

***The Influence of Sekentei and Significant Others on
Seeking Help toward Psychological Services***

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The Asian Conference on Psychology and the Behavioral Sciences 2014
Official Conference Proceedings 2014

0224

Abstract

The under-utilization of mental health services is salient in Japan, implying that those seeking psychological help can be inhibited through various reasons. One of the obstructive factors may be *Sekentei*, a Japanese concept referring to the need to conform to social norms and customs, and to avoid shame and maintain a respectable social appearance. On the other hand, it can be expected that *Sekentei* can be facilitative if significant others have positive views about seeking psychological help, and the individuals has high *Sekentei* concerns. The present research investigated the influence of *Sekentei* and the recommendation of significant others on help-seeking intention toward psychological services. We aimed at determining the effects of *Sekentei* and significant others, and their interaction effect, exploring the potential of facilitating help-seeking through *Sekentei* and suggestions from significant others. A questionnaire was distributed to 273 Japanese undergraduate students. Factor analysis showed that Help-Seeking Intention was composed of the subscales of Help Needs, and Seeking Help without Hesitation. *Sekentei* negatively influenced Seeking Help without Hesitation, while suggestions from significant others positively influenced Help Needs. Furthermore, the two-way interaction effect of *Sekentei* × suggestions from significant others on Seeking Help without Hesitation was significant. These results indicated that: 1) high concern about *Sekentei* leads to hesitation toward help seeking; 2) suggestions from significant others facilitate recognition of need for help; 3) suggestions from significant others can moderate the negative effect of *Sekentei* on help seeking intention. This research determined the influence of *Sekentei* and significant others on help-seeking toward psychological services, and a means to moderate the negative effect of *Sekentei*.

Key Words: help-seeking intention, *Sekentei*, recommendation of significant others

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