

Help-Seeking Behaviors and Mental Well-Being of Albanian Immigrants in Malaysia

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to explore the life experiences of 18 ethnic Albanian immigrants from Albania and Kosovo currently living in Malaysia or who'd previously lived in Malaysia and currently live in Australia. Specifically, the study explores (i) the obstacles and barriers immigrants face in Malaysia and (ii) the role stigmatization has had regarding the immigrants' help-seeking behaviors. The study uses the phenomenological case study design and in-depth semi-structured interviews for collecting the data. The results show that narrations regarding phenomena such as cultural shock, permanent residence status, stigmatization toward the immigrants, and being labeled with terms such as *Mat Salleh* [Westerners] have adversely affected the immigrants' mental well-being. In addition, the Albanian immigrants, especially the females, felt safer confiding their burdens and challenges with family members and close friends. Negative perceptions, stigmatization, and labeling are among the psychological explanations the Albanian immigrants experienced. These inevitable shortfalls affect the immigrants' mental well-being and correspond similarly to the experiences of many immigrants all over the world.

Keywords: ethnic Albanian, immigrants, mental well-being, phenomenological study, help-seeking behavior



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Introduction

Immigration has been and still is a global social phenomenon. Individuals who are unhappy or dissatisfied with their own countries due to many economic, political, and personal reasons choose to leave their homeland and migrate to other countries. This movement is often associated with hopes and dreams for a better life and a desire to achieve goals that were probably impossible to attain in their homeland. Some immigrants commonly leave for a better life without having given much thought kamariah@uniswa.edu.my about a particular destination, and might even have chosen unknown destination. Thus, some immigrants might not have made preparations or did not plan to migrate strategically, practically, systematically, or psychologically.

As a result, the exodus of immigrants to other countries can be stressful and may result in adjustment and situational difficulties and challenges. Hence, many immigrants are unfortunately found to suffer and be vulnerable to mental and psychological problems. In addition, barriers in the new environment such as language, cultural, religious, social, economic, and political differences impact the immigrants' well-being. Indeed, living in a new environment that is unlike one's own country may be highly challenging and stressful. Immigrants residing in a new country are exposed to life stressors and challenges while assimilating, adjusting, adapting, integrating, and harmonizing within a new environment and new community, and even with new friends. This phenomenon may affect immigrants' psychological and mental well-being. The experience of migration can be a stressful decision for immigrants due to the psychological and physical challenges. Numerous narrations in the literature have highlighted mental stress among immigrants moving to a new country, namely in terms of language, cultural barriers, social support, employment prospects, and financial and educational opportunities (Sainula et al., 2020; Voltissa & Ismail, 2021). Due to the complications of shifting to a new environment, immigrants undoubtedly will have difficulty adjusting to new way of life. Maladjustment causes stress, which has been proven to negatively affect immigrants psychological and mental well-being. Furthermore, stress has the potential to harm personal development, interpersonal relationships, and physical health and can lead to loneliness, depression, and alienation.

Nevertheless, mental health issues among immigrants are among the social and psychological problems that are often overlooked and not discussed openly. In many cases, immigrants are afraid to reveal and disclose their mental health challenges and difficulties due to the fear of being stigmatized. In addition, De Vylder et al. (2020) stated the stigmatization of mental illnesses and other issues to implicate labeling and a devaluing of individual worth. Thus, revealing how one is suffering from mental issues and difficulties is a choice that could trap one into being discriminated, labeled, prejudiced, and stigmatized by others. In other words, revealing or disclosing mental health challenges and difficulties may lead to negative perceptions from others who are confronted with individuals with mental health issues. Consequently, people tend not to seek the necessary treatments to avoid being labeled as crazy or as a lunatic. Moreover, de Andino & de Manami (2022) also stated perceived discrimination by mental health sufferers to also be associated with help-seeking attitudes. Discrimination can be general in terms of ethnicity, race, skin color, language, and religion; however, many have found the practice of discrimination to also be associated with mental and psychological well-being. Chiang et al. (2022) referenced young adults and find adolescents to be less likely to confide in anyone and more likely to have no one to confide with, as well as their help-seeking behaviors to be connected to their concerns regarding the impacts of being stigmatized, labeled, or experiencing prejudice. Furthermore, al-Maglash et al. (2022) stated such factors as validity, accessibility, cost, easiness, approach ability, and user-friendliness of intervention programs to affect individuals' choices when seeking help for their mental health.

In addition, immigrants do not seek help for their psychological problems for numerous reasons. For instance, the stigma of being labeled as a crazy person is deeply rooted in many societies' social and cultural norms and may lead to individuals not seeking help. As a result, worries, sadness, and sometimes madness remain untreated and difficult to diagnose and treat. Attitudes and perceptions toward seeking psychological help are greatly influenced by an individual's cultural norms and beliefs. Every culture perceives mental health problems and help-seeking behaviors differently. The fewer demonological explanations a society has for mental illnesses and disorders, the better individuals respond toward professional help. Lua et al. (2022) stated help-seeking behaviors to be related to life satisfaction, with different affects for different societies based on how well individuals adapt to the sensitive perspective of the community to

which they've migrated. Bryant et al. (2021) posited individuals' mental health to be related to living arrangement, sexuality, age, sense of belonging, and ethnicity. Thus, in order to avoid all the negative perceptions from society, an individual would normally first seek help and informal support from family members, friends, and peers. Martinez et al. (2022) stated mental health to be viewed as a stigmatized condition and many people to opt to approach help-seeking behaviors first through their network of family members and friends, followed by a community-based organization, and finally by professional help. This statement is also supported by Seon et al. (2022), who expressed help-seeking behaviors among young adults to be categorizable under informal and formal approaches, depending on the type of help they are seeking. Another study from Alviar and del Prado (2022) described help-seeking behaviors to generally be supported by family, friends, peers, and religious institutions. For example, many would turn to religion to find solace in prayer and meditation, as well as other religious practices that deal with mental health issues. However, some would feel shameful and guilty in seeking help from religious institutions due to it having practices and teachings that are considered to typify strictness and rigidity.

Help seeking behaviors may also be gender-based issues or issues universal to both genders. However, females in reality perceive seeking help for mental health issues as something positive and acceptable. Research has shown female victims of mental health to be better than their male counterparts at seeking help for mental health problems and difficulties. Ratnayake and Hyde (2019) explained how individuals with high levels of mental health literacy, especially female sufferers, will engage more in help-seeking behaviors compared to those with lower levels of mental health literacy, especially males. Brown et al. (2022) claimed individuals' perceived need to be a key barrier to help-seeking behavior, with many males perceiving themselves to be less likely to need to seek help for mental health issues. Sifat et al. (2022) stated individuals' positive views, perceived needs, and mental health literacy to be the motivating factors behind help-seeking behaviors among female. Another study (Burke et al., 2022) addressed the ability of factors such as socio-cognitivism, systemic risk, individual perceived need, and societal structural to influence young men's attitudes toward help-seeking behaviors regarding mental health issues. Lipson et al. (2022) posited that the significance of inequalities experienced by young adults is related to the identification of help-seeking behaviors between males and females. Furthermore, greater internalized mental health

stigmatization is positively related in both genders to help-seeking attitudes. Norwali et al. (2022) maintained that male respondents believe help-seeking behaviors could be seen as weak and a breach of a male's masculinity. This attitude is very much related to interpersonal dilemmas (e.g., communication, information accessibility, misconceptions, religious beliefs, stigmatization, and professionals' practices regarding ethical standards) that could hinder men's help-seeking behaviors.

Method

This qualitative study employs the phenomenological case study as its method. The phenomenological case study approach is designed to explore specific phenomena as described from the experiences of ethnic Albanian diaspora immigrants who are residing in Malaysia or had for a while and have since migrated to Australia as their permanent residence. The phenomenological is design used to interpret these immigrants' lived experiences, and a case study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of Albanian immigrants and their experiences using an inductive procedure. The qualitative design of the study has been an excellent way for it to obtain rich and thick data.

Sampling

The study uses purposive and snowball sampling methods to recruit participants. Ilker et al. (2016) asserted purposive sampling to be a non-probability sampling technique that researchers can use to choose a sample in a population. The technique is useful due to the study having limited resources, time, and manpower. Furthermore, the technique is suitable as the researchers do not aim to generalize the results for an entire population. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), purposive sampling allows researchers to select individuals based on their unique features, experiences, attitudes, or perceptions. Snowball sampling, also referred to as chain referral sampling, is also a non-probability method for selecting a survey sample and is typically used to locate populations. Parker et al. (2019) proposed snowball sampling to be one of the most popular sampling methods in qualitative research. This technique usually starts with initial contacts (i.e., seeds) who fit the criteria for becoming a participant in the research. The participant is then asked to recommend other potential participants for the research. The search for participants goes on until the researcher finds the target sample size has been achieved and the saturation point has been established. Snowball

sampling is also a commonly used method in qualitative studies for identifying and estimating hidden people. Another factor that makes snowball sampling important is that it is a low-cost and effective way of locating individuals that are difficult to find. Snowball techniques can also be used in many settings to collect data very quickly and is undoubtedly an effective method for the primary exploration of phenomena and populations. The use of snowball sampling has been essential in the current research for finding participants through other participants due to the Albanian embassy no longer being present in Malaysia nor any authority representing the Albanian people there. Thus, snowball sampling has allowed the researcher to effectively locate the hard-to-find population (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). These two techniques of purposive and snowball sampling have been used to select Albanian immigrants living in Malaysia as well as those residing in Australia. A qualitative case study by its nature entails a relatively small sample size. Therefore, this study has recruited and interviewed 18 female Albanian immigrants, with two female participants taking part in the pilot study.

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2013), data analysis in the case study approach includes steps similar to those found for other qualitative methods, such as data management, reading, describing, classifying and interpreting. After collecting the data from interviews, the researchers organized the material by creating folders for each data collection method. All the interviews were recorded, transcribed into narrative texts, and numerically coded alongside the first names of the participants. The researchers carefully read the transcripts, listened to the recordings, and identified the significant statements that reflect the participants' understanding of their experiences and other issues related to the mental well-being of ethnic Albanian immigrants.

The researchers analyzed the data by organizing them according to the main ideas and then generated the themes. Themes are the conceptual elements that summarize the aspects of the data (Merriam, 2009). Firstly, the researchers read all the transcriptions repeatedly in order to familiarize themselves with the transcribed data and be more comfortable for analyzing them. Secondly, the researchers developed the coding template table to generate the main ideas.

To ensure inter-rater reliability, two experts also expressed agreement or disagreement with themes the researchers had generated. Five themes were generated from

18 female participants. Next, the researchers assessed the inter-rater reliability for the themes, calculating it by finding the percentage of agreement between the researchers and the two experts.

Triangulation

In qualitative research, the validity of a study is related to whether the research findings are valid and certain. Accuracy is a term that explains whether the research findings precisely mirror the situation, and if sufficient proof is found to uphold the research findings. Triangulation is a strategy qualitative researchers utilize to establish validity in their investigations by breaking down a research question from numerous points of views. Guion (2002), stated triangulation to involve multiple methods of external analysis that are able to enhance the utilization of multiple external data collection methods concerning an equivalent event. Triangulation is a technique in which the researcher analyzes data, then presents the results to an audience to understand the experience of a standard phenomenon. Cohen et al. (2002) described triangulation as an attempt that help explore and explain complex human behaviors using a variety of methods to offer a more balanced explanation to readers. A blended design combines qualitative designs and is an excellent way to obtain rich and thick data. Therefore, the researcher used a blended design in this research to attain one of the aspects of triangulation. A phenomenological case study design is often seen from two perspectives: a case study design with phenomenological interviews or a phenomenological study that's bounded in time and space by a case study design. Therefore, the researchers expanded the sampling size and interviewed people who had lived in Malaysia in order to fulfil the space and time aspect regarding the mental well-being of Albanian immigrants living in Malaysia as well as those who had previously lived in Malaysia. Reaching a point of data saturation is far more achievable with the case study design than with phenomenology. One further point to add is that a particular phenomenology can be better understood with a good sampling method.

Findings

This study's findings are grouped under five themes. The themes generated from this study were aimed at answering the research objectives. Therefore, each theme is discussed in the findings with illustrated quotes from the participants.

Research Question 1: *What are the psychological barriers faced by ethnic Albanians in Malaysia and Australia?*

Three themes emerged for this question: a) cultural shock, b) permanent residence status and c) the *Mat Salleh* [Westerner] phenomenon.

Cultural Shock

Several informants claimed cultural shock to have been a major obstacle for them. Cultural shock is inevitable, and anyone who travels abroad may experience some form of cultural shock such as language, food, culture, or tradition. For example, the informants reported challenges in getting acquainted with the new culture and language in Malaysia and Australia. They claimed that they had a hard time understanding local people, as they did not speak neither English nor Malay. Some informants also reported having problems and difficulty adjusting to local cuisines. For example, the Participant 12 explained how she had been devastated and sick during her first two years staying in Malaysia. The food was different from Albania, and thus adjusting was difficult in the beginning.

It [the food] was very overwhelming for me. Thus, I was sick for about two years, so it was a bad experience for me when I moved to Malaysia; and I was young, the food was not good. Everything that we used to eat there had sugar....it was so strange to me why they had sugar in everything. Even the chicken had sugar. So, I got sick. You know I was really ill for about two years. (Participant 12)

As for the participants, many opted for fast food such as McDonald's, Burger King, and Kentucky Fried Chicken due to being unable to access the cuisine from their homeland. Meanwhile, cultural shock signifies the feelings of fear and confusion that a person experiences due to their inability to adjust and feel comfortable in a new cultural environment that is starkly different from their country of origin. Similarly, the Albanian immigrants also reported facing many other barriers, including feeling homesick, anxious, and nervous while adapting to the new culture, traditions, norms, severe language barrier, and hot weather. The cultural shock was a challenge to the immigrants' psychological and mental well-being. Furthermore, many of the respondents reported being very unhappy there in Malaysia because they missed their families back home dearly.

Permanent Residency Status

Another theme emerged was permanent residency (PR) status, particularly with regard to the adversity ethnic Albanian immigrants faced in getting PR status in Malaysia. According to the respondents, getting PR status in Malaysia is full of challenges. Despite even having resided for more than 20 years in Malaysia, they specified attaining PR status in Malaysia to entail many challenges. Therefore, many who had applied were known to commonly be found to have been rejected. For example, one of the respondents narrated how her application for PR status was rejected more than two times, so she decided to migrate to Australia. Meanwhile, another respondent stated how failing to get PR status despite being married to a Malaysian had been a great disappointment for her. She had spent more than 20 years in Malaysia, was married to a local, and had a Malaysian son yet was ineligible for attaining PR status. Regretfully, the locals still considered her as a foreigner. Another respondent added how her biggest disappointment in Malaysia had been her family's application for PR status being rejected. Her father had filed for PR status five times, and each application had been rejected. She highlighted that she could speak the local language, adhere to Malay customs and went to a national school, yet she could not be considered eligible for PR status.

We said that maybe Malaysia is our home you know; we wanted to stay there, not just for a while, but a long-term stay there... forever... We applied three times... for this PR, but it didn't come through. (Participant 12)

I consider myself to be half Malaysian because my son is Malaysian... I'm still a foreigner...that's what makes me feel unhappy. You can live here for 20 years [and] marry a local...but you will never be eligible for a PR. (Participant 10).

Meanwhile, two informants who had left Malaysia after 10-18 years of residing there stated that they had been given Australian PR status after being there for only two years.

In Australia...I actually don't have any disappointments here...the government granted me PR status after two years, then my family was given not just PR status but also citizenship... We are all Australian citizens. (Participant 16)

We might get PR status here in Australia... Once you enter this country... they show you a pathway for getting PR status and then citizenship. (Participant 8)

According to the respondents who now reside in Australia, they had been stressed and felt like foreigners in Malaysia after a series of attempts to get PR status. Now, however, they felt elated and shared a sense of belonging after being accepted as citizens in Australia. They believe that Australia is a nation of immigrants. Thus, gaining Australian PR status and citizenship is relatively easy, especially for ethnic Albanian immigrants from Europe. However, because of Malaysia's federal constitution, it places more conditions on immigrants who wish to obtain PR status and citizenship.

Still, the informants also shared that attaining PR status would give them a sense of security and ease their worries about the future. Immigrants with children indicated not wanting their children to repeatedly apply for visa renewals to reside long term in the country, as the process is so tedious and sometimes upset their feelings as well as their sense of self-esteem and humanity. Having permanent residency gives a person peace of mind and security, as well as other numerous benefits. Having PR status in Malaysia may allow one to seek employment and other social benefits such as medical and social support, while many who'd migrated to Australia felt happy and welcomed in Australia.

Mat Salleh Labeling

The ethnic Albanian immigrants faced significant challenges as they tried to engage and send their children to Malaysian national schools. Some of the immigrant children reported being bullied and discriminated against due to being labeled as different. Their struggles to adjust and conform with the norms and values of the local schools appeared to have been undetectable by their peers, teachers, and schools. Several respondents stated how local children had verbally bullied their children with name calling. Somehow, the phrase *Mat Salleh* [Westerner] has a somewhat skewed connotation with a negative meaning and is labeled toward the Albanian children. The ethnic Albanian immigrants claimed that their children were still seen as European in school, even though the children tried to fit in and conform to the national school culture just like other Malaysian students. They also claimed how some of their children had been intentionally discriminated against in school by their peers, such as how the local students had perceived and assumed that all *Mat Salleh* are from England and non-Muslim. For example, an Albanian mother who considered herself to be happy and liked her life in Malaysia meanwhile reported being disappointed with how her children had been labeled, discriminated against, and verbally abused in school. Those bad experiences

had made her question her sense of belonging and rejection by the local Malaysians. Another participant said that her peers had always called her a *Mat Salleh* and that she couldn't accept it; she felt bad because the local people perceived her to have the same mentality as Europeans.

They [the children] were always bullied..., being called names [negative narrations] by their school peers, such as Orang Puteh [white person] or Mat Salleh... What was disturbing for my children is that they wanted to fit in with the Malaysian children because they had been born in Malaysia. They kind of felt like Malaysian kids, but the authorities treated them as if they were foreigners all the time, even though they were very much a part of the Malaysian culture. (Participant 16)

I speak their language, I was born here, they never [accepted me], they always called me a foreigner, they always call me Mat Salleh [with negative connotations]. (Participant 1)

Research Question 2: *How does self-stigmatization prevent the help-seeking behaviors of immigrants in Malaysia and Australia?*

The two themes that emerged for this question are a) perceptions toward mental well-being and b) help-seeking behaviors.

Perceptions Toward Mental Health

The study reported many ethnic Albanians immigrants to have felt ashamed to share information about their mental well-being. They were reluctant to share information about their mental being and related issues with others, instead choosing to be discreet about their apprehensions. Some immigrants thought they would be able to protect their self-image and family dignity by doing so. Other immigrants believed that being labeled as having an unsound mental well-being was absurd and shameful in reality. For example, one respondent stated that she would be embarrassed to admit if she had any psychological or mental instabilities, even to family members. People tend to prejudge and label those who suffer from psychological/mental instability. Thus, prejudices and discrimination are quite common for these unfortunate sufferers. Another respondent pointed out how she had also been prejudiced in Albania and had had adverse perceptions toward people suffering from psychological/mental illnesses. She honestly

believed that those who suffered from mental illnesses were weak and helpless individuals. She could not confide in anyone when she was in Albania. In Malaysia, however, the openness and abundance of information portrayed mental instability positively.

Sometimes people are judgmental, or they will think you are crazy. (Participant 2)

I would be embarrassed because... I am concerned about others' opinions. I don't know, maybe the upbringing or the culture in which we were raised, because we were always judged... They [the locals] are judgmental... No matter what you do, good or bad, you will still be judged... So, for me, it matters. (Participant 3)

Help Seeking Behaviors

Family members and close friends are the individuals to whom ethnic Albanians would turn to get help and share their grievances. Many immigrants stated family members are the first individuals in whom they would confide their problems before turning to friends. Still, they were selective and careful in choosing family members and friends who are trustworthy, honest, and non-judgmental.

First, I will discuss with my family... and... they will be the first people to know...

And maybe my friends, because of course they are close. (Participant 7)

So, I guess family comes first... and then, of course, I don't mind sharing with my close friends, but of course I feel more satisfied discussing with my parent's family in general. (Participant 8)

The participants in the study reported seeking help from family and close friends when they had any emotional pain or concern. Family support is undeniably vital to everyone, especially those who live abroad and far away from their country. Thus, confiding one's problems and worries with others, especially with family members, makes the family unit stronger. The Albanian immigrants felt safe and secure sharing their issues with family and close friends in order to find solutions to their problems. The ethnic Albanian immigrants found it difficult to open up to everyone due to fear that people's perceptions would be closely related to stigmatization. Stigmatization is visible in various forms such as fear, bias, shame, embarrassment, rejection, and avoidance. For most individuals, stigmatization is one of the barriers to seeking help for mental health issues among sufferers in the community.

Discussion and Conclusion

Lindner et al. (2022) stated that self-actualization might not only concern its benefits but may also include all facilities and infrastructures that promote well-being, such as housing, student loans, health insurance, and aptitude toward living. This was observed among the ethnic Albanian immigrants, who either stayed in Malaysia or migrated to other countries such as Australia when they perceived the challenges that they had previously encountered again after migrating to Malaysia as students as well as after graduation. The other aspect of self-actualization is the immigrants' feeling of inclusiveness within the new society to which they had migrated despite having different objectives for migrating. This could be seen among the ethnic Albanian immigrants' apprehension and satisfaction in Malaysia and Australia with regard to how well they were accepted by the host countries. Even though most of them had migrated to Malaysia because of the public unrest and war in their countries, many had also come to Malaysia to continue their education. At the beginning of their migration, they had great challenges acculturating in the Malaysian society. Madi et al. (2021) viewed immigrants to maybe feel that the host country might be better for them by observing how well they are treated and welcomed by the local community. As a result, perceptions of discrimination and a lack of positive responses from the local community toward ethnic Albanian immigrants was a normal finding. While the experience of discrimination can be equally hard and painful for different immigrant groups, the immigrants commonly observed and generally accepted incidences of discrimination, stereotyping, labeling, and prejudices. This study has identified some of the cases ethnic Albanian immigrants have experienced, and the difficulty they encountered was in regard to obtaining PR status, which is essential for enhancing a sense of belonging due to the ethnic Albanian immigrants expectation of belonging to a community.

The foreigner stereotype was another barrier ethnic Albanian immigrants had to deal with: By referring to the immigrants as *Mat Salleh* [Westerners], the locals perceived the ethnic Albanians immigrants as foreigners. In this study, the participants expressed their dissatisfaction due to local perceptions and the rejection their children experienced in the local schools. Somehow, the participants tolerated this quandary their children experienced; in reality, however, children stating what they see without filtering their words is part of their natural development, regardless of their differences.

Bernal et al. (2022) realized language competency to be another aspect of individual self-actualization and a good indicator for acculturation. A high level of language competency, especially with some competency in the host nation's language, has been associated with lower levels of acculturation stress. Murphy et al. (2000) found positive feelings such as hopefulness, joy, happiness, and peace to assist in overcoming this stress, compared to negative feelings such as nervousness, anxiety, sadness, and guilt which they associated more with acculturation stress and lower levels of psychological functioning and well-being. The challenges ethnic Albanian immigrants face were greatly related to their ability to master the local language and to communicate with the local community. Despite English being the second language in Malaysia, most people, especially those in rural areas with lower education levels, are still unable to communicate well in English. Janely et al. (2022) examined the cultural shock of students who communicate in English in foreign lands based on the perspective of distinctive cultural backgrounds and lifestyles. In their study, ethnic Albanian immigrants mentioned ways locals differ from them such as how they greet, talk, interact, socialize, behave, eat, think, maintain eye contact, and manage their time. From another perspective, Hesty & Nur (2022) noticed cultural differences such as communication, language, food, dress, individualism, food, family structure, perceptions, religion, time orientation, tradition, and weather to cause students to experience cultural shock abroad. Also, in regard to well-being, Swerdlick et al. (2018) noted that immigrants' well-being may also involve their economic and financial struggle to survive and to maintain a living, their social life and family responsibilities in the host country as well as in their homeland. Some ethnic Albanian immigrants had to find part-time jobs to meet their financial needs as well as those of their parents in their home countries. his study was able to see how the experiences and challenges that the immigrants went through had strengthened their self-esteem, self-actualization and resilience toward challenges as immigrants.

The second part of the study examined the effects of survival and help-seeking behaviors among ethnic Albanian immigrants. Guarneri et al. (2018) stated negative aspects of well-being such as stigmatization to always be a common denominator in mental health issues, as well as other constructs such as race, ethnicity, and gender. In general, perceived stigmatization and self-stigmatization negatively affect individuals' well-being and willingness to seek help, and men are more commonly found to find experience

this negative aspect of well-being than women. This result shows similarities to the greater willingness female ethnic Albanian immigrants have to seek psychological help as a method of early intervention with regard to their mental health issues compared to their male counterparts. Goncalves, M., & et al. (2022) stated men's help-seeking behaviors to depend on their perceptions toward the male gender; to be unique to individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors; and to impact their life based on traditional gender stereotypes. In general, the respondents mentioned that they would seek help from individuals who were close to them, such as their family and friends. Among the reasons mentioned as to why the Albanian immigrants turned to their families, and close friends for help was that they didn't want other people to know about their problems and concerns. According to the respondents, Albanian people are quite prejudiced towards people with problems and, as a result, hide their issues from their communities to maintain their image. In summary, ethnic Albanian immigrants have trouble opening up to people because they do not know what people might think of them. This fear of people's perceptions and opinions is closely associated with the stigmatization they have toward people's perceptions. Therefore, to prevent their name from being tarnished in public, they feel they have to hide any weaknesses, such as their emotional pain and psychological/mental health issues. Shu et al. (2022) posited fear of losing reputation to be related to stigmatizations toward mental illnesses; however, the nature of this relationship seems to be bidirectional. Participants argued that fear of losing reputation was either the cause of their mental health difficulties or the consequence of having mental health difficulties and being stigmatized for them. In both cases, a loss of reputation directly added stress, whether by tarnishing their reputation or by tarnishing their family's reputation. Yongbin Kim et al. (2022) stated emotional self-control to be significantly associated with unfavorable help-seeking attitudes. This could be seen in the current study with the ethnic Albanian immigrants' positive responses in regard to dealing with the difficulties and problems they face, both for those living in Malaysia and those living in Australia. Moreover, this study also showed self-compassion to be a significant aspect of resilience for many ethnic Albanian immigrants' ability to maintain and sustain their relationships in their family and the society where they currently live.

In conclusion, many ethnic Albanian immigrants' experiences with regard to settling down in their host countries (i.e., Malaysia and Australia) are similar to those of many

other immigrants all over the world. The most significant lesson would be the importance mental/psychological health and well-being have in maintaining sanity and helping one charter new episodes in life.

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