

The Guidance Needs Of University Students

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of student counseling are centered around analyzing their needs. The guidance needs of university students can only be understood by recognizing the characteristics of the university student, the various problems they face, and their most important needs and demands. Studies have concluded that students face numerous challenges, including financial difficulties, issues related to adapting to university life and their inability to find the support they need, academic performance problems, housing issues, education-related concerns, social problems, homesickness, and stress from various sources. The guidance needs of students vary and include the need for adjustment to the new environment, academic needs, psychological needs, career-related needs, and social needs.

Keywords: Guidance needs, University students

Introduction:

For students, university represents a new experience, distinct from previous ones, as it involves many challenges and new experiences that require them to navigate, face, and adapt to. These include familiarizing themselves with university systems and regulations, selecting a major and adapting to it, making career choices, and preparing for future professions. Unlike school, university offers students greater freedom and increased responsibility.

Adapting to university life is essential for student success and their continuation in their studies, as university adjustment is an indicator of overall adaptation. Poor adjustment, on the other hand, reflects unmet needs within the university environment, which can negatively affect performance during and after their academic journey.

Psychologists and educators emphasize the importance of guidance and counseling in social life as a means of maintaining students' psychological and social balance, allowing them to focus on academic achievement and excel in their studies in order to reach their goals and fulfill their aspirations. However, students often face various psychological, social, and academic challenges, necessitating counseling services.

It is clear that the goals of guidance and counseling are centered around the needs of students, and counseling programs aim to fulfill these needs, helping students achieve psychological, social, and career-related adjustment, and developing appropriate coping skills to handle stress.

The guidance needs of students were varied, including the need for adjustment to the new environment, academic needs, career-related needs, and social needs. Additionally, there is a need for counseling programs to raise awareness among students on how to adapt to the new environment, as well as the importance of appointing psychological counselors to help students face challenges

1. The Concept of Guidance Needs:

Guidance needs refer to an individual's desire to express their problems in an organized and positive manner with the intention of fulfilling unmet needs, either because they have not identified these needs themselves or because, after identifying them, they were unable to meet them on their own. The aim of expressing problems is to eliminate them, enabling the individual to interact with their environment and adapt to the society in which they live.

A need is essentially a driving force that motivates a person to engage in certain behaviors. Several terms have been used to signify this drive, such as incentive, motive, desire, instinct, purpose, and goal. Despite the

differences in these terms, they all share the general meaning of movement and motivation. These terms refer to hypothetical constructs that appear to explain behavior, but they cannot be observed or measured directly. A motive is an internal state resulting from a certain need, and its activity passes through three stages: urgency, satisfaction, and equilibrium. Educational and psychological counseling is a field with a long history, and this concept has roots in Arab and Islamic heritage, known as "al-Hisbah." It was a role that required individuals to possess knowledge, experience, justice, sound judgment, and effort. (Saeed, 2016, p. 170)

2. Characteristics of University Students:

• Physical Characteristics:

There is a noticeable improvement in the health of young people, and physical maturity is typically completed by the end of this stage. Nutrition, exercise, sleep, work, and study all have an impact on the bodies of adolescents at this phase. One of the prominent features of this stage is the completion of skeletal maturity, with a slight increase in height in both genders, alongside a noticeable increase in weight.

• Emotional Characteristics:

At this stage, young people tend to rapidly move towards emotional maturity, stability, and balance. Most of them display an inclination towards idealism, whether in moral or practical matters, and also a fascination with heroes and admiration for them. (Sarah, 2019, pp. 31-32)

• Mental Characteristics:

During this stage, a student's academic specialization becomes more defined, which is an important step towards career stability after university. Their ability to learn improves, their reading speed increases, and they become more adept at accessing the growing sources of knowledge in light of scientific and technological advances.

University students tend to make more specialized decisions and show greater interest in topics such as politics, philosophy, the lives of influential figures, and religious leaders.

This stage is also characterized by major life decisions, such as career choice and selecting a spouse. It is a phase of intellectual independence and freedom in exploration. Students in this stage increasingly rely on others, while also developing their ability to communicate, persuade, engage in discussions, form opinions, and build confidence. They acquire the necessary concepts, knowledge, and skills to achieve proficiency.

• Social Characteristics:

Social intelligence reaches its peak during this stage, and students show an increased ability to behave appropriately in social situations, understand the emotional states of others, and remember names.

They also develop an enhanced capacity to observe and predict human behavior. Many values develop as a result of a student's broader interaction with their surrounding environment. This phase is marked by a tendency towards what is known as "social weaning," which refers to the advanced growth of independence from the family and the liberation from its authority, as well as increased self-reliance.

University students demonstrate a growing interest in "social weaning," meaning they seek greater independence from their families and more freedom to depend on themselves. (Sarah, 2019, pp. 31-32)

3. Problems Faced by University Students:

The university environment creates pressure on young people who are still in the process of forming their identities. It is well-known that there is a need for qualified human resources. For these reasons, universities must also identify the sources of students' problems and seek solutions to address them, while also contributing to the development of their personalities and providing them with knowledge, skills, values, and good habits. The university environment has demands and expectations that cannot be met with the values, attitudes, and habits acquired up until that point. (Yildız & Ulusoy, 2014)

It is noted that while students' needs are primarily academic, they may also face career-related and psychological challenges, depending on their social and economic circumstances.

University students face many day-to-day difficulties, such as dealing with procrastination, general anxiety about public speaking, career uncertainty, effective study skills, lack of motivation, self-confidence issues, exam anxiety, fear of failure, depression, and relationship problems with the opposite sex, as well as time management. (Yildız & Ulusoy, 2014)

Other challenges include fear of failure, dealing with stress, depression, discomfort in social environments, and coping with loneliness.

Studies have concluded that students face financial difficulties, work-related issues, problems adapting to university, and an inability to find the support they need. They also struggle with academic performance, housing, education, relationships with the opposite sex, homesickness, career planning, identity searching, and stress.

The study also noted that male students tend to experience more problems related to faculty/teachers, life issues, economic difficulties, health problems, bad habits, communication with their environment, family and societal relationships, self-expression, and a lack of psychological support compared to female students, whose satisfaction with life was higher.

However, there was no significant gender difference in study-related problems, exam-related issues, administrative problems, educational challenges, extracurricular activities, social and cultural problems, difficulties in utilizing leisure time, department-related issues, family problems, psychological issues, personal challenges, and communication problems. (Yıldız & Ulusoy, 2014)

4. The Needs of University Students:

Each of us has basic needs that cannot be ignored, and these arise from the biological, psychological, and social makeup of the individual. The importance of fulfilling these needs, as emphasized by scholars, lies in their impact on achieving psychological, social, academic, and emotional adjustment, among others.

When an individual succeeds in fulfilling their needs and achieving their goals, they become psychologically and socially well-adjusted, and a positive, productive member of society. The needs of university students can be classified as follows:

- **Physiological Needs:**

- These arise from the nature of the physical body and what is required for its growth, balance, and health (e.g., the need for food, air, sexual needs, activity, belonging).
- The need for a healthy body and physical fitness.
- The need to accept the rapid physical and physiological changes that occur in early adolescence and to achieve adjustment to these changes.

- **Psychological Needs:** Among the most important are

- **The Need for a Sense of Importance:**

This is one of the most significant human needs during youth, when young people begin to experience identity crises, asking themselves, "Who am I?" This need is fulfilled through activities in which young people take part, where they feel important and valuable.

- **The Need for Belonging:**

This involves the need to belong to different groups, such as youth organizations. (Marwa, 2020, p. 55)

- **The Need for Creative Expression, Movement, and Activity:**

Students need suitable opportunities to express their abilities, such as through cultural activities like writing plays or stories, or through manual arts, etc.

Through these activities, young people find many opportunities to invest their abilities and express their opinions and selves, thus fulfilling their needs for creativity and innovation. Since students are part of the youth category, this stage is charged with a great deal of energy that must be released, such as through university activities aimed at supporting youth, which are designed to achieve this goal.

- **The Need for Competition:**

This need is fulfilled through activity groups, such as sports, cultural, artistic, and scientific activities, where students can compete based on their interests and hobbies.

- **The Need to Serve Others:**

Human beings are naturally inclined to help others, which is why many student groups participate in public service organizations, dedicating their time and effort to serving others.

- **The Need for New Experiences:**

According to Nash (Wash), there are new experiences that a person must learn, practice, and seek in order to fill their life with brightness and happiness, which serves as a safeguard against the mental and psychological pressures that accompany modern civilization.

- **Social Needs:**

Some of the most important social needs for university students include:

- **The Need for Future Security:**

This need involves:

- ❖ Securing a suitable job.
- ❖ Structuring education and planning so that it balances societal needs with the student's own needs.
- ❖ Achieving the principle of equal opportunity.
- ❖ Providing different forms of insurance in cases of illness or disability.

- **The Need for Support:** This can be achieved by:

- ❖ **Utilizing Special Talents and Abilities** by providing resources to invest free time effectively.
- ❖ **Allocating Sufficient Time** for personal talents to be nurtured and hobbies to be pursued.
- ❖ **Protecting Students** from corruptive and extremist influences.
- ❖ The Need for Clear Ideals and Conscious Leadership includes the following:

- The need for clarity regarding the state's goals and its educational, economic, and political services.
- The need for conscious guidance from the media, as well as cultural and educational institutions.
- The need for a strong connection to national heritage and the future the country is progressing towards.
- The need for specialized leaders in all fields.

A young person or student is part of society; therefore, they should not isolate themselves from other social institutions. Rather, they should integrate with them, taking their place in social issues as the educated class within society. (Marwa, 2020, p. 57)

5. The Guidance Needs of University Students:

The guidance needs offered to students can be divided as follows:

5.1 Academic Guidance Needs:

Academic needs are the core of the guidance process at the university, as they play a distinctive role in directing students towards the correct academic path. Through proper academic guidance, students can navigate their university studies effectively. For this reason, universities have assigned advisors (faculty members) to groups of students, whether at the bachelor's, master's, or doctoral levels, with the goal of helping them achieve the best possible adjustment to the university environment.

To achieve their guidance objectives, advisors must establish relationships built on mutual respect and trust with students, allowing them to express their problems freely. This is done through dedicated office hours, during which academic advisors are available in their offices. Guidance can be provided either individually or in groups, depending on the students' personal issues.

To meet academic guidance needs within the multi-hour system, guidance tasks must be integrated and comprehensive, regardless of the variety of methods and tools used across different universities. All educational stages at the university should be considered, with specific attention to each stage individually. During pre-specialization guidance, students should be directed toward how to choose a major and the proper procedures for interviews.

In specialized guidance, tasks include helping students understand the steps for implementing their academic plans, setting office hours, conducting open meetings with students, and facilitating communication between students and faculty members. The goal is to provide students with information that helps them meet their academic guidance needs.

Academic advisors are responsible for several tasks, such as holding individual meetings with each student, exploring possible means and alternatives to support them academically, and providing suggestions for referring students to specialized services as needed, such as social counseling or academic support programs. Advisors may also need to assist students in switching majors before initiating the procedures for their dismissal from a college or university.

In advisory meetings, academic advisors must use a scientific approach to problem-solving and a democratic style in managing discussions to create an environment where students feel safe and able to express their problems and ideas honestly. The academic guidance process also requires advisors to maintain a file for each student that includes their academic performance and study plans, helping the advisor guide the student in selecting the courses they need. Advisors are also responsible for referring students to other departments within or outside the university to receive specialized services. (Sarah, 2019, pp. 63-66)

5.2 Psychological Guidance Needs:

These are non-physical needs of a psychological nature, aimed at protecting the self, developing its abilities and skills, and fostering its independence. Some of the most important psychological needs include the need for security, curiosity, achievement, excellence, and self-reliance. The importance of addressing the psychological guidance needs of university students has become a key concern for those involved in counseling psychology. This aspect involves the student's ability to cope with psychological adjustment difficulties such as feelings of inadequacy, shyness, depression, hostility, introversion, or dissatisfaction with oneself.

Psychological needs can be categorized as follows:

- The need to adjust students' attitudes and their limited perspectives on emotional life problems.
- The need to solve problems students face in adjusting to the educational environment and the surrounding environment in general. This includes issues such as low self-confidence, attention deficits, anxiety, stress, and frustration. Meeting these psychological guidance needs helps students enjoy the benefits of good mental health, which positively reflects on them as they receive services that cater to their psychological needs. (Al-Ruwaili, 2010, pp. 3-6)

5.3 Social Guidance Needs:

This type of need aims to help students adjust to the environment in which they live, instill a spirit of cooperation, and assist them in building positive relationships with others in the educational environment. It

also seeks to foster positive attitudes towards society. The needs related to this aspect, as noted by Al-Ali, Nashwati, Hassan, and Mareifi, include the following:

• **The Need to Accept Others and Build Social Relationships:**

This need requires that the student is not isolated from others, as individual achievement and the status one aspires to cannot be attained without the presence of others.

• **The Need to Take Responsibility:**

This need involves the individual taking responsibility for their actions and words, rather than shifting that responsibility onto others.

• **The Need for Self-Control and Regulation:**

This need reflects the importance of being an active and influential member of the environment, meaning that the individual maintains a balance between being influenced by their environment and their ability to influence it.

• **The Need for Independence and Self-Reliance:**

This need demonstrates the individual's ability to make their own decisions and work towards implementing those decisions within the constraints of their environment and circumstances, while cooperating with others.

6. Career Guidance Needs:

Career guidance has become increasingly important due to the growing focus on human resources, which represent the primary wealth of different nations. Helping individuals choose the right career for their future is one of the best ways to optimize human resource investment.

The need for career guidance is among the most critical for young people, as some may struggle to choose a suitable profession. Career guidance aims to help individuals decide their professional future by focusing on individual differences and the variety of career opportunities available to them. Meeting career guidance needs is vital for fostering healthy psychological development. Since a significant portion of a person's life is spent working, choosing the right profession leads to a certain level of satisfaction. Conversely, poor career choices can negatively impact an individual's productivity and effectiveness at work.

The focus on career guidance needs serves several objectives, including:

- Helping individuals assess their abilities and recognize their strengths and weaknesses by identifying professional experiences.
- Achieving professional adjustment through planning guidance programs to ensure career and social success.
- Assisting individuals in avoiding fields where their weaknesses are prominent.
- Helping individuals control their capabilities and life circumstances, and supporting them in changing professions if they do not find satisfaction in their current job.

Therefore, it is essential to employ career guidance methods through seminars and conferences that discuss the characteristics and requirements of various professions and jobs. This may include hosting individuals from different professions, publishing books and periodicals on career opportunities, and increasing the number of students visiting professional institutions and companies. Additionally, television programs can be created to showcase different careers and jobs that students can pursue. (Al-Ruwaili, 2010, p. 14)

A study conducted by Shobo Abdullah Taher in 1988, titled "The Guidance Needs of Al-Mustansiriya University Students and How to Meet Them," revealed several guidance needs for students, including improving the curriculum, the need for self-awareness, health care, organizing free time, proper sexual guidance, social interaction, financial and personal independence, and faith in God. (Shobo, Abdullah, 1988)

Guidance and Counseling for University Students:

1. Student Guidance:

Student guidance refers to the effort to meet students' needs for direction through various forms of support. This comprehensive support can be provided on a personal level, taking into account the individual circumstances of their lives. The goal of student guidance is to foster both personal and self-directed development in students. This means helping them develop their study skills and encouraging self-reliance. Guidance helps students discover and utilize their resources, enabling them to gain independence and unlock a broader range of opportunities for action.

Students become aware of the various possibilities for obtaining guidance, as well as the role it plays in developing both practical skills and expertise for future careers. They can actively seek or request guidance and counseling as needed.

Student well-being and their ability to study effectively are key factors in ensuring smooth progress in their academic paths. By strengthening these factors, we can support academic progress, improve learning outcomes, and prevent potential problems. At the same time, this approach reduces dropout rates and

facilitates early detection and resolution of issues. Through student guidance, we can identify the factors that influence academic progress, thereby enhancing students' learning abilities and overall well-being.

2. Student Counseling:

The focus on counseling as an effective tool for alleviating the problems faced by individuals, particularly university students, is essential. The psychological counselor plays various roles in guiding and advising individuals, particularly in career counseling, including the following:

- Helping students become aware of their different skills and abilities, which qualify them to choose the appropriate academic specialization, as well as the career that aligns with their interests and aptitudes for the future.
- Assisting students in their studies by enhancing their self-capabilities and skills.
- Providing students at different educational stages with information about available specializations in the job market and career opportunities in each field.
- Conducting individual and group counseling sessions to identify psychological and social problems that affect the learner's life.
- Helping individuals make their own decisions in various areas of life based on the information they have.
- Utilizing various tools and modern techniques to assist students in measuring their cognitive abilities, career interests, and personal traits, with the aim of promoting psychological, social, and academic adjustment.
- Family counseling can be employed when beneficial to help the learner overcome difficulties and achieve self-realization. (Saad El-Din, 2014, pp. 51-54)

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