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THE INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRA-DUATE STUDENTS

LA INFLUENCIA DE LA CONSEJERÍA EN EL RENDIMIENTO ACADÉMICO DE LOS ESTUDIANTES PREGRADUADOS

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ABSTRACT

For undergraduate students, education plays a vital role in developing skills such as cognitive skills and abilities. Students are faced with expectations such as continuous high academic achievement, amid busyness and density of both school assignments, academic assignments, and extracurricular activities are followed by the students. This study aimed to examine the influence of counseling experiences of undergraduates on their academic performance. The convenience sampling method was considered for this research. The t-test and ANOVA statistics were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 alpha level of significance. The data collected with the help of the research questionnaire was analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software 22.0. This study uses data collected in the form of questionnaire administration to determine how Counseling has influenced the students' academic performance. The study population includes 262 undergraduate students from the private school in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. The study results showed that 181 participants out of the 262 said that they had experienced Counseling before, 159 of them mentioned that their academic performance improved after Counseling.

Keywords:

Counselling, guidance, undergraduate students, academic performance.

RESUMEN

Para los estudiantes de pregrado, la educación juega un papel vital en el desarrollo de habilidades tales como habilidades y habilidades cognitivas. Los estudiantes se enfrentan a expectativas tales como un alto rendimiento académico continuo, en medio del ajetreo y la densidad de las asignaciones escolares, las asignaciones académicas y las actividades extracurriculares que los estudiantes siguen. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo examinar la influencia de las experiencias de consejería de los estudiantes de pregrado en su desempeño académico. Para esta investigación se consideró el método de muestreo por conveniencia. La prueba t y las estadísticas ANOVA se utilizaron para probar las hipótesis a un nivel de significancia alfa de 0.05. Los datos recopilados con la ayuda del cuestionario de investigación se analizaron con la ayuda del software Statistical Package for Social Sciences 22.0. Este estudio utiliza datos recopilados en forma de administración de cuestionarios para determinar cómo la consejería ha influido en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes. La población de estudio incluye 262 estudiantes de pregrado de la escuela privada en la República Turca del Norte de Chipre. Los resultados del estudio mostraron que 181 participantes de los 262 dijeron que habían tenido experiencia en Consejería antes, 159 de ellos mencionaron que su rendimiento académico mejoró después de la Consejería.

Palabras clave:

Orientación, orientación, estudiantes de pregrado, rendimiento académico.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Counseling depicts a therapy or a session that encourages a person to discuss issues that the person is facing freely as well as feelings that have been disrupting normal daily activities. In the Counseling, students are entitled to several services that can range from individual counseling services to group sessions (Rowell & Hong, 2013).

These students get faced with so much expectation such as continuous high achievement in their academics considering how busy the school gets with students complaining about clashes in courses period time or too much courses otherwise known as course load. The extracurricular activities are not left out which the students try to get engaged in. For the students to attain a balance in this, guidance and counselling is necessary for these students and to also help them cope with stress and all other psychological issues that they experience during the course of study.

For undergraduate students, education plays an important role in their development of skills such as cognitive skills and abilities (Kalbfleisch, 2015). To determine if a student is successful academically, there are indicators such as achievement of high academic scores and participation as well different skills which are attributed to specific fields and are learnt whether academic related or nonacademic (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Stress for undergraduate students is explained as factors that can either be psychosocial or environmental factors and that daily contributes to oxidative stress in the body (Schiavone, et al., 2013).

As Eskici & Tinkir (2019), mention lack of a supportive environment can lead to long-term negative consequences of emotion regulation difficulty and lack of social skills. The ability of undergraduate students to be able cope and adapt in the educational environment has been a topic that researchers have been working and it is ongoing and this study is also contributing to the research.

Guidance and Counseling is portrayed as a program that helps with recognizing and achieving one's most extreme limit (Salgong, et al., 2016). A guidance and counseling program in school assists students with accommodating their abilities, interests and values and thus help them with developing their most extreme limit.

Counselling is of two types*; the individual counselling* which is face to face and entails the one on one discussion between the counselling and the students requiring the service and can comprise of just a single meeting or a few on-going meetings. The concentration in individual counseling meetings is on the student concern, and objectives are created to help the student roll out sure improvements with respects ways of dealing with stress, how the student adjusts to the circumstance of concern, or how the student acts. The second form of counselling is called the *group counselling* which is between the expert instructor and students who have comparable concern. The group counselling is further divided into small groups and large groups.

Tinto's (1993), theory of student retention is explaining the speculation of departure and how this speculation is related to the students' inability to cope academically or fit in. According to Tinto's speculation the decision to break down or drop out rises up out of a mix of student characteristics and the level of their academic, biological and social blend in an institution. There have been workshops focused on the issues that occur with students in the universities with these issues relating to changes in academics and psycho-social change issues. These changes have shot it up that there is need for more interventions need to address the issues considering their impact on drop outs and lack of educational completion being observed in the students.

The investigation on the impact of Counseling on academic execution and upkeep is limited and some researches like one that evaluated the relationship between counseling experience and CGPA, Lee, et al. (2009), discovered that there was no significant connection between them. However, another research discovered a significant relationship among Counseling and the probability of student support. Turner & Berry (2000), found that during their assessment, a typical of above average of the clients exhibited that their worries own had impact on were their academics, and practically half of the clients demonstrated that Counseling urged them in deciding to continue with enrollment.

This has brought about the curiosity of if these counseling services actually contribute towards achieving high academic performance of undergraduate students as these school counselors address the academic and developmental needs of all students, not just those in need, by collaborating with students, parents, school staff and the community (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2019). Previous studies have shown that undergraduate students encounter 'adjustment difficulties like appetite disturbance, concentration problems and depression are most evident in freshmen' (Renuka Devi, et al., 2013). One of the major reasons of these counseling sessions in schools for undergraduates aside from helping them cope is to also ensure that whatever problem they encounter either social or emotional, does not affect their academic performance.

This research examines the influence of Counseling on the academic performance of undergraduate students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Near East University was considered for this study. The university is located in the Lefkosa district of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Convenience sampling method was considered for this research to make a sample selection of 300 students from Near East University with consideration of all faculties. Convenience sampling is explained as the selection done from the available data or in this case, available participants; the participants within the reach of the study. Also, giving the recent global crisis of the COVID 19 pandemic, this sampling method is efficient. The data for this research was collected with the aid of questionnaire administration of a research tool called the questionnaire. The questionnaire used is named the "Influence of counseling program on Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire" (ICAPSQ).

The scale was developed by researchers and the psychometric property of the instrument has also been established (Bolu-Steve & Oredugba, 2017). The research instrument entails items that are grouped under two different sections. The first section contains demographic data of Age, gender, nationality and year of study with questions related to whether or not the students have gone for counseling services. The other section; section B contains 15 items to measure the influence of counseling program on academic performance of Near East University undergraduate students.

The five-point likert scale was used to measure these items. Where Strongly Disagree is 1, Disagree is 2, Neither agree nor Disagree (neutral) is 3, Agree is 4 and Strongly Agree is 5. The t-test and ANOVA statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The Online Google forms were considered for the administration of this questionnaire as the researcher made efforts to abide by the rules of social distancing which is as a result on the 2nd wave of COVID 19 pandemic. The quantitative method if research is considered for this study. The data collected with the help of the research questionnaire was analyzed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (SPSS Version 22.0). Consent was obtained from the participants for the purpose of the study. Ethical Approval was also obtained from the management/administration of the University for conducting of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 above shows the frequency of the participants with majority of them being female and 38.50% of them being male.

Table 1. Gender Description (N=262).

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	101	38.50%
Female	161	61.50%

Table 2 shows the age category of the participants with the total number of participants being 262. The age range with the highest frequency is between 23- 27 years while the lowest frequency for the age category was discovered to be from the age range of 33 years and above.

Table 2. Age Category (N=262).

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 22 yrs	96	36.60%
23 – 27 yrs	122	46.601%
28 – 32 yrs	36	13.70%
33 and above yrs	8	3.10%

The frequency of the educational level of participants is depicted in table 3 and it reveals that the participants are mostly in their third year and very few of them are in their first year.

Table 3. Education Level (N=262).

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
First year	35	13.40
Second year	53	20.20
Third year	88	33.60
Fourth year	86	32.80

Table 4 entails question 5 frequency of the ICAPSQ scale of the participants' responses. 69.10% of the respondents mentioned that they had experienced Counseling before while 30.90% said they had not gone for Counseling.

Table 4. Have you undergone Counseling before? (N=262).

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	181	69.10
No	81	30.90

Table 5 shows that most of the participants only go for Counseling yearly with the frequency of 84 while just 9.90% of the participants go weekly.

Table 5. How often do you go for counselling? (n=181).

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekly	18	9.90
Monthly	42	23.20

Yearly	84	46.40
Others	37	20.40

Out of 181 participants that they had experienced Counseling before, 159 of them mentioned that their academic performance improved after Counseling and this is shown in 6 above (Table 6, 7 and 8).

Table 6. Did your Academic performance improve after Counseling? (n=181).

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	159	87.80
No	22	12.20

Table 7a. Descriptive statistics of Gender and ICAPSQ.

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ICAPSQ	Male	101	47.9505	12.27223	1.22113
	Female	161	51.3416	10.12676	.79810

Table 7b. Independent t-test of Gender and ICAPSQ.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
F		Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		Lower	Upper	
ICAPSQ	Equal variances assumed	4.297	.039	-2.428	260	.016	-3.39112	1.39647	-6.14095	-.64129	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.325	182.829	.021	-3.39112	1.45881	-6.26939	-.51285	

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of Age and ICAPSQ.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
18-22 yrs	96	48.5313	12.10476	1.23544	46.0786	50.9839	15.00	67.00
23-27yrs	122	51.3115	10.68333	.96722	49.3966	53.2263	15.00	68.00
28-32yrs	36	49.3056	9.75652	1.62609	46.0044	52.6067	24.00	67.00
33 and above	8	51.8750	9.70180	3.43011	43.7641	59.9859	31.00	60.00
Total	262	50.0344	11.10429	.68603	48.6835	51.3852	15.00	68.00

From the Table 9 above, it could be observed that the p-value for the analysis of variance (ANOVA) is greater than 0.05, It can then be concluded that ICAPSQ score does not statistically significantly varies relative to Age. Thus, it could be posited that Age does not have an impact on ICAPSQ.

Table 9. ANOVA.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	462.107	3	154.036	1.253	.291
Within Groups	31720.584	258	122.948		
Total	32182.691	261			

Renuka, et al. (2013), mentioned that University students especially undergraduates experience difficulties in adjustments or difficulties related to their academics which results to problems like appetite disturbance, concentration problems and depression and most of them do not even think of going to the counselling offices for help, advices and guidance.

Table 1 shows the frequency of the participants with majority of them being female and 38.50% of them being male. Table 2 shows the age category of the participants with the total number of participants being 262.

This result *tallies* with Bolu-Steve & Oredugba (2017), 's research which had more female participants than male (Female 62.1: 37.9 Male). The age range with the highest frequency is between 23- 27 years while the lowest frequency for the age category was discovered to be from the age range of 33 years and above.

The Nationalities of the participants with N= 260 showed that the majorities of the participant are from Nigeria with the frequency of 93 while the lowest frequency is between Somalia and Togo nationals with just 1 participant each and followed closely by Sudan with 2 participants. A total of 22 Nationalities participated in this research.

The frequency of the educational level of participants is depicted in table 3 and it reveals that the participants are mostly in their third year and very few of them are in their first year. Table 4 entails question 5 frequency of the ICAPSQ scale of the participants' responses. 69.10% of the respondents mentioned that they had experienced Counseling before while 30.90% said they had not gone for Counseling. Table 5 shows that most of the participants only go for Counseling yearly with the frequency of 84 while just 9.90% of the participants go weekly.

Out of 181 participants that they had experienced Counseling before, 159 of them mentioned that their academic performance improved after Counseling and this is shown in Table 6. A previous research by Renuka, et al. (2013), on the 'Effect of Counselling on the Academic Performance of College Students' showed that the students perceived counselling and they also noticed an academic improvement after counselling. Another study on the influence of counselling on students' academic performance was conducted in Nigeria with 196 students (Atsuwe & Achebulu, 2018). The outcome of the study revealed that, counselling does have an effect on the academic performance of the students and these outcomes tally with the outcome of this research study.

On the Contrary, a study by Bolu-Steve & Oredugba (2017), on the influence of counselling on the perceived academic performance of the students showed that there was no significant relationship between counselling on the academic performance of high school students. Likewise, an investigation on the impact of Counseling on academic completion as well as CGPA by Lee, et al. (2009), showed no significant connection between them.

With p-value less than 0.05, it can then be concluded that ICAPSQ score statistically significantly varies relative to Gender. Thus, it could be posited those females have higher score (47.95±12.27) than the males (51.34± 10.13) as shown in table 7a&7b. The p-value for the analysis of variance (ANOVA) is greater than 0.05, It can then be concluded that ICAPSQ score does not statistically significantly varies relative to Age.

Thus, it could be posited that Age does not have an impact on ICAPSQ as shown in tables 8 & 9. Therefore, it can then be concluded that ICAPSQ score statistically significantly varies relative to counseling utilization. Thus, it could be posited that those that go for Counseling have a higher ICAPSQ score (54.64±6.74) than those that do not go for Counseling (39.74±12.02). From the Tables 10& 11, the p-value for the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is lesser than 0.05. Therefore, it can then be concluded that ICAPSQ score statistically significantly varies relative to the frequency of counseling utilization. The p-value for the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was discovered to be lesser than 0.05 which interprets that ICAPSQ score statistically significantly varies relative to the frequency of counselling utilization. A Post- hoc test using the Tukey method was conducted, and it was found that there is a pairwise

statistical difference between yearly and others (p<0.05). Thus, it could be posited that those that undergo a yearly visitation (55.89±4.65) has higher ICAPSQ score than those who irregularly (51.68 ±6.79) go for Counseling as shown in table 12. Shaterloo & Mohammadyari (2011), mentioned that counselling programs assist students to build competencies in their academics, in the personal lives and social lives as well.

It was discovered in this research that Out of 181 participants that they had experienced Counseling before, 159 of them mentioned that their academic performance improved after Counseling and this is shown in 6. This answers the first research question.

A previous study by Renuka, et al. (2013), discovered that more than 90% of the students have found Counseling impactful; they found Counseling useful. Further research showed that up to 43% of the students improved academically after Counseling.

Another study by Pise & Kaikade (2019), on the 'impact of counselling on the attendance and academic performance of second year medical students in the subject Pharmacology' revealed that counseling impacts the academic performance of students positively.

This result analysis showed that most of the participants only go for Counseling yearly with the frequency of 84 while just 9.90% of the participants go weekly and this can be seen in Table 5. This answers the second research question.

Shaterloo & Mohammadyari (2011), mentioned that school counseling programs tend to carry out the goal of establishing foundational mission and goals, setting up educators in the school and ensuring that the guidance and counselling programs are in line with the educational mission of the school and these tasks will enable every student to cope with academics. It is also very important to emphasize on stress and what it does to undergraduate students.

Dhabhar (2018), revealed that stress impacts the mind, body, and directs from various perspectives, all clearly appended to the physiological changes of the fight or-flight response. The specific signs and symptoms of stress move for the most part from individual to person. A couple of individuals basically experience pain in their lower back, stomach issues, and skin flare-ups. In others, the stress configuration focuses on eager signs, for instance, crying or sensitivity. These are very evident in undergraduate students as they either try to adjust to the new environment or try to adapt, socialize as well as excel

in their academics. Guidance and counselling try to create a balance with these expectations.

CONCLUSIONS

With the proven results from this research, guidance and counselling services in schools influence the academic performance of students. The counseling services offered in schools can get better and efforts should be made in this respect with the aim of improving the student visitation to the counselor's office. Guidance and counselling services for schools needs more awareness and more exploration on how these services influence students' personal and academic life.

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