



**RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-ESTEEM, PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AND
HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA**

TAN LIAN JIA

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (HONS) GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING
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UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN**

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The Relationship of Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support and Help-Seeking Intentions
among University Students in Malaysia

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Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

This research project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. Submitted on APRIL 2024.

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FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
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UAPC3093 PROJECT PAPER II

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Throughout the process of completing the FYP, this was inseparable from the support and assistance from a few parties. Their help made the process much smoother. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those who aided me during the journey of conducting this project study.

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Once again, to everyone who lent me a helping hand along this journey, your contributions and efforts are deeply appreciated and acknowledged.

TAN LIAN JIA

APPROVAL FORM

The research paper attached herewith, entitled “The Relationship of Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support and Help-Seeking Intentions among University Students in Malaysia” written and submitted by Tan Lian Jia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Guidance and Counselling is hereby accepted.

Supervisor

(Mr. Lee Wei Rong)

Date:_____

ABSTRACT

The transformation of the world in this era of globalization evokes a stressful and anxiety-provoking time for society, drawing people's attention to the importance of having active coping strategies such as help seeking in response to the challenge. However, global statistics report an alarming issue of low help-seeking intentions, and Malaysia is no exception. Therefore, the present study examined the relationships between self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. Three instruments were used to measure the respective constructs, including the 10-Item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the 12-Item Multidimensional Perceived Social Support scale, and the 2-Item General Help-Seeking Questionnaire. A cross-sectional survey design with quantitative methodology was employed, utilizing a purposive sampling method to recruit Malaysian university students aged between 18 to 24 years and currently pursuing studies in Malaysia. A total of 188 Malaysian university students aged between 18 to 24 years ($M = 22.053$; $SD = 1.068$), with the majority of female ($n = 156$; 82.98%), participated in the present research by completing the online self-report questionnaire. The results indicate that university students in Malaysia have high self-esteem, medium perceived social support, and high help-seeking intentions. There was no significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions, nor did self-esteem significantly predict help-seeking intentions. In contrast, a positive relationship was found between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions, with perceived social support positively predicting help-seeking intentions. These findings not only casting a fresh perspective on the existing literature about help-seeking intentions in the Malaysian context but also provide empirical support for mental health care providers in developing evidence-based programs related to help-seeking intentions.


Keywords: Help-seeking intentions, Self-esteem, Perceived social support, Malaysian university students, Theory of Planned Behaviour

DECLARATION

I declare that the materials and contents in this paper are the end results of my own work, and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources, by the printed, electronic, or personal.

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Student ID : 20AAB02308

Signature :  _____

Date : 18th April 2024

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List of Abbreviations

GHSQ	General Help-Seeking Questionnaire
HIS	Help-Seeking Intentions
JASP	Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSPSS	Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support
PPMC	Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation
PSS	Perceived Social Support
RSES	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
SE	Self-Esteem
SERC	Scientific and Ethical Review Committee
SLR	Single Linear Regression
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
UTAR	Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

Chapter 1 Introduction

Background of Study

In this era of globalization, the transformation of the world evokes a stressful and anxiety-provoking time for the society (See & Chuah, 2015). Globally, mental health issues have become the leading cause of overall disease (Hassan et al., 2018), drawing people's attention to the importance of mental health. In this globally affected period, Malaysia inevitably passively experiencing a transition that has given rise to high stress in the country (Raaj et al., 2021). Past research revealed that one in three Malaysians suffers from mental health issue, which can have devastating impact on their well-being and may lead to the development of suicidal behaviour (Hassan et al., 2018). Notably, young people disproportionately affected by low levels of mental well-being (Goodwin et al., 2016). According to the latest national health and morbidity survey conducted by Ministry of Health (MOH) in 2017, the prevalence of mental health issues among people aged 16 and above was 29.2%, equivalent to approximately 4.2 million people. Recent research has reported that the prevalence of moderate to severe depression, anxiety, and stress among university students in Malaysia is 53.9%, 66.2%, and 44.6%, respectively (Wong et al., 2023). In this worrying situation, the coping mechanisms of young people to cope with life challenges are especially important. Positive coping mechanisms can benefit mental health, while negative coping mechanisms can lead to poorer outcomes (Yusof et al., 2020). Help-seeking has been viewed as a positive coping strategy in response to challenges and frustrating experiences (Hedge et al., 2016). However, university students have shown high levels of avoidant and impulsive behaviour (See & Chuah, 2015) and low intentions to seek help as they perceive their problems as minor and prefer to solve them themselves (Low et al., 2016). These indicate a reliance on negative coping mechanisms. In addition, cultural influences further inhibit the willingness to seek help, especially among young people highly influenced by their

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environment. As an Asian community, Malaysia has long been influenced by the stigma of 'losing face' associated with mental illness (Ibrahim et al., 2019). The negative stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations from society can be internalised, transforming social stigma into self-stigma (Ibrahim et al., 2019), negatively affects young people's help-seeking intentions (Low et al., 2016; Radez et al., 2019). Failure to seek help for effective coping strategies to manage stress will negatively affect long-term psychophysiological health of the young people (Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021). Attention thus needs to be paid to young people's help-seeking intentions.

Previous research in Ireland revealed that only 3.77% of students utilized the university's mental health support systems (Goodwin et al., 2016). In a study conducted in Jordan, it was reported that 57.5% of students experienced mild to moderate levels of depression, yet only 13.6% of them sought help from mental health services (Aldalaykeh et al., 2019). Additionally, research by Zochil and Thorsteinsson (2018) among Australian university students demonstrated that increased levels of depression and anxiety were associated with decreased intentions to seek help, highlighting the challenges students face in accessing mental health support.

A study conducted among private universities in Malaysia revealed that most students were unwilling to seek professional mental health services, with the highest reported reason being their belief that they should work out their personal problems on their own (Low et al., 2016). The help-seeking rate among young people was found to be low (Ibrahim et al., 2019). In 2022, there were 981 reported suicide cases, while the HEAL Helpline (15555) received 171 calls related to suicidal behaviour from October 2022 to June 2023 (Hakim, 2023). When comparing the 2022 reported suicide cases with the helpline calls received, it is evident that only approximately 17.43% of people sought help for their situation, which is less than a quarter of the population in need of support.

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Previous studies have shown that low intention to seek help is one of the critical factors leading to a lack of access to mental health services (Bonabi et al., 2016). Help-seeking intentions are defined as a conscience-planned effort to communicate a concern, emotional pain, or psychological issue to obtain perceived support, advice, or assistance to reduce individual distress (White et al., 2018). Help-seeking is crucial for accessing appropriate care (Xu et al., 2018), reducing stress, and obtaining emotional support (Kumaran et al., 2023) to improve mental health (Xu et al., 2023; Kumaran et al., 2023). Help-seeking is considered a coping skill for life challenges (Hedge et al., 2016) and is a particularly useful skill for students (De Fuente, 2017). Help-seeking is an essential strategy that promotes self-regulation (Gonida et al., 2018) when facing difficulties by facilitating students' resilience, learning and performance (Karabenick & Newman, 2010).

Self-esteem has been reported as a crucial predictor of help-seeking intentions (Alkal et al., 2018) and acknowledged as an intrinsic motivator for seeking help (De Vos et al., 2020). Self-esteem is an individual's perception of their worthiness and abilities. Negative self-evaluation will lead to low self-esteem, in contrast, positive self-evaluation will lead to high self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). With the perception of high self-esteem, the sense of self-worth will be increased (Hamzah et al., 2021), thus perceived higher ability to adapt to changes (Hamzah et al., 2021) and cope with stress (Lim et al., 2019). According to Jaaffar et al. (2019), it has a positive impact on individuals' sense of control over their performance. By perceiving themselves as having a high level of control over decisions, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards seeking help (Aldalaykeh et al., 2019). With the perception of low self-esteem, the sense of self-worth will be diminished, leading to a belief in the lack of worthiness to make positive changes in one's life, thereby leading to low help-seeking intentions (Crowe, 2020). Furthermore, individuals with low self-esteem who are sensitive to rejection (Yap et al., 2021) continue to hold negative help-seeking attitudes due to the

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influence of social stigma (Maclean et al., 2023). In contrast, Topkaya (2021) found a negative correlation between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions. Low self-esteem may significantly increase an individual's level of distress and vulnerability to mental health problems and thus have a positive impact on their help-seeking intentions (Topkaya, 2021).

Perceived social support has been identified as a significant factor in relation to help-seeking intentions (Maiuolo et al., 2019). It includes the provision of financial, practical, and emotional assistance from a person's significant others, including family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues (House & Kahn, 1985). Perceived social support contributes to an improvement in the perception of an individual's ability to cope more effectively with a variety of situations (Talebi et al., 2016). Individuals with lower perceived social support may be influenced by fear of social stigma associated with help-seeking, perceived fewer resources and opportunities for help-seeking, leading to lower help-seeking intentions (Talebi et al., 2016). Conversely, individuals who perceive higher social support tend to adopt more active coping styles, such as help-seeking (Talebi et al., 2016; Cebi & Demir, 2019; Chao et al., 2022). Participants who perceived higher social support showed higher help-seeking intentions than those who perceived lower social support (Yeshanew et al., 2020). Higher cultural tendencies in relation to perceived social support are associated with higher help-seeking intentions (Tuazon et al., 2019). Furthermore, research suggests that individuals experiencing high social support are more likely to extend help requests to different people (Entilli et al., 2021). Social support serves as a crucial resource for coping with stressful circumstances (Talebi et al., 2016) and is able to enhance individuals' perceived control over help-seeking (Mak & Davis, 2014), thereby increasing their readiness and willingness to seek help (Tomczyk et al., 2020).

In short, the current study is focused on the relationships between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions. Furthermore, in light of the detrimental

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effects of low help-seeking intentions and the significance of having help-seeking intentions in various spheres of life, particularly mental health, this study aims to determine the role that perceived social support and self-esteem play in predicting help-seeking intentions.

Understanding help-seeking intentions is fundamental to identifying factors that can be modified to increase counselling engagement. (Wilson et al., 2005). This may in turn lead to an increase in the effectiveness of the practical impact of counselling (Burnaby et al., 2016). In this way, the field of counselling will benefit from the findings of this study. In addition, it had been revealed that help-seeking intentions is associated with stress management and improved mental health of Malaysian university students. This further proved the importance of understanding help-seeking intentions when providing mental health services to university students. Therefore, the findings would definitely be helpful if more information on the help-seeking intentions and its predictors could be gathered.

Problem Statement

Depression in Malaysia is emerging as a significant and growing public health concern, especially among university students, which is particularly vulnerable amid the current challenges in academic and university life, which makes coping with stress difficult. Globalisation is driving unparalleled changes in mass higher education and global knowledge economy (Altbach, 2016). These changes in the teaching practices have a negative impact on the mental state of university students (Yu et al., 2021). Previous studies have shown that a staggering 33.8% of university students reported clinical levels of depression (Mehrnoosh et al., 2023). Poor mental health among university students has a complex impact on their academic performance (Daniel et al., 2019; Yusof et al., 2020; Kolya et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). It can also trigger unhealthy habits such as smoking and alcohol consumption (Chair et al., 2019; Kolya et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2022) and social isolation, which is correlated with suicidal ideation (Yu et al., 2021). In this challenging context, help-seeking intentions,

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as the first step toward obtaining support for mental well-being (Ibrahim et al., 2019), play a crucial role among university students with poor adaptability to the new changes (Yu et al., 2021). However, research indicates that university students in the 18-24 age group are less likely to seek help (Goodwin et al., 2016). Particularly notable is the finding that students with low levels of mental wellbeing are unlikely to seek any form of help for their mental health problems (Goodwin et al., 2016). This undoubtedly contributes to the worsening mental health of university students. In order to provide effective interventions towards the situation, the importance of investigating help-seeking intentions among university students is evident. However, most of the previous researches focus their attention towards the adolescent population (Hedge et al., 2016; Chuinh et al., 2019; Radez et al., 2019; Liddle et al., 2021). Therefore, further research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of help-seeking intentions among university students.

Apart from that, despite various studies extensively examining self-esteem as a psychological construct, the literature supporting the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions is limited. In other words, much of the existing literature has primarily focused on other factors such as stigma (Taylor & Kuo, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2019; Radez et al., 2019; Topkaya, 2021; El-Hackem et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2023), financial issues (Moitra et al., 2022), and information about help-seeking (Mak & Davis, 2013; Daudi et al., 2022; Lee & Shin, 2022; Zeng et al., 2023). Self-esteem, as a protective factor against stress, has been reported to be related to coping strategies in university students (Morales-Rodríguez, 2021). There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and active coping strategies (Joaquín-Mingorance et al., 2019). As mentioned above, help-seeking is a positive coping strategy for university students to deal with life challenges (Hedge et al., 2016). Therefore, it deserves research attention in order to better understand its influence on help-seeking intentions. In addition, previous studies that have examined the relationship between

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self-esteem and help-seeking intentions have yielded conflicting results. Some studies reported a negative relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions (De Vos et al., 2020; Topkaya et al., 2021), while others reported a positive relationship (Ibrahim et al., 2019; Tomczyk et al., 2020; Maclean et al., 2023). Therefore, there is a need to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intention among Malaysian university students to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Social support, as a resource that offers emotional support, information and practical assistance, is known to contribute to a heightened sense of an individual's competence to cope more effectively with stressful situations (Talebi et al., 2016). This increased sense of control over the decision to seek help and the reduction of social pressure to seek help may have a positive impact on the intention to seek help among university students (Aldalaykeh et al., 2019). However, the correlation between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions has not been extensively investigated in the Malaysian context. Existing studies have predominantly focused on other cultural contexts, such as Turkish (Cebi & Demir, 2019), the United Kingdom (Jones et al., 2019), Ethiopia (Yeshanew et al., 2020), the United States (Tunzon et al., 2019; Chao et al., 2022), Italy (Entilli et al., 2021), and Australia (Maiuolo et al., 2019). Given that perceived social support is a crucial protective factor for university students in alleviating stress (Wang et al., 2023) and facilitating positive emotion regulation strategies (Wilson et al., 2020), it is imperative to examine its role in predicting help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

In summary, due to the contradict views of past studies and the important of consider different study contexts in generalizing research findings (Polit & Beck 2010), the present study endeavors to investigate the interplay between self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. In addition, the level of

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self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions will also be determine in the present study respectively.

Significance of Study

The research aims to validate and provide theoretical support for Ajzen's (1985) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). According to the TPB, help-seeking intentions are determined by three factors: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm towards the behaviour and perceived behavioural control. By relating the factors of the TPB to the variables of the current study, the demonstration of the association and predictive role of self-esteem and perceived social support with help-seeking intentions could provide additional support for the previously established Theory of Planned Behaviour. The current research will examine the associations and predictive roles of perceived social support and self-esteem with help-seeking intentions. As a result, it will provide a deeper theoretical understanding of the possible causes of low help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. Furthermore, this study may strengthen the foundation for future researchers to extend the existing literature by further exploring other possible variables related to help-seeking among university students in Malaysia.

By examining how self-esteem and perceived social support interact with help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia, it may shed light on how to promote help-seeking intentions. From a practical perspective, the research could provide valuable insights for tertiary school authorities and mental health professionals in developing interventions to promote help-seeking intentions among university students. In addition, the research will provide empirical evidence for mental health professionals to guide the design of effective interventions. Eventually, the research will raise awareness of the factors that contribute to low help-seeking intentions among university students. The knowledge gained from these empirical findings will enable students to be more aware of the barriers that

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prevent them from seeking help. In addition, this current study will determine the levels of self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia with the aim of making a worthwhile contribution to the existing body of knowledge by revealing new and insightful data.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of self-esteem among university students in Malaysia.
2. To examine the level of perceived social support among university students in Malaysia.
3. To examine the level of help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.
4. To examine the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.
5. To examine the relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.
6. To examine the relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support among university students in Malaysia.
7. To examine the role of self-esteem in predicting help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.
8. To examine the role of perceived social support in predicting help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of self-esteem among university students in Malaysia?
2. What is the level of perceived social support among university students in Malaysia?
3. What is the level of help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia?

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4. Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia?
5. Is there a significant relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia?
6. Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support among university students in Malaysia?
7. Does self-esteem predict help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia?
8. Does perceived social support predict help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia?

Research Hypotheses

H_{1a}: There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

H_{1b}: There is a significant relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

H_{1c}: There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support among university students in Malaysia.

H_{2a}: Self-esteem is able to predict help-seeking intentions of university students in Malaysia.

H_{2b}: Perceived social support is able to predict help-seeking intentions of university students in Malaysia.

Conceptual Definition***Self-Esteem***

According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem refers to individuals' overall assessment of their worthiness and abilities. In the current study, self-esteem as an important psychological factor (Paudel et al., 2020) is considered a stable trait of individuals that manifests in both positive and negative ways, influencing the attitude of help-seeking intentions (Prihadi et al., 2020).

Perceived Social Support

According to House and Kahn (1985), social support includes the provision of financial, physical and emotional assistance by individuals' significant others, such as family members, friends, neighbours and co-workers. In the current study, social support is considered to be an influential social factor for individuals that manifests in both high and low perceptions, which in turn influence perceived behavioural control on help-seeking intentions (Mak & Davis, 2013).

Help-Seeking Intentions

Help-seeking intentions are fundamental to an individual's mental health and well-being and involve turning to others for understanding, guidance, information, treatment and general support when faced with challenges or distressing experiences. This form of coping relies on social relationships and interpersonal skills, with informal help-seeking (e.g. friends and family), formal help-seeking (e.g. mental health professionals), and indirect interpersonal contact (e.g. Internet) (Rickwood et al., 2005).

Operational Definition***Self-Esteem***

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In the current study, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) will be used to measure participants' self-esteem levels. This self-report scale consists of 10 items designed to assess an individual's overall self-esteem. The negative items on this scale include items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9. Therefore, the scores for these negative items are inverted before being added to the scores for the remaining items to calculate the total score. The higher the total score on the scale, the higher the level of self-esteem.

Perceived Social Support

In the current study, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) developed by Zimet et al. (1988) will be administered to assess participants' perceptions of support from three sources: family (items 3, 4, 8, and 11), friends (items 6, 7, 9, and 12), and a significant other (items 1, 2, 5, and 10). A total of 12 items. Scores will be a sum of all items. Scores between 12 and 35 are categorised as low perceived support, scores between 36 and 60 as medium perceived support and scores between 61 and 84 as high perceived support.

Help-Seeking Intentions

In the present study, the General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ), developed by Wilson et al. (2005), will be utilized to evaluate participants' intentions to seek help for their mental health issues from various sources. The questionnaire consists of 2 items, each comprising 10 sub-items. The score will be sum up. A higher score on the questionnaire indicates a greater likelihood of seeking help.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This review of the literature aims to provide a thorough knowledge of self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions as well as the complex relationships among these three factors by combining the results of several studies. This study goes beyond national borders and demographic divides to shed light on the variables influencing this dynamic partnership. Numerous studies have delved into this complex relationship, revealing how these three components impact mental health, help-seeking intentions and coping mechanisms in challenging circumstances. At the end, the theoretical and conceptual framework of the relationships between variables will be discussed.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has been defined as an individual's overall positive or negative self-evaluation (Rosenberg et al., 1995). Self-esteem is a psychological factor that contributed significantly to the psychological empowerment of the undergraduate students (Jaaffar et al., 2019). Self-esteem was related to the extent to which individuals felt a sense of influence over the work they were doing (Haaffar et al., 2019). Individuals who have satisfied their need for self-esteem tend to feel confident, competent, empowered, and useful (Haaffar et al., 2019), which increases their ability to cope with change (Hamzah et al., 2021). With high self-esteem, individuals with a sense of personal sufficiency believe themselves to be capable and worthy (Varanarasamma et al., 2019).

High self-esteem can be termed "authentic" self-esteem (more socially desirable and achievement focused), while "low" self-esteem can be termed "vulnerable" self-esteem (more narcissistic and associated with arrogance) (Jaaffar et al., 2019). High self-esteem has been reported as an important shield against suicidal intentions (Prihadi et al., 2020) and is

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associated with high academic performance (Busalim et al., 2019) and low social media addiction (Busalim et al., 2019). In contrast, an individual's level of distress and susceptibility to mental health problems such as depression (Gabrielle & Idang, 2022) can be significantly increased by low self-esteem (Topkaya, 2021). Low self-esteem is associated with negative body image (Gabrielle & Idang, 2022) and negative emotions such as sadness and loneliness (Yap et al., 2021).

Self-esteem, a critical aspect of mental well-being, can be significantly influenced by various factors. Stigmatisation, often reinforced by societal stereotypes, has been identified as a powerful force in shaping an individual's self-perception. Research by Maclean et al (2023) highlights a worrying cycle in which the acceptance of and agreement with stigmatising beliefs leads to a reduction in self-esteem. This in turn reduces the likelihood of seeking help for mental health problems, which has a compounding effect on mental health. Furthermore, as noted by Varanarasamma et al. (2019), personality traits have been identified as significant predictors of self-esteem. The complexity of self-esteem development is highlighted by the intricate interplay between external influences and internal characteristics. On a positive note, the study by Subon et al. (2020) suggests that academic achievement, such as receiving good grades, can serve as a direct stimulus to improve students' self-esteem. This correlation highlights the multi-dimensional nature of self-esteem, suggesting that both external factors and individual achievements contribute to the complex pattern of self-esteem.

The complex interplay between self-esteem and various aspects of personal and academic life reveals a compelling picture. Numerous studies have consistently shown a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. In particular, research by Subon et al (2020) highlights how receiving good grades can contribute to an enhanced sense of self-worth, forming a virtuous circle that promotes academic success. However, the importance of self-esteem extends beyond the academic sphere. Prihadi et al (2020) found

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that self-esteem serves as a predictor of depression, highlighting the far-reaching implications of one's self-perception on mental health. Furthermore, the positive correlation between self-esteem and career adaptability, as revealed by Hamzah et al. (2021), suggests that individuals with higher self-esteem are more likely to see themselves as prepared to manage transitions from school to work or between jobs. This attitude of adaptability is consistent with their positive self-perception and contributes to an overall sense of confidence and ability.

Furthermore, Busalim et al.'s (2019) study highlights the role of self-esteem in shaping not only academic outcomes but also social interactions, highlighting its pervasive influence on different aspects of a student's life. The intricate web of connections between self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence is further elucidated by Jaaffar et al. (2019). Their findings reinforce the positive relationship between self-esteem and these key psychological factors. Self-esteem emerges as a critical predictor that influences an individual's efficacy and self-confidence. This interconnectedness highlights the integral role that positive self-perceptions play in shaping not only academic achievement, but also mental well-being, career adaptability and overall personal development.

While numerous studies have investigated self-esteem in relation to various variables, there is a lack of research reporting the levels of self-esteem among university students in Malaysia. The most recent studies have presented conflicting results on self-esteem levels. According to Subon et al. (2020), university students exhibited a good level of self-esteem, while Gabrielle and Idang (2022) reported that 50% of the students displayed low self-esteem.

The sections discuss the crucial importance of self-esteem for university students, highlighting how it affects their capacity to succeed academically as well as their mental and professional flexibility. High self-esteem is related with favourable outcomes, whilst low self-esteem is associated with adverse effects. The complex relationship of self-esteem,

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environmental variables, and personality attributes is reviewed. However, there is a scarcity of research on self-esteem levels among Malaysian university students, with inconsistent findings in current studies. The paragraphs conclude by highlighting the critical role that students' self-esteem plays in influencing a variety of facets of their life. Addressing self-esteem concerns is critical in encouraging help-seeking intentions. Furthermore, further investigation on the self-esteem levels of university students in Malaysia is necessary to offer a deeper understanding of the circumstances.

Perceived Social Support

According to House and Kahn (1985), social support is defined as the practical, financial, and emotional help that provided by significant others including neighbours, relatives, friends, and coworkers. The foundation for comprehending the complex nature of support networks is laid by this definition. According to Maiuolo et al. (2019), people's perceptions of how frequently they receive advice, compliments, or assistance from their social network can serve as an indicator of social support. This emphasises the subjective character of assistance and shows how the recipient's perception may affect how helpful it is. Entilli et al. (2021) outline the various ways that people who receive high and poor support approaches help-seeking. Those with poor support frequently turn to internet forums and believe that friends and close relatives are unhelpful, whereas those with strong support typically contact casual groups, friends, and close relatives. The importance of perceived social support as a coping resources during stressful situations, has been highlighted by Talebi et al. (2016) and Kamaludin et al. (2020). Support resources, whether in the form of information, tangible assistance or emotional support, contribute to individuals' perceptions of increased ability to cope effectively. This suggests that the presence of a robust support

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network contributes to an individual's ability to cope with mental health challenges effectively (Kamaludin et al., 2020).

Studies conducted in China (Guo et al., 2021; Yin et al., 2021), the United Kingdom (Holliman et al., 2021), Malaysia (Kamaludin et al., 2020) and the United States (Wilson et al., 2020) provide global insights into the relationship between perceived social support and mental health outcomes. Previous studies have shown that perceived social support is significantly related to psychological well-being (Holliman et al., 2021). Perceived social support is positively associated with positive emotion regulation strategies, facilitating a more balanced, self-forgiving and positive perspective (Wilson et al., 2020). This positive impact extends to improved well-being outcomes, including subjective happiness and lower levels of depression and perceived stress. These had been further demonstrated in the study by Holliman et al. (2021). In addition, another study found that high perceived social support was associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress (Yin et al., 2021), demonstrating that perceived social support acts as an essential safeguard against the adverse effects of stressors.

In addition, a negative correlation between perceived social support and age has been reported (Guo et al., 2021), suggesting that older individuals have lower perceived social support. As noted above, perceived social support is negatively correlated with psychological distress (Holliman et al., 2021). The risk of increasing levels of depression symptoms and poorer sleep quality was lower in individuals who reported higher levels of perceived social support compared to those with low perceived social support (Grey et al., 2020). There is also a negative relationship between perceived social support with hopelessness and burnout (Karagöl & Kaya, 2022). High-perceived social support can tackle the hopelessness and burnout of individuals (Karagöl & Kaya, 2022).

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Furthermore, Alsubaie et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2019) shed light on the relevancy of perceived social support among university students. Alsubaie et al. (2019) highlight the positive role of perceived social support in protecting students' mental health and quality of life. It is a strong predictor of depressive symptoms, with higher perceived support from friends being associated with lower depressive symptoms (Alsubaie et al., 2019). In addition, perceived social support is a critical contributor in helping students find purpose in life (Zhang et al., 2019).

In summary, the literature converges on the central role of perceived social support in the mental health and well-being of individuals. From diverse sources and approaches to global relevance across cultures, perceived social support emerges as a critical factor influencing coping strategies, mental health outcomes and overall quality of life. Understanding the multidimensional nature of perceived social support provides a basis for understanding help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. In addition, the current study will examine the level of perceived social support among university students in Malaysia to gain a better understanding towards the situation.

Help-Seeking Intentions

Building on Rickwood et al.'s (2005) conceptualisation, help-seeking intentions remain fundamental to mental health and well-being. The process of translating individual distress into interpersonal help-seeking is integral, highlighting the interpersonal nature of coping through social relationships and support. Help seeking remains an important coping mechanism, illustrating the deliberate reliance on social relationships and interpersonal skills to manage emotional challenges (Hedge et al., 2016). This perspective highlights the active role that individuals play in seeking help as part of their coping strategies. The distinction between informal and professional help seeking, as outlined by Hedge et al. (2016), remains

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crucial. Informal sources, such as friends and family, represent the grassroots level of support, while professional pathways involve trained individuals. This dichotomy reflects the different approaches that individuals take to address their mental health needs.

Past study affirmed the importance of help-seeking, emphasising its role as a gateway to appropriate care and improved mental health (Xu et al., 2018). Bonabi et al. (2016) reinforce the practical implications of positive help-seeking attitudes, noting that high help-seeking attitudes correlate with increased treatment engagement. This highlights the consequential nature of attitudes in shaping subsequent actions towards mental health care. Kumaran et al (2023) further emphasise this by linking help-seeking behaviour among Malaysian students to stress management and improved mental well-being. Aldalaykeh et al. (2019) highlight the interesting dynamics among university students in Jordan, where high personal control over the decision to seek help, coupled with low social pressure, promotes positive attitudes towards help-seeking. This nuanced understanding adds depth to the factors influencing help-seeking intentions.

The association of higher self-stigma and younger age with negative attitudes had been highlighted by shedding light on the factors influencing mental health help-seeking attitudes (Ibrahim et al., 2019). This highlights the need for tailored interventions to address these specific barriers across different demographic groups. The positive and significant relationship between general and mental help-seeking attitudes, as found by Goodwin et al. (2016) and Ibrahim et al. (2019), highlights the interrelated nature of attitudes toward help-seeking. A favourable disposition toward help-seeking in general appears to translate into positive attitudes specifically related to mental health. Ibrahim et al. (2019) find that older university students hold more positive mental help-seeking attitudes, extending our understanding of age-related differences in help-seeking intentions. In line with these findings, Topkaya (2021) and Daudi et al. (2022) add that female university students tend to

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have more positive help-seeking attitudes, providing a gendered perspective on this aspect. Jones et al. (2019) provide valuable insights by showing that women are more likely to seek help from formal medical sources, and less likely to rely on informal support. This gendered pattern highlights the importance of considering diverse preferences and sources when designing mental health interventions.

In summary, this extended literature review provides a comprehensive view of help-seeking intentions that includes coping strategies, social relationships and additional factors such as age and gender. A nuanced understanding of these dynamics is essential for the development of targeted interventions that take into account the multiple influences that shape individuals' decisions to seek mental health support. As we navigate the intricacies of help-seeking, recognising the impact of age, gender and individual attitudes enriches our understanding and informs more effective strategies for promoting mental health and well-being. Additionally, the present study will examine the level of help-seeking intention among university students in Malaysia.

Self-Esteem and Help-Seeking Intentions

Individuals often cite the perception that their problems are minor and a preference to solve problems independently as reasons for not seeking help (Low et al., 2016). Individuals need to believe in the benefits of help, have self-esteem and perceive themselves as worthy of positive change (Crowe, 2020) to be more likely to seek help. Individuals with low self-esteem are more vulnerable (Jaaffar et al., 2019) and fear of changing their behaviour (Low et al., 2016) emerges as a significant barrier, reflecting the complex interplay between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions. De Vos et al. (2020) extend the discussion to at-risk gamblers and identify various intrinsic motivators, including self-esteem, as influential in

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shaping help-seeking attitudes. This perspective highlights the importance of considering intrinsic factors when exploring motivations for help-seeking.

A positive perspective had been introduced, suggesting that an increase in self-esteem could increase readiness and willingness to seek help (Tomczyk et al., 2020). This implies a reciprocal relationship, where improving self-esteem can positively influence motivation to engage in help-seeking intentions. The positive relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions was further supported by Maclean et al. (2023) from a different perspective, where individuals who agree with and internalise societal stereotypes may experience a reduction in self-esteem, which may influence their likelihood of seeking help for behavioural problems. In contrast, Topkaya (2021) introduces the role of subjective distress as a predictor of help-seeking behaviour. Low self-esteem is posited as a factor that can significantly increase distress levels, thereby increasing vulnerability to mental health problems and positively influencing help-seeking intentions.

In summary, the intricate relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions unfolds in a complex interplay of stigma, self-stigma, intrinsic motivators and societal attitudes. Recognising the impact of negative stereotypes, internalised beliefs and defences on self-esteem highlights the need for research. Addressing self-esteem as a dynamic factor in the decision-making process is critical to fostering a supportive environment that encourages individuals to overcome internalised barriers and seek the mental health support they deserve.

Perceived Social Support and Help-Seeking Intentions

Studies show that perceived social support acts as a protective factor against mental health problems by reducing the impact of stressors (De Vos et al., 2020). Perceived social support strengthens resilience to life's adversities while shaping perceptions of seeking help.

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Conversely, a lack of perceived social support increases fears of stigma, thereby reducing help-seeking intentions (Talebi et al., 2016).

Research consistently shows a positive association between perceived social support and an individual's willingness to seek help (Maiuolo et al., 2019). This association cuts across diverse populations, from high-risk gamblers to US Chinese older adults and bereaved suicide survivors (De Vos et al., 2020; Chao et al., 2022; Entilli et al., 2021). These findings highlight the universal nature of the relationship between perceived social support and the propensity to seek help. The predictive power of perceived social support for help-seeking intentions is evident across contexts. Higher levels of perceived social support correlate with greater recognition of the need for help and a greater willingness to overcome barriers to help-seeking (Chao et al., 2022; Yeshaew et al., 2022). Conversely, a lack of perceived support increases concerns about potential stigma and inhibits willingness to seek help (Talebi et al., 2016). Tuazon et al. (2019) explore the influence of cultural tendencies on the relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking attitudes. Higher cultural tendencies, which reflect a sense of belonging, are associated with more positive help-seeking attitudes. Furthermore, the study reveals a nuanced dynamic, showing that higher American cultural tendencies predict positive mental health help-seeking attitudes among Filipino Americans.

By strengthening perceived social support, willingness and ability to seek help will be increased (Tomczyk et al., 2020). This implies that interventions focused on strengthening individuals' support networks could have a positive impact on their willingness to seek help. Social factors such as perceived social stigma and embarrassment, as barriers to help-seeking (Radez et al., 2019). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing interventions that address not only the positive aspects of perceived social support, but also the challenges individuals may face when seeking help.

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High perceived support is consistently associated with higher help-seeking intentions than low perceived support (Hedge et al., 2016). This highlights the importance of an individual's subjective evaluation of the support they receive in shaping their willingness to seek help. Entilli et al. (2021) shed light on the differential impact of perceived social support on the professional support seeking intentions of bereaved suicide survivors. Strong family support may reduce the perceived need to contact mental health professionals, highlighting the influential role of family relationships in shaping help-seeking behaviours. Cebi & Demir (2019) contribute insights into the social dynamics that influence help-seeking beliefs. Their work reveals the influence of friends in shaping each other's attitudes towards seeking help, highlighting the importance of peer influence in shaping help-seeking behaviours.

In conclusion, this review highlights the complex interplay between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions. The positive correlation, protective effects and predictive power of perceived social support underline its central role in promoting help-seeking. Cultural, contextual and interpersonal dynamics add to the complexity of this relationship, highlighting the need for research that takes into account the multiple factors that influence individuals' help-seeking intentions.

Self-Esteem and Perceived Social Support

The synthesis of various studies on the intricate relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support across diverse populations and cultural contexts reveals a nuanced understanding of their interplay. Past studies had revealed the positive relationships between self-esteem and perceived social support in the context of adolescents development (Poudel et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020), health crisis (Aprilianto et al., 2020), and married women (Islam et al., 2020).

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Perceived social support been revealed as a predictive role in influencing self-esteem during formative years (Poudel et al., 2020). In the development of adolescents, adolescents with higher subjective socioeconomic status demonstrating an increased of perceived social support, contributing to the enhancement of self-esteem (Yan et al., 2020). In addition, a study conducted among Turkish nursing students revealed the positive influence of supportive social networks on academic and professional development (Karaca et al., 2019). According to Sckody and McKinney (2019), perceived social support will enhance self-esteem of university students, leading to a positive influenced towards mental health outcomes. The protective role of perceived social support in improving self-esteem and contributing to enhanced well-being had been further highlighted by Lee (2020) and Liu et al. (2021).

Overall, the collective evidence underscores the positive impact of supportive environments on individuals' psychological well-being, while considering cultural contexts and specific life circumstances. These insights have implications for interventions and support systems aimed at fostering positive self-esteem through social support across various populations and contexts.

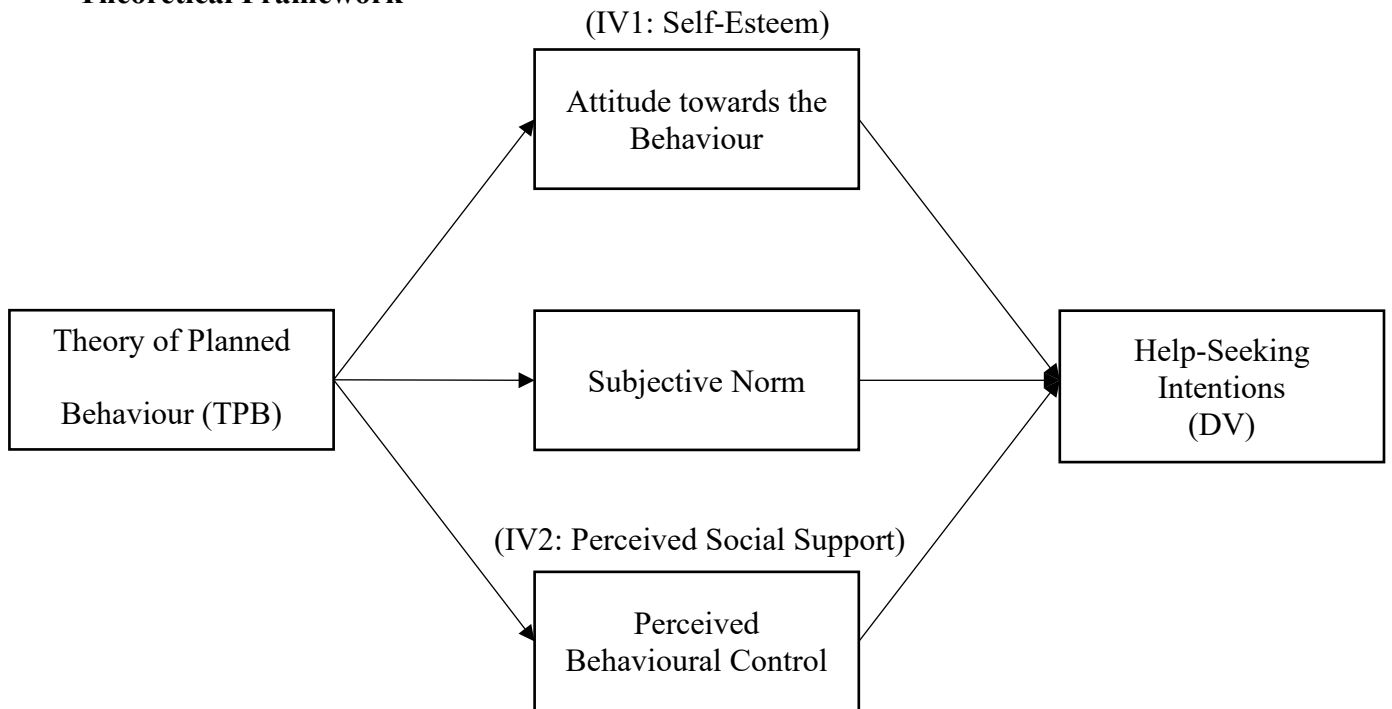
Theoretical Framework

Figure 1: *Theoretical Framework of “The relationship between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia”*

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is the extended theory from the original Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model, broadening its applicability to behaviours (Manstead & Parker, 1995). TPB functions as a general model, providing a framework to predict and explain a wide range of behaviours (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). TPB explain and predict variety of behaviours based on the three components, which are attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). This included the individual's assessment of consequences, perceptions of normative pressure, and perceived control over successful performance of the behaviour (Manstead & Parker, 1995). The three components are influenced by external factors, thus success in achieving behavioural goals, hinges on sufficient control over internal and external factors, in addition to exerted effort (Ajzen, 1985). Empirical evidence supports the validity of TPB in predicting specific behaviours, such as Southeastern undergraduates' participation in physical activity

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(Wang, 2009), adolescents' use of social networking sites (Baker et al., 2010), and the behaviour of overweight adolescents (Rhoades et al., 2011). This theory is comprehensive, offering insights into and predictions for various behavioural domains (Ajzen, 2020).

According to TPB, the primary determinant of human behaviour is behavioural intention (Manstead & Parker, 1995). It posits that stronger intentions are correlated with a higher likelihood of corresponding behaviour (Ajzen, 2020). Intention, defined as the preparedness to engage in a specific behaviour, emerged as the closest determinant of behaviour in the context of TPB (Mak & Davis, 2013). This highlights the crucial role of intention in shaping subsequent actions. In current research, help-seeking intentions refer to a form of coping for mental health issues by reaching out others for assistance in the form of informal help-seeking (e.g. friends and family), formal help-seeking (e.g. mental health professionals), and indirect interpersonal contact (e.g. Internet) (Rickwood et al., 2005). Mak and Davis (2013) found support for the TPB, indicating that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control were all significant predictors of help-seeking intention. In a study by Tomczyk et al. (2020), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was employed and the results revealed significant associations, with attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control being linked to intentions. Furthermore, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), with a specific focus on attitudes, was identified as a robust predictor of help-seeking intentions in a study conducted by Zorrilla et al. (2019). The research indicated that participants who had been exposed to antistigma campaigns or had received behavioural health services demonstrated a significantly positive attitude toward mental health services. This positive attitude was found to be strongly correlated with elevated intentions to seek help (Zorrilla et al., 2019). The TPB theory underscores the multifaceted nature of help-seeking, involving both external and internal factors (Mak & Davis, 2013). The current study will use TPB theory to investigate the influence of internal factors (self-esteem) and external

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factors (perceived social support) on help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

Attitudes towards a behaviour, a function of behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluations (Broonen, 2001), whether successful or unsuccessful, are shaped by underlying beliefs (Ajzen, 1985). These attitudes are evaluative judgments about the favourability or unfavourability of performing a particular behaviour, with outcomes perceived as positive or negative influencing the overall attitude (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). Self-esteem, a component that significantly improved the adequacy of the TPB in predicting intentions (Clark, 2010), has been shown to have a positive relationship with attitude towards help-seeking (De Vos et al., 2020; Topkaya, 2021). In the context of help-seeking, increased self-esteem will increase positive beliefs about one's ability to adapt to difficulties (Hamzah et al., 2021), which will then improve help-seeking intentions (Tomczyk et al., 2020). With high self-esteem, individuals are less likely to be affected by the social stigma of help-seeking and therefore more likely to have positive help-seeking attitudes (Topkaya, 2021). However, individuals with low self-esteem may be reluctant and discouraged to seek help (Lee & Shin, 2022) as they are more sensitive to rejection (Yap et al., 2021). This negative attitude towards help-seeking will affect their help-seeking intentions. In the current study, self-esteem is considered as a stable characteristic of individuals that manifests in both positive and negative ways and influences the attitude of help-seeking intentions (Prihadi et al., 2020).

Perceived behavioural control plays a central role in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), acting as a determinant (Cheng, 2019). It is rooted in confidence in one's subjective judgment of control, the availability of a detailed action plan, and general self-knowledge (Ajzen, 1985). Mak and Davis (2013) argue that seeking mental health services depends on external factors such as cost, time, accessibility knowledge, and language proficiency. As opportunities and resources increase, so does the likelihood of engaging in a behaviour.

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Individuals who lack resources or opportunities are unlikely to have high intentions, regardless of favourable attitudes or subjective norms (Kan & Fabrigar, 2017). In a study by Lee and Shin (2022), knowledge of mental health-related services, as a resource for seeking help, indirectly influenced help-seeking intentions among university students by increasing their sense of behavioural control. Perceived behavioural control, as defined by Kan and Fabrigar (2017), reflects people's perceptions of the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour. Higher perceived social support is associated with higher perceived behavioural control (Jiang et al., 2022). According to House and Kahn (1985), social support includes the provision of financial, physical, and emotional assistance by individuals' significant others, such as family members, friends, neighbours, and co-workers. In the context of help-seeking intentions, receiving resources from social support facilitates higher control beliefs, which in turn leads to higher help-seeking intentions (Mak & Davis, 2013). In the current study, perceived social support is considered to be an influential social factor for individuals, which manifests in both high and low perceptions that influence perceived behavioural control on help-seeking intentions (Mak & Davis, 2013).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) serves as a robust framework for predicting behaviour with a focus on attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. In the present study, the TPB is applied to explore the role of attitudes, which are influenced by self-esteem, and the impact of perceived behavioural control, which is influenced by perceived social support. The TPB posits that stronger behavioural intentions are correlated with a higher likelihood of corresponding actions. The study highlights the crucial role of attitudes, particularly in the context of mental health services, in predicting help-seeking intentions. In addition, perceived social support emerges as a key factor related to perceived behavioural control, facilitating higher help-seeking intentions. In essence, the TPB provides

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valuable insights into the intricate interplay of self-esteem and perceived social support in
influencing help-seeking intentions in current research.

Conceptual Framework

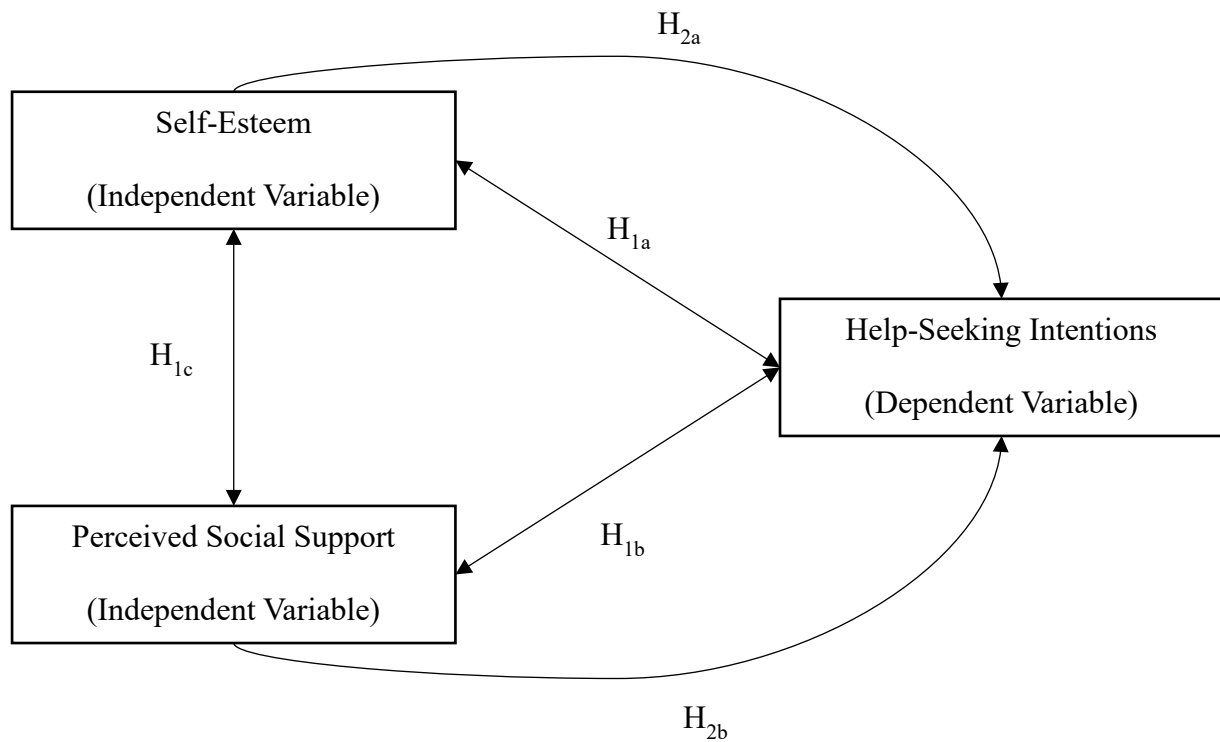


Figure 2: *Conceptual Framework of “The relationship between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia”*

The research aims to study how self-esteem and perceived social support correlate with help-seeking intentions. In this research, help-seeking intentions represents the dependent variable (DV), whereas, self-esteem and social support represent the independent variables (IV). The correlation model (H_{1a} , H_{1b} , H_{1c}) and regression model (H_{2a} , H_{2b}) between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions will be identified using the quantitative method, namely correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

The present study employed a quantitative and correlational research design to examine the relationship between self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions amongst Malaysian university students. The study administered the self-report questionnaire methodology to gather primary data, ensuring participants respond without researcher influence (Demetriou et al., 2015). Purposive sampling was utilized to intentionally target Malaysian university students aged 18 to 24. The study utilized Google Forms to create a self-report questionnaire, and conducted online through various social media platforms. G*Power 3.1.9.4 determined the sample size of 205, accounting for potential non-responsive and missing data. The self-administered survey comprised three parts, including the informed consent, demographic questions and three validated instruments: the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, 12-Item Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and 2-Item General Help Seeking Questionnaire.

Research Design

Current study utilized correlational and quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. A quantitative research design be employed to statistically analyse large representative samples of the population in numerical forms (Mehrad & Zangeneh, 2019). In the present study, primary data were collected, including data on self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. The present study utilized a cross-sectional study design, enabling the researcher to collect data from the research sample and measure the relationship between multiple

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variables with lower costs (Wang & Cheng, 2020). The present study administered the self-report questionnaire, where the respondents can complete the survey without the researchers, to gather a large amount of sample at a single point in time, at the same time avoiding the potential influence of researchers on the participants' responses (Demetriou et al., 2015).

Sampling Procedures

Sampling Method

The present study utilized the purposive sampling technique, commonly referred to as judgment sampling. This sampling technique enables the researcher to target a specific group that cannot be obtained from another group deliberately for data collection. It allows for the quick and effective narrowing down of potential participants, contributing to meaningful results while saving time and costs (Thomas, 2022).

The study included participants selected based on the researcher's own judgments (see Data Collection Procedures). The targeted participants for this study are Malaysian university students in the age range from 18 to 24, currently pursuing tertiary studies in Malaysia. This age group has been reported as highly prevalent in mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and stress (Aldalaykeh et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2023) but with low help-seeking intentions (Goodwin et al., 2016; Low et al., 2016; Aldalaykeh et al., 2019; Ibrahim et al., 2019). Not seeking help for mental health issues may negatively impact university students in terms of academic performance (Daniel et al., 2019; Yusof et al., 2020; Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021; Kolya et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021), unhealthy habits (Chair et al., 2019; Kolya et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2022), and psychological health (Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). Therefore, this study will examine the association between self-

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esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions of Malaysian university students aged between 18 and 24 years.

Location of Study

Google Forms, a web-based tool for online survey creation, was used to generate a self-report questionnaire. The survey was conducted on various social media platforms, including WeChat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and Microsoft Teams. The subjects of the data collection aimed at university students in Malaysia, involving 13 states and 3 federal states.

Ethical Clearance Approval

After the completion of the research proposal, the researcher applied the Ethical clearance approval from the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (SERC). In order to ensure the ethical integrity of the present study, the researcher initiated the data collection procedures after the relevant authority approved the ethical clearance. The relevant authority approved the ethical clearance on 5th January 2024 (Ref: U/SERC/78-182/2024), allowing the initiation of the pilot study's data collection.

Sample Size, Power and Precision

Sample Size

G*Power 3.1.9.4. version, a sample size generator software, was used to obtain sample size for the present study. After utilising several methods in the G*Power to calculate the sample size, a minimum number of 146 respondents was needed for the present study. Additionally, the researcher increased a 40% of sample size based on the minimum number of respondents determined ($n = 146$). It is used to prepare for the possibility of missing data

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or non-responsive data after the data collection is completed (Salkind & Frey, 2019). After increasing by 40%, the present study needs a number of 205 respondents.

Actual Sample Size

The proposed sample size was 205. There were 222 responses collected during the data collection. However, the present study excluded 34 invalid responses from further analysis. Therefore, the actual sample size in the present study was 188 university students.

Power Analysis

In the present study, the sample size was calculated by using the G*Power 3.1.9.4 version. The considered significant level is 5%, which means the margin error is .05 while the considered statistical power is 80%, meaning an 80% chance to get a significant result (Bhandari, 2021).

The present study depended on G*Power 3.1.9.4, to calculate the sample size of H_{1a} , H_{1b} , and H_{1c} for the relationship investigation between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions by using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC). The effect size in the past studies for the correlation between self-esteem (SE) and Help-seeking intentions (HSE) showed $r = .35$ (Alkal et al., 2018), $r = .33$ (Gonzalez, 2021), and $r = .07$ (Topkaya, 2021). The effect size between perceived social support (PSS) and HSE showed $r = .19$ (Maiuolo et al., 2019), $r = .21$ (Tuazon et al., 2019), and $r = .30$ (Cebi & Demir, 2019). The effect size of SE and PSS in the past studies showed $r = .31$ (Gonzalez, 2021), $r = .48$ (Wang et al., 2020), and $r = .36$ (Lin et al., 2020). The average effect sizes were .25, .23 (small effect size) and .38 (medium effect size). Subsequently, G*Power suggested 120, 146 and 49 for the total sample size. The actual power for the three pairs was .80.

The present study depended on G*Power 3.1.9.4, to calculate the sample size of H_{2a} and H_{2b} for the investigation of SE and PSS as predictors of HSI by using Multiple Linear

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Regression. The effect size of SE as a predictor for HSI in past studies showed $f^2 = .23$ (Alkal et al., 2018), $f^2 = .67$ (Topkaya, 2021), $f^2 = 1.49$ (Maclean et al., 2023). The effect size of PSS as a predictor for HSI in past study showed $f^2 = .35$ (Tomczyk et al., 2020), $f^2 = .56$ (Lueck, 2021), $f^2 = .39$ (Ishikawa et al., 2023). The average effect sizes were .79 and .43, both indicating large effect size. Subsequently, G*Power suggested 13 and 21 total sample size. The actual power was .83 and .81.

As a summary, the G*Power determined a sample size of 146 for Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and a sample size of 21 for Multiple Linear Regression. In order to ensure all minimum sample sizes were included, the present study chose a higher number of the sample size.

Data Collection Procedures

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the present study: were (i) Malaysian citizens, (ii) in the age range from 18 to 24 years, and (iii) university students studying in Malaysia. Regarding the exclusion criteria: (i) Malaysian citizens studying abroad, (ii) Malaysian university students currently participating in student exchange programs, and (iii) participants who submit incomplete responses in the online survey.

Plan of Obtaining Consent

An informed consent, the Consent Form for Research Participation and Personal Data Protection, was stated in Part A of the questionnaire. This section, including details of the present study, will contain the study's purpose, participants' inclusion criteria, potential risks, voluntary participation, private and confidentiality, and researcher's details of contact. Participants will only be led to the following questionnaire once they consent to take part in

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the study. The consent form was clearly stated that the participation of the participants is totally voluntary. The participants could withdraw from the study at any time without providing any explanation and no adverse consequences on them. Additionally, the consent form in the section A also clearly informed the anonymity and confidentiality of the surveys. The data collection will only be use for academic purposes.

Data Collection Procedures

The present study used Google Forms to create the online survey form. To facilitate the data collection process, a hyperlink and QR code were generated and spread through various social media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, WeChat, Microsoft Teams, and Facebook. In the process of filling out the online survey form, the participants need not provide their name and email so anonymity and confidentiality can be ensured. The duration used to complete the data collection was 30 days, starting from 14th February 2024 until 14th March 2024. After data collection completed, the researcher converted the data to Microsoft Excel. The raw data was assessed to remove unengaged response and incomplete data. Then, the present study administered the JASP software to analyse the data.

Pilot Study

The pilot study, a small-scale preliminary study, was conducted before the actual study to evaluate the feasibility of the study design. To assess the reliability, the pilot study collected a total of 30 sample (Hertzog, 2008).

After obtaining the ethical clearance approval, the pilot study was conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the research method and instruments before commencing the actual study. A pilot study is a smaller-scale version of an actual study, designed to test the acceptability of a procedure, thereby reducing the risk of failure in the actual study (Vogel & Draper-Rodi, 2017). The pilot study collected 30 participants, all of whom were university

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students involved in internship or practicum activities during the pilot study's data collection period. The sample size of 30 participants was sufficient for a pilot study, as it adhered to the suggested guideline of being 10% of the anticipated sample size for the main study (Viechtbauer et al., 2015), exceeded the recommended threshold ($n = 21$) based on the proposed sample size ($n = 205$).

According to the collected data in the pilot study, good internal consistency was reported for all three instruments utilized in the current study, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha values exceeding .70 (refer to Table 3.1). According to George & Mallery (2003), instruments will be reported as reliable when Cronbach's alpha values are above .70. In this case, all three variables in the present study were reported as reliable and no modifications were needed for the actual study.

Actual Study

After confirming the suitability and reliability of the instruments, the researcher initiated the actual study's data collection, from February 14th to March 14th. Then, the analysis began after the data collection was completed. As previously reported acceptable reliability, the actual study administered all three instruments without any modifications. The researcher generated the link and QR code to distribute the online survey (Google Form) to the research participants both virtually (social media platforms) and directly (face-to-face interactions). The present study collected 222 responses; however, the researcher only included 188 responses in the analysis process. The actual study also reported acceptable for all three instruments, as evidenced by their strong internal consistencies (refer to Table 3.1).

Table3. 1

Instruments' Reliability Found from Pilot Study ($n = 30$) and Actual Study ($n = 188$)

Variable	Number of Items	Pilot Study	Actual Study
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		(Cronbach's α)	(Cronbach's α)
RSES	10	.87	.79
MSPSS	12	.90	.90
GHSQ	2	.91	.85

(with 10 sub-items
for each item)

Note: RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, MSPSS = Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, GHSQ = General Help-Seeking Questionnaire

Instruments

The self-administered survey form consisted three part. Part A included the agreement of informed consent. Part B consisted six demographic questions, including age, gender, ethnicity, level of education, current tertiary institution, current academic year and programme of study. In addition, there were three screening questions, including nationality, involvement in students exchange program, and involvement in an internship or practicum during the data collection period of pilot study and actual study. The screening questions were used to exclude participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria and participants of the pilot study. Part C consisted three instruments, namely the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, 12-Item Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and 2-Item General Help Seeking Questionnaire.

10-Item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Rosenberg (1965), evaluates an individual's overall self-esteem from both positive (items 1, 3, 4, 7, and 10) and negative

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aspects (items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9). The scale used four-point Likert scale to rate the ten items, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The sample items included “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself” and “I feel I do not have much to be proud of”. There are five reverse-scored on this scale (items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9). To calculate the total score, the five items need to be reversed in prior summed the all items. A score between 10 and 25 indicated low self-esteem, while a score between 26 and 40 indicated high self-esteem. Past study reported an acceptable reliability value of .85 (Topkaya, 2021) and .88 (Gonzalez, 2021).

12-Item Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was developed by Zimet et al. (1988) to assess one’s perceptions of support from three sources: family (Items 3, 4, 8, and 11), friends (Items 6, 7, 9, & 12), and a significant other (Items 1, 2, 5, & 10). Comprising a total of 12 items, the scale utilizes a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). Some sample items were “My family really tries to help me”, “My friends really try to help me”, and “I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me”. The score will be sum up. Scores falling within the range of 12 to 35 will be categorized as low perceived social support, scores within the range of 36 to 60 as medium perceived social support, and scores within the range of 61 to 84 as high perceived social support. Past study reported an acceptable reliability value of .94 (Tuazon et al., 2019) and .96 (Yu et al., 2021).

2-Item General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)

The General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) was developed by Wilson et al. (2005) to evaluate one’s intentions to seek help from various sources and the present study focus on help-seeking intentions on mental health issues. The questionnaire consists of 2 items, each comprising 10 sub-items. (eg. “If you were having a personal or emotional problem, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people?”). It aims to

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gauge participants' likelihood of seeking both formal and informal help. Responses are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (Extremely unlikely) to 7 (Extremely likely). The sample item was. The score will be sum up. A greater score on the questionnaire indicates an increased possibility of seeking help. Past study reported an acceptable reliability value of .75 (Ibrahim et al., 2019) and .85 (Wahab et al., 2021). Since the author did not provide the classification of scores, percentile categorization was used to determine the level of help-seeking intentions in the present study. The median scores for help-seeking intentions were 57 (Q1), 73 (Q2), and 84 (Q3), suggesting that scores ranging from 20 to 57 indicate low help-seeking intentions, scores from 58 to 73 indicate medium help-seeking intentions, and scores from 74 to 140 indicate high help-seeking intentions.

Table3. 2*Instruments Score Ranges*

Level	RSES	MSPSS	GHSQ
Low	10 - 25	12 - 35	20 - 57
Medium	-	36 - 60	58 - 73
High	26 - 40	61 - 84	74 - 140

Note: RSES = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, MSPSS = Multidimensional Scale of

Perceived Social Support, GHSQ = General Help-Seeking Questionnaire

Chapter 4 Results

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Characteristics

The Table 4.1 below reported the participants' demographic characteristics in the present study. The present study included 188 university students from 18 to 24 years old ($M = 22.053$; $SD = 1.068$). Precisely, there were 0.53% ($n = 1$) of university students aged 19 years old, 5.32% ($n = 10$) of 20 years old, 21.28% ($n = 40$) of 21 years old, 47.87% ($n = 90$) of 22 years old, 11.17% ($n = 21$) of 23 years old, and 13.83% ($n = 26$) of 24 years old. The largest group of participants in the present study were university students aged 22 years old. In addition, the present study included 17.02% ($n = 32$) of male participants, which was less than the female participants ($n = 156$; 82.98%). Furthermore, the majority of the participants with the ethnicity of Chinese 80.85% ($n = 152$), followed by Malay 10.11% ($n = 19$) and Indian 9.04% ($n = 17$).

The Table 4.1 was not included the current university of the participants and as there were overly numerous. Based on the result, most of the participants were students from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) ($n = 67$; 35.64%). Besides that, they were several universities included in the present study: Asia Pacific University (APU), HELP University, Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, Lim Kok Wing University Creative and Technology, Multimedia University, Raffles University, SEGi University, Southern University College, Sunway University, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TARUMT), Talor's University, University College Sedaya International (UCSI), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti of Technology Sarawak, and Hua Qiao University.

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Other than that, Psychology students ($n = 40$; 21.28%) were the larger group in the present study. Other courses include but not limited to Banking and Finance ($n = 12$; 6.38%), International Business ($n = 9$; 4.79%), etc. Furthermore, the level of education of most of the participants was undergraduate with 88.83% ($n = 167$), followed by postgraduate 5.85% ($n = 11$), foundation 3.19% ($n = 6$), and diploma 2.13% ($n = 4$). Additionally, most of the participants were from Year 3 ($n = 116$; 61.70%), followed by Year 4 ($n = 22$; 11.70%), Year 2 ($n = 34$; 18.09%), and Year 1 ($n = 16$; 8.51%). In addition, all participants were Malaysian who were studying in Malaysia.

Table 4. 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants ($n = 188$)

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Age			22.053	1.068	19	24
19	1	0.53				
20	10	5.32				
21	40	21.28				
22	90	47.87				
23	21	11.17				
24	26	13.83				
Gender						
Female	156	82.98				
Male	32	17.02				

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Race		
Chinese	152	80.85
Indian	17	9.04
Malay	19	10.11
Level of Education		
Diploma	4	2.13
Foundation	6	3.19
Undergraduate	167	88.83
Postgraduate	11	5.85
Current Academic Year		
Year 1	16	8.51
Year 2	34	18.09
Year 3	116	61.70
Year 4	22	11.70

Note. n = number of respondents; % = percentage; M = mean; SD = standard deviation

Topic-Specific Variables Characteristics

The topic specific variables' descriptive statistics included self-esteem ($M = 33.207$; $SD = 4.971$), perceived social support ($M = 61.660$; $SD = 14.150$), and help-seeking intentions ($M = 71.947$; $SD = 20.199$) were reported in Table 4.2 below. In addition, according to the univariate analysis, the data for all three variables (i.e., self-esteem, perceived social support, help-seeking intentions) were normally distributed as their values of

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skewness and kurtosis were all within ± 2.000 . However, based on the p -value of Shapiro-Wilk, the data for self-esteem ($W = 0.981, p = 0.012$), perceived social support ($W = 0.922, p < .001$), and help-seeking intentions ($W = 0.977, p = 0.004$) were not normally distributed as their p -values were less than the standard $p = .05$. In this case, three of the variables will be considered as normally distributed but with cautions on p -value of Shapiro-Wilk.

Table 4. 2

Descriptive Statistics of Topic Specific Variables (i.e., self-esteem, perceived social support, help-seeking intentions)

	Self-Esteem	Perceived Social Support	Help-Seeking Intentions
Median	34.000	65.000	72.000
Mean	33.207	61.660	71.947
Standard Deviation	4.971	14.150	20.199
Minimum	19.000	16.000	32.000
Maximum	45.000	84.000	140.000
Skewness	-0.310	-1.070	0.184
Kurtosis	0.436	1.242	0.199
Shapiro-Wilk	0.981	0.922	0.977
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	0.012	< .001	0.004

Data Diagnostic and Missing Data***Percentages and Frequency of Missing Data***

In the present study, there were no missing data and unengaged responses ($n = 0$; 0%). However, the present study excluded several invalid responses ($n = 34$; 15.32%) from the

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data set. The unengaged responses, responses that without significant fluctuations in response patterns by having same responses for all items in a scale (Steyn, 2017). In the present study, the rule of thumb to determine the respondents as unengaged respondents is when the standard deviation of the group response style less than .50 (Steyn, 2017). 34 responses failed to meet the inclusive criteria in the present study, thus being considered invalid responses. The 34 responses were excluded from the study to ensure the validity and reliability of the present study in the population of Malaysian university students. After excluding the 34 invalid responses from the total of 222 collected responses, there were 188 respondents included in the present study, adequate for the required sample size ($n = 146$).

Methods Employed for Addressing Missing Data

In order to ensure completeness of responses, the researcher set each item in the survey as required, meaning the participants were required to answer all items and unable to leave any blank. Furthermore, to double-check and ensure there is no missing data, the collected data were also checked thoroughly using Microsoft Excel. This was done with the function “=COUNTBLANK(A2:BD2), which included both columns for demographic information and items of questionnaire. The function yielded a value of “0” for all of the rows, which indicated that there were no missing data. However, there is a special case. The AT2 and BE2 items were not included in the count blanks, as these two items were optional open-ended. These items were part of the General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ), which required respondents to list other sources they may seek help from during times of personal or emotional problems or when experiencing suicidal thoughts. The blanks will be ignored as the research hypotheses of the current study did not emphasize the influence of the help-seeking sources, and were not among the variables.

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Criteria for Post Data-Collection Exclusion of Participants

A total of 34 responses were excluded from the collected data. The first criterion for exclusion after data collection was to exclude the unengaged responses. In the present study, the unengaged responses were determined by computing the standard deviation of all the items answered by each respondent with Microsoft Excel using the function “=STDEV.P(I2:BD2)”. There were no unengaged responses in the present study as no case numbers had standard deviations below .50 (Steyn, 2017).

Besides, 34 responses were excluded as the respondents failed to meet the inclusion criteria or met the exclusion criteria of the research participants. This included 10 non-Malaysians, who failed to meet the inclusion criterion of being Malaysian. Moreover, 24 respondents who participated in an internship or practicum during the pilot study and the actual study's data collection period also been excluded, as met the exclusion criterion about being the same population as participants for the pilot study. The 10 foreign respondents were identified with the Microsoft Excel function “=IF(C2=“Malaysian”,1,2)” and the other 24 excluded responses were identified with the function “=IF(M2=“No”,1,2)”, the results were sorted from large to small. With that, the “2” indicated the respondents who were non-Malaysian and participated in an internship of practicum during the pilot study and actual study's data collection period. Additionally, frequent checks were conducted throughout the data collection period to ensure that participants were included in the inclusion criteria and excluded from the exclusion criteria. This helped identify participants who ignored inclusion criteria, such as those 34 participants, thereby facilitating the process of ensuring that recruited participants were appropriate for the study.

Criteria for Imputation of Missing Data

Missing data should be imputed depending on the level of data. For instance, the nominal level of data should be replaced by mode, the ordinal level of data should be

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replaced by median and interval data should be replaced by mean. However, there is no missing data in the present study, thus no imputation of missing data was needed.

Defining and Processing of Statistical Outliers

In order to check the outliers for self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions, a boxplot in JASP was used. According to the boxplots (Appendix B) there were no outliers for the three variables. Outliers are patterns in data that do not conform to a well-defined concept of normal behaviour, are significantly different and inconsistent with the rest of the data, and can create bias in data analysis (Singh & Upadhyaya, 2012). Therefore, to avoid the data analysis being affected, data containing outliers should be excluded from the study. In the present study, no outliers were detected and therefore no data were removed as outliers. However, there is an outlier in the box plot for reported age (case 171), which was 19 years. However, they were not deleted because 19 years old was within the age range mentioned in the inclusion criteria, and the research hypotheses of this study did not emphasize the influence of age, and age was not one of the variables.

Data Transformation

In data transformation, reverse-scored items were reversed in Microsoft Excel using the function “=IF(K2=1,5, IF(K2=2,4, IF(K2=3,3, IF(K2=4,2, IF(K2=5,1,“”))))). The reversal of scores was done for the items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 in Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) so that higher scores would indicate greater self-esteem, which would facilitate the results interpretation. As for the data computation, the scores of scales were sum up using the Microsoft Excel function “=SUM(I2:BD2)”. This included Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ).

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Analyses of Data Distributions

Normality. The present study used the normality tests including skewness, kurtosis, Shapiro-Wilk and boxplot to analyse the data distribution of the three variables (self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions). The normality of data will influence the choice of statistical tests used in the current study, which were either parametric tests or non-parametric tests (Hopkins et al., 2018).

Skewness and Kurtosis. As the univariate analysis reported in Table 4.2, all of the three variables (self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions) were normally distributed based on their skewness and kurtosis that were within ± 2.000 . Specifically, the skewness of self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions were -0.310, -1.070, and 0.184 respectively. As for kurtosis, the results were 0.436, 1.242, and 0.199 respectively. It could be observed that self-esteem and perceived social support were negatively skewed while help-seeking intentions was positively skewed. For skewness, it indicates a greater number of smaller values for self-esteem and perceived social support while a greater number of larger values for help-seeking intentions. For kurtosis, the positive values represented leptokurtic forms of kurtosis, indicating a distribution with higher peaked and taller tails compared to a normal distribution. The data in the present study be considered as normally distributed as both the values for skewness and kurtosis for all three variables were in the acceptable range.

Shapiro-Wilk. According to the univariate analysis reported in Table 4.2, the data for self-esteem ($W = 0.981, p = 0.012$), perceived social support ($W = 0.922, p < .001$), and help-seeking intentions ($W = 0.977, p = 0.004$) appeared to be not normally distributed as their p-values were below the standard $p = .05$.

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Boxplot. Boxplots of the three variables were attached as Appendix B. There were no outliers for all three variables, including self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions. Therefore, no outliers were eliminated. However, the normality of the data still depended on normality tests, including skewness, kurtosis, and Shapiro-Wilk as data without outliers were not necessarily normal.

Data Analysis

Level of self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

For the variable of self-esteem, the classification of scores was in accordance with the scale interpretation suggested by Rosenberg (1965), whereby respondents scored within the range from 10 to 25 were considered to have a low level of self-esteem; whereas those who scored within the range from 26 to 40 were considered to have a high level of self-esteem. For the variable of perceived social support, the classification of scores was also in accordance with the scale interpretation suggested by the authors, whereby scores falling within the range of 12 to 35 will be categorized as low perceived support; scores from 36 to 60 as medium perceived support; and scores from 61 to 84 as high perceived support (Zimet et al., 1988). For the variable of help-seeking intentions, the author did not provide the classification of scores, so the percentile categorization was used to determine the level of help-seeking intentions. According to Table 4.4, the median scores for help-seeking intentions were 57 (Q1), 73 (Q2), and 84 (Q3), suggesting 20 to 57 as low help-seeking intentions, 58 to 73 as medium help-seeking intentions, and 74 to 140 as high help-seeking intentions. In addition, the Excel formulae of “=IF(BG2>83,"high",IF(BG2>59,"medium","low"))” was used to categorized the responses

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into low, medium or high. Moreover, to identify the numbers of participants in each level of the three variables, the Excel formulae of “=COUNTIF(BJ2:BJ189,"low")” had been used.

Based on the result, there are 5.32% of respondents ($n = 10$) been categorised in low self-esteem and 94.68% of respondents ($n = 178$) with high self-esteem. In terms of perceived social support, 35.11% of respondents ($n = 66$) been categorised as having low perceived social support, 60.11% ($n = 113$) as having medium perceived social support and 4.79% ($n = 9$) as having high perceived social support. In addition, there are 25.53% of respondents ($n = 48$) been categorised as having low help-seeking intentions, 27.13% ($n = 51$) having medium help-seeking intentions and 47.34% ($n = 89$) having high help-seeking intentions.

In short, the present study indicated that there are high self-esteem, medium perceived social support, and high help-seeking intentions among the university students in Malaysia.

Table 4. 3

Frequency Distribution of Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support and Help-Seeking Intentions ($n = 188$)

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Self-Esteem			33.500	4.676	21	45
Low (<26)	10	5.32				
High (≥ 26)	178	94.68				
Perceived Social Support			62.218	12.359	30	84
Low (<26)	66	35.11				
Medium (<41)	113	60.11				

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High (≥ 41)	9	4.79		
Help-Seeking Intentions			71.989	18.716
			32	110
Low (<58)	48	25.53		
Medium (<74)	51	27.13		
High (≥ 74)	89	47.34		

Note. n = number of respondents; % = percentage; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum value; Max = maximum value

Table 4. 4*Quartiles of Help-Seeking Intentions***Descriptive Statistics**

	TOTAL_GHSQ
25th percentile	57.000
50th percentile	73.000
75th percentile	84.000

Note. TOTAL_GHSQ = Total of General Help-Seeking Questionnaire

H₁ There are significant relationship between self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions.

The present study used Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) to examine the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions. In addition, Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support as well as perceived social support and help-seeking intentions. For the hypotheses, two-tailed test was conducted.

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H_{1a}: There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

As part of the assumption of PPMC, both univariate normality (see Table 4.2) and bivariate normality (see Table 4.6) were observed. As for the univariate normality, self-esteem and help-seeking intentions were normally distributed as their values of skewness and kurtosis were within ± 2.000 . Regarding the bivariate normality, the p -value of Shapiro-Wilk of the joint distribution of self-esteem and help-seeking intentions was $p = .062$, indicating normal distribution. Therefore, the present study used the parametric test, PPMC to examine the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions.

As shown in Table 4.5, the result reported $r(188) = .042, p = .566$. There was no statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions. The p -value was above .05, the present study thus failed to reject the null hypothesis, H_{1a} was then not supported.

Table 4. 5

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (n = 188)

Pearson's Correlations

Variable		TOTAL_RSES	TOTAL_GHSQ
1. TOTAL_RSES	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. TOTAL_GHSQ	Pearson's r	0.042	—
	p-value	0.566	—

Note. All tests were two-tailed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. TOTAL_RSES = Total of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; TOTAL_GHSQ = Total of General Help-Seeking Questionnaire

Table 4. 6

Assumption Checks for PPMC

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Shapiro-Wilk Test for Bivariate Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk	p
TOTAL_RSES - TOTAL_MSPSS	0.978	0.005
TOTAL_RSES - TOTAL_GHSQ	0.986	0.062
TOTAL_MSPSS - TOTAL_GHSQ	0.975	0.002

Note. TOTAL_RSES = Total of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; TOTAL_MSPSS = Total of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; TOTAL_GHSQ = Total of General Help-Seeking Questionnaire

H_{1b}: There is a significant relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

In terms of the normality of distribution, the assumptions of PPMC were not observed. The univariate analysis indicated that the values of skewness and kurtosis for both perceived social support and help-seeking intentions indicated a normal distribution. However, the bivariate normality analysis revealed that the two variables were not normal, as indicated in Table 4.6. The Shapiro-Wilk p -value of $p = .002$ was reported to have been lower than the standard $p = .05$. This suggested that the combined distribution of perceived social support and help-seeking intentions was not normally distributed. Therefore, H_{1b} was determined by using the non-parametric test, Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (see Table 4.7).

As shown in Table 4.7, the result reported that $r(188) = .368, p < .001$. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions. Given the relationship was in a positive direction, the greater the perceived social support, the greater the level of help-seeking intentions. The p -value was

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below .05, the null hypothesis was thus rejected, H_1 was then supported. According to Guilford's rule of thumb (1973), the strength of the relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions was weak.

Table 4. 7

Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (n = 188)

Spearman's Correlations

Variable		TOTAL_RSES	TOTAL_MSPSS	TOTAL_GHSQ
1. TOTAL_RSES	Spearman's			
	rho	—		
	p-value	—		
2. TOTAL_MSPSS	Spearman's			
	rho	0.232 **	—	
	p-value	0.001	—	
3. TOTAL_GHSQ	Spearman's			
	rho	0.019	0.368 ***	—
	p-value	0.791	< .001	—

Note. All tests were two-tailed.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. TOTAL_RSES = Total of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; TOTAL_MSPSS = Total of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support; TOTAL_GHSQ = Total of General Help-Seeking Questionnaire

H_{1c}: There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support among university students in Malaysia.

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The assumptions of PPMC were not observed, especially in terms of the normality of distribution. The univariate analysis indicated that the values of skewness and kurtosis for both self-esteem and perceived social support indicated a normal distribution. However, the bivariate normality analysis revealed that the two variables were not normal, as indicated in Table 4.6. The Shapiro-Wilk p -value of $p = .005$ was reported to have been lower than the standard $p = .05$. This suggested that the combined distribution of self-esteem and perceived social support was not normally distributed. Therefore, H_{1c} was determined by using the non-parametric test, Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient (see Table 4.7).

As shown in Table 4.7, the result reported that $r(188) = .232, p = .001$. There was a statistically significant positive relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support. Given the relationship was in a positive direction, the higher the level of self-esteem, the higher the perceived social support. The p -value was below .05, the null hypothesis was thus rejected, H_{1c} was then supported. According to Guilford's rule of thumb (1973), the strength of the relationship between self-esteem and perceived social support was weak.

H_{2a}: Self-esteem is able to predict help-seeking intentions of university students in Malaysia.

After conducting correlational analysis, it was determined that regression analysis would not be appropriate for examining the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions. This decision was made due to the absence of a significant relationship between the two variables in the dataset (see Table 4.5). In addition, regression analysis depends on the assumption of a linear relationship between the predictor (self-esteem) and outcome variables (help-seeking intentions). Given that the correlational analysis reported no significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions, this assumption was

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not met. Therefore, proceeding with regression analysis would not produce valid or reliable results.

H_{2b}: Perceived social support is able to predict help-seeking intentions of university students in Malaysia.

The assumptions of Simple Linear Regression (SLR) were observed. As there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions. Therefore, the present study used SLR to examine the prediction power of the only independent variable, perceived social support on the dependent variable, help-seeking intentions. This was a two-tailed test. As shown in the Table 4.8, the result was statistically significant $F(1, 186) = 22.700, p < .001$. Therefore, at α level of .05, the regression model fits the data significantly.

Table 4. 8

Simple Linear Regression Model (n = 188)

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
H ₁	Regression	7162.930	1	7162.930	22.700	< .001
	Residual	58693.049	186	315.554		
	Total	65855.979	187			

Note. Dependent Variable = Help-Seeking Intention; Predictors = Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support

According to Table 4.9, the equation to explained the relationship was as follows: help-seeking intentions = 0.499 (perceived social support) + 40.914. The mentioned formulae could used to calculate the individual cases of help-seeking intentions. For instance, one of the actual data collection cases received a score of 73 for help-seeking intentions and 70 for

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perceived social support. Therefore, using the formula, calculation of the help-seeking intentions for this specific case was $.499 (70) + 40.914 = 75.844$. Besides that, perceived social support ($\beta = .330, p < .001$) were reported to significantly predict help-seeking intentions. Additionally, as shown in Table 4.10, the adjusted R squared was .104. This showed that perceived social support explained 10.4% of the variance in help-seeking intentions. The effect size was determined using the following formula, $f^2 = \frac{R^2}{1-R^2} = \frac{0.104}{1-0.104} = .116$, which was a medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). In a nutshell, perceived social support was predictor for help-seeking intentions, while self-esteem failed to predict help-seeking intentions. Therefore, H_{2b} was supported, but it was not the case for H_{2a} .

Table 4. 9*Simple Linear Regression Coefficient***Coefficients**

							Collinearity	
							Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
Ho	(Intercept)	71.989	1.369		52.598	< .001		
Hi	(Intercept)	40.914	6.650		6.153	< .001		
	TOTAL_MSPSS	0.499	0.105	0.330	4.764	< .001	1.000	1.000

Note: TOTAL_MSPSS = Total of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

In terms of the assumptions for SLR, linear relationship, normal distribution, no multicollinearity, no auto-correlation and homoscedasticity were observed. As shown in Table 4.10, the value of Durbin-Watson was 2.011, which was between 1.5 and 2.5; the assumption of autocorrelation thus was not violated. As shown in Table 4.9, the collinearity

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tolerance was above 0.1 and VIF were below 5.0, further indicating that the data was normally distributed and no outliers were found.

Table 4. 10

Assumption Checks for SLR

Model Summary - TOTAL_GHSQ

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE	Durbin-Watson		
					Autocorrelation	Statistic	p
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	18.766	-0.024	2.044	0.762
H ₁	0.330	0.109	0.104	17.764	-0.007	2.011	0.937

Table 4. 11

Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result
H_{1a}	Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation	Fail to reject the null hypothesis.
H_{1b}	Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient	Reject the null hypothesis. Weak positive relationship.
H_{1c}	Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient	Reject the null hypothesis. Weak positive relationship.
H_{2a}	-	Fail to reject the null hypothesis.
H_{2b}	Simple Linear Regression	Reject the null hypothesis. Medium effect size.

Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examine the level of self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among the university students in Malaysia. In addition, the present study also focus on the relationships between the three variables (self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions) and the predictive roles of the two variables (self-esteem and perceived social support) on help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. According to the statistical analyses, the present study rejected H_{1a} and H_{2a} while supported H_{1b} , H_{1c} and H_{2b} .

Level of Self-Esteem, Perceived Social Support and Help-Seeking Intentions

The present findings revealed that the majority of university students in Malaysia exhibited high levels of self-esteem, with 178 participants representing 94.68% of the sample. With high self-esteem, the university students will tend to perform more positive behaviour such as having a lower inclination to self-handicapping (Yildirim & Demir, 2019), low social media addiction (Köse & Doğan, 2019), less vulnerable to self-protection strategies (Ferradás et al., 2019), performing more organizational citizen behaviour (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2020) and having higher satisfaction in life (Vilca-Pareja et al., 2022).

Additionally, perceived social support was reported at a medium level among 113 participants, constituting 60.11% of the sample. This implies that although a significant proportion of university students perceive some level of social support, there is still needed to improve the support networks available to university students. Based on the result of perceived medium social support, university students may have access to some support sources, such as friends, family, or university services, but there is a possibility that there may be a gap in the availability or quality of support. In order to improve the perceived social

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support, it could be addressed through targeted interventions and programs that could assist individuals to acquire social support and promote a sense of belonging (Pang, 2020). Social support that is relevant to psychological well-being at different major developmental life stages (Holliman et al., 2021) serves as a valuable resource for universities in protecting the mental health of students (Alsubaie et al., 2019). Improved social support for university students, particularly family support, significantly decreases the report on negative mental health outcomes (Lagdon et al., 2018) and increases the well-being of university students (Cobo-Rendón et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the study indicates that help-seeking intentions were generally high among university students, with 89 participants, accounting for 47.34% of the sample, indicating a strong inclination towards help seeking when faced with challenges. The high level of help-seeking intentions indicated by university students in Malaysia suggests they have a higher level of coping self-efficacy (Zi et al., 2020), thus tending to cope with difficulties through greater use of support-seeking (Ubesie et al., 2021) and less use of avoidant coping strategies (Niegocki & Ægisdóttir, 2019). Additionally, a positive attitude towards help-seeking is crucial for promoting help-seeking behavior (Xiong & Yang, 2021) and reducing stigma (Dagani et al., 2023; Harvey & White, 2023) surrounding seeking assistance for personal or academic difficulties.

Self-Esteem and Help-Seeking Intentions

The H_{1a} , hypothesised there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia, was rejected ($r = .042$; $p = .566$). Likewise, the H_{2a} , hypothesised that self-esteem significantly predicts help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia, was rejected.

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The present study having results differed from past studies. Past studies showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions (Alkal et al., 2018; De Vos et al., 2020; Topkaya, 2021; Maclean et al., 2023; Tomczyk et al., 2020). Past research reporting a positive relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions claimed that high self-esteem could motivate individuals' help-seeking intentions (Tomczyk et al., 2020). Increased self-esteem will foster positive beliefs about one's ability to adapt to difficulties (Hamzah et al., 2021). Individuals need to believe in the benefits of seeking help, have self-esteem, and perceive themselves as worthy of positive change (Crowe, 2020) to be more likely to seek help. With high self-esteem, individuals are less likely to be affected by the social stigma of help-seeking and therefore more likely to have positive attitudes toward seeking help (Topkaya, 2021). Additionally, individuals with low self-esteem tend to use inappropriate coping strategies for their difficulties, which excludes seeking help (Yap et al., 2021).

Mental health stigma persists in Malaysia (Kotera et al., 2020). According to Eui and Tan (2019), over half of university students (53.4%) reported high perceived public stigma. However, this phenomenon was absent in past research. Previous studies conducted among university students in Turkey reported a significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions (Topkaya, 2021). The earlier study found that only 1% of Turkish university students reported fear of social judgment (Bilican, 2013). The disparity between the present study and past studies could be attributed to Malaysian society experiencing stronger stigma regarding help-seeking compared to Turkey. Consequently, university students in Malaysia may harbour a greater fear of judgment and discrimination regarding help-seeking, regardless of their self-esteem level, as stigma could deter them from seeking help even if they have higher levels of self-esteem.

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Additionally, Topkaya's (2021) study conducted in Turkey predominantly included Muslim students, who constitute the dominant group in Turkey. However, the present study conducted in Malaysia needs to consider cultural sensitivity and differences among different ethnic groups. The majority of respondents in the current study were Chinese ($n = 152$; 81.85%), which is a subordinate group in Malaysia (Albury, 2018). Chinese individuals in Malaysia, as a minority group, tend to undergo a stigma normative process by internalizing stigma (Friedman et al., 2022). In the present study, the Chinese individuals as the subordinate group in Malaysia, may tend to internalize and be influenced by stigma, leading to stigma having a stronger influence on help-seeking intentions rather than self-esteem.

According to Erikson's developmental theory, the targeted participants in this study, university students in the age range from 18 to 24 years old, have passed the adolescent stage that emphasizes the development of self-identity and are currently in the stage of young adulthood (Erikson, 1959). In this stage, their personal identity, such as self-esteem, has been achieved, and they are now focusing on finding intimacy or experiencing isolation in interpersonal relationships (Erikson, 1959). They have transitioned from the stage of seeking their personal identity to the stage of needing to form intimate, loving relationships with others. During this time focused on developing relationships with others, their social and cultural environment influences university students (Schwartz et al., 2023). Thus, as university students have passed the identity-perceiving stage and entered the stage of relationships, the help-seeking intentions of the participants may be more influenced by social stigma than by their self-esteem.

In the context of the present study, the self-esteem of university students in Malaysia was not associated with their help-seeking intentions.

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Perceived Social Support and Help-Seeking Intentions

The H_{1b} , which hypothesised that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia, was supported ($r = .368; p < .001$). In other words, when individuals perceived higher social support, they are having higher help-seeking intentions. Moreover, the H_{2b} , which hypothesised that perceived social support significantly predicts the help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia, was also supported ($F = 22.700, p < .001$).

The result was consistent with past studies (Cebi & Demir, 2019; Jones et al., 2019; Maiuolo et al., 2019; Yeshanew et al., 2020; Entilli et al., 2021; Chao et al., 2022). According to Cebi & Demir (2019), when individuals perceive higher social support, they are more likely to employ active coping strategies, such as help-seeking, to deal with life challenges. This has been supported by further research (Kamaludin et al., 2019; Chao et al., 2022). To illustrate, when individuals perceive higher social support, it enhances their perceived control over help-seeking (Mak & Davis, 2014), coupled with low social pressure (Aldalaykeh et al., 2019), leading to higher help-seeking intentions. It is same as the individuals experiencing authoritative parenting that associated with efforts to modify or direct attempts at autonomy and decision-making, may be supported in seeking help (Maiuolo et al., 2019). Additionally, when university students perceive higher social support, stigma is reduced, thus facilitating their help-seeking intentions (Kim et al., 2020).

The support of social support positively influencing individuals' coping strategies, such as help-seeking when facing life challenges, could be discussed using Social Support Theory. According to Cullen's (1994) Social Support Theory, social support resulting in supportive societies and relationships could lessen crime rates and individual crime. Social support, a positive aspect, can prevent or reduce the risk of crime (Kort-Butler, 2018). Meanwhile, crime is considered one potential coping strategy to deal with negative feelings

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA triggered by life challenges (Barbieri et al., 2019). Individuals perceiving less control and greater pressure are likely to experience negative emotions that could push them towards negative coping strategies such as crime (DeCamp et al., 2020). However, if individuals perceive higher social support, they may perceive more resources in their lives (Talebi et al., 2016), leading to a higher perception of control and lesser pressure. This enhancement of perceived control could improve the likelihood of individuals employing active coping strategies such as help-seeking (Aldalaykeh et al., 2019), thus coping more effectively with life challenges (Talebi et al., 2016). In other words, higher perceived social support is associated with an increased likelihood of employing active coping strategies, such as help-seeking, when facing life challenges. In this case, individuals who perceive themselves as having strong social support networks are more likely to seek help when faced with challenges or stressors.

According to the current study, university students in Malaysia are more likely to have strong help-seeking intentions when they perceive high levels of social support.

Predictors of Help-Seeking Intentions

The H_{2a} of the current study was self-esteem will significantly predict help-seeking intentions. However, the results shown no significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among the Malaysian university students in present study. According to the H_{2b} in the present study, the perceived social support could significantly predict the help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. The SLR results also demonstrated that help-seeking intentions was significantly predicted by perceived social support. Based on the result, out of the two variables in the study, perceived social support was the only one that could explain help-seeking intentions.

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The result has been supported by past research (Tomczyk et al., 2020; Lueck, 2021; Ishikawa et al., 2023). Social support has been reported as the primary determinant of help-seeking intention (Lueck, 2021). Prevention efforts such as improving social support could help improve adults' readiness and willingness to seek help (Tomczyk et al., 2020). This could be influenced by the collectivistic nature (Mat Saat, 2021) and the value of saving face (Ibrahim et al., 2019) in Malaysian culture. Collectivist university students easily to be influenced by their environment. A supportive environment increases individuals' perceived control and leads to higher help-seeking intentions (Mak & Davis, 2014). Thus, having higher perceived social support empowers them to seek help when facing challenges. Additionally, social support plays a critical role in combating some of the unhelpful aspects of self-reliance for mental health help-seeking in young people (Ishikawa et al., 2023). Young people with high self-reliance have low perceived social support (Ishikawa et al., 2023) because they may believe they should work out their personal problems on their own (Low et al., 2016). However, by improving their perceived social support, the unhelpful aspects of self-reliance could be reduced, leading to higher help-seeking intentions (Ishikawa et al., 2023).

In the context of the present study, when university students have higher perceived social support, their higher help-seeking intentions will be predicted.

Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

The conceptual framework of the current study was developed in accordance with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). Based on the findings, it was demonstrated that the current study, in fact, contributed to the theory's validation in the context of Malaysian university students. The present study reported that perceived social support has

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statistically significant relationships with help-seeking intentions and can predict help-seeking intentions. Given in the present study, the perceived social support was related to one of the significant components described in TPB, which is perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1985). The result indicates that perceived behavioural control is indeed related to help-seeking intentions. As a result, the current study's findings not only strengthened the theory in the context of Malaysian university students, but they also offered concrete information that supported up the theory's usefulness.

Nevertheless, it was also found that self-esteem was not significantly associated with help-seeking intentions. This indicated that self-esteem may not adequately account for the help-seeking intentions of Malaysian university students. Furthermore, this may also suggested that perceived social support, which was related to the components of perceived behavioural control, was more significant in influencing help-seeking intentions rather than attitudes towards the behavior (self-esteem), in the context of university students in Malaysia. As a result, these findings conflict with the theory as well as with certain earlier researches (Mak & Davis, 2013; Kan & Fabrigar, 2017; Zorrilla et al., 2019). However, a variety of additional external variables may also have an impact on this, such as the selection of instruments, research design or sample size. In summary, this suggested that additional research is necessary to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions in order to improve help-seeking intentions in the theory more thoroughly.

Practical Implications

First and foremost, the findings of the current study offer a practical framework that mental health professionals can utilize to enhance help-seeking intentions among university students within the community. This applies to a range of professions, such as clinical

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psychologists, counsellors in various contexts, and especially university counsellors, considering the study's emphasis on university students. As revealed by the results, perceived social support was positively associated with help-seeking intentions and is capable of predicting it. Consequently, the professionals can integrate these findings into their explorations, action plans, or interventions. For instance, when university counsellors encounter students exhibiting low help-seeking intentions, they can assist them in bolstering their perceived social support to improve their willingness to seek help. For example, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) could be employed to identify and modify cognitive distortions among university students that contribute to their social isolation and loneliness, thus helping them to increase their perception towards social support, and increasing help-seeking intentions.

Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that improved help-seeking intentions correlate with enhanced overall mental health and well-being among university students (Rickwood et al., 2005; Hedge et al., 2016). Therefore, professionals are encouraged to consistently emphasize the significance of help-seeking intentions for university students, even for those without pronounced help-seeking challenges. When university students exhibit satisfactory progress in their help-seeking intentions and overall mental health, no matter the practitioners or organizations, stand to benefit from a more positive image and reputation. In a similar way, university counsellors and the universities themselves stand to benefit in terms of their general standing when students improve their help-seeking intentions within university counselling units. In the process of working with the clients, the mental health professionals could also feel more confident, effective, and worthy of their work.

Furthermore, the current study offers university students a useful framework for determining the important variables affecting their help-seeking intentions. This empowers students to increase their inclination to seek help when encountering life challenges and to

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view help-seeking as a positive, proactive coping strategy for managing difficulties by augmenting their perceived social support. Additionally, ensuring the mental health and well-being of university students becomes feasible as they become more inclined to seek help when needed. Consequently, the well-being of university students improves, benefiting both the students and the university. With enhanced help-seeking intentions leading to effective management of life challenges, university students may also achieve better academic performance and interpersonal experiences. In this scenario, not only do university students benefit from their academic achievements, but universities do as well.

Limitations of the Study

The use of non-probability sampling techniques was the study's primary limitation, which may have limited the findings' applicability to a larger population. The present study used the purposive sampling, imposing specific inclusion criteria on respondents' selection. There is a possibility that the researcher may have some subjectivity and bias in selecting the research sample, which may hinder the ability to draw inferences about the population (Rai & Thapa, 2015). Given the time and resource constraints, this approach was quicker and easier to use, but it would have been better to have validity that is more external and a more representative sample of the research population. According to Wisniowski et al. (2020), samples drawn using non-probability sampling techniques are less representative of the population because they are less accurate in capturing the traits of the larger group. The majority of the participants in the present study were Chinese females, inconsistent with the actual population of university students in Malaysia. Hence, it must be acknowledged that the study's results may be limited in terms of external validity, and the generalizability of the findings is subject to this limitation.

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Additionally, this study used social media to gather data from respondents via online self-report questionnaires, which could lead to response biases that compromise the validity of research findings. One of the possible bias is social desirability bias, wherein respondents tend to provide socially desirable responses, leading to biased data that hinder result accuracy (Kuru & Pasek, 2016). For instance, participants may be inclined to report higher self-esteem levels to present themselves in a positive light, fearing judgment or seeking social approval. Furthermore, acquiescence bias may arise, in which survey participants have a tendency to agree or rate everything more favourably, regardless of the content (Kuru & Pasek, 2016). This implied that respondents who do not carefully consider the choices that best describe them may score higher on scales.

A further limitation of the current study is its reliance on statistical assumptions, which are evident in the statistical test of the first hypothesis, H_1 : There are significant relationships between self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. The normal distribution of the data and random sampling from the population were included as the assumptions of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC). However, bivariate normality for perceived social support and help-seeking intentions, as well as self-esteem and help-seeking intentions, was not achieved. In this situation, Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, the non-parametric test were used in place of parametric tests (PPMC) in order to address this problem. Nonetheless, compared to non-parametric tests, the use of parametric tests is typically recommended since they yield more insightful and significant results (Asmare & Begashaw, 2018). Thus, this limitation is notable in the present study.

Other than that, the present study was included insufficient variables and sample size, leading to the inability to fully explore relationships among variables and the potential implications for the study's findings. While the present study delved into the constructs of

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attitude towards the behavior (self-esteem) and perceived behavioral control (perceived social support) within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), it did not directly address the component of subjective norms. This omission highlights a significant limitation in the study's scope. Subjective norms, a critical component of the TPB, capture individuals' perceptions of social pressure or approval from significant others regarding the behavior under consideration. By not incorporating subjective norms into the study design, the present study missed an opportunity to examine the determinants of help-seeking intentions within the TPB framework comprehensively. This limitation suggests that the relationship between the TPB and help-seeking intentions may not have been fully explained. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the interplay between attitude towards the behaviour, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms in shaping help-seeking intentions.

Secondly, the study's sample size of 188 participants may also pose a limitation, as it could be considered relatively small. While this sample size was sufficient as the expected sample size ($n = 146$), it may be insufficient to fully explore the relationships among variables and produce solid results. A small sample size increases the risk of Type II errors (Knudson & Lindsey, 2014) and limits the representation of diverse demographic groups or variability in the variables of interest (Zhao, 2020), potentially compromising the generalizability of findings. Therefore, the findings of the study should be interpreted with caution, recognizing the limitations imposed by both the analytical approach and the sample size on the ability to accurately examine the relationships between self-esteem, perceived social support, and help-seeking intentions.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research are recommended to use longitudinal and qualitative research to examine the relationship between the three variables over time and gain a deeper

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understanding of the factors influencing help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia. The present study reported no significant relationship between self-esteem and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia, which may have been influenced by the single-point data collection method. Therefore, further studies could adopt longitudinal designs to provide insights into how the three variables may change or influence each other throughout the university experience. Additionally, qualitative research methods such as interviews or focus groups could be employed to explore more about the role of self-esteem, perceived social support, and other factors influencing help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia.

Other than that, the another recommendation included reducing socially desirable responding, it is recommended that researchers may modify the instructions. The revised instructions contained more details about the participants' role as important information contributors, the need for accurate information, and the anonymity of their responses (Gordon, 1987). In order to lower the likelihood of socially acceptable responses, it is also advisable to minimize physically approaching respondents, thus the respondents will be less likely to be influenced by the researchers and feel more secure in answering the questionnaire truthfully. Moreover, to address acquiescence bias, it is suggested to rephrase questionnaire items to make them shorter and easier to understand, or to balance positively and negatively worded items (Latkin et al., 2017). However, including items in a questionnaire with varying wording may lead to respondent confusion and inaccurate data. Thus, caution must be exercised when rewording items and proper procedures should be followed.

An additional suggestion would be to expand the sample size. In comparison to a smaller sample size, a larger sample size increases the likelihood of a normal data distribution (Khatun, 2021). Additionally, expanding the sample size and diversity of participants would enhance the generalizability and validity of findings. Recruiting larger and more diverse

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samples from various demographic backgrounds and cultural contexts would enable researchers to examine the relationships among variables across different populations, thus strengthening the adaptability of the study's conclusions.

Last but not least, future research could significantly benefit from expanding the scope of variables and increasing the sample size to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics influencing help-seeking behavior. By incorporating a broader range of variables beyond self-esteem and perceived social support, researchers can capture the multifaceted nature of help-seeking intentions. For instance, researchers could incorporate subjective norms into the study design, thus researchers can gain valuable insights into the different variables that shape individuals' help-seeking intentions. This approach allows for a more comprehensive examination of the factors influencing help-seeking intentions and offer a more nuanced analysis of the complex interplay between individual characteristics and help-seeking intentions.

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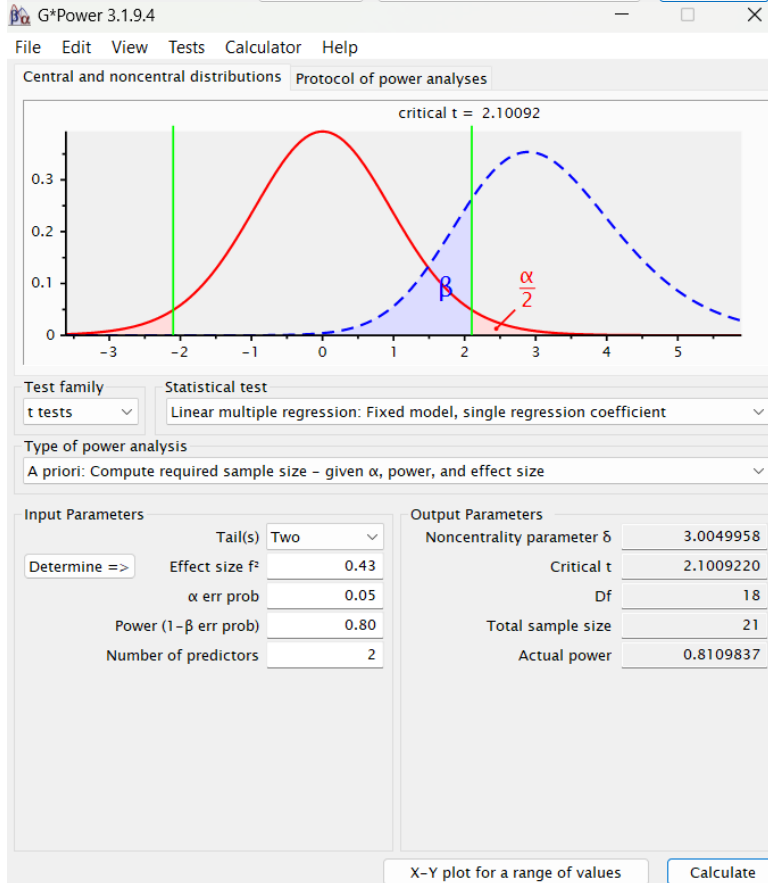
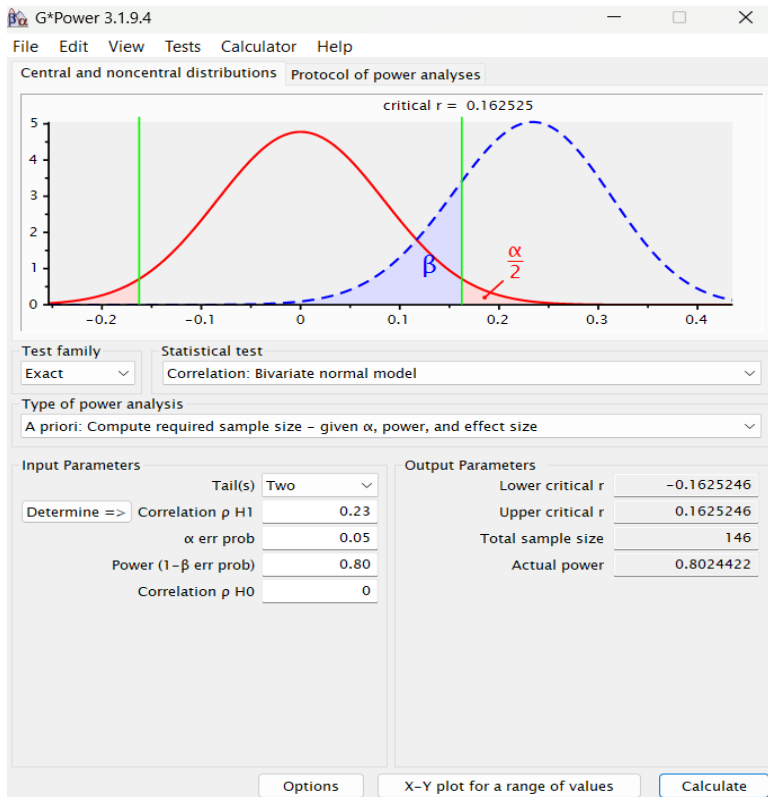
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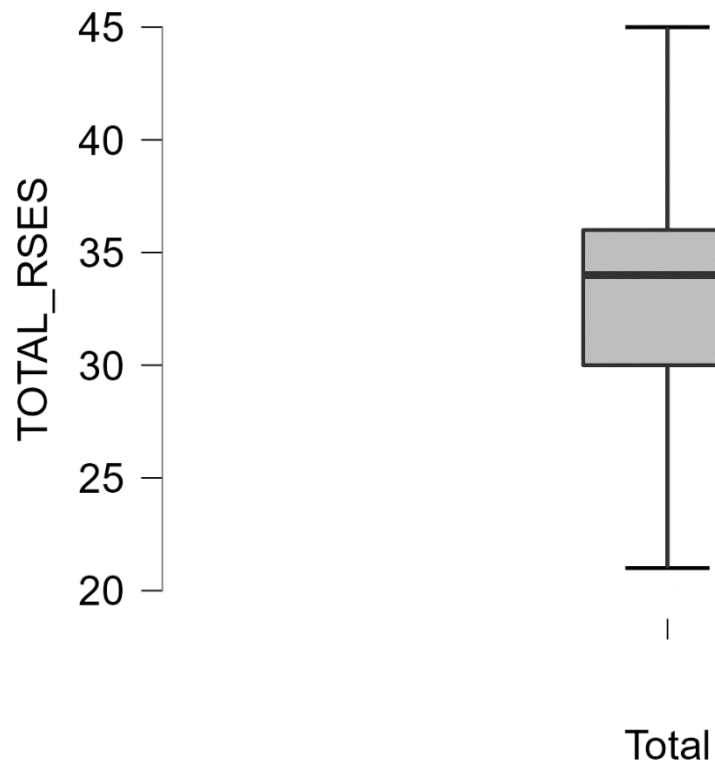
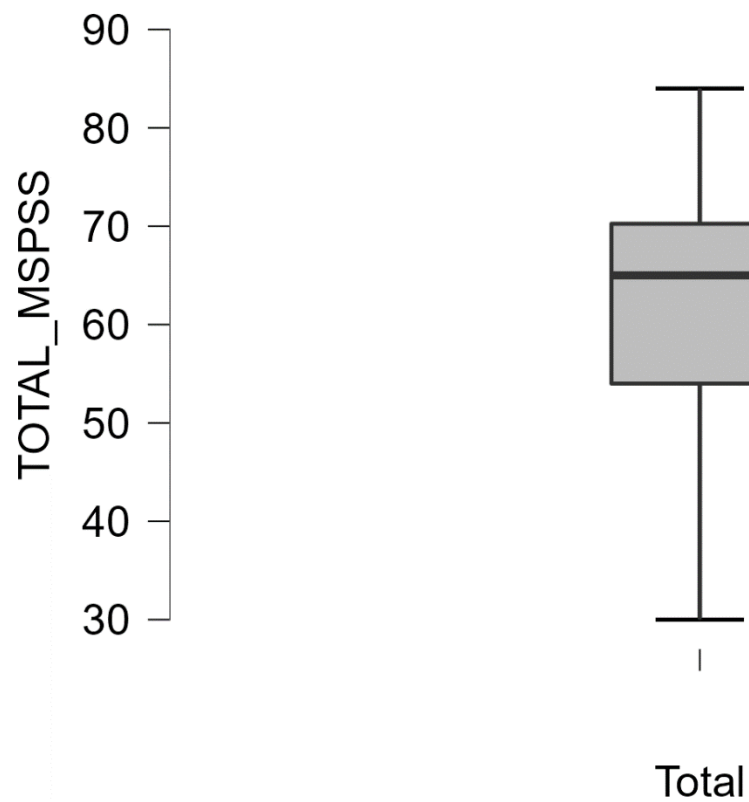
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Appendixes

Appendix A: Sample Size Calculation

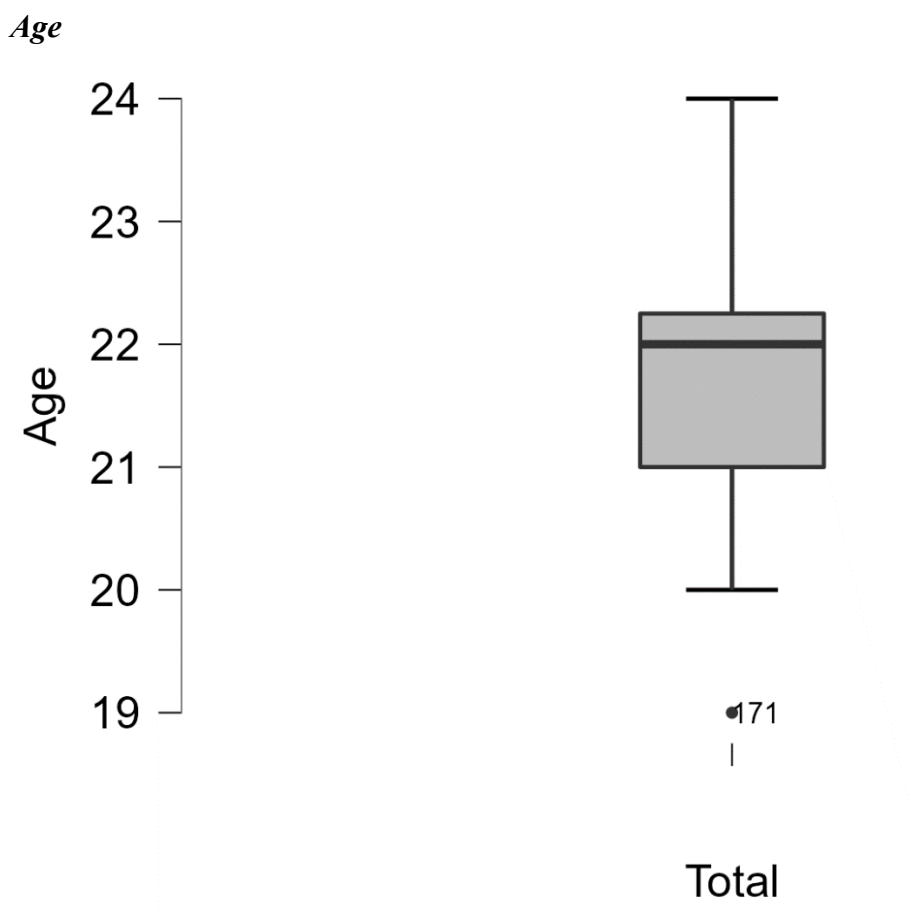
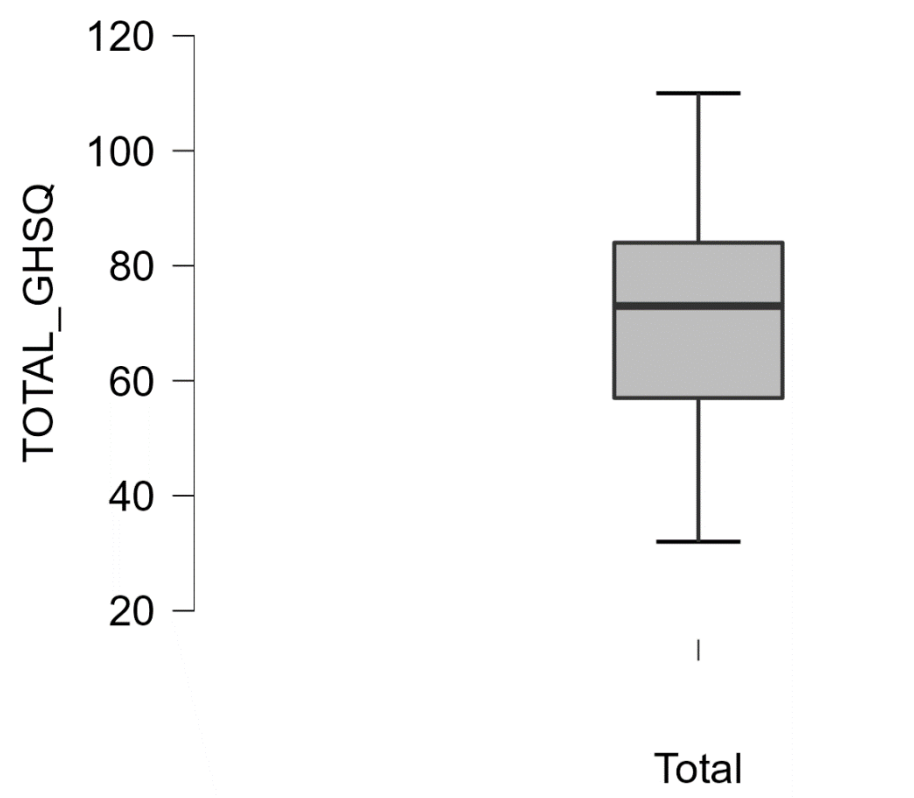


HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix B: Boxplots*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)**Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale (MSPSS)*

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)



Appendix C: JASP Output for Reliability in Pilot Study*Self-Esteem***Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.867
95% CI lower bound	0.785
95% CI upper bound	0.923

*Perceived Social Support***Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.903
95% CI lower bound	0.833
95% CI upper bound	0.948

*Help-Seeking Intentions***Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.905
95% CI lower bound	0.853
95% CI upper bound	0.943

Appendix D: JASP Output for Reliability in Actual Study*Self-Esteem***Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.791
95% CI lower bound	0.745
95% CI upper bound	0.831

*Perceived Social Support***Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.902
95% CI lower bound	0.879
95% CI upper bound	0.921

*Help-Seeking Intentions***Frequentist Scale Reliability Statistics**

Estimate	Cronbach's α
Point estimate	0.849
95% CI lower bound	0.817
95% CI upper bound	0.877

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix E: JASP Output for Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation**Pearson's Correlations**

Variable		TOTAL_RSES	TOTAL_GHSQ
1. TOTAL_RSES	Pearson's r	—	—
	p-value	—	—
2. TOTAL_GHSQ	Pearson's r	0.042	—
	p-value	0.566	—

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Bivariate Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk	p
TOTAL_RSES - TOTAL_GHSQ	0.986	0.062

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix F: JASP Output for Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient**Spearman's Correlations**

Variable		TOTAL_RSES	TOTAL_MSPSS	TOTAL_GHSQ
1. TOTAL_RSES	Spearman's rho	—		
	p-value	—		
2. TOTAL_MSPSS	Spearman's rho	0.232 **	—	
	p-value	0.001	—	
3. TOTAL_GHSQ	Spearman's rho	0.019	0.368 ***	—
	p-value	0.791	< .001	—

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Bivariate Normality

	Shapiro-Wilk	p
TOTAL_RSES - TOTAL_MSPSS	0.978	0.005
TOTAL_RSES - TOTAL_GHSQ	0.986	0.062
TOTAL_MSPSS - TOTAL_GHSQ	0.975	0.002

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Appendix G: JASP Output for Single Linear Regression

Model Summary - TOTAL_GHSQ

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE	Durbin-Watson		
					Autocorrelation	Statistic	p
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	18.766	-0.024	2.044	0.762
H ₁	0.330	0.109	0.104	17.764	-0.007	2.011	0.937

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
H ₁	Regression	7162.930	1	7162.930	22.700	< .001
	Residual	58693.049	186	315.554		
	Total	65855.979	187			

Note. The intercept model is omitted, as no meaningful information can be shown.

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
							Tolerance	VIF
H ₀	(Intercept)	71.989	1.369		52.598	< .001		
H ₁	(Intercept)	40.914	6.650		6.153	< .001		
	TOTAL_MSPSS	0.499	0.105	0.330	4.764	< .001	1.000	1.000

Collinearity Diagnostics

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions	
				(Intercept)	TOTAL_MSPSS
H ₁	1	1.981	1.000	0.010	0.010
	2	0.019	10.167	0.990	0.990

Note. The intercept model is omitted, as no meaningful information can be shown.

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Casewise Diagnostics

Case Number	Std. Residual	TOTAL	GHSQ Predicted Value	Residual	Cook's Distance
1	-0.163	73.000	75.876	-2.876	0.000
2	0.685	88.000	75.876	12.124	0.002
3	0.148	72.000	69.383	2.617	0.000
4	-0.449	53.000	60.892	-7.892	0.002
5	0.798	82.000	67.885	14.115	0.002
6	-0.304	71.000	76.376	-5.376	0.000
7	0.035	75.000	74.378	0.622	0.000
8	1.615	100.000	71.381	28.619	0.007
9	0.996	84.000	66.386	17.614	0.005
10	0.317	79.000	73.379	5.621	0.000
11	0.520	68.000	58.895	9.105	0.004
12	0.769	88.000	74.378	13.622	0.002
13	0.630	89.000	77.874	11.126	0.002
14	-1.096	48.000	67.385	-19.385	0.005
15	0.374	83.000	76.376	6.624	0.001
16	1.108	93.000	73.379	19.621	0.003
17	-1.096	48.000	67.385	-19.385	0.005
18	0.091	70.000	68.384	1.616	0.000
19	1.927	109.000	74.877	34.123	0.012
20	-1.131	42.000	61.891	-19.891	0.013
21	0.996	84.000	66.386	17.614	0.005
22	-0.672	55.000	66.886	-11.886	0.002
23	-1.208	48.000	69.383	-21.383	0.005
24	-0.446	60.000	67.885	-7.885	0.001
25	-0.332	72.000	77.874	-5.874	0.001
26	0.827	80.000	65.387	14.613	0.004
27	-0.276	73.000	77.874	-4.874	0.000
28	0.459	83.000	74.877	8.123	0.001
29	-1.029	38.000	55.898	-17.898	0.023
30	0.516	86.000	76.875	9.125	0.001
31	-1.009	54.000	71.880	-17.880	0.003
32	-0.049	77.000	77.874	-0.874	0.000
33	-1.433	48.000	73.379	-25.379	0.006
34	0.628	83.000	71.880	11.120	0.001
35	1.420	101.000	75.876	25.124	0.008
36	-0.247	70.000	74.378	-4.378	0.000
37	0.574	89.000	78.873	10.127	0.002
38	-0.788	50.000	63.889	-13.889	0.005
39	0.317	80.000	74.378	5.622	0.000
40	-1.660	39.000	68.384	-29.384	0.010
41	0.374	74.000	67.385	6.615	0.001
42	1.984	110.000	74.877	35.123	0.013
43	0.459	84.000	75.876	8.124	0.001

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Casewise Diagnostics

Case Number	Std. Residual	TOTAL	GHSQ Predicted Value	Residual	Cook's Distance
44	-0.136	61.000	63.390	-2.390	0.000
45	-2.025	35.000	70.882	-35.882	0.011
46	-1.580	37.000	64.888	-27.888	0.016
47	0.318	83.000	77.374	5.626	0.000
48	-1.331	38.000	61.392	-23.392	0.019
49	-0.700	65.000	77.374	-12.374	0.002
50	-0.983	60.000	77.374	-17.374	0.005
51	-0.162	72.000	74.877	-2.877	0.000
52	-1.179	52.000	72.879	-20.879	0.004
53	-0.445	68.000	75.876	-7.876	0.001
54	0.461	89.000	80.871	8.129	0.002
55	-0.078	72.000	73.379	-1.379	0.000
56	-0.841	61.000	75.876	-14.876	0.003
57	-0.078	72.000	73.379	-1.379	0.000
58	-1.404	48.000	72.879	-24.879	0.005
59	1.251	99.000	76.875	22.125	0.007
60	0.861	98.000	82.868	15.132	0.008
61	-0.106	81.000	82.868	-1.868	0.000
62	1.333	94.000	70.382	23.618	0.005
63	0.261	79.000	74.378	4.622	0.000
64	-1.038	57.000	75.377	-18.377	0.004
65	-0.388	64.000	70.882	-6.882	0.000
66	-1.179	49.000	69.883	-20.883	0.004
67	-1.836	32.000	64.389	-32.389	0.023
68	0.374	79.000	72.380	6.620	0.000
69	1.259	83.000	60.892	22.108	0.018
70	0.092	81.000	79.372	1.628	0.000
71	2.775	108.000	59.394	48.606	0.109
72	1.449	103.000	77.374	25.626	0.010
73	0.967	86.000	68.884	17.116	0.003
74	1.587	101.000	72.879	28.121	0.007
75	0.035	68.000	67.385	0.615	0.000
76	-1.348	50.000	73.878	-23.878	0.005
77	0.692	71.000	58.895	12.105	0.007
78	-0.163	73.000	75.876	-2.876	0.000
79	0.374	74.000	67.385	6.615	0.001
80	0.092	81.000	79.372	1.628	0.000
81	-1.179	49.000	69.883	-20.883	0.004
82	0.148	72.000	69.383	2.617	0.000
83	1.927	109.000	74.877	34.123	0.012
84	0.520	68.000	58.895	9.105	0.004
85	-0.445	68.000	75.876	-7.876	0.001
86	0.520	68.000	58.895	9.105	0.004

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Casewise Diagnostics

Case Number	Std. Residual	TOTAL	GHSQ Predicted Value	Residual	Cook's Distance
87	-0.449	53.000	60.892	-7.892	0.002
88	0.374	83.000	76.376	6.624	0.001
89	-0.983	60.000	77.374	-17.374	0.005
90	1.420	101.000	75.876	25.124	0.008
91	0.780	71.000	57.396	13.604	0.011
92	0.035	68.000	67.385	0.615	0.000
93	0.317	80.000	74.378	5.622	0.000
94	0.459	83.000	74.877	8.123	0.001
95	-0.700	65.000	77.374	-12.374	0.002
96	-0.304	71.000	76.376	-5.376	0.000
97	-1.580	37.000	64.888	-27.888	0.016
98	0.261	79.000	74.378	4.622	0.000
99	-1.038	57.000	75.377	-18.377	0.004
100	3.053	109.000	55.898	53.102	0.202
101	1.615	100.000	71.381	28.619	0.007
102	-2.025	35.000	70.882	-35.882	0.011
103	-0.162	72.000	74.877	-2.877	0.000
104	-0.247	73.000	77.374	-4.374	0.000
105	-1.131	42.000	61.891	-19.891	0.013
106	-0.391	76.000	82.868	-6.868	0.002
107	0.318	83.000	77.374	5.626	0.000
108	-1.179	52.000	72.879	-20.879	0.004
109	-0.136	61.000	63.390	-2.390	0.000
110	0.574	89.000	78.873	10.127	0.002
111	0.317	79.000	73.379	5.621	0.000
112	-0.672	55.000	66.886	-11.886	0.002
113	-0.332	72.000	77.874	-5.874	0.001
114	0.091	70.000	68.384	1.616	0.000
115	-1.009	54.000	71.880	-17.880	0.003
116	-1.096	48.000	67.385	-19.385	0.005
117	-1.029	38.000	55.898	-17.898	0.023
118	0.035	75.000	74.378	0.622	0.000
119	-0.049	77.000	77.874	-0.874	0.000
120	0.996	84.000	66.386	17.614	0.005
121	-1.208	48.000	69.383	-21.383	0.005
122	1.251	99.000	76.875	22.125	0.007
123	0.035	75.000	74.378	0.622	0.000
124	-1.331	38.000	61.392	-23.392	0.019
125	-0.078	72.000	73.379	-1.379	0.000
126	-0.388	64.000	70.882	-6.882	0.000
127	-1.985	48.000	82.868	-34.868	0.044
128	0.516	86.000	76.875	9.125	0.001
129	0.769	88.000	74.378	13.622	0.002

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

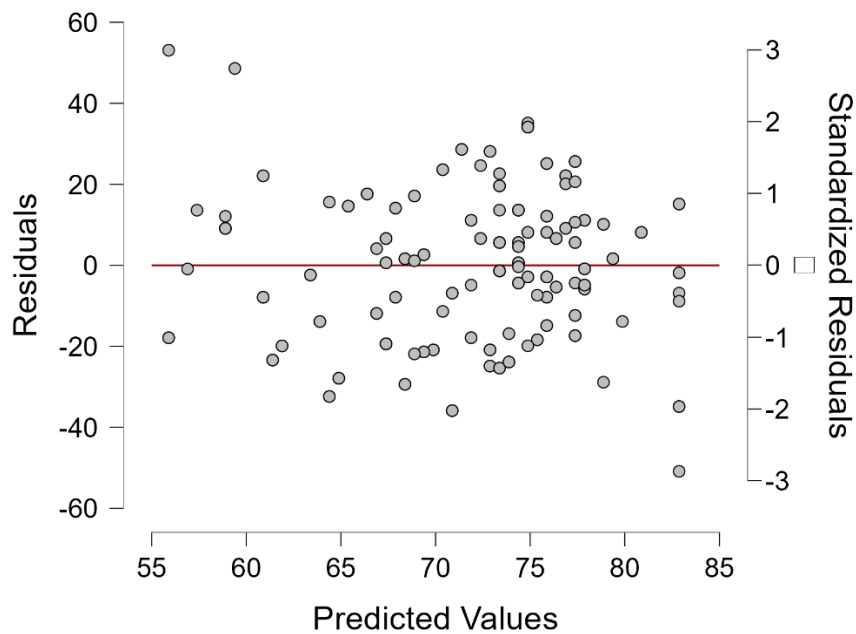
Casewise Diagnostics

Case Number	Std. Residual	TOTAL	GHSQ Predicted Value	Residual	Cook's Distance
130	0.861	98.000	82.868	15.132	0.008
131	-0.106	81.000	82.868	-1.868	0.000
132	-1.836	32.000	64.389	-32.389	0.023
133	1.449	103.000	77.374	25.626	0.010
134	-0.163	73.000	75.876	-2.876	0.000
135	1.587	101.000	72.879	28.121	0.007
136	0.374	79.000	72.380	6.620	0.000
137	-0.276	73.000	77.874	-4.874	0.000
138	0.459	84.000	75.876	8.124	0.001
139	1.259	83.000	60.892	22.108	0.018
140	-1.404	48.000	72.879	-24.879	0.005
141	1.108	93.000	73.379	19.621	0.003
142	-0.841	61.000	75.876	-14.876	0.003
143	-1.433	48.000	73.379	-25.379	0.006
144	0.630	89.000	77.874	11.126	0.002
145	0.685	88.000	75.876	12.124	0.002
146	1.333	94.000	70.382	23.618	0.005
147	0.628	83.000	71.880	11.120	0.001
148	1.927	109.000	74.877	34.123	0.012
149	-0.788	50.000	63.889	-13.889	0.005
150	0.827	80.000	65.387	14.613	0.004
151	0.798	82.000	67.885	14.115	0.002
152	-1.660	39.000	68.384	-29.384	0.010
153	-0.078	72.000	73.379	-1.379	0.000
154	0.317	79.000	73.379	5.621	0.000
155	-0.247	70.000	74.378	-4.378	0.000
156	-1.348	50.000	73.878	-23.878	0.005
157	0.520	68.000	58.895	9.105	0.004
158	0.374	83.000	76.376	6.624	0.001
159	0.461	89.000	80.871	8.129	0.002
160	-0.446	60.000	67.885	-7.885	0.001
161	0.967	86.000	68.884	17.116	0.003
162	0.091	70.000	68.384	1.616	0.000
163	-1.096	48.000	67.385	-19.385	0.005
164	-1.985	48.000	82.868	-34.868	0.044
165	0.769	88.000	74.378	13.622	0.002
166	1.108	93.000	73.379	19.621	0.003
167	0.630	89.000	77.874	11.126	0.002
168	-0.051	56.000	56.897	-0.897	0.000
169	-0.417	68.000	75.377	-7.377	0.001
170	1.138	97.000	76.875	20.125	0.006
171	-0.786	66.000	79.872	-13.872	0.004
172	1.390	97.000	72.380	24.620	0.005

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Casewise Diagnostics

Case Number	Std. Residual	TOTAL_GHSQ	Predicted Value	Residual	Cook's Distance
173	1.167	98.000	77.374	20.626	0.006
174	0.063	70.000	68.884	1.116	0.000
175	0.885	80.000	64.389	15.611	0.005
176	-1.635	50.000	78.873	-28.873	0.016
177	-0.021	74.000	74.378	-0.378	0.000
178	-1.236	47.000	68.884	-21.884	0.005
179	-0.643	59.000	70.382	-11.382	0.001
180	-0.953	57.000	73.878	-16.878	0.003
181	0.233	71.000	66.886	4.114	0.000
182	-0.275	67.000	71.880	-4.880	0.000
183	-1.123	55.000	74.877	-19.877	0.004
184	-0.505	74.000	82.868	-8.868	0.003
185	0.601	88.000	77.374	10.626	0.002
186	-2.895	32.000	82.868	-50.868	0.094
187	1.277	96.000	73.379	22.621	0.005
188	0.769	87.000	73.379	13.621	0.002

Residuals vs. Predicted

Appendix H: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

Please record the appropriate answer for each item, depending on whether you Strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it.

- 1 = Strongly agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Disagree
- 4 = Strongly disagree

- ___ 1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- ___ 2. At times I think I am no good at all.
- ___ 3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- ___ 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- ___ 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- ___ 6. I certainly feel useless at times.
- ___ 7. I feel that I'm a person of worth.
- ___ 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- ___ 9. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.
- ___ 10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix I: Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale (MSPSS)

		Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree
1.	There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My family really tries to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I get the emotional help & support I need from my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	My friends really try to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I can talk about my problems with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	My family is willing to help me make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I can talk about my problems with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix J: General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)

1. If you were having a personal or emotional problem, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people?

Please indicate your response by putting a line through the number that best describes your intention to seek help from each help source that is listed.

1 = Extremely Unlikely 3 = Unlikely 5 = Likely 7 = Extremely Likely

a. Intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife, de facto)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Friend (not related to you)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Other relative/family member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Mental health professional (e.g. psychologist, social worker, counsellor)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Phone helpline (e.g. Lifeline)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. Doctor/GP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Minister or religious leader (e.g. Priest, Rabbi, Chaplain)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i. I would not seek help from anyone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j. I would seek help from another not listed above (please list in the space provided, e.g., work colleague. If no, leave blank) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. If you were experiencing suicidal thoughts, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people?

Please indicate your response by putting a line through the number that best describes your intention to seek help from each help source that is listed.

1 = Extremely Unlikely 3 = Unlikely 5 = Likely 7 = Extremely Likely

a. Intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife, de facto)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Friend (not related to you)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c. Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d. Other relative/family member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e. Mental health professional (e.g. psychologist, social worker, counsellor)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f. Phone helpline (e.g. Lifeline)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g. Doctor/GP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Minister or religious leader (e.g. Priest, Rabbi, Chaplain)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i. I would not seek help from anyone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j. I would seek help from another not listed above (please list in the space provided, e.g., work colleague. If no, leave blank) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix K: Ethical Clearance Approval



UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN DU012(A)
Wholly owned by UTAR Education Foundation Co. No. 578227-M

Re: U/SERC/78-182/2024

5 January 2024

Dr Pung Pit Wan
Head, Department of Psychology and Counselling
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat
31900 Kampar, Perak.

Dear Dr Pung,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to the application for ethical approval for your students' research project from Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Guidance and Counselling programme enrolled in course UAPC3083. We are pleased to inform you that the application has been approved under Expedited Review.

The details of the research projects are as follows:

No	Research Title	Student's Name	Supervisor's Name	Approval Validity
1.	The Relationship of Attitude Toward Online Counselling and Self-stigma on Intention of Malaysia University Students to Seek Online Counselling and Face-to-face Counselling	Hu Zi Miao	Mr Lee Wei Rong	5 January 2024 – 4 January 2025
2.	The Effectiveness of Dialectical Behavior Therapy on Responds of Perceived Chronic Stress and Positive Reappraised Anxiety and Perceived Control among Undergraduate Student in Malaysia: Single Case Study	Meng Jin		
3.	The Relationship of Self-esteem, Perceived Social Support and Help-seeking Intentions Among University Students in Malaysia	Tan Lian Jia		
4.	Multicultural Counselling Competencies of Local Counsellors in Malaysia in Dealing with Culturally Diversified Clients: A Phenomenological Study	Tan Jia Ye		

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The conduct of this research is subject to the following:

- (1) The participants' informed consent be obtained prior to the commencement of the research;
- (2) Confidentiality of participants' personal data must be maintained; and
- (3) Compliance with procedures set out in related policies of UTAR such as the UTAR Research Ethics and Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Research Involving Humans and other related policies/guidelines.
- (4) Written consent be obtained from the institution(s)/company(ies) in which the physical or/and online survey will be carried out, prior to the commencement of the research.

Should the students collect personal data of participants in their studies, please have the participants sign the attached Personal Data Protection Statement for records.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Ts Dr Faiz bin Abd Rahman
Chairman
UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee

c.c Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Science
 Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research



Appendix L: Supervisor's Comments on Originally Report

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman			
Form Title : Supervisor's Comments on Originality Report Generated by Turnitin for Submission of Final Year Project Report (for Undergraduate Programmes)			
Form Number: FM-IAD-005	Rev No.: 0	Effective Date: 01/10/2013	Page No.: 1 of 1

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Full Name(s) of Candidate(s)	Tan Lian Jia
ID Number(s)	20AAB02308
Programme / Course	Bachelor of Arts and Social Science (Hons) Guidance and Counselling
Title of Final Year Project	The relationship of self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia

Similarity	Supervisor's Comments (Compulsory if parameters of originality exceeds the limits approved by UTAR)
Overall similarity index: <u>1 5</u> % Similarity by source Internet Sources: <u>1 2</u> % Publications: <u>1 1</u> % Student Papers: <u>8</u> %	
Number of individual sources listed of more than 3% similarity: _____	
Parameters of originality required and limits approved by UTAR are as follows: (i) Overall similarity index is 20% and below, and (ii) Matching of individual sources listed must be less than 3% each, and (iii) Matching texts in continuous block must not exceed 8 words <i>Note: Parameters (i) – (ii) shall exclude quotes, bibliography and text matches which are less than 8 words.</i>	

Note Supervisor/Candidate(s) is/are required to provide softcopy of full set of the originality report to Faculty/Institute

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Based on the above results, I hereby declare that I am satisfied with the originality of the Final Year Project Report submitted by my student(s) as named above.



Signature of Supervisor

Name: Lee Wei Rong

Date: 17/4/2024

Signature of Co-Supervisor

Name:

Date:

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Appendix M: Turnitin's Report

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Appendix N: IAD Consent Form

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman			
Form Title : Sample of Submission Sheet for FYP/Dissertation/Thesis			
Form Number : FM-IAD-004	Rev No: 0	Effective Date: 21 June 2011	Page No: 1 of 1

**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN**

Date: 18 April 2024

SUBMISSION OF FINAL YEAR PROJECT

It is hereby certified that Tan Lian Jia (ID No.: 20AAB02308) has completed this final year project titled "The relationship of self-esteem, perceived social support and help-seeking intentions among university students in Malaysia" under the supervision of Mr. Lee Wei Rong (Supervisor) from the Department of Psychology and counselling, Faculty of Arts and Social Science.

I understand that University will upload softcopy of my final year project in pdf format into UTAR Institutional Repository, which may be made accessible to UTAR community and public.

Yours truly,









Name: Tan Lian Jia

HELP-SEEKING INTENTIONS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

Appendix O: Action Plan**Action Plan of UAPC3093 Project Paper II**

Supervisee Tan Lian Jia

Supervisor Mr. Lee Wei Rong

Task Description	Date	Supervisee's Signature	Supervisor's Signature	Supervisor's Remarks	Next Appointment Date/Time
Methodology Submit Chapter 3: Methodology Amend Chapter 3: Methodology	25/3/2024			Completed amended chapter 3	5/4/2024
Results & Findings Submit Chapter 4: Results Amend Chapter 4: Results	5/4/2024			Completed amended chapter 4	9/4/2024
Discussion & Conclusion Submit Chapter 5: Discussion Amend Chapter 5: Discussion	9/4/2024 15/4/2024			Completed amended chapter 5	15/4/2024
Abstract					
Turnitin Submission				Generate similarity rate from Turnitin.com	

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Amendment					
Submission of final draft				Submission of hardcopy and documents	
Oral Presentation					

- Notes:**
- 1. Deadline for submission cannot be changed, mark deduction is as per faculty standard.**
 - 2. Supervisees are to take the active role to make appointments with their supervisors.**
 - 3. Both supervisors and supervisees should keep a copy of this action plan.**
 - 4. This Action Plan should be attached as an appendix in Project Paper 2.**