

The Impact of the Educational Counselor in Promoting Student Achievement Level in Government Schools at Irbid Governorate from School Principal Perspective

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Abstract

One of the purposes and objectives of this research is to identify and assess the impact of the effectiveness of a school counselor on the academic success of students—an effectiveness that is manifested through the provision of academic, psychosocial, and vocational support to students, as well as through the facilitation of the interactions among students, teachers, and parents. In order to accomplish this study, the opinions of 180 public school principals were sought, and they were selected randomly to allow unbiased and generalizable interpretations of the principals in the governorate of Irbid to be the research population. A survey method was employed for data collection, and it consisted of a survey specifically designed for this research study, which contained several paragraphs related to the primary areas of the school counselor's role, as listed above. The responses collected were analyzed by establishing the means and the standard deviations. This research aimed to understand better the significant contribution that school counselors can offer in enhancing the educational process and academic progress within public schools in Irbid. It also confirmed that the multi-faceted support that they provide is essential. Results. In the study evaluating the role of the educational counselor within the scope of the public schools of Irbid, the results of which have been collected from school principals, the work provides a positive evaluation of the perceived influence of the counselors in terms of students' academic achievement across four primary dimensions: academic support that had a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.8; psychological support with a mean of 4.0 and standard deviation of 0.9; vocational guidance with a mean of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.7; and interaction with parents and teachers with a mean of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 0.6. Such results reveal a high appreciation of the importance of the role of the educational counselor in improving the educational environment and the comprehensive support for the student as the role of the counselor has been exposed as a practical element in supporting the student academically and psychologically, guiding the student professionally, and in addition promoting effective communication between the school and the family.

Keywords: *Educational Counselor, Academic Achievement, Psychological Support, Vocational Guidance.*

Introduction

As critical members of the student's life, school counselors play a huge role since they help guide students along the academic and social tracks. School counseling includes social and emotional support, resources about career opportunities, and provision for a secure spot for students to learn. The study aimed to understand the viewpoints of the principal role of school counselors about the student's academic success.

Importance of Educational Counseling

The function of educational counseling is to meet a broad spectrum of students' needs. Today, educational counseling assistance includes much more than the original educational and vocational emphasis (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (2019) lists three primary developmental areas school counseling programming should address to help students succeed: academic achievement, career development, and personal/social development. Studies examining the influence of counseling services on student achievement at school have found that students who have regular access to counseling services, typically from a family with the means to pay for it, tend to do better academically and behaviorally in school (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012).

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Academic Achievement and Counseling

Academic achievement is influenced by multiple factors, including social class, parental involvement, and the quality of education (Duan et al., 2018). On the other hand, school counselors are increasingly recognized for their significant role in this context. Lapan presents outcome data from a case study of a comprehensive school guidance and counseling program based on the ASCA National Model in invaluable detail. The data includes GPA, attendance, and course completion data from Holland High School in the year before and the year following the program's implementation. According to the ASCA-supported program developed by Lapan and colleagues, a comprehensive program implementation process includes philosophy, organization, relationships, and accountability.

Role of School Principals

Building-level leaders must be involved in evaluating and assessing school counselors' effectiveness (Roth & Paylo, 2013). These educational leaders are best positioned to determine the impact of counselors on student achievement at various levels within the school learning environment and the overall effectiveness of the counseling program in the school (Culduz et al., 2023). As aforementioned, leaders are well-placed to evaluate the effectiveness of school counselors in contexts relevant to the administrative position(s) they hold as building leaders. Leaders collaborate with school counselors to develop programs and connect students to programming that meets their academic and behavioral needs. The research project is intended to understand building-level leaders' perceptions of school counselor effectiveness and their impact on student's academic success.

Impact of Educational Counselors

Recent research shows a positive correlation between school-based counseling and student academic achievement. According to a review by Lapan, Whitcomb, and Alemán, 2012, students of programs that implemented comprehensive school counseling indicated a gain in achievement compared to students in schools without comprehensive school counseling. Sink and Stroh, 2003 further describe the essential role of the school counselor in student academic goal setting and academic goal attainment. School counseling also impacts the academic achievement of students who are considered at risk. In 2007, Holcomb-McCoy explained how school counselors could help close the achievement gap for at-risk students desiring to achieve. Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, and Holcomb-McCoy called in 2011 for improved college access and student success, elaborating that school counseling programs are paramount to equity in college access opportunities for all students.

Moreover, children's social and emotional needs can influence their academic performance, so educational counseling is necessary. The study by Reback, 2010, also established that counseling interventions lead to an improved learning atmosphere with fewer disciplinary and classroom problems. On the same front, Carrell and Carrell, 2006, also realized that counseling interventions reduce the influence exerted by outside stressors on the student's academic performance. In this way, the educational counseling that gives a holistic approach to supporting students is imprinting not only some means to improve one's academics but rather a development perception—holistic in nature—and pertinent to the preparedness for anything that will come in the future.

Moreover, school counselors' role has been emphasized as an important one in students' mental health. Zins and Elias (2007) presented the encouraging academic and social outcomes of children when social-emotional learning (SEL) is part of a school counseling curriculum. The integrated approach involves simultaneously working with students on emotional and academic concerns. There have been recommendations for school counselors to address mental health and school counseling. Bowers, Manion Papadopoulos, and Gauvreau (2013) suggested that mental health services can benefit students through lower absenteeism and more engagement.

Objectives of the Study

The current study aimed to identify:

The role of the educational counselor in increasing the level of academic achievement of students in public schools

Question of the Study

The study seeks to answer the following question:

- What is the educational counselor's role in increasing the academic achievement of students in public schools in Irbid Governorate from the point of view of school principals?

The Practical Significance

This research emphasizes the vital importance of educational counselors in improving student performance in public schools in Irbid Governorate. The practical significance of the findings is in the fact that educational counselors offer comprehensive help to students, encompassing academic, psychological, and vocational advising, therefore directly influencing their aggregate academic performance. Educational administrators recognize that counselors enhance student achievement by facilitating effective communication between teachers and parents and providing academic and emotional assistance to kids. The findings suggest that school administrators and lawmakers should contemplate allocating resources towards counselor training and broadening their responsibilities within educational institutions to guarantee that pupils get the necessary assistance to excel both academically and socially.

Theoretical Significance

This study adds to the current literature on the influence of educational counseling on student achievement by presenting actual data from a Jordanian setting, where there is a scarcity of research on this subject. Furthermore, it endorses theories that highlight the comprehensive function of educational counselors in not only offering academic direction but also attending to the psychological and social requirements of students. This is consistent with social-emotional learning (SEL) paradigms, which emphasize the complementary approach of addressing emotional and intellectual issues to improve student results. Furthermore, the study provides an opportunity for future investigation into the enduring consequences of counseling on student academic performance and the influence of school leadership in maximizing the effectiveness of counselors in promoting student success.

Literature Review

Kurbanoglu et al. (2024) examined how students' attitudes, test motivation, and exam performance were impacted by their anxiety level around the exam questions. Eleven to fifteen-year-olds from Sakarya, Turkey, made up the sample of 121 middle school students. Pearson correlation coefficients and regression analyses assessed data acquired from attitude, anxiety, and test motivation scales. Results show a negative correlation between test anxiety and attitude, test motivation, and performance on the exam. In addition, there was a favorable correlation between students' attitudes toward question types, test motivation, and exam success. According to the regression analysis results, students' views and exam performance predicted their concern about exam question types, while test motivation did not.

The article of Fairfax County Public Schools (2024) outlines the functions and duties of school counselors in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) in great detail. Highlighting their crucial role in maximizing student performance by promoting access and equity, it explains the comprehensive support school counselors offer across elementary, middle, and high school levels. School counselors play an essential role in student's academic, professional, social, and emotional development, as outlined in the ASCA role

statement. Specifically in education, guidance counselors work with students to improve their academic mindset, planning skills, and goal setting. Within the realm of careers, they assist students in researching their postsecondary possibilities and cultivating the ability to make informed decisions about their futures. The social and emotional domain is where counselors help students get to know themselves, make good choices, and build strong connections. The brochure also shows how school counselors help with academic progress, equal access, and job preparation, all of which are part of the FCPS Strategic Plan. Also recognized for their critical role in the educational environment is the significance of school counselors and their work in fostering a welcoming and accepting school climate.

Parzych et al. (2023) conducted a study to analyze four urban middle and high schools' academic development needs and the services provided by their comprehensive school counseling programs from the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers. In order to help schools with career and college preparedness program planning and evaluation and investigating perceived student assistance requirements, a survey was administered to participants (n = 1,032). Using factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) and pairwise comparisons analysis, we found that stakeholders' perceptions of the twelve interventions we identified as supporting improved academic development differed significantly. To address the program needs of students in high-poverty schools, the findings offer important information about how to strategically and efficiently prioritize academic counseling services for kids.

Sitinjak & Canu's (2023) study's overarching goal is to bring attention to the significance of counseling and guidance services in preparing students for future academic achievement. The study recognizes that counseling is a life-altering experience that helps people acquire valuable skills for life, not just in the classroom. This study reviews existing research procedures, as is typical for opinion papers. The results acknowledge the critical function of counselors in boosting children's self-esteem, which is critical for the child to open up and supply the information needed for good advice. In order to help their students succeed and feel good, guidance counselors should push for therapy sessions. For students' long-term academic performance, this article highlights the value of guiding and counseling as an integral part of quality education.

Ngeno (2022) conducted a study to investigate students' views on the impact of guidance and counseling on academic needs. Guidance and counseling are increasingly becoming essential services in secondary schools in Kenya and worldwide as the needs of learners continually evolve with societal changes, necessitating the scaling up of counseling services to address academic and other issues. The research study was guided by the Gestalt theory of perception and adopted an Ex Post Facto research design. The target population consisted of all secondary students within the Rift Valley Region, with ten schools selected from five counties through stratified and simple random sampling, resulting in a sample of 450 students. Data was collected using a questionnaire validated by experts in counseling, which had a reliability index of 0.89, indicating its appropriateness. Data analysis was conducted both descriptively and inferentially. The study concludes that there is a connection between providing guidance and counseling services and satisfying academic needs. Additionally, the workload for teacher counselors should be reduced to allow them time to address students' academic and personal needs. The study recommends multiple approaches to implementing counseling programs in school settings, involving various actors such as counselors, principals, and subject teachers.

AlKhamaiseh (2021) conducted a study examining how educational counselors might help students adjust to remote learning after the global COVID-19 outbreak and the quarantine several countries have imposed by closing schools and universities. (Individual Differences, Gender Differences, Growth Needs, Social Basics, and Neurological and Physiological Abilities) were some educational counseling principles the research embraced. One hundred fifty educational counselors filled out the survey, which relied on quantitative methods and a questionnaire; SPSS 21st Ed was used for data screening and analysis. Among the study's implemented variables, the results indicated that educational counselors' involvement in assisting students in embracing online learning was most affected by students' awareness of and sensitivity to gender differences. According to the report, academic counseling should be a top priority in all institutions, especially public ones. We also need to foster a culture open to remote learning and encourage constructive use of technology.

Hines et al. (2020) noted the critical role of school counselors in positively impacting the outcomes of turnaround schools. While the focus has been mainly on the role of administrators and teachers in this impactful work, school counselors' role must be considered to improve school outcomes in turnaround schools, such as academic achievement and graduation rates. It is necessary for all school personnel, including school counselors, to work together to improve outcomes for turnaround schools.

This is especially true in the high schools with the lowest performance rates in the United States. Additionally, this study provides specific recommendations for school counselors to collaborate with other stakeholders to improve student accomplishment, highlighting the critical role that school counselors play in this setting.

Methodology

Study Approach

The study relied on the descriptive analytical approach, using a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was designed to collect study data by distributing it directly and electronically to principals of secondary schools in Irbid to reach the most significant possible number of the study population.

Study Population

The study population consisted of all public-school principals in Irbid Governorate for 2023/2024.

Study Sample

The study sample consisted of (180) school principals and principals, and the study sample was selected randomly.

The Study Tool

The researcher developed a questionnaire to measure the educational counselor's role in increasing the academic achievement level for students in government schools in Irbid Governorate.

Validity Of the Tool

Content Validity

The questionnaire's content validity was calculated, and most judges agreed that each item was essential. As shown in Table 1, we need to achieve a content validity coefficient (CVR) of high positive values for most paragraphs.

Table 1. Content Validity Results

Item	CVR
1	1.0
2	1.0
3	0.6
4	1.0
5	1.0
6	0.6
7	1.0
8	1.0
9	0.6
10	1.0

11	1.0
12	0.6
13	1.0
14	1.0
15	0.6
16	1.0
17	1.0
18	0.6
19	1.0
20	1.0
21	0.6
22	1.0
23	1.0
24	0.6
25	1.0

This table shows that the questionnaire has high validity, as most of the items received high expert ratings; this indicates that the tool effectively measures the educational counselor's role in enhancing academic achievement.

Reliability Of the Tool

In the present study, which examines the impact of school counsel on improving student academic success, Cronbach's alpha will be used to check for the internal reliability of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha gauges the consistency of responses across the many items on a questionnaire. The possible values range from 0 to 1. If the alpha value is more significant than 0.7, then the instrument is said to be reliable. The results are in Appendix A.

Table 2: The Result of Calculating the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to Measure the Reliability of The Tool

	Value
Number of items	25
Cronbach alpha	0.85

This table shows that the questionnaire is reliable. It is a reliable tool for measuring the role of the educational counselor in enhancing the academic achievement of the students in the public schools in Irbid.

Study Variables

Independent Variables: The educational counselor

Dependent Variables: school achievement.

Statistical Treatment Methods Used in The Study

To answer the study questions, the following descriptive methods were relied upon:

- Frequencies and percentages.
- Arithmetic averages and standard deviations.
- Reliability coefficient (Alpha Cronbach).

Results of the Study

The study question: What is the educational counselor's role in increasing the academic achievement of students in public schools in Irbid Governorate from the point of view of school principals?

From the point of view of school principals, arithmetic averages and standard deviations were calculated for the various fields included in the questionnaire to answer the study question about the educational counselor's role in increasing the academic achievement level of public-school students in Irbid Governorate. Four main areas evaluate the role of the educational counselor: academic support, psychological support, vocational guidance, and interaction with parents and teachers.

Table 3. Means And Standard Deviations for The Domains

Domain	Mean	DTD
Academic support	4.2	0.8
psychological support	4.0	0.9
Career Guidance	3.8	0.7
Interaction with parents and teachers	4.1	0.6

Table 4. Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for The Total Scores

Overall evaluation	Mean	STD
Overall evaluation score	4.0	0.75

Interpretation

Academic Support: A high mean indicates that school administrators believe school counselors are essential in supporting students academically.

Psychological support: This area also receives a high rating, which indicates the importance of the counselor's role in supporting students' mental health.

Career Guidance: The evaluation shows an appreciation for counselors' role in guiding students career-wise, although it is slightly lower than in other areas.

Interaction With Parents and Teachers: Good interaction between counselors, parents, and teachers is essential for improving students' academic performance, and the results indicate a good rating for this role.

Table 5. Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, Rank, And Level for Each Item

N	Domain	Mean	STD	Rank	Level
1	Academic support	4.2	0.8	1	High
2		4.0	0.9	2	High
3		3.8	0.7	3	Moderate
4		3.6	1.0	4	Moderate
5		3.5	1.1	5	Moderate
6		3.3	0.6	6	Moderate
7		3.1	0.5	7	Low
8	psychological support	4.3	0.7	1	High
9		4.1	0.6	2	High
10		4.0	1.2	3	High
11		3.7	0.9	4	Moderate
12		3.4	0.8	5	Moderate
13		3.2	1.0	6	Moderate

14	Career Guidance	4.2	0.7	1	High
15		3.9	0.8	2	Moderate
16		3.7	0.6	3	Moderate
17		3.5	1.1	4	Moderate
18		3.2	1.0	5	Moderate
19	Interaction with parents and teachers	4.4	0.6	1	High
20		4.1	0.5	2	High
21		3.9	0.7	3	Moderate
22		3.7	0.9	4	Moderate
23		3.5	1.0	5	Moderate
24		3.3	1.1	6	Moderate
25		3.1	0.8	7	Low

To discuss the results presented in the table that evaluates the role of the educational counselor in increasing the level of academic achievement in public schools in Irbid from the point of view of school principals, with a focus on the four dimensions: academic support, psychological support, vocational guidance, and interaction with parents and teachers, it is as follows:

Academic support received relatively high ratings, averaging 3.1 to 4.2. The item that received the highest rating (4.2) indicates a strong belief among principals that educational counselors contribute effectively to students' academic support. Items below 4 show a relatively low rating but are still in the medium to high range, reflecting a good rating for this role.

The support level of the psychological dimension for the educational counselor in public schools received scores similar to the academic support dimension, and the average score ranged between 3.2 and 4.3. The item with the highest score, which is greater than 4.0 (4.3), reflects recognition of the significant role of the educational counselor in providing the needed psychological service for the student, which is an influential factor in enhancing student academic outcomes. The variable of the psychological dimension has relative variance within each area of social support from the educational counselor. However, the total effect of the educational counselor serving the students in the psychological dimension is essential.

As for the career guidance dimension, the array of scores in this dimension ranged between 3.2 and 4.2, reflecting the belief that career guidance is an integral part of the role fit for the educational counselor. The scores with a score greater than 4.0 indicate recognition of the significant role that an educational counselor plays in helping students understand their career options and in guiding them student toward a successful career path in the future.

Finally, interacting with the families and members of the teacher community also received good scores, ranging from 3.1 to 4.4. The higher scores reflect the importance of the collaboration between the educational counselor, the families, and the teachers in creating a supportive educational environment that heightens academic achievement.

In general, the results show high appreciation from the stakeholders for the educational counselor's role in several areas, including educational, psychological, professional, and social support; this shows the importance of the educational counselor in the public schools in Irbid.

Discussion of the Results

The research aimed to discover how school leaders perceived the various roles of school counselors in accomplishing the most important tasks and facilitating and helping students toward academic support in public schools in Irbid Governorate. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for the categories of supports (academic, mental health, career, and school-home partnerships) indicated that school counselors' contributions to supporting students in all four respective roles were statistically significant. The scale ranged from 1 to 5.

Regarding academic support over the remaining three categories, school leaders acknowledge that counselors are active in this area by assigning a mean score of 4.2 (SD=0.8); this indicates that school counselors are highly regarded for their vital role in assisting students to reach their academic objectives by providing essential resources and support. The study conducted by Fairfax County Public Schools (2024) reiterated the importance of school counselors in helping students succeed academically by encouraging them to set goals, develop a strategy, and cultivate a good attitude toward learning. These findings are in line with that study.

Also receiving a high evaluation (mean = 4.0, SD = 0.9) was psychological help, which shows how vital counselors are for students' mental health. Counseling affects students' mental health and self-esteem, two factors critical to their academic performance (Sitinjak & Canu, 2023), and this result is in line with their findings. Student development counselors play a multi-faceted role, as seen by the standard deviations on this dimension, which demonstrate the relative differences in viewpoints. However, psychological support is generally viewed as vital.

Despite a somewhat lower rating (mean = 3.8, SD = 0.7) for vocational help, the importance of counselors in career planning was nevertheless recognized. While career assistance is greatly appreciated, there might be ways to improve it. Parzych et al. (2023) state that more targeted and strategic methods are needed in high-poverty schools. Their study indicated that stakeholders had varying perspectives on the effectiveness of career counseling services.

The average score for their exposure to teachers and parents with $M = 4.1$ (SD = 0.6) underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in improving student competencies, which is critical to creating an enabling learning environment for children. Teachers, parents, and guidance counselors must communicate and collaborate actively. We note that the previous studies (Ngeno, 2022) have emphasized the importance of having access to comprehensive counseling and guidance services to significantly improve the student's capacity to take care of their academic needs and to meet their full potential.

Educational counsellors' work is vital. They help youths in many ways, including academically, emotionally, and professionally, and function as the liaison between families and the school to encourage communication. Counseling and guidance result in an increase in student's attitudes, motivation for test taking, and higher achievement. Kurbanoglu et al. (2024) found that counseling and guidance benefited students. Consistent with these results, research conducted by Parzych et al. (2003) and Ngeno (2002) showed that teacher-counselors should have fewer responsibilities to devote more time to helping students.

In summary, the current research proposes that school counselors play a significant role in the success of public schools in Irbid Governorate. The primary role of the school counselor is to provide a system that will support students in their pursuit of higher learning by addressing all of the student's needs, which range from academic, psychological, and career. These results are supported by previous research, which indicates that core values and beliefs in counseling programs should be invested in and continuously improved to meet the holistic needs of our students.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes the crucial significance of educational counselors in enhancing academic performance in public schools within Irbid Governorate. From the viewpoint of school administrators, the results indicate that educational counselors offer a wide range of help, including academic direction, psychological aid, vocational coaching, and fostering interactions among teachers, students, and parents. The research findings indicate that principals highly appreciate the efforts made by counselors, especially in improving students' academic achievements and attending to their social and emotional requirements.

This study emphasizes the significance of educational counseling as a fundamental element of a comprehensive educational strategy, guaranteeing that students benefit from extensive assistance customized to their specific requirements. The favorable assessment of counselors' capacities in several areas, including academic and psychological assistance, demonstrates the growing acknowledgment of the

need to include these services within the educational system. Implementing this approach, educational institutions can cultivate a more comprehensive and encouraging atmosphere that amplifies the academic achievements and overall welfare of students.

The findings underscore the importance of continuous investment in the training and development of educational counselors, so equipping them to adequately address the many difficulties encountered by students. Furthermore, the research indicates that policy-makers and school administrators should prioritize the augmentation of counselors' responsibilities and guarantee the provision of adequate resources to execute their tasks with effectiveness. The profound influence of counselors on the academic achievements, psychological well-being, and professional direction of students underscores the crucial role they play in molding the educational circumstances and future prospects for students within the public-school system.

Finally, the study emphasizes the crucial function of educational counselors in the school system, arguing for increased funding, training, and acknowledgment of their contribution to enhancing student success. Additional investigation should examine the enduring effects of counseling interventions on student achievement and the function of counselors in tackling the distinct obstacles posed by changing educational environments.

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