RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF COMPETENCY ON THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGE COUNSELLORS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study aims to explore the impact of counselor competencies on work performance, specifically focusing on the provision of academic and personal development support to college students. The research process involved a systematic review of academic databases, including ERIC, JSTOR, and ProQuest, using search terms such as competency, job performance, college counselors, and education management.

Theoretical Framework: The study emphasizes the importance of counselor competencies in determining job performance. Counselors excelling in crisis intervention, career counseling, active listening, and interpersonal skills tend to perform better, effectively addressing students’ needs and guiding them in academic and personal development.

Methodology: Academic databases and publications were systematically reviewed to ensure the retrieval of relevant and recent material. Strict selection criteria were applied to guarantee the caliber and applicability of chosen sources.

Results: The findings underscore the significance of counselor competencies in enhancing job performance. Counselors proficient in key areas exhibit effective interaction with students, catering to their needs, and fostering academic and personal development.

Conclusion: The study highlights the need to prioritize the evaluation and improvement of counselor competencies. Tailoring counselor training programs to enhance critical abilities can benefit educational institutions, ensuring better support for students’ academic and personal growth.

Keywords: competency, job performance, college counsellors, education management, student support, academic achievement.

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INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE A INFLUÊNCIA DA COMPETÊNCIA NO DESEMPENHO PROFISSIONAL DOS CONSELHEIROS UNIVERSITÁRIOS

RESUMO

Introdução: Este estudo tem como objetivo explorar o impacto das competências do orientador no desempenho do trabalho, com foco específico na prestação de apoio ao desenvolvimento acadêmico e pessoal para estudantes universitários. O processo de pesquisa envolveu uma revisão sistemática de bancos de dados acadêmicos, incluindo ERIC, JSTOR e ProQuest, usando termos de pesquisa como competência, desempenho no trabalho, conselheiros universitários e gestão da educação.

Estrutura Teórica: O estudo enfatiza a importância das competências de conselheiro na determinação do desempenho do trabalho. Conselheiros que se destacam em intervenção de crise, aconselhamento de carreira, escuta ativa e habilidades interpessoais tendem a ter um melhor desempenho, atendendo efetivamente às necessidades dos alunos e orientando-os no desenvolvimento acadêmico e pessoal.

Metodologia: As bases de dados e publicações acadêmicas foram sistematicamente revistas para garantir a recuperação de material relevante e recente. Foram aplicados critérios de seleção rigorosos para garantir o calibre e a aplicabilidade das fontes escolhidas.

Resultados: As descobertas ressaltam a importância das competências dos conselheiros no aprimoramento do desempenho no trabalho. Conselheiros proficientes em áreas-chave exibem interação eficaz com os alunos, atendendo às suas necessidades e promovendo o desenvolvimento acadêmico e pessoal.

Conclusão: O estudo destaca a necessidade de priorizar a avaliação e a melhoria das competências dos conselheiros. Personalizar programas de treinamento de conselheiros para aprimorar habilidades críticas pode beneficiar as instituições educacionais, garantindo melhor suporte para o crescimento acadêmico e pessoal dos alunos.

Palavras-chave: competência, desempenho profissional, conselheiros universitários, gestão da educação, apoio ao aluno, realização acadêmica.

1 INTRODUCTION

Higher institutions of learning are going through a significant transition due to a change in demographics, economic pressures, and the rapid advancement of technology (Oke & Fernandes, 2020). In this ever-changing environment, college counsellors play an unparalleled role. College counsellors serve as the pivot points that link students to a changing learning environment that offers a variety of chances and challenges (Levy & Lemberger-Truelove, 2021). College student demographics are changing, and this has a big impact on higher education. Millennials used to be the main demographic in higher education. On the other hand, millennials, Gen X, Baby Boomers, and, occasionally, Gen Z, are among the varied generations that make up today's college campuses (Graham, 2018). Student demographics at universities include a range of generational groups,
including those who are returning to college after a break, international students, veterans, and those who are seeking online education. Today's students' changing demands, aspirations, and life situations are reflected in the diverse range of generations present in higher education (Akour & Alenezi, 2022). For example, a veteran making the move to college could struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other issues connected to their military service. International students may also encounter language and cultural challenges (Wen et al., 2018). The skill set needed by college counsellors needs to change to accommodate the increasingly diverse student group. It is imperative for counsellors to possess cultural competence and be able to cater to the diverse needs of students, irrespective of their life stage or background.

Higher education is changing significantly due in large part to economic concerns as well (Aleixo et al., 2018). Counsellors extends beyond academic success and includes all-encompassing support that enables students to flourish in both their personal and professional life. More people are beginning to see college counsellors as vital components of this value proposition (Scheel et al., 2018). As a result, the popularity of college counsellors’ skill in areas including financial literacy, career counselling, and job placement has increased. Many educational institutions are struggling financially in addition to the financial demands that students experience (Arkoudis et al., 2019). The necessity for affordable counselling services and budgetary constraints have made counsellor qualifications even more crucial. Colleges and universities seek after counsellors who can effectively address students’ needs, enhance retention, and assist students’ progress in an economical way (Odeleye & Santiago, 2019). Technological breakthroughs have reached a new level with the advent of the digital age. Today's students are digital natives who are used to always having access to resources and information. They anticipate that institutions of higher learning will keep up with the rapid advancement of technology. Counselling services at colleges are not an exception.

The way students seek out counselling and support has changed dramatically since the invention of computers (Shaw et al., 2022). Digital resources, online platforms, and virtual counselling sessions are now essential parts of college counselling. It is increasingly expected of college counsellors to be digitally literate in order to interact with students via a variety of online platforms, provide remote assistance, and efficiently utilize technology. Furthermore, college counsellors now play a bigger role in higher education due to the rising dependence on data and analytics (Attaran et al., 2018).
Counsellors are being given more and more responsibility to use data to determine whether kids are at risk, evaluate the effectiveness of counselling interventions, and participate in data-driven decision-making in educational settings.

The tasks and responsibilities of college counsellors have changed dramatically in response to these demographic shifts, financial constraints, and technology breakthroughs. Stress, anxiety, sadness, and other mental health issues are common among students during their college years (Ramón-Arbués et al., 2020). This delegation of duties extends beyond mental health assistance. It is expected of college counsellors to act as mentors, assisting students with their personal growth and decision-making. Counsellors are expected to act as student advocates, especially while navigating intricate administrative procedures and standing up for the rights of students (Crawford et al., 2019). The requirement for a flexible range of competencies grows as college counsellors take on these more expanded tasks. The possession of proficiencies such as active listening, empathy, problem-solving, cultural competency, and career counselling abilities is important for them to effectively handle this extensive range of duties.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the impact of competency on college counsellors’ work performance in the field of education administration using a thorough literature review methodology. Relevant scholarly articles, research papers, and publications were located by carefully searching major academic databases. Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) were among the databases. Search phrases including "competency," "job performance," "college counsellors," and "education management" were used to ensure that pertinent content was found. To guarantee that the search results were narrowed down to the precise subjects and themes pertinent to the investigation, these keywords were carefully selected. The results and suggestions of the study were derived from a critical analysis of the chosen literature from various sources, which yielded insightful discoveries, thematic patterns, and research findings.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Competency frameworks for college counsellors, measurement of job performance, impact of counsellors on student outcomes, training and development
programs and institutional support and best practices are the main thematic subheading in this literature review.

3.1 COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS FOR COLLEGE COUNSELLORS

College counsellor competence offer the fundamental framework for defining the abilities, expertise, and characteristics required for successful counselling in higher education. College counsellors’ professional development, assessment, and training are shaped by these frameworks, which act as guiding documents. The competency frameworks created by academic institutions and professional organizations are reviewed and analyzed in the section that follows, with an emphasis on how important they are in influencing college counselling practice.

3.1.1 American College Counselling Association (ACCA) Competency Framework

In establishing the competency requirements for college counsellors, the American College Counselling Association (ACCA) has been instrumental. A thorough guide to the competences deemed necessary for counsellors working in college settings is provided by their competency framework, which was most recently updated in 2019 (Johnson & Riley, 2021). Multiple domains that each highlight distinct competencies are part of the ACCA framework. Research and assessment, human development, multicultural competency, counselling skills, ethical practice, and professional identity are all included in these domains. Active listening, empathy, and problem-solving skills, for example, are highlighted as important attributes in the Counselling Skills category (McGill et al., 2020). In order to effectively meet the wide range of needs of students, college counsellors have many different duties and responsibilities, which are acknowledged by the ACCA framework. When working with a student body that is becoming more and more diverse, it highlights how important cultural competence is. According to Giordano and Cashwell (2018) ACCA framework emphasizes the importance of college counsellors in advancing students' academic, personal, and mental wellbeing.
3.1.2 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

In the field of counsellor education, the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is a respected authority. While not specifically designed for college counselling, CACREP's competency standards function as fundamental skills that direct counsellor preparation in a variety of fields (Grus, 2019). The competency domains of CACREP are broad and flexible, covering a wide range of counselling disciplines. These areas offer a strong foundation that is in line with the essential abilities required for professionals operating in the constantly changing field of higher education, even though they were not created with college counselling in mind. The CACREP places a lot of emphasis on the domain "Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice." The significance of counsellor professionalism and ethical behaviour is emphasized in this arena. It emphasizes how important it is for counsellors to uphold the highest standards of professional practice, protect the rights and privacy of their clients, and follow ethical norms (Litherland & Schulthes, 2020).

The domain of "Social and Cultural Diversity" is also important. Diversity and cultural sensitivity are important aspects of the counselling process that CACREP acknowledges. The ability of counsellors to collaborate well with people from different cultural backgrounds is emphasized in this field. This skill emphasizes how important it is for counsellor’s to understand the various needs and viewpoints of a diverse group of kids (Gonzalez-Voller et al., 2020). A key area of study is "Counseling and Helping Relationships." The development of fundamental abilities that are essential to the counselling process is the focus of this domain. It emphasizes how crucial it is to have good communication skills, empathy, and the capacity to build relationships with clients. Zeiger (2021) cites that these skills are essential for creating therapeutic alliances that promote trust and enable successful outcomes. The context in which college counsellor’s operate is defined by a variety of student demographics, moral dilemmas, and the necessity of strong interpersonal and communication skills. As a result, the competencies outlined by CACREP correspond with the fundamental abilities needed by college counsellors to effectively assist students in the quickly evolving field of higher education.
3.1.3 Academic Institution-Specific Competency Models

Many academic institutions have created competency models that are specifically designed to satisfy the needs of their college counselling services, taking into account the particular missions, varied student populations, and special goals of their respective schools (Chase et al., 2021). The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is a good example of this; in line with their counselling services, they have developed a College Counselling Competency Model (López et al., 2020). This model, which is unique to each institution, gives special weight to competencies that align with the needs of the student body. Counsellors are expected to possess a thorough understanding of student development within the UCLA paradigm. This skill recognizes the diverse stages at which college students are undertaking their academic and personal journeys. It requires a thorough understanding of the difficulties, turning points, and adjustments that university students face (Becker et al., 2022). Counsellors can now offer personalized advice that promotes each student's unique development because of this understanding.

Another essential component of UCLA's competency model is effective communication. It is expected of college counsellors to have excellent communication skills with students, colleagues, and other stakeholders (Camilleri, 2023). Effective communication that is compassionate, straightforward, and constructive is critical to fostering positive connections between counsellors and students as well as good results. In this strategy, crisis intervention abilities are essential (Foon et al., 2020). UCLA's college counsellors are qualified to handle difficult circumstances and offer suitable assistance in an emergency or during a personal crisis. This ability highlights the university's dedication to the safety and well-being of its students.

3.2 MEASUREMENT OF JOB PERFORMANCE

College counsellors’ job performance is defined differently by academic literature. A counsellor’s ability to help students' academic, personal, and emotional growth is measured by how well they carry out their tasks, responsibilities, and competences. This defines job performance. College counsellors’ efficacy is frequently measured by their capacity to mentor, empower, assist, and advise students all of which enhances their overall performance and well-being (Grøtan et al., 2019).
3.2.1 Measurement Indicators

The metrics employed to assess college counsellors’ work performance cover a wide range of aspects. These metrics frequently have to do with student outcomes, competences, and the overall influence of counsellors in higher education settings.

**Assessment of Competencies:** The American College Counselling Association (ACCA) and the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) have established competency frameworks that have been used as the main indicators. Researchers have evaluated the degree to which counsellors possess the qualities included in these frameworks. For this, instruments such as supervisor assessments, peer evaluations, and self-evaluations have been employed (Giordano & Cashwell, 2018; Grus, 2019).

**Student Feedback and Satisfaction:** Views from students regarding the work of counsellors are regarded as important indicators (Rajabalee & Santally, 2021). Researchers have evaluated factors including counsellor-student relationships, effective assistance, and responsiveness to student needs by collecting student satisfaction and feedback using surveys and feedback forms. These metrics shed light on how well college counsellors do in fostering an environment that is encouraging and empowering (Gloria & Hird, 2019).

**Student Outcomes and Success Metrics:** These two concepts have also been connected to job performance. Indicators of academic achievement including grade point averages (GPA), retention rates, and course completion rates are included in measuring the competence of counsellors (Kivlighan et al., 2021). In order to assess a counsellor’s success, other factors like student outcomes hat have been investigated include career-related outcomes, post-graduation employment rates, and job placements (Donohue et al., 2022). Moreover, studies have looked at how college counsellors affect students' mental health, general personal development, and general well-being (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020).

**Institutional Data and Benchmarking:** Analysing institutional data and comparing it to benchmarks or other institutions is a common step in evaluating employee performance. Variables such as caseloads, budgetary allotments, counsellor-to-student ratios, and the availability of professional development opportunities can all be found in institutional data (Thielking et al., 2018). To find opportunities for development and
improvement, institutions assess their counsellor performance against comparable institutions, national standards, and regional standards (Farozin, 2019).

3.3 IMPACT OF COUNSELLING ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Counsellors are in a good position to offer advice, resources, and assistance to help students succeed academically (Warren et al., 2019). In this setting, indicators including as grade point averages (GPA), course completion rates, and retention rates are frequently used to evaluate academic progress. Students who use counselling services typically have higher GPAs, do better academically, and have greater retention and course completion rates (Bilodeau & Meissner, 2018). Additionally, college counsellors have a major impact on the results of personal development. They are essential in assisting students in overcoming obstacles in their lives, developing resilience, and improving their general wellbeing. Students who receive counselling support are more likely to handle stress, enhance their emotional and psychological health, and create useful coping mechanisms (Baik et al., 2019). Students' enhanced mental health, self-confidence, and general contentment with their college experience are frequently indicators of the beneficial effects of college counselling on personal growth. College counsellors are extremely beneficial in the areas of career readiness and life after college preparation. Counsellors assist students in making the move into the working world by offering career advice, internship opportunities, and resources for job placement (Keshf & Khanum, 2021). College counsellors’ all-encompassing strategy has a significant impact on students' success. They include issues pertaining to academics and careers as well as students’ general wellbeing. Studies repeatedly demonstrate the beneficial effects of counselling services on students' interpersonal connections, quality of life, and capacity to adjust to the demands of college life. This complex effect enhances students' overall well-being and happiness by making college a more enjoyable and enriching experience.

3.4 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

College counsellors are intended to benefit from training and professional development programs that guarantee alignment with acknowledged competencies (Okolie et al., 2020). Organizations such as the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the American College Counselling Association (ACCA) often develop frameworks that explain these competencies. The
goal of training programs is to give counsellors the abilities and information required to fulfil the competences outlined in these frameworks (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019). These programs' emphasis on diversity and cultural competency is one of its most important features. College advisors needs to be adequately equipped to work with a wide range of students. Training courses frequently cover topics related to cultural sensitivity, awareness, and offering inclusive counselling services (Benuto et al., 2018). This is in line with social and cultural diversity competencies, which are essential to provide effective counselling in higher education. Programs for training and development also include ethical practice as a fundamental element. High ethical standards are expected of counsellors, and these programs make sure that counsellors comprehend and follow ethical rules in their work (Watt et al., 2019). One essential element of acknowledged competencies is ethical competence, which is strengthened by continual professional growth. Training programs that correspond with recognized abilities include elements such as effective communication, empathy, and the capacity to establish trust (Beck & Kulzer, 2018).

3.4.1 Impact of training on counsellor’s Job Performance

Counsellors who take part in training programs gain the knowledge and abilities necessary to succeed in their positions (Zyromski et al., 2018). There are various areas where this enhanced job performance is apparent. Initially, counsellors who have participated in training and development initiatives tend to possess greater cultural competence and awareness. Their proficiency enables them to establish meaningful connections with a varied student body and offer culturally aware therapy. Better results for pupils from different backgrounds are thus a result of this College counsellors’ ethical practices are further improved by training programs (Scheel et al., 2018). Counsellors are better prepared to make moral decisions in their day-to-day work when they have received training on ethical principles and rules. This enhances the professionalism of these experts by fostering a greater degree of trust and confidence in the counselling services they offer. Training programs strengthen counselling partnerships and effective communication (Tavakoly Sany et al., 2020). Counsellors with this kind of training are better at building rapport, figuring out what students need, and offering helpful advice. Stronger counsellor-student interactions follow, and this strengthens the supportive and empowering atmosphere that supports job performance (Öcek et al., 2021).
3.5 INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND BEST PRACTICES

Investing in professional development is frequently the an important step towards institutional support for college counsellors (Rønnestad et al., 2019). The body of research emphasizes how crucial it is to provide chances for continued education and training. Counsellors who receive funding from educational institutions to attend conferences, workshops, and training programs are more likely to be knowledgeable about current trends in counseling and best practices (Abacan et al., 2019). Resources for professional development also include access to pertinent research, subscriptions to scholarly journals, and chances for counsellors to participate in scholarly endeavours (Rønnestad et al., 2019). Counsellors’ abilities and job performance are improved by these investments since they allow them to remain up to date on the most recent research findings and evidence-based procedures (Hallé et al., 2018).

Research indicates that college counsellors receive better assistance from institutions that keep appropriate counsellor-to-student ratios and caseloads (Thielking et al., 2018). Counsellors devote more of their time and energy to developing deep connections with students, attending to their needs, and skillfully utilizing their talents when they are not overburdened with cases. Counsellors offer more individualized advise when they have fewer cases on their caseload, which enhances their effectiveness at work (Nettle et al., 2018).

College counsellors are more productive when their institutions provide them access to the newest technology and data sources (Klempin & Karp, 2018). Counsellors may monitor and oversee students’ development, maintain contact with them, and expedite administrative work thanks to technology. Counsellors make data-driven decisions and provide students with more effective interventions and support when they have access to institutional data and analytics (Cech et al., 2018). College counsellors thrive in environments that support teamwork and multidisciplinary methods. These institutions provide these opportunities. Building cooperative connections with academic advisors, teachers, and additional student support agencies improves the counsellor’s capacity to meet the wide range of needs of students (Ieva et al., 2021). Counsellors collaborate with other professionals in interdisciplinary teams to offer a more comprehensive approach to student support, which in turn helps students receive more comprehensive support (Greidanus et al., 2020). Providing services for wellness and mental health is a vital part of institutional assistance. Counsellors effectively handle the
emotional and psychological needs of students in an atmosphere where they have access to resources for supporting students' well-being, crisis intervention training, and mental health services.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Numerous educational establishments, including UCLA, create competency models that are unique to their student bodies. The UCLA approach prioritizes student safety and well-being by highlighting competences that are in line with their varied developmental stages, effective communication, and crisis response skills (López et al., 2020). The effectiveness of college counselors' work is evaluated in a variety of ways. Supervisor assessments, peer evaluations, and self-evaluations are some of the tools used to evaluate competencies based on frameworks such as ACCA and CACREP (Giordano & Cashwell, 2018; Grus, 2019). Relationships, support, and response between counselors and students are all revealed through student feedback and satisfaction questionnaires (Rajabalee & Santally, 2021). Academic performance, career-related outcomes, and mental health are just a few of the student outcomes that are important predictors of job performance. The benefit of counselors on students' academic progress is demonstrated by metrics including as grade point averages, retention rates, and course completion rates (Kivlighan et al., 2021). Additionally, counselors have an impact on students' general well-being, personal growth, and mental health (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020). Programs for professional growth and training are essential for improving college counselors' work performance. According to Bagdadli and Gianecchini (2019), these programs guarantee alignment with acknowledged competences and place a strong emphasis on cultural competency, ethical behavior, effective communication, empathy, and the development of trust. Participating in these programs equips counselors with the skills and information needed to effectively assist the different student populations they work with (Benuto et al., 2018).

Training improves work effectiveness by having a favourable impact on the relationships between counsellors and students as well as cultural competency, ethical behaviour, and communication skills (Scheel et al., 2018; Tavakoly Sany et al., 2020). Support from institutions is essential to improving college counsellors’ effectiveness in their roles. To guarantee that counsellors are up to date on the most recent research findings and best practices, this support includes financing for ongoing education and
training (Abacan et al., 2019). To provide more individualized student support, it also includes keeping proper counselor-to-student ratios and caseloads (Thielking et al., 2018).

Counsellors are better equipped to monitor and assist students when their institutions grant them access to technology and data sources (Klempin & Karp, 2018). Ultimately, encouraging interdisciplinary thinking and teamwork within organizations enables counsellors to collaborate with other student support organizations, leading to more thorough student care and enhanced job performance (Ieva et al., 2021).

5 CONCLUSION

In summary, college counsellors play a critical and intricate role in higher education. College counsellors must have a flexible set of skills due to the changing needs of students and the different student demographics seen in higher education. The primary themes surrounding college counsellors have been examined in this study, including competency frameworks, job performance assessment, and impact on student outcomes, training and development initiatives, institutional support, and best practices. Competency frameworks—such as those offered by the Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the American College Counselling Association (ACCA)—provide crucial direction for identifying the abilities and qualities necessary for counselling in higher education. These competencies cover topics including effective counsellor-student interactions, cultural sensitivity, and ethical practice. Colleague feedback, student results, institutional data comparison, and competency assessments based on these frameworks are all part of the process of evaluating college counsellors’ work performance. Successful college counsellors are adept in guiding, supporting, empowering, and counselling students, which enhances their academic, emotional, and personal development.

Programs for professional development and training are essential for improving counsellors’ skills and matching them with acknowledged competences. These courses address topics including empathy, ethical behaviour, cultural competency, and effective communication. Relationships between counsellors and students, moral behavior, and communication abilities are all improved by training. The performance of college counsellors is greatly enhanced by institutional support, which includes continuous financing for education, controlled counsellor-to-student ratios, access to technology and
data sources, and an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach. Counsellors can offer more effective, individualized student help when they have this kind of support.

The success and well-being of students in higher education are greatly dependent on college counsellors. Their work performance, professional growth, influence on student outcomes, and competencies are all intertwined, and institutional support is essential to their efficacy. Higher education institutions can improve the overall quality of education by addressing these themes collectively and ensuring that college counsellors are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of students and support their academic, personal, and emotional growth.
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