

Chapter 20

Traditional and Complementary Medicine (TCM) Usage vs. Health Technology: Moderating Effect of Races

Dyana M. L. Chang

Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia

Norazah Mohd Suki

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8422-2449>

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

An integration of traditional and complementary medicine (TCM) into modern medical practices and its utilization along with health technology has incorporated issues like efficacy, quality, and safety. Malaysia government recognized TCM in various medical practices such as homeopathy, traditional Malay medicine, traditional Indian medicine, Islamic medical practices, and traditional Chinese medicine. This research aims to investigate whether races have moderating influence on the relationship of consumers' perceived safeness, perceived efficacy, holistic balance view, trust, and health awareness, and feeling of TCM usage. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to 288 respondents residing in Sabah, Malaysia. Results revealed that races correspond with native, Chinese, Indian ethnicity in terms of having better feeling towards the usage of TCM products. The role of TCM usage is vital among the local communities in Sabah, Malaysia whereby they develop positive feeling and patronize towards TCM. Healthcare providers should consider this aspect for business sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

An integration of traditional and complementary medicine (TCM) into modern medical practices and its utilization along with health technology has incorporated issues like efficacy, quality and safety. The usage of traditional complementary medicine (TCM) is growing globally including Malaysia. Malaysian population encountered 3.8% visited both TCM and modern practitioner and 2.3% of population whom visited TCM practitioner solely. Complementary Medicine (CM) is referred as “a sum total of the knowledge, approaches, skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs incorporating plant, animal, and/ or mineral based medicine, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied singular, experiences indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health and prevention, diagnosis improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness” (World Health Organization, 2001). Preceding studies noted that 69.4% of the Malaysian population used TCM in their lifetime due to growing values, beliefs and perception about health care and wellness (Astin, 1998; Kew, Chia, Lai, Chong, Ho, Liew & Selvarajah, 2015).

Local communities choose traditional remedies rather than modern medical practitioner due to traditional medicine can expedite the process of recovery and healing of the illness and the convenience to seek treatment from the CMs practitioner. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influences the prevalence and types of TCM modalities used and moderating effect by races factor in Sabah population. There is limited study available on the perceptions towards the effectiveness of TCM compare the conventional therapies, disclosure and source of information to the health care providers in Malaysia despite of the increasing number of number users of TCM of Sabahan (Othman & Farooqui, 2015; Chang, Tam & Suki, 2017; Lindenmeyer et al., 2011; Siti, Tahir, Farah, Fazlin, Sondi, Azman & Zakiah, 2009; Singh, Raidoo and Harries, 2004; Sirois, 2008; Lam, 2001; Eisenberg, et al., 1993).

The Ministry of Health Malaysia (2011) acknowledge that TCM played a significant and important role as the number of TCM users is escalating. Most patients prefer to consult form TCM practitioner even though Malaysia is well known with the conventional medical services to international standard such as qualified pharmacists, medical doctor, nurses and physical therapist. The decision and belief to sought of both conventional medicine and TCM will substitute each other to cure the illness quicker and solve the problem. Lam (2001) supported that CMs also consider as treatment to get rid the disease and some moderate sickness. In addition, Lee et al., (2004) suggested that TCM usage among the consumers significantly influences by many sources such as family advices, suggestion from close friends, doctors, pharmacists and public health authority. In addition, the usage of TCM extensively used and growing rapidly in Malaysia due to the well-built family relationship that increased their trust in family advices. Various TCM modalities that was use by Malaysian population include traditional Malay herbs (21.6%) reflexology (14.1%) and traditional Chinese herbs (16.6%).

Many patients and consumers consumed CMs for chronic illness were substituting conventional medicine (Aziz & Tey, 2009). From the year 2000 to 2005, the Ministry of Health in Malaysia engaged on traditional medicine from RM1 billion to RM4.5 billion in Malaysia with an optimistic and retro-active movement in assisting traditional and complementary medicine because CMs is an important for community-based of the wellbeing care scheme in Malaysia. There is a total of 40% of the world population are using TCM for their health care needs especially ASEAN countries consists of China, Singapore and India (Malaysia National Policy of TCM, 2007).

Scholars like Aydin, et al. (2008) pointed out that Malaysia spent \$500 million yearly for TCM and \$300 million for CMs, the expenditure \$80 million in Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, while

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