



## **AWARENESS, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN MULTI-CULTURAL COUNSELING APPROACH AMONG COUNSELOR TRAINEES**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to identify the level of multicultural counseling competencies among counselor trainees and their differences according to the efficiency domains. This quantitative study uses questionnaire to the trainee counselors at one of the universities that provide training for future counselors in Malaysia. Overall, the results show that the mean score of multicultural counseling skills is at a higher level in the domain of knowledge and awareness compared to the skill domain, which is at a moderate level. This indicates that the training received through the relevant counseling subjects has helped to enhance the effectiveness of multicultural counseling among the trainee counselors in preparation for addressing various issues in the community.

**Keywords:** Counselor Trainees, Multicultural Counseling Competencies, diverse societies.

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## **1. Introduction**

There are different definitions and perspectives on the meaning of cultural competence. Sue (1998) describes that cultural competence is a person who has a certain level of cultural knowledge and skills that allows him to provide effective services to a population. Another view states that cultural competence is one's ability to serve between two cultural perspectives or the ability to identify cultural interests and incorporate them into the assessments and treatments provided (Whaley & Davis, 2007). Sue and Torino (2005) have described cultural competence as a person's ability to engage in efforts to create comfortable situations in which it can maximize optimal development of the client. The competency of multicultural counseling is that counselors achieve the awareness, knowledge and skills needed to function more effectively in a plural society. It includes the ability to communicate, interact, negotiate and be part of clients from a variety of backgrounds. Counselors with multicultural counseling competencies are also able to effectively support the development of new theories, training, policies and structure of an organization that makes itself more responsive to all groups in society.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia has determined that all schools, especially secondary schools, should have their respective guidance teachers in 1963. This event is an early development of guidance and counseling services in Malaysia. Counseling was first introduced in the country by providing career guidance services in schools on the awareness that school students desperately need career guidance. At that time, guidance and counseling was carried out by teachers who are also teachers who teach subjects in the classroom and have undergone in-service training organized by the Ministry of Education Malaysia for two weeks. When Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) offered the Diploma in Psychology Counseling program in 1979, guidance and counseling teachers began to be trained to conduct guidance and counseling services professionally (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2011).

Counseling and Counseling Services in Malaysia have undergone the same developmental process as in other countries based on the counseling profession in America (Amla, Zuria & Salleh, 2009; Lloyd, 1987; Pope, 2000). According to Russell (2002), the good acceptance of the Ministry of Education Malaysia on the importance of counseling and counseling services in the school system has formulated a policy where all schools, especially secondary schools, need to have

counseling teachers. From 1962 to the present, various forms of training in guidance and counseling have been held at various institutions to support this situation (Sapora, 2007). The Malaysian Counselor Board through its latest statistics shows that there are only 5129 registered counselors and 2540 of them are counseling teachers. This number is small compared to the number of counseling teachers in the school which is 15000 and the number of graduates in counseling who has been born by local universities since 1985, about 20000 (Counselor Board of Malaysia, 2014). Efforts to increase the registration of the counselor are still ongoing.

Guidance and counseling services in Malaysia have undergone a process of improvement in several phases starting with the existence of the position of school counselor in 1996 in secondary schools and guidance teachers in primary schools in 2002. To make this service more recognized, the Malaysian Board of Counselors was established under the act 580 in 1998 where the act of counselor was gazetted. This Act legally authorizes the regulation of counselor services as well as all counseling activities in Malaysia. Counseling services have now been recognized as a profession and every counselor who wants to provide services is required to register with the Board of Counselors and have a Certificate of Practice (Malaysian Board of Counselors 1998). The birth of the Board of Counselors and the Counselors Act 1998 is on the awareness that there is a need to create a body and act to regulate counselors in Malaysia (Rohay 2008). In Malaysia, the Board of Counselors is a reference to the offering of counseling programs at IPTA / IPTS. The Board of Counselors has developed the Malaysian Counselor Training Standards Standard based on the Council For Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) standards that have been accepted as an international guide. Among the role of the Malaysian Board of Counselors is to ensure an appropriate counselor training curriculum in producing qualified, professional and equivalent counselors in the field of counseling at the international level. The existence of the Counselors Act 1998 (Act 580) has to some extent helped educational institutions to refine new and existing counseling programs. Apart from that, the establishment of the Malaysian Counseling Association (PERKAMA) which is considered to be the voice of counseling in Malaysia took place in 1998.

### **Research Objectives**

In this study, a counseling trainees refers to a student which have been undergone at least three years of studying variety of subjects relating to

counseling at one of the universities that provide training for future counselors in Malaysia. The main purpose of this study is to identify the level of multicultural counseling competence among trainee counselors who receive counselor training at a public university. In addition, this study also aims to identify the competency level of multicultural counseling competencies based on competency domains. Finally, this study also aims to identify the mean of each item based on the multicultural counseling competency instrument.

### **Review of Literature**

The latest scenario shows that Malaysian society is also facing various changes and social challenges such as the increase in migrants, increase in life expectancy, divorce, changes in family structure and the influx of illegal immigrants (Pope, Musa, Singaravelu, Bringaze & Russell, 2002). The increase in migrants also includes the legal entry of foreigners to meet the needs of the workforce in the country. This situation illustrates the issue of cultural diversity has become an important part of counseling training (Wieling & Rastogi, 2003; Ponterotto, 1997; Dodd, Nelson, Ostwald & Fischer, 1991; Gutierrez 1982). So multicultural counseling training should be emphasized in the study of counseling in preparation for counselors at this time to deal with the issue of cultural diversity. It is in line with the focus of multicultural counseling training in America, which focuses on training on the race and ethnicity of the majority and minority of trainees (McNeill, Hom & Perez, 1995; Poterotto & Alexander, 1995; Gutierrez, 1982). The same is true of what is stated in the standards and standards of counseling programs in Malaysia which emphasize the importance of multicultural competency training (Malaysian Board of Counselors, 1998). The increasing development of counseling professionalism indicates that there will be a greater emphasis on professional ethics in providing counseling services in Malaysia. Currently the Malaysian Board of Counselors and the Malaysian Counseling Association have complied with and adapted the code of ethics from the United States Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) ACA Codes of Ethics. Both organizations have worked together to develop a code of ethics in a cultural context relevant to society in Malaysia (Ching & Ng, 2010). specializing in multicultural aspects. The conclusion of the three sections is that the counselor is responsible for evaluating to improve competencies in terms of knowledge and skills in the field of his profession, the counselor must understand and respect the client's socio-cultural background, especially differences in values and beliefs with multicultural clients in order to act fairly and openly subsequent counseling counselors

should understand and respect the socio-cultural elements of the community in which they serve. This shows that the detailed emphasis has been expressed in the code of ethics of counselors which is a guideline in the practice of counseling in Malaysia to meet the needs of counseling services for the Malaysian community of various races and cultures. The Malaysian Board of Counselors in 2003 has also produced standards and qualifications for counselors that qualify a person to carry out counseling services in Malaysia. Specifically related to multicultural counseling competencies, the minimum standard requirements are 6 credit hours for a bachelor's degree program and 3 credit hours for a master's degree program on social and cultural diversity courses set out in the third core. Examples of courses in this training component are an understanding of social diversity and cultural context such as aspects of relationships, issues and trends in a plural and multicultural society. Next are the examples of courses such as multicultural counseling, cross-cultural counseling, social psychology, individual and community as well as cultural anthropology and sociology. The standard standards of the Malaysian Board of Counselors further explain that the competence of multicultural counseling is important in the training of counselors to be competent in various cultures so that they can serve more effectively in Malaysian society, especially students in schools of various races and cultures. However, training on the competence of multicultural counseling in most counseling programs is still lacking (Ching Mey See & Kok-Mun Ng, 2010). The bachelor's degree program only offers 6 credits of social and cultural diversity courses while the master's degree program has 3 credits. This social and cultural diversity course has been filled by every university that offers bachelor's degree programs in the field of counseling, namely UPM, UPSI, IUM, UUM, UNISZA, UM, UMT, UMS, USIM, and UNIMAS. The same goes for the master's degree program in counseling where social and cultural diversity courses have been met by each of these universities, namely UPM, UKM, UPSI, IUM, UUM, USM, UM and USIM (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). In terms of examples of courses that can be offered in this component of social and cultural diversity are multicultural counseling, cross-cultural counseling, social psychology, individuals and society, anthropology and sociology of culture as well as culture and society (refer to appendix). However, the courses offered in this component in most universities are multicultural counseling or cross-cultural counseling. The history of the development of guidance and counseling services in Malaysia shows that these services are increasingly accepted

and become important especially to face the scenario that occurs in terms of social change that leads to cultural change and way of life of Malaysian society. These circumstances indicate that multicultural counseling is important and needs to be considered in current and future guidance and counseling services. The competence of multicultural counseling can enhance the self-efficacy and therapeutic relationship of counseling in the counseling process, improve the performance of counseling teachers and in turn make guidance and counseling services more effective. Indirectly, multicultural counseling is an approach in guidance and counseling services that supports the formation and application of nationally aspired values in the concept of 1 Malaysia (Kamarul & Salleh, 2010). In addition, the study on the competence of multicultural counseling in Malaysia is still less than the study in the west (Kamarul & Salleh, 2010) while this competence is also one of the personal and professional characteristics that must be present in school counseling teachers and influence the self-efficacy and competence of counseling teachers while conducting guidance and counseling services further enhances its effectiveness. Among the many studies conducted by researchers in the west are related to the importance of the competence of multicultural counseling on the awareness of counselors on the influence of culture when conducting counseling sessions with multicultural clients (Sue & Sue, 2003; Corey, 2001; Pedersen, 1991), the importance of gender awareness in improving the efficiency of multicultural counseling (Gold & Hawley, 2001; Utsey, Poterotto, Reynolds & Cancelli, 2000; Robinson, 1999; Hays, 1996; Stevens-Smith, 1995), and the importance of ethnic identity having a very high relationship with the level of competency in multicultural counseling (Constantine, Warren, & Miville, 2005; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2003; Neville, Heppner, Louie, Brooks, Thompson & Baker, 1996; Ottavi, Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1994). Furthermore, studies on the importance of improving the efficiency of multicultural counseling, especially among trainee counselors to be better prepared to deal with multicultural clients (Dini Farhana Baharudin, 2012; See & Ng, 2010; Shwarzbaum & Thomas, 2008; Fuertes, Bartolomeo & Nicols, 2001), training and input of multicultural counseling during university studies (CACREP 2001; Malaysian Board of Counselors, 2003) includes learning through experience gained while conducting counseling services which greatly helps to improve the efficiency of multicultural counseling among counselors (Kim & Lyons, 2003; Klak & Martin, 2003; Jones, 2001) has also done a lot. On the other hand, studies on multicultural counseling among practice counselor and counselor

trainees in Malaysian have not been conducted in depth but are very important in efforts to enhance the effectiveness of counseling guidance and services. Based on these interests, researchers want to know the understanding and practice of multicultural counseling among secondary school counseling teachers by building a profile of the level of competency of multicultural counseling in order to provide guidance to educational institutions in ensuring training related to these aspects can be updated and enhanced. Multicultural training aims to increase the level of competence of multicultural counseling among counselors (Vinson & Neimeyer, 2003) and previous research has been conducted based on the view that counselors have a high level of competence after receiving training in multiculturalism (Neville et al., 1996; Smith et al., 2006). Parker et al. (1998) show that when counselors have a low level of understanding of ethnicity and ethnic identity, they tend to deny aspects of race as something meaningful in life and society and tend to refuse to engage in multicultural training. On the other hand, counselors who have a high level of understanding of ethnicity and cultural identity do not practice racism and do not refuse to engage in multicultural courses and projects. It is therefore reasonable to expect ethnic identities to unite positively with multicultural training. This shows that training in multiculturalism is something that is important towards becoming a counseling teacher with competence in multiculturalism. The scope of school counselor training is constantly changing. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has proactively given professional credentials to school counselors with at least a master's degree and above or its equivalent where they are qualified to identify student development needs (ASCA, 2005). Professional school counselors provide school counseling programs that encourage all students in matters related to academics, careers and personal development as well as help them maximize their personal achievement. The duties of school counselors are different because they pay attention to the level of development and growth of students including the needs, tasks and advantages at each level. In the early 1990s, the school counselor program was more to meet administrative needs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997), realizing that school counselors were an important part of the change agenda, the authorities sought to include the school counseling program as part of the school program as a whole. The role of school counselors has changed to provide a structured set of student services to identify the needs of all students (Gysberg & Henderson, 2006). Multicultural counseling is one of the inputs in university counseling education. It is taught through specific courses or in an

integrated manner in each counseling course throughout the study. According to Midgette and Meggert (1991), if multicultural counseling instructors teach about multicultural counseling awareness, knowledge and skills they should also be able to demonstrate quality in dealing with multicultural issues. Counseling instructors are responsible for pioneering multicultural training which is a key task in providing competent trainees and encouraging the formation of a clear perspective on the competency of multicultural counseling in its training process (Cannon & Frank, 2009). In turn, it will facilitate the acquisition of learning outcomes to achieve awareness and knowledge of multiculturalism towards the goal of acquiring specific skills to face multicultural clients. According to Sue, Arredondo and McDavis (1992), in order to be an effective professional in various cultures, educators must first have an awareness of their own race and culture. There are various factors that hinder the integration of multicultural counseling in counselor education training programs, namely the negative attitude of trainee counselors and lack of knowledge or training from supervisors. Faculty and students typically see multicultural issues as something that can be thought of later rather than making them an important component of the curriculum (Hill, 2003).

A study by More, Madison-Colemore and Collins (2005) provides some ideas in the form of activities in his article that can be used to increase multicultural efficiency and increase multicultural awareness. Among them are conducting field trips, presentations in lectures, field observations, community evaluation and so on. Diaz-Lazaro and Cohen (2001) discuss how significant cross-cultural relationships where it directly affects multicultural competencies such as role-playing training and sharing about a culture by individuals invited to deliver lectures. According to Jasinski (2009), the feedback obtained from trainee counselors can increase the potential of counseling lecturers to carry out the task of improving the quality of multicultural training in counseling training programs among which students suggest more cultural groups to be held in a lecture. Multicultural counseling courses should also be taught at the beginning of the study so that it can be used as a basis to obtain more information about various cultures throughout the study. In addition, involvement in cultural activities will provide an advantage and importance in counseling education programs. The response from counseling trainees on cultural diversity can be used as a basis and guide to improve the quality of training in multicultural counseling to further strengthen the input of multicultural counseling among counselors.

## **2. Methodology**

This quantitative study uses a survey method and uses a set of questionnaires to collect data. Research data was analyzed using SPSS software version 22.0. Mean score analysis was used for data analysis. A total of 101 trainee counselors at one of the public universities that provide training for potential counselors in Malaysia were selected as the study sample. Convenient random sampling was applied to a population of 228 counselor trainees. This sampling method is used because it is suitable for obtaining samples from a large number of non-uniform, unbalanced and comprehensive populations (Noraini, 2010; Sidek, 2002; Babbie, 2001; Wiersma, 2000; Mertens, 1998). The study uses a set of questionnaires that have been developed by researchers to measure the competence of multicultural counseling (Salleh et al., 2013). This questionnaire includes 26 items from three main domains namely awareness, knowledge and skills. The alpha coefficient value of this questionnaire is 0.92. The questionnaire items are divided into five categories: (1) Very Low (mean score 1.00 to 3.00); (2) Low (mean score between 3.01 to 5.00); (3) Moderate (mean score between 5.01 to 7.00); (4) high (mean score between 7.01 to 9.00); and (5) Very High (mean score ranging from 9.01 to 11.00). This category follows the scale proposed by several statisticians (Betz & Hackett, 2002; Betz, Hammond, Multon, and Chaney, 2007; Betz, Klein, & Taylor, 1996; Betz, Hammond, & Multon, 2005; Turiman, 1989).

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

This section discusses the findings based on the issues reviewed in the scientific research with the support of the literature review.

### **The level of multicultural counseling competency among trainee counselors**

The findings of the study show that the mean level of multicultural counseling competence of the respondents as a whole is 8.16 which is in the high category (7.01-9.0). This situation can occur because society in Malaysia is multi-ethnic, where trainee counselors who study and live with multi-ethnic students have given them the opportunity to acquire multicultural counseling competence. Most studies mention that counselors need to understand the various cultures that exist in their work environment in order to better understand their role in providing effective guidance and counseling services. This is in line with studies that state that multicultural counseling competence is needed when counselors have the ability to integrate cultural factors into various theoretical approaches and techniques, which include aspects of



measurement, prevention, and counseling (Roysicar, 2003). Therefore, the situation of cultural diversity that exists in society will be a good experience that is useful for counselor trainees to build multicultural counseling competence. In general, counseling training for trainee counselors in Malaysia also emphasizes multicultural counseling competency training in line with the requirements for recognition by the Malaysian Counselor Board. This situation is also in line with the needs of counseling programs practiced in the United States. Multicultural counseling training encourages each coach to discover their own exploration of being a cultured individual and understanding of other cultures, elaborates theories, defenses, social justice, and multicultural competence, develops skills to improve client's mental health, and supports understanding of the counselor's role in eliminating

bias, prejudice, oppression and discrimination that occurs intentionally or unintentionally (Counsel for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, CACREP, 2009, p.10). This shows that multicultural competence is not only acquired through formal education, but also through informal education, such as personal reflection and thinking process and also the level of understanding of the counseling teacher himself about culture. Therefore, multicultural counseling competence among trainee counselors in Malaysia is aided by diversity in society, apart from counselor training that includes all aspects of cultural diversity. However, this efficiency level still needs to be upgraded to a "Very High" rating.

### **Multicultural counseling competencies in the competency domain**

Table 1: Mean scores of multicultural counseling competencies' domain for trainee counselors

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Awareness	101	8.35	High
Knowledge	101	8.83	High
Skills	101	7.34	High
Over all	101	8.16	High

The total score for the three domains in this questionnaire is 8.16. It shows that overall the competency of multicultural counseling among trainee counselors is at a high level. However, based on the mean score according to the domain shown in Table 1, the mean score of the knowledge domain is the highest mean which is 8.83 compared to the awareness domain which is 8.35; while the mean score for the skills domain is 7.34 which is the lowest. This analysis shows that in terms of multicultural counseling competency domains, the knowledge domain is the highest domain possessed by the respondents, followed by the cultural awareness domain, and the skills domain. If we refer to the theoretical definition of multicultural counseling, this finding illustrates that the respondents have knowledge about the client's various cultures, especially regarding their view of the world and their own culture. Trainee counselors acquire intervention strategy skills in dealing with multicultural clients during counseling sessions. In addition, they are also aware of their own culture which can lead to bias and discrimination against their culturally different clients during counseling sessions. Therefore, the results of this study coincide with the findings of previous studies that multicultural counseling competence includes domains of awareness, knowledge, and skills that are interdependent on each other. A counselor can have one of them, but to be most effective, a counselor needs all three (Sue et al., 1982;

Pedersen, 1981). The domain of awareness, knowledge, and cultural skills can also be understood through self-reflection during counseling sessions. Cultural awareness includes the process of understanding culture, stereotypes, reference sources of minority groups, and also power in relationships. Cultural knowledge is an understanding of the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors of a culture. As for cultural skills, it is related to communication skills and the learning process of a counselor to become more aware of certain cross-cultural issues (Benavente, 2004; Betancourt, 2003; Pakai, 2003; Pope & Reynolds, 1997; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis 1992 ). All these components seem to exist in the cultural behavior of competence and they are also a prerequisite for working effectively and ethically with people from all backgrounds (AEA, 2004). Furthermore, these three components do not necessarily appear to depend on the achievement of cultural competence. For example, cultural awareness is a self-reflective skill that does not improve cultural skills. Knowledge culture can also be an important part of stereotyping and discrimination against a culture if it is not combined with cultural awareness. In addition, logically, cultural skills cannot be achieved without a good knowledge of the culture (Betancourt, 2003). Therefore, these three components need to be present in trainee counselors to demonstrate their cultural competence.

**Multicultural counseling competencies based on items**

Table 2: Means of multicultural counseling competencies based on items

Num.	Items	Means	SD
1	I am aware of my own culture can affect my behavior in the counseling process.	8.74	1.88
2	I am aware of my own culture can affect the way I think in the process of counseling.	8.64	1.99
3	I am aware of my own culture can influence my attitude toward multicultural clients.	8.12	2.11
4	I am aware of my own culture can influence the formation of my values.	8.92	1.79
5	I am aware of your own culture can affect my tendency to make decisions in multicultural counseling sessions.	7.89	2.24
6	I am aware of my own culture can affect my profession as a counselor.	8.24	2.38
7	I am aware of my own culture can influence the acceptance of the client's culture.	8.14	2.41
8	I am aware of my own culture may affect my willingness to accept a multicultural clients.	8.07	2.37
9	I know how discrimination can affect the process of multicultural counseling.	8.72	1.91
10	I know that the world view of clients affected by the inherited culture.	9.21	1.61
11	I know the socioeconomic level influence the thinking of multicultural clients.	8.78	1.68
12	I know that the world view of clients affected by the value system of the culture.	9.16	1.32
13	I am sensitive to the cultural differences that I have with clients.	8.49	1.81
14	I know the belief system that clients have in different cultures.	7.43	1.66
15	I know that a behavior different meanings in different cultures.	9.05	1.28
16	I know the use of appropriate language can affect the effectiveness of multicultural counseling sessions.	9.44	1.24
17	I know the ability to use language that is used by the client can improve the comfort of the client's various cultures.	9.19	1.55
18	I can run counseling sessions with clients who come from different cultural backgrounds.	7.73	1.78
19	I am constantly improving my skills multicultural counseling session through training.	7.94	1.86
20	I am constantly improving my skills multicultural counseling session through reading.	7.74	2.10
21	I talked about the matter with the client in multicultural counseling sessions.	6.94	2.08
22	I can give an appropriate response to the problems of multicultural clients.	7.00	1.75
23	I can identify issues in multicultural counseling sessions.	7.15	1.87
24	I believe the appropriate response in multicultural counseling sessions.	7.17	1.84
25	I have a variety of intervention strategies in multicultural counseling sessions.	6.86	1.86
26	I can give an appropriate response to the problems of clients in its cultural context.	7.20	2.05

Table 2 shows the mean value for each item in the instrument used to measure the efficiency of multicultural counseling. The highest item number was item number 16 under the domain of

knowledge that I know use appropriate language can affect the effectiveness of the counseling of various culture with mean value of 9.44. The second item was the item number 9 is also under

the domain of knowledge that I know how discrimination can affect the process of multicultural counseling with a mean value of 9.21 followed by the item number 17, which I know to use the language that is used by the client can improve the comfort of the client multicultural with 9.19 min value. Items that showed the lowest mean value is item number 25 under the domain of the skills that I have various intervention strategies in multicultural counseling session (6.86). The mean value of this study illustrate that the respondent has a high efficiency in the domain of knowledge than skills domain. Counselor training becomes the basis for steady and continuous efforts, along with their willingness to learn which will also generate success over time (Larson, 1998). Larson (1998) also stated that this is important to the counseling profession because it can identify specific training and appropriate interventions to improve the effectiveness of counseling services provided. Experience handling counseling can be improved from time to time. According to Manese, Wu, and Nepumuceno (2001), counselor trainees at the initial stage can work with multicultural clients during practical training or supervision to develop skills or interventions that will enhance their professional experience. Clinical supervision is also part of the professional counseling experience. Supervisors can be a model for them and provide knowledge of multicultural competence to ensure trainee counselors as the future generation that will meet the changing demographic needs of society (Arrendondo et al., 1996). In fact, multicultural counseling competence begins during ongoing formal training and supervision while performing their daily duties as counselors. In addition, there are several multicultural training models that can be used to improve the competence of multicultural counseling (Pedersen & Carey, 2003; McIntosh, 2001; Brislin & Bhawuk, 1999; Hays, 1996; Helms, 1995; Comas-Diaz & Jackson, 1991 ). According to Jose Miguel Maldonado (2005), counselor education training is one of the important aspects to prepare students to deal with multicultural counseling. Multicultural counseling training is part of that process. The study also suggests that taking a multicultural course can generate more multicultural counseling competence than those who do not take the course. A study by Pope-Davis et al. (1994) found that coaches who took cultural courses, cultural workshops, or took more credit hours in multicultural courses would acquire more multicultural skills and knowledge than those who did not take multicultural courses. Therefore, the input of multicultural activities and cultures acquired during studies definitely affects the competence of trainee counselors in multicultural counseling. In general, master's degree students are also considered more mature

than bachelor's degree students. Therefore, it is not impossible that undergraduate students have a higher level of competence than undergraduate students.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The counseling and guidance services are an important aspect in organisation. It can develop accordance to the different needs of races and cultures in Malaysia. Therefore, counselors must remain a high quality of service that is relevant in the system. This quality includes the efficiency in various multicultural counseling. The diversity of races and cultures of the people demand the counselors to improve their counseling efficiency. This paper evaluated the efficiency of multicultural counseling among trainee counselors on culture. The efficiency of multicultural counseling among trainee counselors who are involved in this study was at the high level of efficiency. However, it still needs to be improved to the highest level, namely at the level of "Very High". In addition, the questionnaires used in the survey can also be improved to ensure more valid findings. Apart from that, since the study is the first study to examine the efficiency of multicultural counseling trainee counselors, it is suggested that larger studies should be conducted to find the real situation related to this multicultural competence among practitioner counselor. The reliability and validity of the instruments can also be addressed in the future in order to ensure that the instruments have good validity and can be used in a larger population.

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