

Perceptions of Heads of Secondary Schools Regarding Academic Advising Competencies of The Teachers at Secondary School Level

Zaheer Ahmad

PhD Scholar, Department of Education, International Islamic University Islamabad.

Dr. Azhar Mahmood

Associate Professor, Department of Education, International Islamic University Islamabad.

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Abstract

This study was aimed at analyzing the perceptions of heads of secondary schools regarding academic advising competencies of the teachers at secondary school level. Quantitative approach was used in this study and the design of the study was descriptive and survey type. The study was delimited to the four districts of Rawalpindi Division, i.e. Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum and Rawalpindi. A total number of 4913 secondary school teachers and 960 heads of secondary schools were included in the population. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. A total number of 491 teachers and 97 heads were selected as sample. Questionnaire was developed for the collection of quantitative data from the heads. The quantitative data was analyzed using the frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and chi-square. On the basis of the conclusions it is recommended that enough time for interaction and contact between the students and the teachers for the purpose of academic advising may be offered. The professional development of teachers regarding academic advising may be given due importance so as to make the very process more effective and efficient. The teachers in this regard may be given more autonomy and flexibility in dealing with rules and regulations of academic advising. There is a dire need to establish an advanced psycho-educational advising centre at the schools and activate its activities to offer advising, developmental, and remedial services focusing on the development of the bright and optimist side of students' personalities.

Keywords: Heads Teachers, Perceptions, Secondary School Teachers, Academic Advising, Competencies

Introduction

Academic advising holds a key position in the efforts of supporting students' success in colleges and universities. It serves an indispensable function in improving student persistence and facilitating timely degree completion (Robbins, 2016). Higher education

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leaders are drawing more attention to academic advising; in recognition of the powerful role that academic advising plays in improving retention and graduation rates, as well as supporting student learning (Darling, 2015). Educational guidance and counselling are very much significant for the students and the educational institutions have a key role to play in drawing out the best amongst the students. Although, good behaviour and conduct is desirable, but most of the times in order to groom and polish their personalities, the young minds need guidance. By using the counselling techniques, the young minds are given advice on how to address, manage and deal with their personal, academic and professional problems.

There are diverse techniques which are used worldwide to address the students' problems and issues in this regard and the academic advising is one of those which is aimed at helping and assisting the students in their academic matters (Lowenstein, 2005). With the passage of time, the concept and meaning of academic advising has evolved. O'Banion (1972) defined academic advising as a process which involves a relationship respectful of student concerns. Through the advisor's role as a teacher and guide, the chief purpose of the academic advising is to enhance and improve the self-awareness and fulfilment within the student. The very definition of academic advising also includes the enhancement of behavioural awareness, development of decision-making skills, inculcation of problem-solving abilities and the facilitation of students' rational processes (Crookston, 1972). In this era, with the burden of responsibility on the student, the very concept of academic advising has been defined as an information exchange that is designed to enhance and foster the students' educational and career goals (Drake, 2011).

The positive qualities of teachers, staff and educational advisors include student support in the areas of teaching, development and career counselling (Himes, 2014). Unlike the students and teachers in the classrooms, the academic advisors share augmented responsibility to support and make the students fully adaptable to the available resources and existing culture of the educational institution (Williamson et al., 2014). There are many persons in an educational institution who can, although, contribute to the students' success and overall connection but the most vital element emerges to be the most frequent interaction between the teachers, staff and academic advisors. In one way or the other, all of them are the key stakeholders of students' academic and educational experiences (Tinto, 2012).

The most important objective of the academic advising is to help and facilitate the students become and develop as effective and successful agents for their own personal development and lifelong learning. Every aspect of the students' concern that ranges from the resources that we share and recommend, the questions that we pose, developing the relationships between the students and the teachers, taking short-term decisions and formulating long-range plans, the perspectives that we share with them; in short, everything in which we help our students think through must aim and focus at increasing their competence and capacity towards making them independent and self-sufficient. As an academic activity, the academic advising depends on suitable descriptions of complex student behaviours and institutional conditions to help out the students in formulating and executing educational and life plans. As far as the scope of academic advising is concerned, there are five beliefs that establish the practical boundaries of academic advising.

Academic advising is a partnership between the advisor and the student (advisee), placing

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emphasis upon planning, communication, and personal responsibility. It is a distinct field in the developed countries through which the advisors tend to advise and guide the students pertaining to their academic matters but unfortunately, in developing countries in general and in Pakistan in particular the academic advising has not been taken care of. Unlike the developed countries, where the role of academic advisors is played by the persons who are specialized in this field, the role of academic advisors has to be played by the concerned teachers in Pakistan according to the proposed draft of the National Education Policy, 2017. In the said draft, the teachers at the level of secondary education are entrusted towards the guidance of the students for their better understanding and academic achievement but the fact of the matter is that the teachers have not been formally trained for this purpose. Keeping this into consideration, the present study was aimed at analyzing the current level of academic advising competencies of the teachers at secondary school level.

Aims of the Study

The aims of the study was to analyze perceptions of heads of secondary schools regarding academic advising competencies of the teachers at secondary school level.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to four districts of Rawalpindi Division, i.e. Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, and Rawalpindi.

Research Methodology of the Study

The study was delimited to the four districts of Rawalpindi Division, i.e. Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum and Rawalpindi. A total number of 4913 secondary school teachers and 960 heads of secondary schools were included in the population. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. A total number of 491 teachers and 97 heads were selected as sample. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of sample from the population. Questionnaire was developed for the collection of quantitative data from the heads. The quantitative data was analyzed using the frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation and chi-square.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 *Availability of the Teachers to Accommodate Student Needs*

Data Source	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Chi-Square	P-Value
Head Teachers	SA	7	8.4	3.9759	.96241	85.133 ^a	.000
	A	62	74.7				
	N	4	4.8				
	DA	9	10.8				
	SDA	1	1.2				

According to the table 1, 83% of the head teachers agreed with the statement that the teachers' availability is flexible to accommodate student needs. 5% of the head teachers had neutral response to the statement, whereas, 12% head teachers disagreed with the

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statement. The mean score of the head teachers’ response to the statement is 3.9759 as associated to greater score as 4 with standard deviation of .96241. Likewise, the calculated value of Chi-Square 85.133^a is more than the p-value i.e., .000 at 0.05 level of significance. This depicts that the teachers’ availability is flexible to accommodate the student needs.

Table 2 *Spending Sufficient Time with the Students*

Data Source	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Chi-Square	P-Value
Head Teachers	SA	8	9.6	3.2169	.79707	157.422 ^a	.000
	A	61	73.5				
	N	3	3.6				
	DA	8	9.6				
	SDA	3	3.6				

According to table 2, 83% head teachers had agreed with the statement that the teachers spend sufficient time with their students to address their concerns. 4% of the head teachers remained neutral, whereas, 13% head teachers had disagreed with the statement. The mean score of head teachers’ response with statement is 3.2169 as associated to greater score as 4 with standard deviation of .79707. Likewise, the calculated value of Chi-Square 157.422^a is more than the p-value i.e., .000 at 0.05 level. This depicts that the teachers spend sufficient time with their students to address their concerns.

Table 3 *Current Year Planning to Accommodate Course Sequencing*

Data Source	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Chi-Square	P-Value
Head Teachers	SA	4	4.8	3.2410	.89156	149.952 ^a	.000
	A	73	88.0				
	N	2	2.4				
	DA	3	3.6				
	SDA	1	1.2				

According to table 3, 93% of the head teachers have agreed with the statement that teachers encourage students to think beyond current year planning to accommodate course sequencing. 2% head teachers remained neutral, whereas, 5% of the head teachers disagreed with the statement. Mean score of the head teachers’ response to the statement is 3.2410 as associated to greater score as 4 with standard deviation of .89156. Likewise, the calculated value of Chi-Square 149.952^a is more than the p-value i.e., .000 at 0.05 level. This depicts that the teachers encourage students to think beyond current year planning to accommodate course sequencing.

Table 4 *Current Year Planning to Accommodate Graduation Expectations*

Data Source	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Chi-Square	P-Value
Head Teachers	SA	4	4.8	3.0843	.56751	239.831 ^a	.000
	A	72	86.7				
	N	4	4.8				
	DA	2	2.4				

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SDA	1	1.2
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According to table 4, 92% head teachers agreed with the statement that teachers motivate students to think beyond current year planning to accommodate graduation expectations. 5% head teachers had neutral response to the statement, whereas, 3% of the head teachers have disagreed with the statement. The mean score of head teachers' responses to the statement is 3.0843 as associated to greater score as 4 with standard deviation of .56751. Likewise, the calculated value of Chi-Square 239.831^a is more than the p-value i.e., .000 at 0.05 level of significance. This depicts that the teachers motivate students to think beyond current year planning to accommodate graduation expectations.

Table 5 *Current Year Planning to Accommodate Relevant Work Experience*

Data Source	Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Chi-Square	P-Value
Head Teachers	SA	5	6.0	3.0843	.54560	231.518 ^a	.000
	A	71	85.5				
	N	4	4.8				
	DA	3	3.6				
	SDA	0	0.00				

According to table 5, 91% head teachers had agreed with the statement that the teachers encourage students to think beyond current year planning to accommodate relevant work experience. 5% head teachers remained neutral, whereas, 4% head teachers disagreed with the statement. And the mean score of head teachers' response to the statement is 3.0843 as associated to greater score as 4 with standard deviation of .54560. Likewise, the calculated value of Chi-Square 231.518^a is more than the p-value i.e., .000 at 0.05 level. This depicts that the teachers encourage students to think beyond current year planning to accommodate relevant work experience.

Conclusion

The teachers in the school provide a variety of services, but one of their most important jobs is to act as a direct personable connection between a student and their academic institution; someone who is invested in a students' success and is available to provide support when needed. A teacher is a type of advisor who works with students, usually at the school level. Teachers are the ones who are responsible for helping students choose a major and a minor and ensuring that they meet all the requirements in future. The teachers who possess certain characteristics are most successful, with whom the students are interested in advising. These characteristics include; demonstrating a concerned and caring attitude towards the students, exhibiting effective interpersonal and communication skills, easily available to the students, having frequent contact with the students, showing intrusive behaviour with students, knowledgeable of institutional regulations, policies, offerings, and procedures, monitoring students' progress, using appropriate information sources and engaging in developmental advising versus simply course scheduling.

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Recommendations

1. The professional development of teachers at all levels with regard to academic advising may be carried out extensively on periodical basis in order to achieve the learning outcomes as well as to enhance the student retention rate at the optimum level.
2. An electronic registration system regarding academic advising may be developed at school level so that the accurate record of the students and alumni can be made available for subsequent betterment and strengthening the academic advising practices and experiences.
3. Enough time for interaction and contact between the students and the teachers may be offered and the teachers may be given more autonomy and flexibility in dealing with rules and regulations regarding academic advising.

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