




Identifying the Cultural and Contextual Barriers to Help-Seeking Behavior for Mental Health in Adolescents

Syarifah. Maisarah¹, Mei-Ling. Chen^{2*}

¹ Faculty of Social Sciences & Liberal Arts, Department of Psychology, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

² Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan

* Corresponding author email address: meiling.chen@ntnu.edu.tw

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Anela Hasanagic  Full Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Islamic Education, University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina anela.hasanagic@unze.ba	Reviewer 1: Mehdi Rostami  Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: dr.mrostami@kmanresce.ca Reviewer 2: Sara Nejatifar  Department of Psychology and Education of People with Special Needs, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. Email: s.nejatifar@edu.ui.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In “Addressing stigma, enhancing parental and school support, improving service accessibility...” the conclusion could better emphasize the implications for policy and clinical practice separately, to make it actionable.

In the paragraph discussing “Digital mental health services...”, the contrast between potential and limitations is clear, but lacks evidence specific to Taiwan. Adding local adoption data or case examples would strengthen relevance.

The phrase “guided by an interview protocol covering key topics...” would benefit from including a sample question or two, to demonstrate how cultural barriers were probed.

The table lists open codes, but it is unclear how frequently each was endorsed. Adding frequency counts or participant percentages would help readers understand the prevalence of each barrier.

The discussion paragraph starting “The barrier of ‘fear of losing face’...” effectively links to Latinx and immigrant youth research, but could also address whether this concept manifests differently in Taiwan compared to other East Asian cultures.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the sentence “Help-seeking behaviors during adolescence are shaped by a complex interplay of individual, cultural, interpersonal, and structural factors...”, consider citing additional recent Taiwan-specific studies to justify the local context more robustly.

The paragraph beginning “In the context of East Asia, including Taiwan...” could integrate more detail on specific Taiwanese sociocultural characteristics beyond collectivism (e.g., educational ranking systems, urban-rural service disparities) to situate the reader better.

In the “Fear of Losing Face” subsection, the quote “If my classmates know I go to a counselor...” is strong, but including a contrasting case (e.g., a participant who did seek help despite this fear) could illustrate variability.

The “Lack of Emotional Support” theme might be enriched by describing any differences observed between single-parent households and two-parent households in the dataset.

In “Limited Access to Services...”, the statement “The nearest clinic is an hour away...” should be contextualized with urban vs. suburban differences, since travel time likely varies by location.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.