10

THE INFLUENCE OF COUNSELLING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of the counseling experiences of undergraduates on their academic performance. A 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 will make use of data collection 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.161 female undergraduate students and 101 Male undergraduate Students. The result of the study 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. The outcome of the study also showed that most of the participants only go for counseling yearly. Counselling had an impact on the academic performance of students in the school. Out of 181 participants that had experienced counseling before, 159 of them mentioned that their academic performance improved after counseling. There is a need for more awareness of counseling services in schools and the kind of influence they have on students' personal and academic lives.

Keywords:

Counselling, guidance, undergraduate students, academic performance.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este estudio fue examinar la influencia de las experiencias de consejería de los estudiantes de pregrado en su desempeño académico, para lo cual se consideró el método de muestreo por conveniencia. La prueba t y la estadística ANOVA se utilizaron para probar las hipótesis con 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 utilizará la recopilación de datos en forma de administración de cuestionarios para determinar cómo el asesoramiento 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, 161 mujeres estudiantes de pregrado y 101 hombres estudiantes de pregrado. El resultado del estudio mostró que 181 participantes de los 262 dijeron que habían experimentado asesoramiento antes, 159 de ellos mencionaron que su rendimiento académico mejoró después del asesoramiento. El resultado del estudio también mostró que la mayoría de los participantes solo reciben asesoramiento una vez al año. La consejería tuvo un impacto en el desempeño académico de los estudiantes en la escuela. De los 181 participantes que habían experimentado asesoramiento anteriormente, 159 de ellos mencionaron que su rendimiento académico mejoró después del asesoramiento. Es necesario crear más conciencia sobre los servicios de asesoramiento en las escuelas y el tipo de influencia que tienen en la vida personal y académica de los estudiantes.

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 counseling, students are entitled to several services that can range from individual counseling services to group sessions (Rowell & Hong, 2013). These students face so many expectations such as continuous high achievement in their academics, considering how busy the school gets with students complaining about clashes in course period time or too many 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 counseling are necessary for these students and help them cope with stress and all other psychological issues 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. To determine if a student is successful academically, there are indicators such as achievement of high academic scores and participation and different skills attributed to specific fields and are learned 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 contribute to oxidative stress in the body (Schiavone, et al., 2013). Eskici & Tinkir (2019), mention that 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 to cope and adapt to 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 are portrayed as a program that helps recognize and achieve 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. Counseling is of two types*; the individual counseling is face-to-face and entails the one-on-one discussion between the counseling and the students requiring the service and can comprise* just a single meeting or a few ongoing meetings. The concentration in individual counseling meetings is on the student's concern. Objectives are created to help the student roll out sure improvements with respect to ways of dealing with stress, how the student adjusts to the circumstance of concern, or how the student acts. The second form of counseling is called *group counseling* which is between the expert instructor and students who have a comparable concern. The group counseling 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 regarding changes in academics and psychosocial change issues. These changes have shot it up that there is a need for more interventions need to address the issues considering their impact on dropouts 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 between counseling and the probability of student support. Turner & Berry (2000), found that during their assessment, a type of above-average of the clients exhibited that their worries own had an 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 the 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., 2020). 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 for 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 the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). The 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, the participants within the study's reach. 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). Researchers developed the scale 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 programs on the 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 resulting from 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.

DEVELOPMENT

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 frequencies 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).

From Table 6, 7, 8 and 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 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 (Descriptives).

	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

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 Devi, 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 counseling offices for help, advice, and guidance.

Table 1 shows the frequency of the participants with the 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's (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 from 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 frequencies 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 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. Previous research by Renuka Devi, et al. (2013), on the 'Effect of Counselling on the Academic Performance of College Students' showed that the students perceived counseling and noticed an academic improvement after counseling. Another study on the influence of counseling on students' academic performance was conducted in Nigeria with 196 students (Atsuwe&Achebulu, 2018). The study's outcome revealed that counseling does affect 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 counseling on the perceived academic performance of the students showed that there was no significant relationship between counseling 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.

However, another research discovered a significant relationship between counseling and the probability of student support. Turner & Berry (2000), found that during their assessment, a type of above-average of the clients exhibited that their worries own had an impact on were their academics, and practically half of the clients demonstrated that counseling urged them in deciding to continue with enrollment.

With a p-value less than 0.05, it can then be concluded that ICAPSQ scores statistically significantly vary relative to Gender. Thus, it could be posited that females have a higher score (47.95±12.27) than 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 the 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 scores statistically significantly vary 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 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 scores statistically significantly vary relative to counseling utilization frequency.

The p-value for the analysis of variance(ANOVA) was discovered to be lesser than 0.05, which interprets that the ICAPSQ score statistically significantly varies relative to the frequency of counseling 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) have a higher ICAPSQ score than those who irregularly (51.68 ±6.79) go for counseling, as shown in table 12. Shaterloo & Mohammadyari (2011), mentioned that counseling programs assist students to build competencies in their academics, personal lives, and social lives.

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 had 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 counseling on the attendance and academic performance of second year medical students in the subject Pharmacology' revealed that counseling impacts students' academic performance 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, which 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 counseling 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 direction from various perspectives, all clearly appended to the fight-or-flight response's physiological changes. 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, and excel in their academics. Guidance and counseling try to create a balance with these expectations.

CONCLUSIONS

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

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