



Research Article

Empowering Students through Counseling: Purposes, Challenges, and Impact in Chiniot District Schools

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Abstract

This research paper presents a comprehensive analysis of counseling services in Chiniot District schools, Punjab, Pakistan. The study investigates the purposes, challenges, and impact of counseling services on student well-being. A reliable sample size of 118 10th-grade students from four selected schools was used for data collection. The survey results indicate that "Decision making" (Mean = 4.70) is the primary purpose of counseling services, followed by "Future career" (Mean = 3.25) and "Improve student's achievements" (Mean = 3.18). Notably, "Shortage of qualified personnel" (Mean = 4.49) and "Inadequate facilities" (Mean = 4.45) were the most significant challenges faced by counseling services. On the positive side, "Improvement regarding adaptation to the school's environment" (Mean = 4.56) and "Improve your grades" (Mean = 4.29) emerged as the most notable effects of counseling services. The findings underscore the vital role of counseling services in enhancing student well-being and academic success. Recommendations are provided to address challenges and strengthen counseling support in Chiniot District schools. This research contributes valuable insights to the field and advocates continuous investment in student support and development.

Keywords: Counselling; challenges; purposes; impact; empowerment.

Introduction

Career counseling is defined as the process through which students attain opinions and perception of experts for the best future and career (Kaplan et al., 2014). It provides a path for students to make informed decisions and ensures future success. In the educational field, teachers, known as the first counselors, understand their students and offer guidance based on their talents and areas of specialization (Asikhia, 2010). While guidance and counseling are effective, some individuals may not cooperate with the advice given, affecting the counseling process (McCuen and Greenberg, 2009). Adequate facilities and funding are essential for effective counseling services, but many educational institutions face challenges in this area (Bobga, 2016). Guidance and counseling are terms often used interchangeably, but counseling requires expertise from professionals (Dogar et al., 2011). The implementation of guidance and counseling services may still face neglect despite increasing awareness (Yuan et al., 2019). School counselors play a vital role in providing guidance counseling, social and emotional support, and behavioral interventions (Lapan



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et al., 2002). Empowering students to become self-regulated learners positively impacts academic achievement. Teachers also contribute to student empowerment through student-focused lessons (Zacharakis and Foy, 2011). Effective school counseling programs enhance students' academic, career, and social/emotional outcomes. The Empowering Students Through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act aims to provide financial literacy assistance to students (Tien and Lu, 2018). These efforts collectively foster a nurturing educational environment that promotes student growth and success. In modern educational systems, counseling services play a vital role in supporting student well-being and academic success. These services provide a platform for students to seek guidance, address challenges, and make informed decisions about their academic and personal lives. Chiniot, a culturally rich city in Punjab, Pakistan, with its historical significance and intricate wooden furniture craftsmanship, recognizes the importance of fostering the holistic development of its students through comprehensive counseling support. Education is not merely about imparting knowledge; it also involves nurturing students' social, emotional, and psychological well-being. Recognizing the diverse needs of students, educational institutions worldwide have integrated counseling services into their academic framework to create a nurturing environment that enables students to thrive academically and personally. The significance of counseling services in educational settings has been widely acknowledged due to their potential to empower students and equip them with essential life skills.

Significance of the study

This study holds several important implications for educational stakeholders in Chiniot District: By comprehensively examining the purposes and impact of counseling services, educational authorities can identify areas for improvement and better tailor their counseling programs to meet the diverse needs of students. This, in turn, can lead to enhanced support and guidance for students in critical aspects of their academic journey. Understanding the perceived importance of counseling in decision-making processes can aid students in making well-informed choices about their academic and personal pursuits. This study can contribute valuable insights for counselors, educators, and parents to facilitate students' decision-making processes. This research aims to shed light on the role of counseling services in empowering students and fostering their overall well-being in Chiniot District schools. By examining the purposes, challenges, and impact of counseling, this study endeavors to contribute to the ongoing efforts to provide effective and tailored support to students as they navigate their educational paths and plan for their future endeavors.

Objectives

- To Explore the Purposes of Counseling Services
- To Identify the Challenges Faced by Counseling Services

Methodology

The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to investigate the purposes, challenges, and impact of counseling services in Chiniot District schools, Punjab, Pakistan. The research design involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to provide

statistical insights into the selected variables. The study was conducted in Chiniot District, which is located in the province of Punjab, Pakistan. The target population comprised 10th-grade students from four selected schools within Chiniot Tehsil. The total population consisted of 549 students in this grade. Due to limitations in transportation, funding, and time, a reliable sample size of 118 students was determined using an online sample size calculator. This sample size provided a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 8%, ensuring an adequate representation of the population. Proportionate sampling technique was employed to select respondents from each of the four selected schools. The number of participants from each school was determined based on the proportion of students in the 10th grade at that school relative to the total population. A structured survey questionnaire was developed to gather quantitative data on the purposes, challenges, and impact of counseling services. The questionnaire consisted of Likert scale and multiple-choice questions, allowing participants to rate and rank their responses. Trained researchers conducted face-to-face surveys with the selected 10th-grade students in each school to ensure accurate responses. Participants were provided with clear instructions on how to answer each question, and confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

The study explored three main variables:

Purposes of Counseling Services

Participants rated the importance of counseling services for various purposes (e.g., decision making, future career, improving achievements) on a Likert scale.

Challenges Faced by Counseling Services

Participants ranked the challenges faced by counseling services (e.g., shortage of qualified personnel, inadequate facilities, lack of cooperation from management) based on perceived severity.

Impact of Counseling Services

Participants indicated the extent of the impact of counseling services on different aspects (e.g., adaptation to school's environment, improvement in grades) using a Likert scale. The quantitative data collected through the survey were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as weighted scores, mean values, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the responses for each variable.

Results

Table 1. Purposes of counseling service.

Purposes of counseling service	Weighted scores	Mean values	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Decision making	554	4.70	0.92	1
Future career	381	3.25	1.17	2
Improve student's achievements	373	3.18	1.09	3
Personal problems solving	342	2.92	.97	4
Improve student's behavior	335	2.86	1.20	5
Improve student's attendance	332	2.83	1.15	6

1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Undecided, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

The results indicate that the primary purpose of counseling services, as perceived by the participants, is "Decision making" (Mean = 4.70, SD = 0.92), ranking it at the top position.

The second most important purpose is "Future career" (Mean = 3.25, SD = 1.17), followed by "Improve student's achievements" (Mean = 3.18, SD = 1.09). "Personal problems solving" (Mean = 2.92, SD = 0.97), "Improve student's behavior" (Mean = 2.86, SD = 1.20), and "Improve student's attendance" (Mean = 2.83, SD = 1.15) are also considered important but received lower mean values compared to the top three purposes.

Table 2. Challenge of counseling service.

Challenges	Weighted scores	Mean values	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Shortage of qualified personnel	530	4.49	1.07	1
Inadequate facilities	525	4.45	0.95	2
Management is not cooperative	485	4.11	1.17	3
Ignorance about individual choices	404	3.42	1.16	4
Heavy workload of the school	402	3.41	1.11	5
Inadequate time	374	3.17	1.13	6
Counselor put personal interest	334	2.83	1.12	7
Lack of parental support	313	2.65	1.05	8
Lack of personal interest	297	2.52	1.05	9

Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Undecided, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree

Among the challenges faced by counseling services, "Shortage of qualified personnel" (Mean = 4.49, SD = 1.07) and "inadequate facilities" (Mean = 4.45, SD = 0.95) are perceived as the most critical issues, ranking at the top two positions, respectively. The challenge of "management is not cooperative" (Mean = 4.11, SD = 1.17) is also considered significant by the participants. Ignorance about individual choices (Mean = 3.42, SD = 1.16), heavy workload of the school" (Mean = 3.41, SD = 1.11), and "inadequate time" (Mean = 3.17, SD = 1.13) are identified as challenges but received comparatively lower mean values.

Table 3. Effects of counseling service.

Effects	Weighted scores	Mean values	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Improvement regarding adaptation to the school's environment	538	4.56	0.72	1
Improve your grades	506	4.29	0.68	2
Help to understand conceptual thoughts of subjects	424	3.60	0.88	3
Increased interest in your subject	388	3.29	0.85	4
Develop positive attitude towards education	359	3.04	0.72	5

1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes, 4- Very Often, 5- Always

The findings demonstrate that the most notable effect of counseling services is "Improvement regarding adaptation to the school's environment" (Mean = 4.56, SD = 0.72), ranking it at the top position. The effect of "Improve your grades" (Mean = 4.29, SD = 0.68) is also considerable and ranks second. "Help to understand conceptual thoughts of subjects" (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.88), "Increased interest in your subject" (Mean = 3.29, SD = 0.85), and "Develop positive attitude towards education" (Mean = 3.04, SD = 0.72) are also

reported as positive effects of counseling services but received lower mean values compared to the top two effects.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal valuable insights into the perceived purposes, challenges, and effects of counseling services in Chiniot District schools. The highest-ranked purpose, "Decision making," indicates that students highly value the guidance provided by counseling services in making informed choices about their academic and personal decisions. Additionally, "Future career" and "Improve student's achievements" are also considered significant purposes, suggesting that students are actively seeking support to shape their educational and career paths. The challenges faced by counseling services, such as "Shortage of qualified personnel" and "Inadequate facilities," underscore the need for additional resources and support to enhance the effectiveness of counseling programs. Addressing these challenges can ensure that students receive quality counseling support and access to appropriate facilities. On the positive side, the perceived effects of counseling services, particularly "Improvement regarding adaptation to the school's environment" and "Improve your grades," demonstrate the positive impact counseling can have on students' academic performance and overall well-being. Such positive outcomes highlight the importance of counseling services in creating a conducive learning environment for students. Overall, the findings emphasize the significance of counseling services in addressing the diverse needs of students in Chiniot District schools. To optimize the impact of counseling services, it is crucial to address the identified challenges and continue to prioritize students' well-being and academic success. By implementing targeted interventions and providing adequate resources, educational authorities can further strengthen counseling services and ensure that students receive the necessary support to thrive in their educational journey.

Conclusions

It could be inferred that counseling services in Chiniot District schools play a vital role in supporting students' decision-making, improving academic achievements, and fostering a positive learning environment. However, challenges such as a shortage of qualified personnel and inadequate facilities need to be addressed to enhance the effectiveness of counseling programs. The positive impact of counseling on students' adaptation to the school environment and grades emphasizes the importance of continued investment in student support and counseling services. These findings offer valuable insights for optimizing counseling programs and promoting student well-being and success in Chiniot District schools. To strengthen counseling support, it is recommended to increase resources, tailor programs to students' needs, and promote awareness and engagement among stakeholders.

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