



NEED ASSESSMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

The current study examined academic, emotional, social, personal and career problems of college and university students as well as the need for guidance and counseling among college and university students. The present educational system puts students of higher education on several hurdles which have been seen to affect their academic performance, mental health, personality development and future job planning. If appropriate support systems are not in place, these difficulties could have a detrimental impact on students' academic performance and general wellbeing. Therefore, guidance and counselling services are seen as important part of educational institutions as they help the student to maximize his abilities and to cooperate with problems encountered in his personal and academic life. Thus, guidance and counselling services are considered to be essential components in educational institutions as they help students to achieve their potential, solve their academic and personal problems and make better decisions in life. This study aims to determine the importance of guidance and counseling in the educational institutions and the needs of the college students for counseling. The context of the study focused on academic advice, career counseling, emotional counseling, social adjustment, stress management and personal development needs of students. In addition, the study examined students' perceptions of the usefulness of counselling services in improving their academic performance, mental health and decision making. The descriptive survey research design was used in combination with quantitative research design which was used to collect all the information from the participants. In order to obtain the data, 250 students enrolled in higher education institutions were selected using a self-developed structured questionnaire which is on the scale of five points ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The following statements were included in the questionnaire on academic counseling, emotional support, career guidance, social counseling, mental health awareness, interpersonal relationship, stress management. The study findings indicated that a great percentage of students strongly agree on the importance of providing suitable guidance and counselling in HEIs.

Keywords: *Academic Counselling, Career Guidance, Guidance and Counselling Services, Higher Education Students, Need Assessment, Student Mental Health*

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1. Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) including colleges, universities, are expected to assist students in building their skills, confidence, abilities, and career interests. Yet, students attending higher education levels often have a range of academic, emotional, social and psychological issues which can impact their educational success and overall health and wellness. Therefore, guidance and counseling services have been made a fundamental part of the educational system. The education process is ongoing and has a great impact on the intellectual, emotional, social and personal growth of a person.

In the modern world, the purpose of education is to prepare students to overcome the challenges of life as well as convey information. Higher education institutions such as colleges and universities must support pupils to develop their skills, abilities, confidence and aspirations. However, higher education students often encounter a number of different academic, emotional, social and psychological challenges that may negatively affect their academic performance and overall health. Consequently, guidance and counselling are now an integral part of education system. Counselling is more concerned with emotional, psychological and behavioral problems and is a professional interaction between the counsellor and the individual, while guidance is concerned with educational, vocational and personal matters and is a professional interaction between the counsellor and the student. The services are designed to support students' mental wellbeing, self-confidence, academic achievement and personal development. Students in Higher education are in a transitional phase of life with numerous responsibilities and challenges.

Students may not be able to cope with these challenges as they have little emotional support and professional counselling services, resulting in low academic performance, poor mental health, social isolation, low self-esteem and low motivation. In recent times, there has been a lot of consciousness about mental health and mental well-being among learners. Educational researchers and psychologists have put a strong emphasis on the fact that students' emotional and psychological health is directly associated with their academic performance and personality development. Therefore, guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in assisting students to discover their strength, interests and career opportunities. Students are, as a result, likely to suffer from mental health issues, low self-esteem, social isolation, low academic performance and lack of ambition. The knowledge and understanding of mental health and psychological well-being among students have seen considerable change in recent years. Educational scholars and psychologists have linked academic achievement and development of personality to the emotional and

psychological well-being of pupils. Hence, guidance and counseling services play a vital role in assisting students to cope with stress, develop communication skills, build healthy relationships, become decision makers and maintain their emotional balance. These services help students prepare for educational and career success and discover their interests, strengths and opportunities.

Although counselling services are very important, many Higher Education Institutions still have no proper counselling centres, qualified counselors or mental health support programs. Some places do not offer or provide counseling or the counseling is inadequate or poorly organized. Due to societal shame, ignorance, or fear of being judged, students may also be reluctant to seek counseling. This means that many students continue to struggle in the classroom, emotionally, and personally without help from a professional. It is essential, therefore, to study the demand for guidance and counseling so as to identify primary problems faced by students and to find out the type of assistance they require. Need assessment is an important tool that can be used to gain insight into students' expectations, priorities, and counseling needs, which can help to create successful support services within educational institutions.

The present study aims to assess the need for guidance and counseling service among the students of higher education. It examines students' academic, emotional, personal, social and career counselling needs, and their perceptions of the importance of counselling services in the educational institutions. The study findings could contribute in the understanding of the significance of counseling services to the administrators, counsellors, teachers and policy makers in higher education institutions on how to ensure that the support systems for the students are improved.

2. Literature Review

In this view, counselling is a helping relationship that assists individuals to 'understand themselves, to solve problems and to grow as a person in the process of which they receive emotional support and acceptance' (1951). Rogers pointed out that students need a positive, supportive setting in which they are able to express their emotions and issues. Students at the higher education level often suffer from stress, anxiety, depression, low self-confidence, adjustment issues and doubts about future career. If not adequately supported, these problems have the potential to significantly impact students' academic success and mental health. Stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, adjustment difficulties and uncertainty about future occupations are often issues among students in higher education. Failure to get the proper treatment can cause these issues to negatively affect students' academic achievement and psychological well-being. The counseling process, as described by (1951), is a helping relationship in which the individual better understands himself, learns to work out problems and develops personally through

acceptance and emotional support. Rogers says students require an environment that is empathetic and supportive, in which they can freely share their feelings and concerns.

Counselling services focus on improving the emotional health, self-awareness and personal adaptation of the student, and guidance services help students make suitable educational and career decisions. Researchers say the demand for counselling services in higher education institutions has skyrocketed with changing social, educational and economic conditions. According to (2018), counseling services are important in supporting students to develop their interpersonal skills, their stress management, and problem-solving skills. These demands often entice students to become emotionally unstable, experience low academic performance, frustration, and mental health problems, which can hinder their daily life. Students often find it hard to cope with these demands, resulting in emotional instability, low academic performance, frustration, and mental health problems, which in turn can negatively affect their lives.

Likewise, and (2011) emphasized the importance of guidance and counseling to students' growth and development. Their research indicates that students require assistance in making course selections, learning strategies, time management, and career planning. Career counseling is also of great significance as there is a lot of confusion and uncertainty among the students about career choices and employment opportunities. The effective guidance of careers assists students to discover their interests, skills and aspirations, and assists them to make informed career choices. Gladding continued that counseling programs improve a student's self esteem, emotional stability, leadership and communication abilities. Similarly, and (2011) stressed the importance of guidance and counseling services for students' overall development. Their research discoveries show that students require support in the course selection, study habits, time management, and career planning. Career counseling is particularly important as many students are confused and have little idea about the options they can have and what they can expect to be offered in terms of employment. Students can make well-informed career options by identifying their interests, skills, and objectives with the aid of effective career guidance.

In addition, their research found that children who have counseling services support have more social relationships, better academic adjustments, and more self-esteem compared to the children who are not supported with counseling services. There has also been a number of studies concerning the relationship between counseling services and mental health of students. A large number of college students were found to experience anxiety, despair, loneliness and emotional stress due to social constraints and academic overload. Counselling is used to help students build positive thought patterns, coping mechanisms and emotional resiliency (2014).

Moreover, counseling has been found to reduce stress and improve students' emotional health and school productivity. Besides, there's been a lot of emphasis put by

educational researchers on the preventive and developmental role of counseling services in developing students' leadership traits, decision making skill, communication skill, social adjustment etc. School mental health awareness sessions also promote students to seek professional assistance if they are experiencing emotional challenges. Counselling services provide a safe and confidential environment to discuss their feelings with others without fear of judgment or criticism. Further studies demonstrated that counselling interventions reduced stress and improved students' academic achievement and mental health. Moreover, professionals in the field of education have emphasized that counseling has a preventive, developmental role as well as having a problem solving role. Programs for guidance and counseling aid in the development of students' leadership, decision-making, communication, and social skills. The research studies conducted in higher education institutions found that counselling students increased their academic performance, socialization and improved their classroom performance. Though counselling is recognized as one of the most crucial services in higher education, there are still a lack of counselling arrangements and trained counsellors in many institutions. It has been reported that in some institutions, counselling services are not available or organized properly. There is also a possibility that students are reluctant to seek assistance in counseling because of social stigma or lack of awareness or fear of being judged by others. Moreover, counseling service is beneficial in overcoming personal issues such as low self-esteem, lack of motivation, family conflicts and relationship difficulties.

Students who take part in counseling programs exhibit better classroom participation, higher academic accomplishment, and healthier social interactions, according to research studies done in higher education institutions. Although it is accepted that counseling services are valuable, many higher education institutions have not provided sufficient counseling facilities nor have they professional counselors. Research shows that there are gaps in the provision of counselling services, and/or the service is not planned appropriately in some universities. Also, a student might not be willing to seek counseling help due to social stigma, not knowing what counseling is, or being afraid of being judged. Educational institutions, therefore, need to set up counselling services that are supportive and non-threatening for students, so that they are confident to express their concerns. To support students' academic achievement and psychological well-being, researchers highly advise colleges to set up counseling centers, hire qualified counselors, host mental health seminars, and incorporate counseling services into the curriculum.

3. Research Gaps

Although extensive research has been conducted in the field of guidance and counselling, it can be observed that there are some glaring gaps in the literature. Most previous research focused on school-based counselling services and few studies were conducted specifically on the counselling needs of university students. However, school

students are encountering different challenges in their academic, emotional, social and career development as compared to the students in the University and college levels, and these challenges have not been fully explored in many research studies. This has led to a lack of in-depth knowledge on the counselling needs of students in higher education institutions.

Although numerous research have been conducted on guidance and counselling services in educational institutions, there are still many gaps in the body of knowledge. However, few studies have specifically examined students' higher education counselling needs, and most of the previous studies have focused on the school level. University/college students face various academic, emotional, social and career challenges compared to the challenges faced by school students, but many research studies have not adequately explored these challenges. For this reason, the specific counseling needs of students attending higher educational institutions are not well understood.

3.1. The study's rationale

The justification of this study is due to the increasing problems of psychological, emotional, and academic problems that college and University students are facing. The increasing focus on students' mental health and emotional wellbeing has been brought about by the fact that many pupils struggle to manage their own and school's demands effectively. Although counselling services are becoming increasingly important, the provision of counselling centers, qualified counselors and mental health support programme is still inadequate in many higher education institutions. Students in some institutions are either not aware of the availability of counseling services or not utilize the services in an appropriate manner due to ignorance, social stigma or fear of being judged.

As a result, without expert assistance, students continue to struggle academically and emotionally. Another important reason for conducting this study is that most of the previous studies focused on counseling services at the school level and neglected the focus on counseling needs of students in higher education. University students are offered unique counselling support due to unique difficulties of career planning, independence, social adjustment, and uncertainty of the future. The aim of this study is to identify the specific counseling needs of the college students and to explore the needs where counseling services are needed.

3.2. Research Objectives

- To identify students in higher education the need of whom require academic, emotional, social, personal and career counseling.
- To determine the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in improving students' academic performance and personality development.

To explore students' perceptions of the availability and effectiveness of guidance and counseling in postsecondary education.

- To look at the psychological and emotional issues that college students deal with, such as stress, anxiety, sadness, and a lack of drive.

3.3. Research Question

In higher education, what students need in counseling regarding academic, emotional, social, personal and career?

How much do college students feel their college should offer in terms of guidance and counselling?

What are the common struggles students face in college, including stress, anxiety, depression, and other factors that lead to feelings of unmotivating?

5. What do students think of the use of counselling in improving academic performance and personal development?

3.4. Operational Definition

Guidance

Guidance is a systematic approach to the process of helping college students to make appropriate decisions about their college career, future work, and personal life. It involves providing guidance, information and advice to students for them to choose suitable academic courses, develop effective study habits, and plan their future career related to their skills and interests.

Counseling

Counselling is a professional helping relationship between a qualified counsellor and a student to better understand and address student emotional, psychological, social and personal concerns. This involves listening, understanding, and supporting the student in a confidential setting to build up their mental health, self-confidence and overall wellbeing.

Students in Higher Education

If students join a college or university after completing intermediate or similar education, they are referred to as higher education students. Typically these students are either undergraduate (BS) or graduate (Master's) students.

Evaluation of Needs

The scientific approach of identifying and analyzing students' needs, problems and aspirations in relation to guidance and counselling services is called Need Assessment. Helps students pinpoint areas needing assistance and support for their professional, personal and academic development.

Academic Guidance

Academic counseling is the support provided to students to improve their learning abilities and strategies, time management and academic outcomes. It helps students with any issues related to assignments, exams, and study.

Career Guidance

Career counselling is the process of helping students identify their interests, talents and abilities to make informed choices about future occupations and employment. It assists students to make appropriate career and academic decisions.

Counseling on Emotions

Emotional therapy is emotional support given to students to help them cope with stress, anxiety, depression and other emotional problems that they face. It seeks to enhance pupils' mental health and emotional stability.

Social Adaptation

Social adjustment is the students' ability to adjust and take an active part in the social and education environment. Part of this is building positive relationships with family, instructors and peers.

3.5. Conceptual Structure

The theoretical framework for this study is based on well established theories of human development and counselling which explain human knowledge of self, problem solving and decision making in educational settings. The framework helps to understand the role of guidance and counseling services to address the academic, psychological, social and career needs of higher education students. This research is mainly based on Person-Centered Theory of Counseling by Carl Rogers. This theory states that all individuals are able to evolve, develop and solve their problems in a supportive, sympathetic and meaningful environment. Understanding people's emotions and experiences and assisting them in developing self-awareness and personal development should be the main goals of counseling, according to Rogers.

In the higher education field, this theory has been used in support of the idea that with proper guidance and emotional support from counsellors, students can be able to overcome their emotional and academic problems. In addition to Rogers' theory, the Developmental Guidance Theory which holds that students undergo numerous personal, academic, and social developmental stages in their educational process also helps to support the study. At each of their steps they are faced with challenges which require proper guidance and support. In higher education, especially, students experience a period of transition in which they develop into adults with greater self-sufficiency, professional identity and social responsibility. Structured counselling services are, therefore, needed to ensure they make proper adjustments to these changes.

The concept of all aspects of the counseling process being an assisting process, and that counseling helps people cope with stress, improve relationships, and make good decisions in life, also resonated with Samuel T. Gladding's theoretical perspective. His study emphasizes that counseling services are developmental and preventive, in addition to being problem-solving tools, helping students to establish healthy behaviors and emotional resilience. The concept is also endorsed by the Educational and Vocational

assistance Theory, which states that students need the proper support to make informed decisions about their educational choices and career prospects. This focuses on the importance of career counselling to help students clarify their career interests, their capabilities and their career options, especially in higher education.

Overall, the study's theoretical framework incorporates various viewpoints to clarify why counseling and guidance services are crucial for promoting students' overall development. It helps to show that students who provide the compassionate counseling, organized guidance and career support are likely to experience academic success, mental stability and the planning for successful careers in higher education institutions.

3.6. The importance of the Research

The current study on the need assessment for guidance and counselling services among Higher Education Students highlights the need for providing psychological, intellectual, social and career-oriented support to their students. College can be a very important period in a student's life when they face multiple challenges both academically, emotionally and professionally. This study helps to understand these challenges and the organized counseling service in school environment. Students also need to know about the study as it helps them know what their needs are in counseling and the importance of guidance in career planning, emotional stability and academic development.

This could lead to improvements in educational policy and support for students. The study is important for mental health professionals and counselors as it provides insight into the specific concerns that students may have including academic stress, career confusion, emotional instability and issues with social adjustment. Counsellors may find the information to be useful in designing counseling programs or interventions that will be more effective. Furthermore, the study provides current data from college students which also contributes to the literature in the field of guidance and counseling. This helps future learners, as it serves as a reference for further study on the mental health of learners, counselling needs and educational support services.

4. Methodology

The current study adopted descriptive survey research design and quantitative research method. This approach was considered appropriate as it allows for collecting factual information from a large sample of respondents and understanding their views on the need for guidance and counselling services to college students. The population of this study consisted of higher education students in colleges and universities. A random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of 250 students from this group to ensure that participants from different academic disciplines had an equal chance of being selected. Structured questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data.

4.1. Research Design

The present study was descriptive survey type research with quantitative research technique. The design was selected due to its suitability to collect quantitative data and to describe the status quo of guidance and counselling needs of higher education students. In a descriptive survey design, the purpose is to gather data directly from the respondents about their thoughts, attitudes and experiences without altering the factors. The design of this study helped in providing information regarding the counseling needs of students in academic, emotional, social, personal and career aspects. This study aimed to describe the counseling needs of students instead of testing any experimental treatment or intervention.

4.2. Research Setting

The location and surroundings where the study was carried out are referred to as the research setting. The current study on higher education students' needs for guidance and counseling services was carried out in a few chosen colleges and universities. The survey was carried out in educational institutions with students enrolled in different academic programs at the master's and bachelor's levels. Higher education institutions are appropriate setting for the study because of the diversity of academic, emotional, social, and career-related issues that are relevant to the goal of this study.

A diverse set of answers to the challenge was ensured by recruiting both public and private sector schools and universities. This facilitated understanding of counselling needs of children across a range of learning environments, socio-economic and academic backgrounds. Students were freely accessible in the classroom and on campus through which data was collected. The researcher personally went to the institutions, explained the purpose of the research and distributed the questionnaires. The setting enabled students to respond and make authentic comments relating to their counselling needs. All things considered, the research setting offered a realistic and appropriate setting for collecting precise data regarding higher education students' need for guidance and counseling services.

4.3. Sampling and Population

Higher education students enrolled in the researcher's own university made up the study's population. These students attended several academic departments both at the undergraduate (BS) and graduate (Master's) levels. Because higher education students frequently encounter academic, emotional, social, personal, and career-related difficulties that need for guidance and counseling help, the group was deemed appropriate. A sample was chosen for the study since time and accessibility constraints made it impossible to include the whole population.

A sample of 250 students was taken from the population of the university. The sample included students from different departments, sex and academic levels to ensure variety and representativeness. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The approach used was to minimize bias and increase the reliability of

the findings by ensuring that every student had an equal opportunity of being selected. A representative sample was selected to assess the need for guidance and counseling of the university students in the field of Higher Education.

4.4. Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire created by the researcher to gauge higher education students' need for guidance and counseling services served as the primary research tool in this study. After examining pertinent literature and earlier research in the field of educational advice and counseling, the questionnaire was created. The instrument was created in a straightforward and easy-to-understand style so that the respondent can easily understand the questions and answer them.

Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) were among the five-point Likert scale-based closed-ended questions.

This scale more easily illustrated the level of children's desire for therapy. There were two primary portions of the questionnaire. Section A included the respondents' age, gender and educational attainment (BS and Master's students). This segment had the aim of gaining more information about the backgrounds of the participants. Statements on various aspects of guidance and counseling needs, such as academic counseling, career counseling, emotional counseling, social adjustment, and personal development, were included in Section B. The instrument focused on identifying students' needs in relation to their problems with studying, time management, test anxiety, career indecision, emotional issues such as anxiety and depression, and social issues such as lack of connection.

Student satisfaction with the value and effectiveness of counselling services for improving their learning and development were also evaluated. The instrument was subjected to a content validity check by the subject matter experts, who made the necessary modifications according to their suggestions. To allow students to give accurate responses the questionnaire was also kept simple, relevant and clear. Overall, the research tool was deemed suitable for gathering valid and trustworthy data for the study, and it was crucial in determining the counseling requirements of college students.

4.5. Reliability and Validity

4.5.1. The Instrument's Validity

The degree to which a research tool measures what it is supposed to measure is known as validity. In the present study, content validity was used to ensure the validity of the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was carefully designed based on an extensive review of related literature on counselling services. Once developed, the tool was examined and evaluated by professionals in their respective counseling and education fields. Experts judged the items related to academic, emotional, social, personal and career counseling needs on the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, language and appropriateness.

The questionnaire was revised to incorporate the suggested changes and improvements to improve quality and ensure each item was suitable to measure the desired variables. This procedure made that the tool was reliable and in line with the study's goals.

4.5.2. The instrument's reliability

The consistency and stability of the research tool throughout time are referred to as reliability. However, the questionnaire's reliability was maintained in the present study by using simple, straightforward and easily understood statements so that there is no misunderstanding among the respondents. To ensure internal consistency, pilot research was conducted on a small sample of students who were not included in the final sample of college students.

The pilot study's responses were examined, and reliability methods (such Cronbach's Alpha) were used to gauge the items' consistency. The results showed good reliability and confirmed the instrument's consistency and reliability as a means of data collection. Thus, the questionnaire used in this study was validated and accurate in determining the need for guidance and counseling services for higher education students.

4.5.3. Data Collection

The data were collected in the current study using a systematic questionnaire in order to obtain the information regarding the needs of higher education students for guidance and counseling services. The researcher personally went to the selected university and interacted with students in some departments to ensure that appropriate involvement and accurate data collection were achieved. The purpose of the study was thoroughly explained to the participants before giving the questionnaire. Students were told that there was no requirement that they participate and that their responses would only be used for scholarly research.

4.5.4. Analysis of Data

For determining the need of guidance and counseling services to the higher education students, descriptive statistical techniques were used as a means of analyzing the data collected for this study. After collecting 250 questionnaires that had been completed, the responses were carefully analyzed for accuracy and then coded for further analysis. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and mean scores. These statistical methods were used because they are appropriate to describe and summarize respondents' thoughts and perceptions clearly and concisely. Percentages were calculated to determine the percentage of students who either agreed or disagreed to each statement, and frequencies were used to show how many students picked each answer choice.

4.5.5. Result and Findings

The current study's findings on higher education students' needs for guidance and counseling services provided valuable information on their academic, emotional, social, personal, and career-related demands. From the study of data collected from 250

respondents, it was found that the respondents strongly needed guidance and counseling (G&C) services, which is a substantial majority of students at the higher education institutions. The results showed that students' needs for academic counseling were quite important. Most participants agreed that time management, exam preparation, study skills, and the ability to maintain good grades are a challenge. Students believed that if they were properly counselled in school they could improve their studying skills and thereby their grades. The results showed that the students' attitudes were very similar about the necessity of career advice. There was a lack of confidence among many of the students with regards to their job prospects and career options. They claimed that they required professional career counselling to help them select suitable career paths for their skills, interests and qualifications. This implies that career guidance is one of the most pressing demands of students in Higher Education.

Other results of the study indicated that emotional counseling services are needed as well. Many students reported feeling stressed, anxious, depressed and unmotivated due to personal issues and/or academic pressures. Counseling services can help people manage emotional issues and enhance their mental health, according to the majority of respondents. This highlights the importance of mental health services in HEIs. The results showed that students are having difficulties in communication, social adjustment and self-decision making in their social and personal counseling needs. A large number of respondents agreed that counselling can increase their confidence levels, improve their relationships with others and help with their social skills. Also, students reported needing help in family and personal issues that affect their ability to learn.

The findings indicated that the students were greatly in need of guidance and counselling services in all key areas. Most respondents point to counseling services as important to improving academic achievement, emotional wellness, career and career planning, and personal growth. It was also revealed that there is inadequate counselling facility in the higher education institutions indicating a need for proper counselling and counselling services.

4.5.6. Suggestions

The study of guidance and counseling services among college students is strongly recommended in order to broaden and enrich the knowledge about guidance and counseling. The study was limited to a few institutions and colleges from a smaller geographical area and with 250 students only, hence the study needs to be repeated on a wider scale that includes more institutions and colleges from varied locations. This will enhance the findings' generalizability and offer a more comprehensive picture of the counseling requirements of students. Future researchers are encouraged to include representatives of private and public sector organizations to allow for a comparison of effectiveness and availability of counseling services.

Future studies will also benefit from a mixed method involving quantitative and qualitative approach. In addition to questionnaires, a focus group and interviews should be conducted to gain insights into the individual experience, emotional challenges and expectations of students regarding counselling services. Moreover, future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of existing counseling services in universities to determine the successful management of emotional, academic and professional problems faced by students. Comparative studies are also suggested to identify differences in counseling needs of students with different academic levels (BS students, Master's students). Researchers should also examine students' barriers to accessing counseling, including institutional barriers, social stigma, and lack of understanding.

Future studies could also investigate the use of modern counseling methods, including digital mental health services and online counseling platforms, that could assist students. Overall, additional research on the topic will contribute to improved guidance and counselling services and the academic success, mental well-being and personal development of higher education students.

5. Discussion

The findings of the present study clearly indicate the great need of college students for guidance and counseling services. These findings include multiple challenges students face, including pressure to do well in school, stress, anxiety, depression, lack of motivation, career confusion, and social adjustment challenges. These issues have a direct impact on their academic achievement and general psychological health, which emphasizes how crucial it is for higher education institutions to offer systematic counseling help. According to the report, one of the most crucial demands of students is career advice. In fact, there is increased need for appropriate career advising services in colleges as indicated by the many respondents who expressed doubts about their future careers and employment opportunities.

Similarly, students complained of stress and emotional instability due to their problems and excessive workload, which resulted in a great demand for emotional counselling. The finding is consistent with the idea that mental health services play a crucial role in students' educational outcomes and development. The study results indicated that students believe that guidance and counseling can improve their confidence, relationship, academic performance and decision making abilities. However, despite this urgent need, there are still many Universities that lack proper counseling facilities and competent staffs, leaving students with limited access to academic counseling and psychological support. This gap between the need of the students and the services provided indicates that the counselling system in higher education institutions must be enhanced.

5.1. Ethical Consideration

Ethics is an important part of any research project, especially one that involves human research subjects such as college students. Appropriate ethical standards were observed in the current study that focused on the need assessment of the students in higher education institutions for guidance and counselling services in order to respect the rights, dignity and safety of all the participants in the study.

5.2. Delimitation of the Study

The researcher made some limitations for the present research to make study limited and manageable in the study of need evaluation of guidance and counseling services among the higher education students.

First off, only students enrolled in colleges and universities were included in the study. The school and intermediate level students were not involved in this study.

Secondly, the sample of the study consisted only from 250 pupils. Given the time and budget constraints, only 250 respondents were selected for data collection even though the population of higher education institutions is large, having a considerable number of students.

Thirdly, just a few institutions were included in the study. Data were collected from a limited number of colleges and universities rather than all the higher education institutions in the region or country. This meant that the results were not representative of all institutions.

The study was not very comprehensive in evaluating the effectiveness of the existing counselling programme, but rather focused only on the need of guidance and counselling services. The study did not measure counseling outcomes but rather students' views and needs.

Fifth, only a quantitative technique was used in the study, and a standardized questionnaire was used to gather data. The absence of other qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews may have limited the depth of the examination of the pupils' experience.

Last but not least, the research was limited to a specific period within the academic time frame. Over the course of the study, any modifications in the demands of the pupils were not taken into account.

Taking everything into consideration, these borders helped the researcher focus the study and maintain clarity as well as ensuring goals were achievable with available resources.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

The findings of the present study should be interpreted with caution, considering the constraints of the study for the need assessment of guidance and counselling services in higher education students. First, the sample size of the study (250 college and university students) may not represent the entire student body. The results may be more specific and

generalizable with a larger sample size. Second, the results are not generalizable to other institutions with different students and academic settings since the study was conducted in specific higher education institutions. Another limitation is the exclusive use of quantitative study methodology and structured questionnaire in order to collect the data. Lack of qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews limited the scope of knowledge about students' experiences, feelings, and particular perspectives on counselling services. Further, self-reported responses by students were possible to be skewed by socially acceptable responses, personal bias, and misinterpretation of the questions. Further, given the brevity of the study, it was not possible to conduct a longitudinal assessment of the students' counselling needs changes over time. Further, other variables that may affect student perceptions and reactions were not fully explored including institutional differences, cultural influences, and the provision of counseling services.

5.4. Possibility of the Study

The findings of this research study that examined the need for guidance and counselling services for college students have some important implications for students, teachers, counsellors, educational institutions and lawmakers. The survey clearly shows that college students have many problems regarding their academic, emotional, social, personal and career life which require proper counseling and guidance. One important impact in the field of education is the establishment of well-run guidance and counselling centres by colleges and universities. Skilled and trained counselors should be on hand to provide students with the appropriate career counseling, emotional support, academic direction, and assistance in solving personal problems that will occur within these facilities.

In order to make students feel comfortable asking for assistance, institutions should also make sure that counseling services are readily available and private. The study also has implications for students because it heightens awareness of the importance of the counselling services of managing stress, anxiety, depression and academic pressure. Students should not hesitate or fear the use of counseling services. This can help improve their academic performance, decision-making skills, confidence, and emotional well-being. The findings suggest that teachers and faculty should support and guide students who are experiencing difficulties to seek counseling support. The teachers can act as a bridge between the students and counselors by creating a positive learning environment and by encouraging them to express their thoughts openly.

6. Conclusion

It is concluded in the present study that guidance and counselling services are very important for the improvement of college student's academic, emotional, social and professional lives. Higher education institutions face many challenges to ensure students'

adjustment and performance, in which they require the expert supervision and counselling. The findings are clear and unequivocal - the amount of academic, career and emotional counseling and assistance services required by students. Counselling services can clearly help students in stress management, improving their academic achievement, building their self-esteem and making better career options.

The study also highlights the lack of adequate counseling facilities in a number of schools, making it challenging for students to access support services when required. In brief, guidance and counselling should be considered as part of the system of higher education. It is important for universities and colleges to set up appropriate counseling centers, hire qualified counselors and promote mental health and counseling awareness. Ultimately, the enhancement of these programs will have a positive effect on the academic achievement, emotional balance and overall well-being of college students.

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