

Enhancing Legal Skills: Client Counselling Assessments Using Rubric Evaluation Among Foundation Law Students in Malaysia

Farhah Abdullah^{1*}, Norsyazrah Zulkifli¹, Nurulhasni Shaari @ Mat Saman¹,
Ainul Mardhiyyah Tajudin¹, Cartaz Ummu Syawaeda Jaiman¹,
Mohd Safri Mohammed Na'aim¹

¹ Centre of Foundation Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM), Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Dengkil, 43800 Dengkil, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding Author: farha523@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract: *This study assesses the efficacy of client counselling assessments, utilising a rubric evaluation, in enhancing the practical legal skills of Part 2 foundation law students in Malaysia. The faculty wants to prepare students for problem questions on contract and tort law tests. They use role-playing to teach legal principles by acting out different types of contracts or tort crimes. Student groups employ the ILAC (Issue, Law, Application, Conclusion) framework to identify issues, select appropriate laws, and demonstrate application through structured conclusions. The evaluation utilised a rubric to identify problems, apply relevant legal principles, write quality, and foster teamwork. Results indicate that most groups scored between 10 and 13 out of 15 marks, demonstrating a solid grasp of legal concepts with areas for improvement identified. The study emphasises the critical role of hands-on, scenario-based learning in legal education and recommends continued use of practical assessments to prepare students for examination success and a successful transition into law faculty. Through this approach, students develop improved legal reasoning and teamwork skills. These findings advocate for integrating more interactive and practical learning experiences in the legal curriculum, fostering a more active and enjoyable learning environment in law schools. In conclusion, client counselling assessments employing the ILAC framework contribute to developing the foundational legal skills necessary for a deeper understanding of legal principles among law students.*

Keywords: Assessment, Client Counselling, Rubric, ILAC Framework, Legal Skills

1. Introduction

Legal education strongly emphasises the legal profession's client-centred approach (Holvast & Kortleven, 2023). In Malaysia, legal education has traditionally focused on theoretical knowledge. However, there is a growing recognition of the significance of practical legal skill sets. Among these skills, client counselling is a critical component that prepares students for real-world legal practice. Client counselling is a simulated scenario in which a team of law students assumes the roles of lawyers with another colleague's help while other students portray clients. The purpose is to assist clients in comprehending their legal problems and making well-informed choices. Given their proven validity, reliability, and cost-effectiveness, the current study underscores the significance of integrating client counselling assessments into legal education. Cunningham et al., 2006).

Many law schools incorporate client counselling assessments into their legal education assessments, including UiTM's Foundation of Law Centre of Foundation Studies. Client counselling entails more than just legal knowledge. It also requires listening, understanding, empathising, and providing clear, practical advice. Developing these skills early for Malaysian foundation law students is vital for their future success in the legal profession. Client counselling assessments, mainly when evaluated using rubrics, provide a structured and objective method to enhance these skills, as the most appropriate use of outcome-based evaluations, which assess knowledge and skills, is recommended for legal education enhancement. Lopez and his colleagues published their findings in 2009. This article explores how Malaysian law schools can further evaluate the practical legal skills of foundation law students through client counselling assessments.

Today's legal profession recognises professional legal competencies as essential in practical legal education (Azni et al., 2020). Law schools train students to think and act 'like lawyers.' Educators actively integrate interactive and practical learning experiences into legal education, significantly enhancing students' legal reasoning and teamwork skills (Johnson et al., 2014). According to a study by Irwin, Brown, and Butler (2020), students who engage in practical simulations, such as client counselling, exhibit a better understanding of legal concepts and improved problem-solving abilities. Similarly, La Rocca et al. (2014) have shown that collaborative assignments foster essential teamwork skills, preparing students for real-world legal practice.

By incorporating rubric-based client counselling assessments and the ILAC framework, Malaysian law schools can significantly enhance the practical legal skills of foundation law students, preparing them for successful legal careers to aid in their personal and professional development. This approach bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application and improves legal practice communication, problem-solving, and ethical standards (La Rocca et al., 2014).

Incorporating practical simulations like client counselling allows students to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. Studies have shown that these methods improve students' legal reasoning and teamwork skills, preparing them for professional practice (Spencer, 2018; Gerdy, 2008). Holvast and Kortleven (2023) state that interactive methods enable students to understand complex legal concepts, enhance problem-solving skills, and foster essential teamwork abilities, improving their legal education.

Despite recognising the importance of practical skills in legal education, many law schools in Malaysia still emphasise theoretical knowledge over practical application. This gap often leaves students underprepared for real-world legal practice, where client interaction and counselling are crucial. The lack of structured and consistent evaluation methods, such as rubric-based assessments, further exacerbates this issue. Overcoming these challenges is crucial for developing competent and confident legal professionals. Legal education in Malaysia has historically prioritised academic knowledge, concentrating on doctrinal and case law analysis while frequently neglecting the cultivation of practical skills essential for the legal profession. While fundamental, this conventional method fails to equip students with practical skills like client counselling, negotiation, and legal problem-solving required for real-world practice. The disconnect between Malaysian law schools and the profession arises primarily from insufficient interactive and skill-based learning opportunities. The absence of systematic evaluations that measure students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge exacerbates this gap (Ministry of Law Singapore, 2024).

Client counselling is essential to legal practice, allowing law students to interact appropriately with clients, identify legal issues, and offer appropriate advice. The focus on academic assessments and memorisation in Malaysian legal education has frequently eclipsed the necessity to cultivate interpersonal and analytical abilities in law students. While some institutions, such as UiTM's Centre of Foundation Studies, have started incorporating client counselling assessments, their implementation remains inconsistent. Also, these activities cannot help students improve their skills because they do not have straightforward evaluation methods, such as rubric-based tests.

Client counselling assessments augment students' legal understanding and develop critical skills such as active listening, empathy, effective communication, and ethical decision-making. Research indicates that including practical simulations, such as client counselling, in legal education significantly improves students' problem-solving capabilities, collaborative skills, and comprehension of legal principles (Irwin et al., 2020; Spencer, 2018). Rubric-based assessments give a systematic and objective method for evaluating these skills, providing a consistent and transparent framework for instructors and students, thus encouraging more engaging and practical evaluations in legal education.

By emphasising practical skill development via client counselling assessments, Malaysian law schools can more effectively link their curriculum with the professional realities encountered by aspiring lawyers. This essay looks at how tests, especially those combined with the ILAC framework, can significantly enhance the legal knowledge of foundation law students, linking what they learn in the classroom with what they can do in real life. Recognising this issue is essential for developing proficient, self-assured, and practice-ready lawyers capable of confronting the demands of contemporary legal practice.

2. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to assess client counselling assessments' effectiveness in Introduction to the Law of Contract, Torts, and Crimes, which covers the law of contract, torts, and crimes. To enhance the practical legal skills of foundation law students, we provide a detailed explanation of the methodology in an accessible format, which includes the rubric criteria and their significance. We developed the questionnaire based on the research model in Figure 1. Table 1 shows the methodology and parameters applied in this work, and Table 2 illustrates rubric criteria and an explanation. Table 2 shows selected variables and parameters used in this present work.

Table 1: Methodology Table

Methodology Component	Description
Data Collection	We use online Google Form surveys with selected PI005 and PI007 foundation law students and faculty members to gather qualitative insights on client counselling assessments.
Performance Analysis	We quantitatively analysed student performance data before and after implementing rubric evaluations.

Table 2: Rubric Criteria and Explanation

Criteria	Poor (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Importance
Foster Good Relationships	Limited evidence supports the ability to foster good relationships towards goal achievement.	Able to foster positive relationships with minor improvements needed.	The team effectively fosters relationships and works towards goal achievement.	Developing positive relationships is crucial for building trust with clients and is essential for successful client counselling.
Contribution	Few group members contribute and participate.	Most group members actively contribute and participate.	All group members actively contribute and participate.	All team members must actively participate to practice their counselling skills, which is essential for professional development.
Communication	There was limited confidence, minimal eye contact, and a nervous delivery.	There should be reasonable confidence, acceptable eye contact, and body language.	Confident delivery with regular eye contact and appropriate body language is good.	Effective communication is crucial to client counselling, helping to convey legal advice clearly and confidently.
Organisation	There is no limited sequence, making it difficult for the audience to follow.	The audience can follow the logical sequence.	It is a logical and exciting sequence that is straightforward for the audience to follow.	A well-organised presentation ensures that clients understand the legal advice and options.
Time Management	The inability to utilise time properly is a concern.	The skill of making reasonable use of time is essential.	We enhance the proper use of time by completing tasks within the given time frame.	Time management is critical in legal practice to ensure efficient and effective client meetings.

The ILAC framework table from Table 3 served as the foundation for developing the questionnaire.

Table 3: ILAC Framework Table

ILAC Component	Explanation	Example
Issue	Identify the relevant legal issue(s) in the case.	Contract Law: The issue might be the lack of an element such as proposal, acceptance, consideration, intention to create legal relations, or lack of free consent. Tort Law: The issue might be trespassing on a person, such as assault, battery, or false imprisonment.
Law	Determine the relevant laws that apply to the identified issue(s).	Contract Law: Apply the relevant contract laws, such as the Malaysian Contracts Act 1950. Tort Law: Apply the relevant tort laws, such as the principles of the Malaysian Tort Law.
Application	Analyse how the law applies to the facts of the case.	Contract Law: Analyse how the lack of an element, such as consideration, affects the contract's validity by applying the relevant sections of the Contracts Act to the facts provided. Tort Law: Analyse how the facts of the case meet the criteria for assault under the principles of Malaysian Tort Law.
Conclusion	Draw conclusions based on the application of the law to the facts.	Contract Law: Conclude whether the contract is valid or void due to lacking an essential element. Tort Law: Conclude whether the defendant's actions constitute assault and suggest appropriate legal actions.

Justification for the ILAC Framework

We chose this study's **ILAC framework (issue, law, application, conclusion)** because it is a structured and logical approach to legal problem-solving. It provides a straightforward methodology for analysing legal cases, essential for academic and practical applications in legal education.

We explicitly adapted the ILAC framework in client counselling to guide students in identifying client issues, applying relevant laws, analysing legal implications, and delivering actionable conclusions. These adaptations align with the real-world legal practice requirements, where lawyers must assess and address client needs systematically and efficiently.

There are critical reasons for selecting and adapting ILAC for client counselling.

- i. **Structure and Clarity:** The ILAC framework ensures that students follow a systematic approach in client interactions, reducing ambiguity and promoting clear communication.
- ii. **Practical Application:** Students can seamlessly translate theoretical knowledge into practical advice by aligning the framework with common legal scenarios (e.g., contract disputes and tort claims).
- iii. **Focus on Client Outcomes:** The conclusion phase emphasises actionable recommendations tailored to the client's circumstances, mirroring professional law practice.
- iv. **Skill Development:** The framework fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, which are vital for successful client counselling.

Students received training to incorporate interpersonal skills like empathy and active listening into each phase of the ILAC framework for client counselling. For example:

- We encouraged students to ask open-ended questions during the issue phase to better understand the client's perspective.
- During the law phase, instructors guided students to explain legal principles in layperson's terms, improving client comprehension.
- The **application** phase required students to use clear, client-focused reasoning to relate legal principles to the facts.
- Finally, the **conclusion** phase emphasised actionable advice and options, ensuring clients could make informed decisions.

Importance of Rubric Assessment in Evaluating Client Counselling in Legal Education for Pre-Law Students

Rubric assessments are essential in evaluating client counselling in legal education, especially for pre-law students. They offer a structured and objective framework, ensuring consistency and fairness in evaluations (Reddy & Andrade, 2010). Rubrics help educators pinpoint strengths and areas needing improvement, facilitating targeted feedback and support. This method enhances students' grasp of essential counselling skills, such as communication and problem-solving (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007).

Moreover, rubrics promote self-assessment and reflection, enabling students to gauge their progress and identify improvement areas, fostering active learning and skill mastery (Mrangu, 2022). They also enhance transparency and accountability in the assessment process, reducing anxiety and boosting confidence in grading fairness. This clarity helps set goals, promoting a focused and motivated learning approach (Mrangu, 2022).

Incorporating rubric assessments in legal education prepares pre-law students for practical careers by bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and helpful application. The primary objective of this study is to enhance the practical legal skills of foundation law students in Malaysia through rubric-based client counselling assessments. It assesses client counselling practices in Malaysian law schools and highlights the benefits of using the ILAC framework for contract and tort law examinations. The study also explores the impact of interactive learning on student engagement and academic achievements, offering recommendations for improving student performance in client counselling assessments (Grose, 2012; Clark & DeSanctis, 2013).

3. Results and Discussion

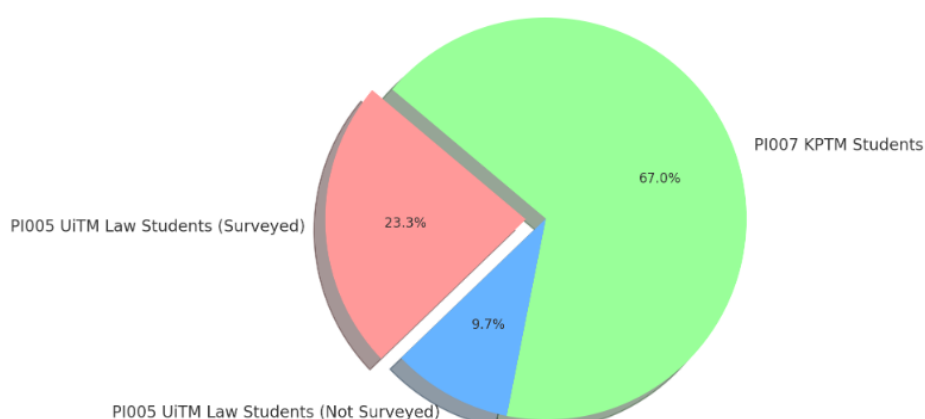


Figure 1: A Google Form Survey Of 156 Law Students At A Pre-Law University In Malaysia

Distribution of PI005 and PI007 Law Students

The pie chart in Figure 1 demonstrates the distribution of students across the three categories:

- **PI005 UiTM Law Students (Surveyed):** 156 out of 670 students, representing approximately 23.3% of the total population.
- **PI005 UiTM Law Students (Not Surveyed):** 65 out of 670 students, representing approximately 9.7% of the total population.
- **PI007 KPTM Students:** 449 out of 670 students, representing approximately 67% of the total population.

4. Methodology

This study utilised a Google Form survey of 156 law students at a pre-law university in Malaysia, as shown in Figure 1. The survey included 156 out of 221 students enrolled in UiTM PI005, representing 23.3% of the university's total 670 students. The unsurveyed cohort accounted for 9.7%.

Forty-seven law students from the KPTM PI007 cohort participated. Additionally, the total student population included 449 students from PI007 at KPTM. The overall student population for this study, including students from PI005 (UiTM) and PI007 (KPTM), was 670.

The survey data from the PI005 and PI007 cohorts reveals significant differences in participation rates, highlighting varying levels of student involvement in these groups. The PI005 cohort, consisting of 221 students, demonstrated a high level of engagement, with 156 students (70.59%) participating in the survey. In contrast, the PI007 cohort, with a larger

population of 449 students, showed a markedly lower participation rate of 10.47%, with only 47 students completing the survey.

Assessment Design

The client counselling assessment employed the ILAC framework, with scenarios focusing on forming contract elements or specific and tortious acts. Each group was required to identify legal issues, select appropriate laws, apply these laws to the problems, and provide structured conclusions. The assessment simulated real-world legal counselling sessions, encouraging students to apply their legal knowledge accurately and effectively.

Evaluation Rubric

The faculty used a detailed rubric to evaluate the student's performance. The rubric assessed four key areas: (i) problem identification, (ii) application of relevant legal principles, (iii) writing quality, and (iv) teamwork. Evaluators scored each area on a scale of 1 to 5, with a possible score of 15.

Data Collection

Researchers collected data using both quantitative and qualitative methods. They measured quantitative data through pre- and post-assessment scores and gathered qualitative insights from student feedback and instructor observations. Additionally, online Google Form feedback from selected students provided more profound insights into their experiences and perceptions of the assessment.

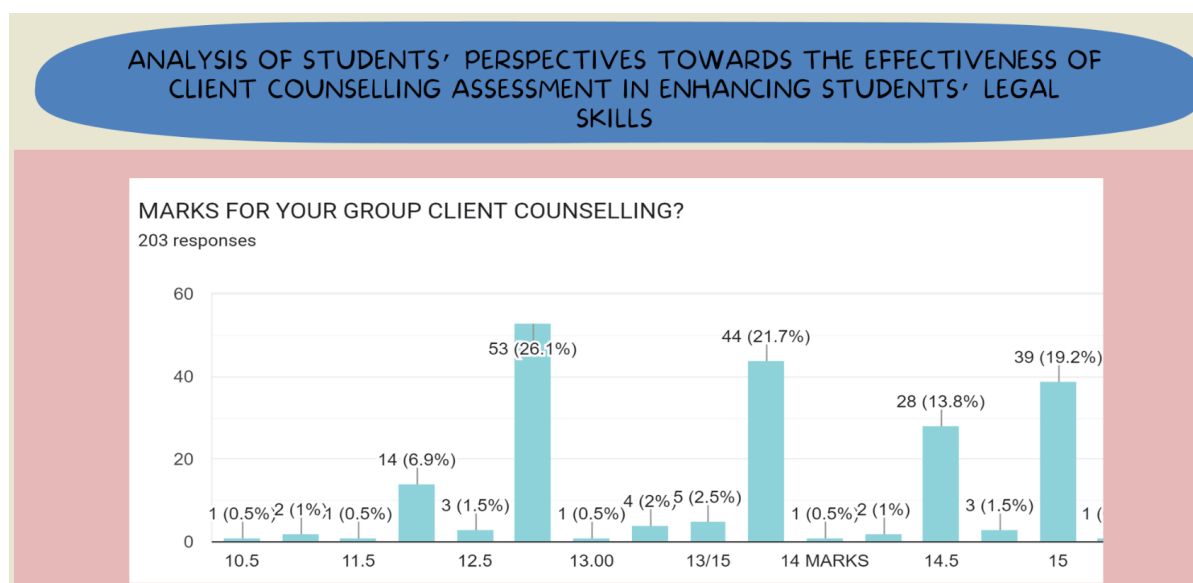


Figure 2: Marks for Group Client Counselling

By utilising this mixed-methods approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of client counselling assessments in enhancing the practical legal skills of foundation law students in Malaysia. The group client counselling marks analysis, as shown in Figure 2, reveals diverse student performance outcomes. Most students scored between 12.5 and 14.5 marks, with the highest concentration at 12.5 marks (26.1%) and 14 marks (21.7%). A notable proportion of students achieved full marks (19.2%), indicating a high level of proficiency in client counselling skills. Conversely, a small percentage of students scored below 13 marks, suggesting areas for further improvement and targeted support. This distribution highlights the varying levels of skill development among students, emphasising

the importance of continuous assessment and personalised feedback to enhance learning outcomes and ensure all students achieve a satisfactory level of practical legal competence.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data consisted of three main components: the marks earned for group client counselling, the contribution of teamwork to client counselling, and the overall group teamwork. The following bar charts visually represent the data:

Teamwork Contribution to Client counselling

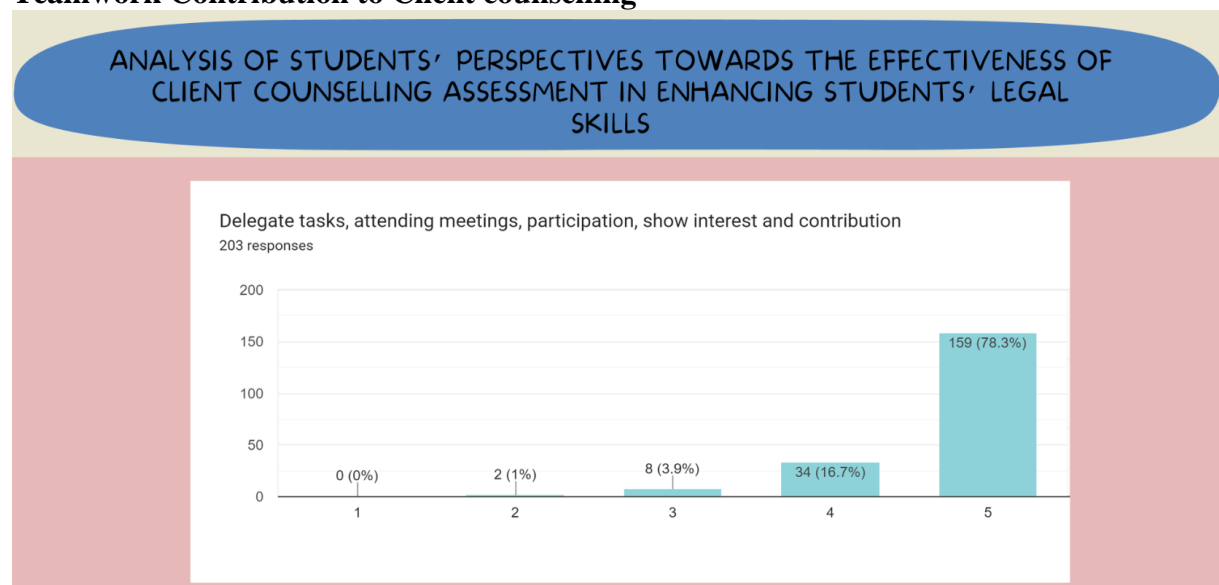


Figure 3: Teamwork Contribution in Client Counselling

This chart in Figure 3 illustrates student participation and contribution to group tasks, such as delegation tasks, attending meetings, and showing interest. Most students rated their teamwork contribution highly, with 78.3% rating it a 5, suggesting a high level of engagement and collaboration. This chart shows the marks awarded to student groups for their client counselling assessments. Most groups scored between 10.5 and 15 marks, indicating a solid grasp of the legal concepts and practical application of the ILAC framework.

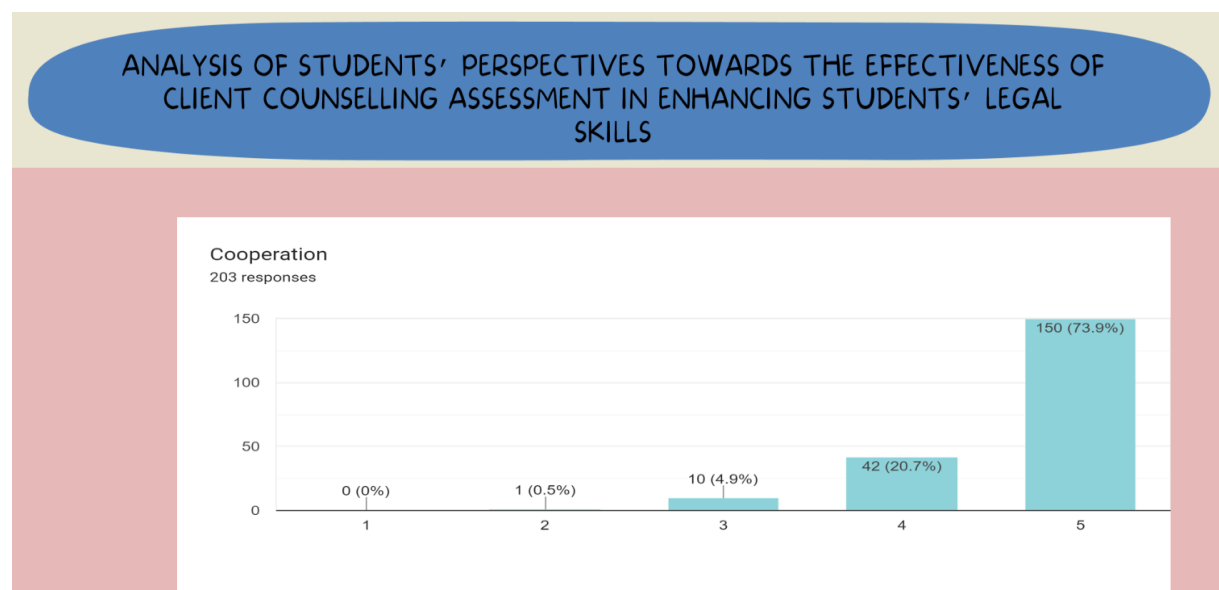


Figure 4: Students' Perceptions of Their Overall Group Teamwork

This chart, in Figure 4, presents students' perceptions of their overall group teamwork. Most students rated their teamwork experience positively, with 90.6% giving it a 3 out of 3, indicating that the group dynamics were strong and contributed positively to the client counselling exercise.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher gathered qualitative data through student feedback and instructor observations. This data provided additional context to the quantitative results, highlighting specific areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Interviews with selected students offered profound insights into their experiences, revealing how the ILAC framework and client counselling assessments impacted their learning and skill development.

By utilising this mixed-methods approach, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of client counselling assessments in enhancing the practical legal skills of foundation law students in Malaysia. The Ministry of Law Singapore (2024) emphasises that combining quantitative and qualitative data provides valuable insights into student achievement, collaboration, and the overall learning experience, aiding curriculum improvement.

The study reveals that rubric-based client counselling assessments improve students' practical legal skills (Hyams & Evans, 2021). The ILAC framework proves beneficial in helping students systematically approach legal problems, enhancing their performance in contract and tort law examinations (O'Brien & Littrich, 2008). Interactive and practical learning experiences contribute to a more active and enjoyable learning environment, leading to higher student engagement and better learning outcomes (Freeman et al., 2014; Prince, 2004). Feedback from students and faculty highlights specific areas for improvement, such as the need for more realistic role-playing scenarios and increased opportunities for practice (O'Brien & Littrich, 2008).

Student Feedback Analysis on Improved Legal Reasoning and Teamwork Skills

The table below summarises selected feedback from the 156 foundation law students, highlighting what they learnt regarding improved legal reasoning and teamwork skills.

Table 4: Student Feedback Analysis on Improved Legal Reasoning and Teamwork Skills.

Student Feedback	Improved Legal Reasoning	Teamwork Skills
I have learnt that it is crucial for us (as lawyers, even though I am not a lawyer now) to understand and apply the law to the situation that the client has explained.	I understand and apply the law based on clients' situations.	Teamwork is essential to achieve a good result in client counselling.
I can manage my time well, and teamwork is crucial while doing assignments because we can share ideas and be alert to what our group members are doing. From client counselling, I also developed my interest in law, and contract law is my favourite field of law.	I am interested in law, especially contract law, and applying legal principles to clients' situations.	Teamwork is crucial: sharing ideas and being aware of group members' contributions.
I learnt the importance of effective communication, active listening, and articulating complex information clearly.	To develop customised solutions for clients and comprehend ethical standards, one must engage in critical thinking and problem-solving.	It involves building trust and rapport, managing time, staying organised, and continuous improvement through feedback.

I have learnt much about the definition of a mistake in law, as stated in Section 21 of the Contracts Act 1950.	I learnt specific legal concepts, such as the definition of a mistake in law.	I was acting and presenting in a group setting.
Through client counselling, I learnt how to cooperate and compromise with others, enhancing my thinking and acting according to everyone's expectations.	I have developed an enhanced understanding of legal concepts and the application of these concepts to client scenarios.	I am learning to cooperate, compromise, and meet expectations within a group setting.
I learnt that client counselling in movies or series looks the same, but seeing each group's creativity and presentation methods was terrific.	We are experiencing the pressure of being a client and lawyer, gaining small experience to achieve more in the future.	We are witnessing different groups' creativity and storytelling methods.
Through client counselling, I learnt how to cooperate with groupmates to produce a good client counselling session.	I understand the client counselling topic better.	Cooperation with groupmates is essential for a successful session.
I learnt how to manage the situation with the client, advise them regarding their problem, and read many cases to resolve it.	We manage situations, advise clients, and resolve issues through case studies.	I am learning proper behaviour and manners during meetings with clients.
Professional ethics includes ensuring clients are fully informed about the counselling process, including potential risks and benefits, and setting boundaries.	We keep clients informed and self-aware to prevent bias and manage emotions during sessions.	We are improving communication skills and practicing problem-solving with groupmates.
I am responsible for handling clients and formally speaking to them, ensuring they understand their situations from a legal perspective.	I am responsible for ensuring clients understand their legal situations and matters clearly.	I am enjoying the assignment despite group arguments.
I am researching how real-life situations may arise when I become a lawyer or legal advisor.	I am applying elements of contract learnt in class to real-life situations.	The students benefit from the simulation of real-life legal practice.
It takes hard work and patience to deal with different types of people.	I am ensuring clear understanding through videography and editing.	They receive help from teammates during discussions and value their contributions.
They are learning the procedure of client counselling and dealing with clients from various backgrounds.	I am being careful in daily life to avoid actions that could lead to legal issues.	We deal with diverse client backgrounds and understand the consequences of actions.
I realise the importance of 100% commitment from everyone on the team for success.	I communicate professionally with lawyers and understand the lawyer-client interaction.	We are recognising the importance of team commitment.
We are learning that readiness and response in group matters are crucial for equality in decision-making.	It is essential to understand the topic of fraud and its legal measures.	We are ensuring equal contribution and decision-making within the group.
Finding the assignment opened my eyes to understanding the topic and handling clients better.	I am gaining a better understanding of legal procedures.	It is crucial to comprehend the practical implementation of client counselling presentations.

Improved Legal Reasoning

The feedback indicates that client counselling sessions significantly enhanced students' legal reasoning skills. Students reported that they learnt to understand and apply the law to specific client situations (e.g., "understanding and applying law based on clients' situations"), developed a more profound interest in contract law, and recognised the importance of identifying the root of issues before making decisions. One student noted, "I have learnt that it is crucial for us (as lawyers, even though I am not a lawyer now) to understand and apply the law to the situation that the client has explained." Another highlighted their improved ability to manage situations and advise clients based on legal principles, reflecting a practical application of classroom learning to real-life scenarios.

Teamwork Skills

Teamwork emerged as a critical component of the learning experience. Students emphasised the importance of collaboration, sharing ideas, and being aware of their group members' contributions. Statements such as "Teamwork is crucial: sharing ideas and being aware of group members' contributions" and "Learning to cooperate, compromise, and meet expectations within a group setting" underscore the value of working together effectively. Students also reported improved soft skills, such as building trust and rapport, managing time, staying organised, and continuously improving through feedback. The collaborative nature of the client counselling sessions helped students appreciate the necessity of cooperation and tolerance for successful group activities. These results show how important it is to include hands-on and interactive activities in legal education to help students get better at legal reasoning and work together as a team while making the classroom more fun and active.

Incorporating strategies to address challenges in assessments for legal education, particularly with frameworks like ILAC, is critical for enhancing student outcomes. Experts suggest enhancing training on the ILAC framework, especially in the Application and Conclusion phases, by incorporating practical workshops and role-playing within time constraints. This approach ensures that students practice real-time application of legal principles (Association of American Law Schools [AALS], 2024). Similarly, Boston University (BU, 2023) recommends modules on effective communication, which emphasise plain language, active listening, and body language, to develop interpersonal and professional skills essential for client interactions.

Time management exercises like simulated counselling sessions with strict time limits allow students to practice prioritising critical components within legal frameworks. Additionally, interpersonal skills training through group discussions, empathy exercises, and reflective activities encourages peer and faculty feedback, fostering comprehensive learning. These methods collectively prepare students to excel in practical and theoretical aspects of legal education in an evolving professional environment (BU, 2023; AALS, 2024).

The findings and identified challenges highlight the need for a more comprehensive approach to developing practical legal skills among law students (Holvast & Kortleven, 2023). Addressing these challenges will enhance the effectiveness of client counselling assessments and better prepare students for law faculty admission. Future assessments should include longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of these interventions on students' professional competencies.

5. Conclusion

The client counselling sessions provided a dynamic and engaging learning environment, making legal studies more enjoyable and fostering a desire to pursue a legal career. Students valued the real-life application of their knowledge, gaining practical skills such as active listening, empathy, and effective communication (Aji, 2024). One student shared, "The client counselling gave a broader vision of the legal field and sparked a more significant desire to be part of the legal field." Also, the rubric-based tests provided a structured and objective way to check these skills, and the ILAC framework showed students how to deal with legal issues properly. These tools enabled students to bridge theoretical knowledge and practical application, helping them excel in examinations and real-world practice. By addressing gaps in legal education, Malaysian law schools can create a more interactive and skill-focused learning environment (Cunningham et al., 2006; Lopez et al., 2009).

To enhance practical legal education, Malaysian law schools should expand rubric-based client counselling assessments across various courses, such as family law, contract law, and tort law. Structured training modules focusing on client interaction skills and collaboration with legal practitioners can improve students' learning experience. Additionally, longitudinal assessments can help track students' progress, providing data to refine curriculum design. Developing these practical skills can significantly enhance students' readiness for professional practice, particularly in critical areas such as client interaction and ethical decision-making (Irwin et al., 2020). By implementing these changes, Malaysian law schools can ensure that their graduates possess the necessary competencies to thrive in their legal careers.

Educators can enhance client counselling assessments among foundation law students in Malaysia by implementing the following strategies:

- **Curriculum Development:** Integrate client counselling modules into the curriculum, focusing on practical skills development.
- **Experiential Learning:** Encourage experiential learning opportunities through internships or clinics where students can practice client interactions.
- **Structured Assessments:** Educators should use rubrics to evaluate student performance in client counselling scenarios, ensuring objective and comprehensive assessments.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement regular feedback sessions where students can reflect on their performance and receive instructor guidance.

By focusing on practical legal skills, Malaysian law schools can significantly enhance students' readiness for the legal profession. Active listening, effective communication, and empathy are indispensable in client interactions and build the foundation for ethical and professional legal practice (Aji, 2024). Moreover, familiarity with frameworks like ILAC ensures students develop systematic problem-solving skills for navigating complex legal issues. These recommendations and skills development strategies contribute to producing graduates who are competent in legal theory and capable of excelling in real-world legal practice. By addressing the current gaps in providing legal education and incorporating robust, practical assessments, Malaysian law schools can ensure a seamless transition from academic settings to successful legal careers.

Enhancing legal skills through structured assessments like rubric evaluations is crucial for preparing foundation law students in Malaysia for the complexities of legal practice. By focusing on practical experience and integrating modern educational techniques, law schools can better equip students with the necessary competencies to succeed in their future careers.

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