

Influences of Institutional and Counselor Attributes on Help-Seeking Intentions Among Chinese International Students in Japan: A Conjoint Analysis

Dr. Tingting An

Assistant Professor, Institute of Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba, Japan

Dr. Satoru Nagai

Professor, Graduate School of Psychology, Ritssho University, Shinagawa, Japan

Abstract

Chinese international students face significant sociocultural stressors but utilize counselling services less than domestic students. This study investigated how specific institutional and counsellor attributes influence help-seeking intentions. A web-based survey was conducted with 217 Chinese international students in Japan. Using conjoint analysis, participants evaluated hypothetical counselling scenarios comprising organizational attributes (location, application method, service type, language) and counsellor characteristics (gender, intercultural competence, specialized knowledge, credentials).

Results showed that all attributes significantly impacted help-seeking intentions. Chinese international students preferred multilingual support (relative importance: 49.5%), followed by web/email-based or walk-in applications (relative importance: 22.6%), low-traffic locations (relative importance: 16.3%), specialized services for international students (relative importance: 11.6%). For counsellor characteristics, professional credentials (relative importance: 26.6%) and high intercultural competence (relative importance: 26.6%) were most valued, followed by specialized knowledge of international students (relative importance: 24.2%), and female gender (relative importance: 22.7%). Regarding the awareness and preferences for student counselling services, lower Japanese language proficiency was associated with a stronger preference for multilingual counselling offices ($\beta = .305$, $p < .001$) and counsellors specializing in international student support ($\beta = .169$, $p < .01$). Additionally, a longer duration of stay was correlated with higher awareness of student counselling services ($\beta = .148$, $p < .05$).

These findings suggest that help-seeking behavior is profoundly shaped by the structural and professional attributes of the support system. To improve accessibility, university counseling centers must transition from a "one-size-fits-all" model to multifaceted strategies tailored to students' linguistic proficiency and cultural backgrounds.

Keywords

Chinese international students, help-seeking intentions, mental health services, institutional factors.