized, and interpreted. NVivo analysis used a thematic framework with master codes: trust, stigma, and attitude.

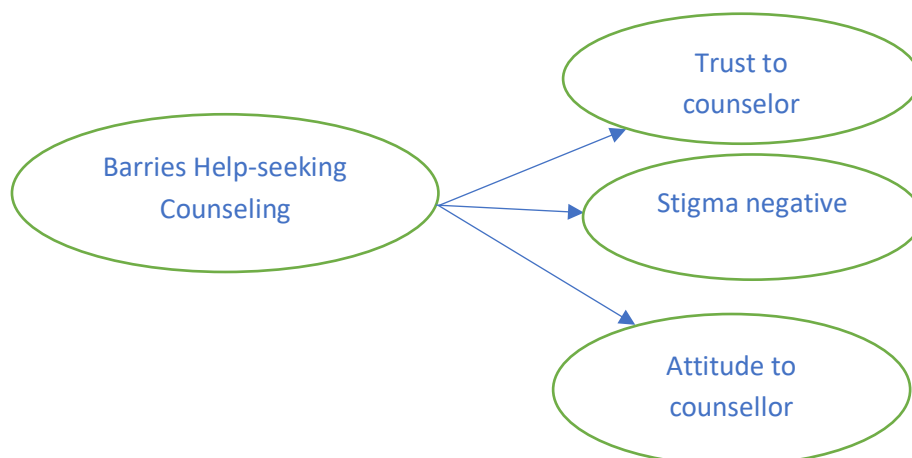


Figure 1. Coding Tree Structure

Data were analyzed in five stages. The first stage was collecting data from students and school counselors. Second, the collected data were processed by transcribing



and taking field notes. Third, data were coded using NVivo. Fourth, data were analyzed, and fifth, conclusion was drawn.



Figure 2. Research Analysis

Data trustworthiness was examined by source-triangulation, which was done by comparing the results of interviews with students, school counselors, cultural practitioners, and cultural experts in online and offline settings by applying social distancing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The finding highlights three important factors influencing Chinese students' help-seeking behaviors with counselors: trust, stigma, and negative attitudes. These barriers are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
 Barriers to Chinese Students' Counseling help-seeking behaviors

Aspects	Chinese Students
Trust	Did not trust counselors
	Trust family
	Trust one's self
	Trust Church Counselor
Stigma	Misbehaved Individuals
	Troublesome individuals
	Truant
	Crazy people
Negative attitude	Family secret Snitch
	Ashamed of engaging in counseling
	Afraid of being spread.
	Feeling minority
	Afraid of being alienated

There were at least three perceived trust issues among Chinese students. First, Chinese students' reticence to seek help through counseling was due to their distrust of counselors' competence. Furthermore, Chinese students tend to be pragmatic, rational, and self-reliant; if a counseling process offers no help, they believe they can solve their problems themselves.

I-8 : I am not seeing a counselor because doing so will not solve my problems.

I-12 : I am not close to them, and sometimes the solution is unrealistic.

R-1 : As long as we can solve it ourselves, if we cannot solve it, we do it together with our ethnic community .

I-8 : *tidak ke konselor, karena masalah tersebut ke konselor pun tidak selesai.*



I-12 : karena saya tidak dekat kadang solusinya tidak realitis.

R-1 : Sepanjang kita dapat memecahkan masalah dipecahkan sendiri, jika kita tidak dapat memecahkan, kita memecahkan Bersama dalam komunitas etnis.

Second, Chinese students trusted their family more. Family was viewed as the most understanding party, far more understanding than counselors.

I-14 : I am not certain about building psychological relationship with school counselors, their suggestion may not suit the problem. I find it more comfortable to tell my family, I meet my parents everyday and they know me better. So they can give better solution.

I-14 : saya masih ragu membangun hubungan psikologis dengan guru BK, sehingga belum tentu saran yang diberikan pas, saya lebih nyaman cerita dengan keluarga, karena keluarga orang tua yang setiap hari ketemu, yang mengerti mendalam tentang diriku, sehingga tahu solusi yang pas.

Third, Chinese students believed that they could cope with their problems and find solutions. As a part of pragmatic, rational, and self-reliant community, Chinese students were raised to be self-reliant individuals who could solve their personal problems.

I-7 : I solve and try my best to solve my own problems.

I-4 : We are introduced to the values of hard work and perseverance.

I-7 : Saya memecahkan masalah dengan dihadapi sendiri dan berusaha diselesaikan sendiri.

I-4 : kami dikenalkan nilai kerja keras sejak kecil dan nilai pantang menyerah.

Fourth, most Chinese students were Christians and Catholics, who view pastors and priests as role models in daily life dynamics. Those religious figures are viewed as a more preferable source of daily life consultation rather than the school counselor.

I-14 : I am a Christian. We have a prayer fellowship guided by an advisor in church, there is also a sharing session during which anyone could share their problems and give suggestions.

I-3 : There is a dedicated church team who provides guidance for the members' problems.

I-14 : Saya orang Kristen, ada persekutuan doa yang dibimbing pembimbing di gereja dalam bentuk kelompok, ada sharing untuk curah hati, dan mereka bisa saling memberi saran.

I-3 : ada tim khusus gereja yang membimbing masalah di jemaahnya.

Chinese students' avoidance of counselors' help also emerged from several stigmas. First, they viewed students who engage in counseling as misbehaved, destructive, and psychologically deviant students.

I-2 : There is a stigma that engaging in counseling service is only for crazy people, or misbehaved and truant students.

I-2 : ada stigma kalau konseling ke konselor dianggap orang gila, begitu juga konseling menangani anak yang nakal, mbolos, bandel.



Second, Chinese students viewed those engaging in counseling were individuals with serious problems.

I-14 : Students who meet school counselors are troubled individuals

I-14 : orang-orang yang masuk Bimbingan Konseling adalah orang-orang yang bermasalah.

Third, Chinese students viewed students who engage in counseling as those with psychosis because they could not solve their problems alone and hence sought counselors' help.

I-13 : I am afraid of being viewed as crazy person because of consulting with counselors.

I-13 : saya takut kalau konsultasi dengan konselor takut dianggap gila.

Fourth, Chinese students believed participating in a counseling session equals revealing the family's flaws. Chinese people value kinship and family dignity. Every negative piece of information is viewed as a family's flaw that should be kept secret and not shared with anyone outside the family.

I-6 : Engaging in a counseling with a counselor is a disgrace.

I-6 : Konseling dengan konselor adalah aib.

R-2 : Chinese people believe that bad things should not be told to other people.

R-2 : Orang China percaya bahwa sesuatu yang buruk tidak seharusnya diceritakan kepada orang lain.

The negative attitude stated by Chinese students included: 1) Embarrassment, 2) Afraid of having their problems leaked, 3) perceived minority, and 4) fear of being alienated. Students were ashamed when counselors knew their negative sides. Such a feeling indicated that they felt inferior and viewed counselors as a more superior individual.

I-1 : We solve our problems ourselves and do not see counselors. I think it is embarrassing as I am not close to them

I-1 : Kalau kita menyelesaikan sendiri, maka tidak mendatangi konselor, di samping itu ada perasaan malu dan sungkan dengan konselor karena merasa kurang dekat.

The next negative attitude involved fear of having their problems leaked. Chinese students in this study were afraid of having their personal secret leaked to other parties, such as teachers, homeroom teachers, and student affair department, causing potential intervention and more complex problem-solving.

I-9 : No, not counselor, I am afraid of saying something wrong and being referred to the student affairs department. So, being honest can worsen my problems.

I-9 tidak ke konselor, takut salah ngomong, dikira berantem kemudian sampai ke kesiswaan, harus jujur masalah menjadi melebar.

The third negative attitude was related to feeling like a minority. Chinese students were a minority group, and this condition created personal pressure and discomfort when they intended to build a close relationship with a native Indonesian counselor.

I-1 : How can I say it... I don't feel we are close enough... As I am from minority group,

I-1 : ya bagaimana...kurang dekat saja...ada perasaan minoritas,



The negative attitude was also due to their fear of being alienated by the big family. While some families view counselors as helpful for understanding students' development, other families consider them sources of information about negative development. When counselors are involved in solving students' problems, parents see that the family's flaw is spread. Such a condition contrasts with the Chinese family tradition of holding on to and remaining loyal to the family's reputation. Therefore, when a student's problem is leaked to parents, the big family will likely find out, and students are usually alienated from their big family.

I-2 : Because I do not trust counselors, I am afraid that when I visit counselors, my family will find out and I will be alienated in the family.

I-2 : karena kurang percaya pada konselor dan takut ke konselor, keluarga jadi tahu, karena kalau tahu akan dikucilkan oleh keluarga.

R-1 : From teachings and habits, children's attitude towards their parents could be interpreted, and parents' negative side should not be told to others.

R-1 : Ada ajaran dan kebiasaan sebagai tafsiran, bagaimana sikap anak-anak kepada orang tua, kalau keburukan orang tua tidak boleh diceritakan ke orang lain.

Discussion

This study explored barriers to counseling help-seeking behaviors among Chinese people in Surakarta City, where they live together as community members and interact at the same school. In this study, barriers to counseling help-seeking behavior were associated with distrust of counselors, stigma, and a negative attitude toward counseling. Low trust in school counselors served as the primary barrier to help-seeking behaviors. Chinese students tended to doubt counselors' competence in solving personal problems and keeping confidentiality. They tended to trust religious figures, parents, and friends more than counselors when confiding their personal problems. This finding supports previous studies reporting that adolescents prefer family (Topkaya, 2015) and informal parties (Bundock et al., 2020; Schwank et al., 2020), and that they do not trust counselors' competence to solve their personal problems (Yelpaze & Ceyhan, 2019). Adolescents' trust in counselors is limited to academic problems (Bentil, 2015; Yamawaki & Green, 2020). This study supports previous research showing that distrust in counselors is the primary driver of counseling help-seeking behaviors.

Chinese students' distrust in counselors appeared to be influenced by their Confucianism teaching, which views personal problems as an internal family issue that should be kept secret to protect family dignity and respect their ancestors (Lee, 2013). This belief supports Chinese students' closure to native Indonesian people (Chu, 2013). This is supported by Confucian filial piety, which teaches that children must obey their parents. (Ho, 1987). There is a cultural mismatch in different norms in society (Stephen et al.). In this case, Chinese culture emphasizes family unity, whereas Western culture emphasizes individualism.

This finding brings several implications for counselors so that the students could accept and voluntarily engage in counseling services. First, counselors need to evaluate their competence in providing counseling services, including both personal and professional competence. Second, counselors need to present counseling services as a culturally valued, friend service for students. Lastly, counselors need to show empathy



towards students' cultural values, eliefs, and views and consider these aspects when approaching and building relationships through counseling. The second source of barriers to counseling help-seeking behaviors is the stigma of counseling. Chinese students viewed their friends who used counseling services negatively. They viewed students who used counseling services as misbehaving, troublesome, and unintelligent individuals who violated school regulations and leaked family secrets. This stigma caused students decide not to engage in counseling services.

This finding supports the previous study, which reports that stigma may lower one's help-seeking behavior (Mahalik & Di Bianca, 2021). Self-stigma is associated with help-seeking behavior in counseling (Vogel et al, 2007; Vidourek et al, 2014; Coleman et al., 2017; Alhomaizi et al, 2017; DeBate et al, 2018). One's willingness to seek help from a mental health service may have significantly lower stigma than the mental disorder (Han & Pong, 2015). A previous study showed that self-image correlated significantly and negatively with counselor help-seeking behaviors (Raviv et al., 2000). Self-stigma has also been found to be negatively associated with counseling attitudes (Vogel et al, 2007; Al-Darmaki, 2011; Heath et al, 2016; Crowe et al, 2011). Its significantly affect counselor help-seeking behavior (Yamawaki & Green, 2020). The finding of this study supports previous studies showing that the stigma of counseling emerges as one of the barriers to help-seeking behavior. Chinese students in this study viewed counseling services negatively, thus inhibiting them from seeking help from counselors.

Some Chinese people view that only crazy people seek help from counseling, because they believe that individuals seeking help from counselors suffer from mental health issues. According to Sue (Sue & David, 2008). Individuals will seek professional psychological help when they suffer from severe psychological issues, which may lead to psychosomatic disorders (Sue & David, 2008). Such individuals are viewed as incapable of solving their own problems (Kim & Yon, 2019). The findings of this study present several implications for counselors in order to avoid stigma. First, school counselors need to treat all students equally, regardless of their behavior, as this may create a counseling-for-all paradigm. Second, counselors must also facilitate counseling services not only in the counseling room but also in any place, as long as confidentiality and students' safety are ensured. Third, counselors need to socialize their primary duties effectively. Counselors could also utilize other services, such as cybercounseling. Another implication is that counselors need activities to reduce negative prejudice between members of different groups, including cultural differences based on Allport's contact theory (Afandi, 2021). Using a dialogical approach between group members (Shamo, 2024).

The third barrier to counseling help-seeking behavior is students' negative feelings about the counseling service Chinese students in this study reported that they are ashamed, anxious, and reticent to seek help from counselors. They also see it as damaging one's pride. A previous study found that help-seeking behavior in counseling is associated with perceptions of losing face (Yakunina & Weigold, 2011). A study involving Australian adolescents also report students' fear of bringing shame to their family through information they give during counseling session (Price & Dalglish, 2013). Psychological disclosure is positively correlated with help-seeking behavioral tendencies (Pham et al., 2020). Emotional factors are also reported to be a barrier to seeking counseling help (Bundock et al., 2020). Self-reliance is also related to help-seeking behavior (Mahalik & Di Bianca, 2021). Siarra & Lawrence report that one's low help-seeking behavioral



tendency is accounted for by their belief that it is useless to disclose themselves to others (Sierra & Lawrence, 2018). Thus, our study supports previous studies showing that one's negative attitude may hinder individuals' help-seeking behaviors.

Chinese families view themselves as a minority, non-native people. Chinese students find it more comfortable to accept their position as a minority group, an attitude that eventually becomes a barrier to help-seeking behaviors. Quach and Hall's (2013) study revealed that the Chinese community in the USA is ashamed of counseling (Quach & Hall, 2013). Self-concealment affects professional help-seeking attitudes, which in turn affect individuals' willingness to seek help through counseling services (Yang et al, 2016). Some individuals also find it difficult to self-disclose (Heath et al, 2016 ; Vidourek et al, 2014). Chinese community, as a minority group, tends to accept their condition as a non-native people, which is further supported by their self-concealment culture (Chu, 2013)

This study has several implications for counselors to minimize barriers to help-seeking behaviors. First, counselors need to understand students' cultural backgrounds. Second, they need to involve students to think rationally, open new perspectives about problem-solving lifestyle. Fourth, Counselors need to develop a peer counselor program involving religious / community leaders to reduce negative stigma. Lastly, counselors need to build effective two-way communication to minimize students' perceived inferiority.

CONCLUSION

This study identified three main themes that inhibit the behavior of seeking counseling assistance in ethnic Chinese students in Surakarta, namely distrust of counselor competence, negative stigma towards counseling services, and negative attitudes that are contrary to the family's collective values. Students trust their families or themselves more because they believe the counselor does not understand the cultural context and that the solutions provided are unrealistic. Social stigma associates counseling with deviant, mischievous, or insane behavior, leading to shame and worry about leaking family secrets. Negative attitudes, such as hesitation, fear of exclusion, and a sense of being a minority, further reinforce avoidance of professional services. Therefore, counselors need to improve their cross-cultural competence and develop approaches aligned with ethnic Chinese values to reduce these barriers.

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