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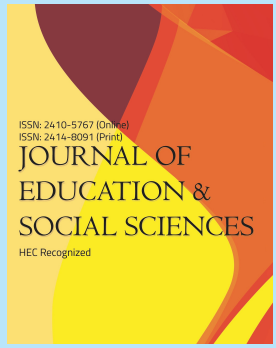

A Correlational Study Examining the Relationship Between Psychological Distress and Academic Adjustment in Technical College

Affiliation:
Ying-Leh Ling
Politeknik Kuching Sarawak, Malaysia.
Email: drylling@poliku.edu.my
Jennifer Tini
Open University Malaysia, Malaysia.
Email: jennifer0739@oum.edu.my

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A Correlational Study Examining the Relationship Between Psychological Distress and Academic Adjustment in Technical College

Ying-Leh Ling [*] Jennifer Tini [†]

Abstract: *As college students are in a period of transitioning from teenage years to adulthood, they typically will experience multiple levels of psychological distress, and these stressors influence their studies. This research presents to investigate the relationship between psychological distress and academic adjustment in technical college students in Kuching, Sarawak. This research used a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey. The instruments in this study applied the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms-34 (CCAPS-34) for psychological distress domains and the Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS) for academic adjustment domains. The students were given a web link to the survey questionnaire. The respondents in this research are 303 students in semester three: consisting of 146 male students and 157 female students. Overall, there is a significant correlation between psychological distress and academic adjustment. With this, psychological distress is unexceptional towards tertiary education learners and hurts an individual and their educational setting. To improve learners' academic performance, it is crucial to have more focus on the psychological well-being of college students.*

Keywords: Psychological distress, academic adjustment, technical college students.

Introduction

Psychological distress could have been detected as early as in the adolescent stage, whereby before the transition period to adulthood phase. Grasdalsmoen, Eriksen, Lønning, and Sivertsen (2020) propounded that most mental disorders take place in late adolescence and early adulthood, and some researchers found that 12 to 50 percent of college students possess the traits. According to the article written by Lee, Menon, and Rajaendram (2018), 18.3 percent of students in Malaysia are suffering from depression, 39.7 per cent experience anxiety, while stress is 9.6 percent. The increasing numbers of mental health issues among students at the age of 13 to 17 represent potential problems for the schools and specifically for the country.

On the other hand, Sani (2018) revealed that the analysis carried out among university students in Klang Valley between the age of 18 to 24 on depression, anxiety, and stress

[*]Politeknik Kuching Sarawak, Malaysia. Email: drylling@poliku.edu.my
[†]Open University Malaysia, Malaysia. Email: jennifer0739@oum.edu.my

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were significantly higher and alarming. Altogether, they displayed depression at 37.2 percent, anxiety scored 63 percent, and stress rated 23.7 percent. Previous research indicated that depression phenomena among college and university students aged 18–25 years old were from 12.3 percent to 21.3 percent. Their research also showed that uncertainty, depression, melancholy, or pressure over demanding circumstances occurred among this population.

Kaloeti et al. (2019) verified that the associated factors of psychological distress among higher institutions students were closely related to academic, non-academic, parents, and cultural background, while academic achievement was solely found closely connected to depression. Therefore, psychological distress decreases results, compromises students' well-being, and triggers mental and physical health issues. Students face a lack of self-confidence, emotional dysregulation, suicide, and detrimental self-interest.

The suspension of classes and evacuation of students by universities due to the recent Covid-19 outbreak has led to negative psychological consequences among college students (Zhai & Du, 2020). Students dealt with extreme distress, and their academic routines changed overnight. Practically, the learning process throughout the semester program is abruptly interrupted, and students develop poor psychological behaviour due to this pandemic. Conrad, Rayala, Menon, and Vora (2020) mentioned that during the lockdown period, when college activities become heavily restricted, and students require quarantining themselves, they are prone to perpetuate stress, anxiety, and low mood. They added that this vulnerable population could lead to clinically significant psychiatric symptoms and illness. As endorsed by Kerr (2020), the rate of depression, PTSD, and eating disorders in college students has been considerably higher over time, and the full impact of a new set of stressors due to the virus has not been known yet.

It is necessary to address and ascertain the level of psychological distress in college students and the insight of this condition to academic adjustment. However, not many studies conducted on the effect of psychological distress on academic adjustment among technical college students in Sarawak. The need for this study is highlighted while (Sani, 2018) has emphasized that psychological symptoms may intervene in students 'academic performance, and this distraction causes them to struggle more during their years in university. Next, Ramachandiran and Dhanapal (2018) uncovered that research among university and college students on distress symptoms documented well in many Western countries even though studies agreed that these groups of students share common characteristics of distress around the globe. Therefore, at this stage, the researchers want to conduct this study to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the two study variables, namely psychological distress, and academic adjustment, especially in the context of technical schools in Sarawak.

Previous Research on the Correlation Between Psychological Distress and Academic Adjustment

Many university students face stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, nutritional issues, and other psychiatric disorders that have significant adverse effects on their academic

and mental state. They were found to struggle with psychological problems and thus reduced work capacity and low academic achievement. The findings of the study concluded that several factors such as coping with adult life, meeting the demands of their environment, handling relationships and other concerns may affect students 'psychological well-being and academic interests. The effect, as supported by Teh, Ngo, binti Zulkifli, Vellasamy, and Suresh (2015), low grades in courses are due mainly to the challenges students face in their studies. For example, to meet a competitive environment to achieve more, the pursuit of large syllabi, social insecurity, and financial matters. Reddy, Menon, and Thattil (2018) posited that some stress levels are driving students to extreme capacity. If it is not adequately controlled due to various insufficient resources to deal with the tension, this could have caused tremendous damage to both the student and the institution. Hanawi et al. (2020) stated that the life of a student might also be complicated due to learning activities and examinations, social life, hectic lifestyle and intolerance towards university life and climate. Topuzov, Shamne, Malykhin, Aristova, and Opaliuk (2020) disclosed the analysis by some scientists reveals that high academic and interpersonal tension among students during their first years corresponds with social exclusion and a high risk of suicide. As they further studied that this may cause by the lack of parents and friends' support and motivation, not having enough of the institute monitoring system, and personal matters.

An example of the relationship between psychological stress and academic adjustment is boredom, which is perceived as poor perception, distracts attention from current tasks and contributes to anxiety symptoms. Khan, Sadia, Hayat, and Tahir (2019) have clarified concerns will adversely affect students 'academic success and achievement and may also contribute to academic decline. Another example is eating disorders, and it is said to have a significant impact on students who study academic achievement because 11 to 13 percent of higher education students experience these symptoms. As supported by Hou, Mei, Liu, and Xu (2020), eating habits among students were found to be related to their academic performance as it decreased memory capacity, grades, and student attendance to courses. According to Hanawi et al. (2020) due to constant stress in pursuing their academic courses, students 'appetite may appear to increase and lead to unhealthy eating behaviours. They found that these students tended to reduce their intake of healthy foods such as vegetables and fruits as well as adopt a sedentary lifestyle.

Karaman, Nelson, and Cavazos Vela (2018) commented that academic stress among students is associated with life gratification. However, they believed that encouragement and support toward academic status rely on students' skills, behaviours, or qualities if they improve their satisfaction with life and alleviate academic tension by perceiving and reacting to events. In learning settings where students' perspectives were questioned, and higher-level thought was activated, students reported greater psychological well-being. For instance, individuals who experience a confrontation between their studies and their social activities emphasized that anxiety is usually achieved in academics. Findings by He et al. (2018) mentioned that night eating syndrome in college students has no relation to gender and age depending on the learning setting's condition.

Hall (2012) stated Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) in his research about the usefulness of self-efficacy in counselling college students. He found out that student in

their tertiary education encounters mental and emotional issues which counselling does not fully utilize in college or university. Bandura (2001) believed that social cognitive is the primary determinant in the development of psychological styles. His theory influenced the fields of investigation in education, health, social policy, and psychotherapy. Principally, it reflects on the way an individual psychologically influences their interpersonal relationships and then affects their behaviour and personality, and in this context, their learning behaviour.

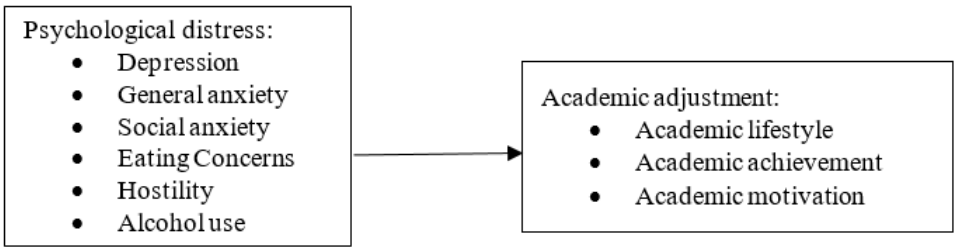
Conceptual Framework

University students tend to have high rates of mental illness, such as depression, stress, and anxiety, which may harm their educational attainment, and emotional well-being. This statement was highlighted by Milic et al. (2020), whereby mental well-being disorder is more common in schools than in the public, and this is possibly attributed to intense academic demands. The impairment in social well-being in education has developed over the years. High levels of anxiety contribute to unintended consequences, including impaired memory and attention, contributing to slow learning and low academic achievement (Mohsen, 2017).

Anderson, Guan, and Koc (2016) described a student's performance metrics are accountable for their emotional, psychological and difficulties when they transition to higher education life. The individual can overcome their psychological problems, therapy and expertise while adjusting to college life. Psychological distress such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, hostility and alcohol use generally impact learners' academic settings in higher institutions. Hall (2012) used the domains in psychological distress to measure the obligation student face in the education area.

This conceptual framework shows the relationship between psychological distress and academic adjustment. The domains under psychological distress are depression, general anxiety, social anxiety, eating concerns, hostility, and alcohol use (Hall, 2012). Meanwhile, academic adjustment comprises academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation (Anderson et al., 2016).

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

Research Design

This study was carried out based on a quantitative approach that is cross-sectional and descriptive using questionnaires. The data quoted were analyzed and compared at one point in time. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2009) as well as Ramachandiran and Dhanapal (2018) respectively have described the quantitative analysis as a compilation of numerical information to predict and monitor interest phenomena. Apuke (2017) also added that this research technique, in which experiments and surveys are used, and data from predetermined methods that produce statistical results are gathered collectively.

Research Instruments

The research instrument used consisted of a set of questionnaires containing three sections. Section A contains details of respondents such as gender and academic department. Accordingly, Part B - Psychological Distress Psychometric Properties (30 items) and Part C - Academic Adjustment Scale (8 items) used a five-point Likert scale. In psychological distress psychometric properties, the Likert Scale's response ranges from 1 to 5, whereas 1 is not at all like me, 2 is a little like me, 3 is definitely like me, four is very like me, and 5 is extremely like me. Part C in the Likert Scale, the Academic Adjustment Scale, consists of the level of endorsement from 1 to 5. The number 1 represents rarely applies to me, 2 occasionally applies to me, 3 is sometimes applied to me, 4 is often applied to me, and 5 is always applied to me. The researcher adjusts the items of the standardized questionnaires from Hall (2012); Anderson et al. (2016) to the learning conditions of a local technical college in Sarawak. Hall (2012) employed CCAPS-34 developed by Locke et al. (2012), whereas they revised the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms-34 from CCAPS-62. Supposedly, there were seven subscales with 34 items to be tested for psychological distress in this study. However, the total items of psychological distress CCAPS-34 were reduced to only 30 items under six subscales to align the study with the academic adjustment scale. The six subscales are depression, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, eating disorders, hostility, and alcohol use. On the other hand, the academic adjustment scale contains three subscales with three items: academic lifestyle, academic motivation, and academic achievement.

Moreover, Part B: psychological distress psychometrics properties settle on only 30 items. These 30 items are randomly distributed by number in the survey questionnaire and not correspondingly grouped with the six subscales. While maintaining the structure of the psychometric properties, this encourages and proposes factor structure and concurrent validity of the six subscales from the respondents (Locke et al., 2012). Therefore, respondents will not prefer to choose one subscale over the others and thus, promote relatively the psychological distress domains. Rating instruction is given to the respondent to specify the choices on each survey. Each item rates from number one to five with the 'not at all like me' to 'extremely like me' statement. It should be noted that participant needs to always refer to themselves based on observational facts about their situation.

Subsequently, Part C: academic adjustment scale comprises three subscales; academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation. According to Anderson et al. (2016), each subscale is appropriate for the learning setting encountered by students in tertiary education. They elaborated that the academic lifestyle reflects the student's role and function in the learning environment, and academic achievement represents the progress and educational achievement of a student in the learning centre. Academic motivation is the determination of the student to pursue and ended the task as a student. Each subscale measures the different levels of endorsement which apply to the respondent. The rating instruction is from number 1 'rarely applies to me' to number 5 'always applies to me' scale. This scale explores the respondent's educational perspective as a whole learning process.

Population and Sampling Procedure

Polytechnic Kuching Sarawak as the first institution to obtain international recognition from the Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission (APACC), has been identified as a study site following its success in receiving accreditation recognition from the Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certification Commission (APACC). In this study, the sample of participants was from Kuching Sarawak Polytechnic Semester 3 students who had adapted to the institutional environment after one semester, this study may capture differences in their transition results to institutions of higher learning. Respondents will be selected from a population of 988 third-semester students enrolled in SMEs. The population is random and multicultural i.e., between 18-21 years old. In this study, random sampling was considered. Gay et al. (2009) define random sampling as all individuals in each population having the same and independent probabilities as the selecting sample. Referring to the Sample Size Determination Table from Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size required to represent 988 third-semester students in this technical college is only 278. 278 samples of these third-semester students were randomly selected from six different academic departments.

Samples were taken from a combined population of six departments: civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, commerce, information and computer technology, and petrochemical engineering. In semester three, all participants must participate in an online survey questionnaire during their class time. The researcher applied for permission and approval to conduct the study by completing the survey form. Once approval is given, the researcher requested a list of names of current Semester 3-year students from each department. In addition, a sample will be identified from each department and selected according to an even number of 278 participants. The researcher invited the participants to engage in this analysis by outlining the purpose and scope of this research in an online form. Students were informed that this online survey questionnaire would not identify them by name, so respondents could disclose information and participate at will. The study was conducted in the second week of October, and the duration of the online survey was approximately 3 to 5 minutes.

A total of 64 students from the Civil Engineering Department, 67 students from the Mechanical Engineering Department, 48 students from the Electric Engineering Depart-

ment, 63 students from the Commerce Department, 36 students from the Information Technology and Communication Department, and 20 students from Petrochemical Engineering Department participated in the actual study. However, it turned out that 303 respondents voluntarily participated in the research and submitted the online survey questionnaire. Overall, more female students completed the survey questionnaire, whereby 51.8 percent were 157 respondents in comparison to male students, only 48.2 percent represented 146 respondents.

Table 1
Population and sample according to the academic department

Academic Department	Research Population	Targeted Research Sample	Return Rate
Civil Engineering	212	64	50
Mechanical Engineering	223	67	80
Electric Engineering	160	48	43
Commerce	209	63	41
Information Technology and Computer	118	36	59
Petrochemical Engineering	66	20	30
Total	988	278	303

Pilot Test

The pilot phase of this research was conducted in semester one of the students at the technical college of Kuching, Sarawak. The selection process is based on convenience and selection to provide a domain that is tested for reliability and consideration. 41 respondents participated electronically in the survey questionnaire. Participants were informed in advance and given a briefing before conducting the pilot test. Findings obtained through a pilot test on 39 items have shown a high-reliability value of .895 on the part of psychological distress. Next, for the academic adjustment scale, the reliability value that has been identified is as high as .689, which is considered moderate, through the nine items that have been presented. To increase the alpha reliability scale for the other eight items, Item 2 *'My education is not worth it to my family's* needs to be deleted. It would produce an alpha value of .733 for the other eight items. Item 2 may be problematic to the internal consistency of the build. For items 3 and 9, the researcher re-encoded the responses received before further analysis was performed. The statements of these two items were expressed in positive statements to reinforce the encouraging response.

Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

In this research, psychological distress domains acted as independent variables whereby it is said that they have affected academic adjustment domains. Pearson's value of depression to academic lifestyle is -.375, academic achievement is -.323, and academic motivation is -.314. It brings out that when the correlation coefficient value for depression increases, the values in the three domains of academic adjustment will decrease. Thus,

these data showed that depression has a negative relationship with academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation. The significant (2-tailed) values between depression and these three academic adjustments are .000 which showed a statistically significant correlation between these variables.

Then, Pearson's r among general anxiety to academic lifestyle is -.300, academic achievement is -.326, and academic motivation is -.261. This result too showed a negatively weak relationship among the variables involved. When the value of the general anxiety domain is higher, the values for the three academic adjustments will go lower. Hence, it concluded that general anxiety has a negative relationship with academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation. However, the significant (2-tailed) values showed that general anxiety has .000 towards all three academic adjustments. With this, there is a statistically significant correlation between general anxiety to academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation.

On the other hand, the Pearson correlation coefficient, r values of social anxiety towards academic lifestyle are -.390; academic achievement is -.364, and academic motivation is -.236. The changes in social anxiety are a moderate negative relationship with the changes in academic adjustments. For this reason, social anxiety indicated a negative correlation coefficient on academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation. At the same time, it revealed that when the value of social anxiety increases, the values for the three academic adjustments will decrease. It also concluded that there are statistically significant correlations between social anxiety towards academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation, whereby the significant (2-tailed) value is .000.

Additionally, Pearson Correlation values of eating disorders towards academic lifestyle (r = -.095) and academic achievement (r = -.085); with this, it demonstrated a negative correlation in those variables. When an eating disorder increases in value, academic lifestyle, and academic achievement also decrease in value. However, the eating disorders domain with academic motivation showed a .010 Pearson's r-value. That means there is a positive relationship between eating disorders and academic motivation. There is a tendency the change values accordingly. The significant (2-tailed) value between eating disorders with academic lifestyle (.098), academic achievement (.141), and academic motivation (.863) is more significant than .05, and it can conclude that there is no statistically significant correlation between these variables. Consequently, the increase or decrease in one of the variables does not significantly relate to the increase or decrease in the other variable.

Moreover, the correlation coefficient of hostility towards academic lifestyle is -.174, academic achievement is -.204, and academic motivation is -.238. As the value of hostility increases, the values of these academic adjustments will decrease. These variables are negatively correlated, as Pearson's values generated are negative. As for the significant (2-tailed) value, the value for hostility towards academic lifestyle is .002, and .000 towards academic achievement and academic motivation. These values are considered less than .05, and with this, it is said that there is a statistical correlation of hostility towards the three academic adjustments.

Lastly, the correlation coefficient for alcohol use towards academic lifestyle is .051, academic achievement .033, and academic motivation is -.178. The values of .051 and .033

disclosed that as alcohol use increases in value, academic lifestyle and academic achievement would increase in value too. Thus, the relationship of alcohol use with academic lifestyle and academic achievement revealed a positive correlation. On the contrary, Pearson's correlation coefficient between alcohol use and academic motivation generated a negative relationship. As the value of alcohol use increases, the value of academic motivation will decrease. The significant (2-tailed) values of alcohol use towards academic lifestyle and academic achievement are more significant than .05, which are .051 and .033; these values concluded that there is no statistical correlation in these domain variables. The increase or decrease in alcohol use does not significantly relate to an increase or decrease in academic lifestyle and academic achievement. Despite this, there is a statistically significant correlation between alcohol use and academic motivation as the significant (2-tailed) value is .002.

Table 2
Inter-correlation between dimensions of psychological distress and academic adjustment

	LFS	ACH	MOT
DPS	-.375**	-.323**	-.314**
GAX	-.300**	-.326**	-.261**
SCA	-.390**	-.364**	-.236**
ETD	-0.095	-0.085	0.01
HST	-.174**	-.204**	-.238**
ALC	0.051	0.033	-.178**

Where DPS = Depression, GAX = General Anxiety, SCA = Social Anxiety, ETD = Eating Disorders, HST = Hostility, ALC = Alcohol Use, LFS = Academic Lifestyle, ACH = Academic Achievement, MOT = Academic Motivation.

It can be summarized that there is a significant correlation between psychological distress and academic adjustment. For this reason, the null hypothesis is rejected even though the data collection demonstrated that psychological distress domains such as eating disorders and alcohol use did not statistically demonstrate a significant correlation with academic adjustment domains. As Karaman et al. (2018) expressed, academic status depends on the way learners perceive and react to the event of life when they are in the tertiary institution. From a personal view, as some students acknowledge their college life adversely, they will experience depression, frustration, anxiousness, and confrontation with their studies unfavourably.

Discussion

Students in higher education appear to suffer a higher prevalence of psychiatric issues such as depression, anxiety, and anger that influence their academic attainment. Previous research by Saleem and Mahmood (2013) agreed that this psychological well-being has a significant impact on students' academic adjustment. The factors such as the transition stage to adulthood, workload, relationship, and low performance contribute to the psychological problems in their studies. The result of this study found that there was a significant correlation between psychological distress and academic adjustment. This

data is congruent with Topuzov et al. (2020); Hou et al. (2020); Milic et al. (2020), whereas there was an instance relationship between psychological distress and academic adjustment. In this data analysis, it was strongly suggested a statistically significant correlation between depression, general anxiety, social anxiety, and hostility toward academic adjustment, academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation. These findings were according to previous analyses by Hanawi et al. (2020); Mohsen (2017), which concluded that undergraduates notably experienced mental and emotional breakdowns due to the incapability of meeting the educational demand. On the other hand, Anderson et al. (2016) mentioned that students could counter psychological problems if they can adjust to their academic setting. They need to be attuned to the environment and well versed in terms of mental and emotional health.

However, Thompson, Her, Fetter, and Perez-Chavez (2019); He et al. (2018) analysis studies revealed that there was no significant correlation between psychological distress and academic adjustment. This prediction is the same analysis as revealed in the data collection. They pointed out that whenever students have stress and anxieties, this would not influence students' performance on their lifestyle, achievement, and motivation. Perhaps, students think that if they have the academic goals to complete the curriculum years, this complication will not bother them at all. Additionally, psychological issues in this analysis, such as eating disorders and alcohol use disclosed no significant relationship with academic adjustment. The consumption of alcohol and eating syndrome among students may impair the values of their physical state but not their learning process. If the individual fulfills the criteria of academic adjustment and meets the requirement needed, they can still gain satisfaction towards academic goals. The level of the physiological or emotional intensity of a person seems to affect the performance of specific activities and decisions (Thompson et al., 2019). In this case, it is referring to the academic adjustment of the students. The analysis results in this study concluded that when the value of psychological distress domains increases, the values for academic adjustment domains will decrease. It is concluded that when the degree of psychological distress becomes greater throughout students' academic years, their academic lifestyle, academic achievement, and academic motivation will become progressively worse. Based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the theory underlined the significance of educational experiences in particular areas that individuals use to assess their effectiveness in achieving it (Hall, 2012). The types of educational experiences that are stated are emotional anticipation and physiological excitement that lay the groundwork for consciousness. In another term, SCT postulated that the emotional and physiological of an individual influence the quality of some of the performances, responsibilities, and decisions- making. In any circumstances, the symptoms of psychological distress as depression, general anxiety, social anxiety, hostility, eating disorders, and alcohol use carried out the capacity to affect the development and academic status of the students.

Implications and Conclusion

The findings from this research regarding psychological distress and academic adjustment will be an essential topic for institutions and management, counseling centers, educators, and society. The analyses will help to understand and evaluate the issues of psychological distress among students and the effect on academic adjustment in college or university. Educational boards will have to provide effective on-campus public health services with cooperation and collaboration across the whole school, to enable students with significant psychological issues to have meaningful assistance. In the same way, the data from the findings provide the institution and management with information on the way that psychosomatic conflict could exercise domination towards students' way of life, academic attainment, and motivation.

Apart from that, the results of this study could assist the counselors in the counseling centre to manage and analyse the psychological symptoms in students under a particular set of circumstances. The counselor may organize a program that is incorporated into an educational institute for prevention and remedial care for students, particularly in faculty with a wide variety of mental health criteria (Arvidsdotter, Marklund, Kylén, Taft, & Ekman, 2016). For instance, programs such as psychotherapy, academic counseling, career training, healthcare services, and clinical assessment could be part of the strategies to approach and tackle significant issues that lay in undergraduates. Through this, earlier diagnosis services or resources are possible to retrieve as the counselors could provide necessary treatment in attending to the specific case.

Furthermore, as an educator is a person that knows and meets students within the term of the course, the educator can play an essential role in recognizing and limiting psychological symptoms among students. Preventive initiatives in different contexts of environments will increase awareness about students who need to seek assistance with specific emotional and mental issues, thus providing them with information about accessible therapeutic resources. Educators could also provide and improve the number of students requesting support, leading in exchange to a more robust learning environment for all students. With this, it will build trust and confidence between educators and students in dealing the psychological distress effectively.

Nonetheless, this research will also help society as a community to grasp a better knowledge of psychological well-being towards students' academic adjustment. It will assist and prepare society to explore the possibilities of this mental and emotional strain among students and the afterwards effect. Similarly, society should take the initiative and share the responsibilities of creating awareness and providing guidance for psychological distress. In this way, society could reduce the chances of this emotional and mental illness.

Suggestions for the Future Research

This research only focuses on the psychological distress and academic adjustment in one technical college in Kuching, Sarawak. Possibly, in the future, the investigation could

extend to other technical and vocational colleges in Sarawak and local universities and colleges. This action is to have a comparison and evaluation of the information comprehensively and in relevant ways. Apart from semester three programme students, another academic year of students could involve and participate in the analysis to extend the understanding and knowledge within the population. In other words, this research only provided the interpretation of psychological distress's influence on academic adjustment effectiveness. It gives unique details to the relationship between these two variables compared to the effect, in which the consequence of the action of wellbeing issues towards academic adjustment. The mechanisms and effects of these psychological domains must be understood and discussed more thoroughly. For example, the effects of each psychological dimension on academic adjustment have not been thoroughly studied even though there is a statistically significant difference between these two variables. Such action is to clarify the effect of the prevalence of psychological well-being and would be a valuable tool in enhancing and strengthening the evidence.

This research study employed a quantitative method as it was based on statistical data to interpret the relationship between psychological distress and academic adjustment. Feasibly in the future, mixed method research could be the medium to advance the investigation and understanding of these two variables. Besides using quantitative procedures to evaluate and interpret data collection, the qualitative method can achieve in permitting a complete investigation and inquiry. The procedures will develop a wide variety of research designs and questions. Qualitative data can be done through a series of interviews with the desired sample of the population to have a better understanding and in-depth details of the occurring issues apart from collecting the survey questionnaire.

There is a notable lack of adequate databases to research the relationship between psychological distress and academic adjustment. Previous research separately discussed the issues of psychological distress and academic adjustment. For example, there are ample studies providing information on psychological distress, whether the domain alone or as a group of the domain, but none prescribed the combination of databases with academic adjustment. Perhaps, in the future, a comprehensive study can be implemented to have outstanding observation and information.

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