

Need assessment of guidance and counseling services at higher secondary school level in district Skardu, Pakistan

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Abstract

This study explores the need for guidance and counseling services in higher secondary schools in District Skardu, Pakistan. Understanding how crucial guidance and counseling are for the academic and personal growth of students, the research aims to highlight the gaps and areas where the current system can improve. By using a mix of methods surveys and interviews we gathered insights from students, teachers, and school administrators. Data analysis were involved the systematically applying the logical and statistical techniques to summarized, evaluate and described the collected data. The results clearly show that there's a strong need for structured guidance and counseling services, especially given the unique social and economic challenges students face in this area. The absence of trained counselors and sufficient resources makes this need even more pressing. The study suggests setting up a dedicated guidance and counseling system designed specifically to meet. Based on the findings, the need assessment was offer recommendations and actionable insights aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of counseling and guidance services for the higher secondary school's students in the district Skardu.

Keywords: Guidance services, counseling services, higher secondary school level, district Skardu

1.Introduction

Guidance and counseling services are essential in helping students navigate the crucial years of higher secondary education, a time when they face significant academic choices and personal challenges. These services

offer much-needed support, not just academically, but also in addressing the social, emotional, and psychological aspects of students' lives. Rogers (2013) explained counseling as a series of direct interactions aimed at helping individuals change their attitudes and behaviors. For students in District Skardu, Pakistan, these services are even more critical due to the unique socio-economic and cultural hurdles they encounter daily. Skardu, nestled in the mountainous northern region of Pakistan, is a district known for its stunning landscapes but also for its remoteness.

Additionally, Nwachuku (2007) characterized guidance and counseling as systematic educational services provided by trained professionals to learners of all ages, both inside and outside of school. This geographic isolation impacts many aspects of life, including education. Schools in Skardu strive to meet the educational standards set nationwide, but they often struggle with limited resources, insufficient infrastructure, and a shortage of trained personnel.

Students here are not only managing the typical academic demands of their age but also grappling with the added pressures of living in a remote area where opportunities and resources are scarce. Likewise, Nayak (2001) emphasized the wide-ranging and straightforward nature of guidance and counseling. In an increasingly complex and intricate world, Nayak suggested that students require expert guidance to navigate the challenges they encounter.

Similarly, Harper et al (2003) discussed that how Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs, the counselor can be used as the framework to approach the needs of the students. He discussed the child needs and the present strategies of Counseling that include crisis intervention technique, development of program, availability of social services and the counselors should meet the parents of the students and try to solve their problems. Furthermore, Akpan (2010) stated that the guidance and counseling services in the educational area are enable the child to understand himself and prepare for the functional life. It prepares the individual to cope the challenges of the world.

Guidance and Counseling enable the students to achieve their full potentialities in their moral, social, emotional, vocational and academic development. These experts assist students in selecting suitable educational paths based on their interests, guiding them to the next stage of education, helping them choose profitable career options, and providing mental health support in such a challenging environment, the role of guidance and counseling becomes indispensable. These services can empower students to make informed decisions about their future, cope with stress, and overcome the obstacles that stand in their way.

However, despite the clear need for guidance and counseling in Skardu's schools, these services are often lacking. There is a significant gap between what is needed and what is currently available. Many schools do not have trained counselors, and the existing resources are

often stretched thin. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness among both educators and students about the importance of these services. As a result, many students miss out on the crucial support that could help them thrive during their formative years.

This research aims to assess the specific needs for guidance and counseling services in Skardu's higher secondary schools. By exploring the current state of these services and identifying the gaps, this study seeks to provide actionable recommendations for developing a more robust and effective framework. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every student in Skardu has access to the support they need to succeed academically and personally, thereby enhancing their overall educational experience and opening up better opportunities for their future. The school counselors in Israel gives their one- third time to the instructions of classrooms and rest of the time gives the students personal or the social Counseling.

Career Counseling is also very essential in the secondary school level for choose the career of the students in the future. The Counseling development in the Turkey is about 50 years ago. Many secondary schools have the guidance and Counseling services. The Ministry of National Education is fully supported to the development of guidance and Counseling services in the secondary schools of Turkey (Patrick & Review of Applied Management and Social Sciences (RAMSS) Suk- Chun, 2008).

The current research was aimed to determine The research was aimed to determine the requirements for counseling and guidance services in Skardu district at the higher secondary school levels. The main aim of this study was to determine necessity for guidance and counseling services in higher secondary education. Additionally, the study delves into the prevalent personal and academic challenges encountered by students in their advanced educational pursuits.

The main objective of the study was:

- 1) To assess the needs of counseling and guidance services at higher secondary levels within the Skardu district

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant impact of need assessment of guidance services at the higher secondary school level

2. Review of Related Literature

This research encompass a literature review focused on need assessment of counseling and guidance services. The practice of counseling, as a means of providing assistance, dates back to ancient human societies. Formal counseling, as a structured movement, originated in the United States and has since permeated various aspect of life from past education to industry. Most of the research in this field originate from west countries where the counseling is prevalent. This presents two significant challenges for those engaged in counseling literature.

Azeez Sumangla (2015) emphasized that adolescent is critical period marked by emotional turbulence and rapid physical and emotional changes. They argue that adolescents require counseling support to navigate social, personal, educational, and psychological challenges. Adolescent students often seek vocational guidance as they contemplate their future careers. They value freedom of expression and choice, as well as economic and social security.

Malek et al. (2013) noted the increase of guidance and counseling services in Malaysian institute mirrors the trajectory observed in the United States. Initially focused on vocational guidance, these services have evolved to prioritize personal growth, increased personal development, and their integration into the school system. Vocational guidance was crucial in helping students choose educational paths based on their abilities and talents, facilitating future career planning.

Returning to the issue of Western-centric literature, its prevalence has two noteworthy consequences. Firstly, due to slow acquisition and dissemination, the available literature remains inadequate and often outdated. Secondly, it may not directly apply to different cultural contexts, posing challenges for literature reviewers.

Lunenburg (2010) asserted that counseling and guidance services are indispensable in the area of educational, social emotional and vocational development. School administrators should introduce these services in their institutions to ensure students fully benefit from them. Lunenburg examines the goals of guidance and counseling programs, the counselor's role in schools, key services offered, counseling methods, and program evaluation. Similarly, Parhar et al. (2013) stressed that the increasingly complex and dynamic world poses challenges for young learners in secondary schools.

They argue that guidance and counseling services are essential in addressing students' educational, social, physical, psychological and vocational concerns. Guidance term encompasses all forms of education, whether formal, informal, or non-formal, aimed at helping students effectively adapt to society.

Need assessment towards seeking help

Counseling can understand as a form of social inference, where the counselor makes both direct and indirect efforts to affect the actions and thoughts of their client, similar to any other interpersonal relationship. Various factors can either grow or diminish a counselor's ability to guide a client for better change, as assisting individuals in their personal growth is essentially a process that enables them to move in the direction of change. It's important to note, as Brammer pointed out, that a person must be ready for counseling; readiness cannot be imposed by the counselor but must come from the individual themselves. Successful counseling typically requires some level of voluntary participation from the client, a widely accepted notion.

Academic difficulties due to lack of guidance and counseling services

Academic difficulties can stem from various sources, such as disorganized study habits and inefficient time management. These challenges may indicate underlying psychological stress or result from inadequate teaching methods in schools that fail to cater to individual learning styles. Such struggles may manifest as an inability to read comprehensively, take effective lecture and reading notes, or a combination of these factors. If the root cause of these academic difficulties is psychological, counseling can be a beneficial avenue for addressing them. This counseling approach focuses on resolving personal issues, with the expectation that resolving these issues will subsequently improve academic performance.

Student's personal problems

In 21st century, the realms where students might require assistance encompass both academic and personal challenges. "A problem arises whenever an individual finds themselves in a situation they wish to change but lacks the knowledge of how to transition." (Ellis, 1991). Specially trained individuals are essential for providing full-time counseling to students, a task too critical to be solely entrusted to enthusiastic amateurs, regardless of their competence (Brammer, 1998). Ensuring easy access to well-trained counselor can address the related the minor needs of the students before they escalate (Njau, 1993). It's important to recognize that normal developmental processes can lead to issues; it's not just the troubled or maladjusted students who require assistance. Academic personal and social aspects of secondary school life can be demoralizing for many students throughout their academic journey (Cottle, 1973). These adjustment difficulties can be challenging for students to express to their teachers.

The role of a teacher counselor

In accordance with Wangoi (1990), it has been acknowledged that the role of a counselor remains somewhat unclear and not fully embraced. To maximize the potential and abilities of students through guidance and counseling, it is imperative that these services begin early, starting from preschool and continuing through primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, as advocated by Newsome, Dowson, Jhon, and Njau (1973). Every student should have equal access to both education and counseling. Therefore, many writers argue that counseling and guidance should be internal part of the main curriculum. Wanjohi (1990), in his examination of students' perceptions of teacher-counselors, discovered that high school students favored counselors over teachers and parents. Tinsley's (1984) investigations into whether students' perceptions of counseling centers were affected by their titles, such as school counselors, teacher-counselors, or guidance and counseling offices, revealed that these titles influenced students' preferences for seeking help.

3. Methodology

This study was focused as mix method, the data were collected through the survey method as well as a questionnaire and interview from teacher, through mixed-method research techniques, more variables are used using a wide range of research procedures. By using this method, the researcher observes and measures the variables in this study.

This study discussed the research approach and process that were employed to look into the research problem. Examining the need assessment were impact on the academic performance at higher secondary school level. For this investigation, the following approaches were used: The research consist of mixed-methods methodology.

3.1 Delimitations

The present study was delimited to

- 1) only Skardu district in Gilgit Baltistan
- 2) only Public and higher secondary school level were included in the study
- 3) Both male and female of higher secondary school's students were the part of the study

3.2 Population

According to, a population is a set of complete people with specific characteristics. The target population of the study consisted of 4 public male and female higher secondary school in district Skardu. A total of 12 teachers and 118 students from public higher secondary school were the population of the study.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

According to, a sample is the set of individuals who actually take part in the research. The sample of the study were 4 public higher secondary schools in district Skardu which consist of 12 teachers and 118 students of higher secondary school students were sampled of the study. A simple random sampling technique was used for this research study.

3.4 Tools and data collections

After going through the relevant literature review, self-developed closed ended questionnaire for students and one structured interview for teachers were used. The researcher developed the questionnaire using a five point Likert scale based on the literature review and under the guidance of the supervisor, stated that a research tool is used by a scientist to find, measure, and examine the data. One closed-ended questionnaire for higher secondary school students and one structured interview protocol for higher secondary teachers.

3.5 Data analysis

The present study is mixed-method so involving both questionnaires (quantitative data) and interviews (qualitative data), the data analysis needs to integrate both types of data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Ensure all questionnaire responses are accurately entered into a statistical software (e.g., SPSS, Excel). Additionally, for interview questions collected data were analyzed by the statistical methods of frequency, percentage, mean score and t-test statistics.

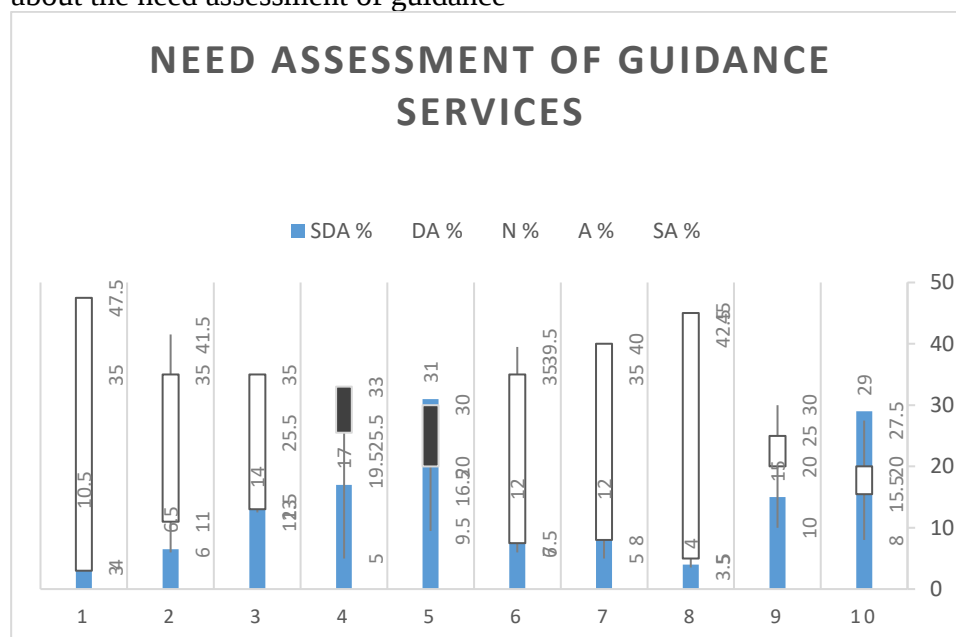
3.6 Reliability of Questionnaires

In order to evaluate the questionnaire's validity and reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot study on it. Four public higher secondary level schools were the sites of the pilot testing as it was necessary to check whether the objectives of the study were met or not. The questionnaire was finalized after ten experts provided their opinions based on the results of the pilot testing. On the questionnaire, errors related to some items were left omitted. Using Cronbach's alpha reliability was determined. The result of the Cronbach's alpha as shown in the table given below. Table 3.1

Total No of Items	Cronbach Alpha Reliability
30	0.975

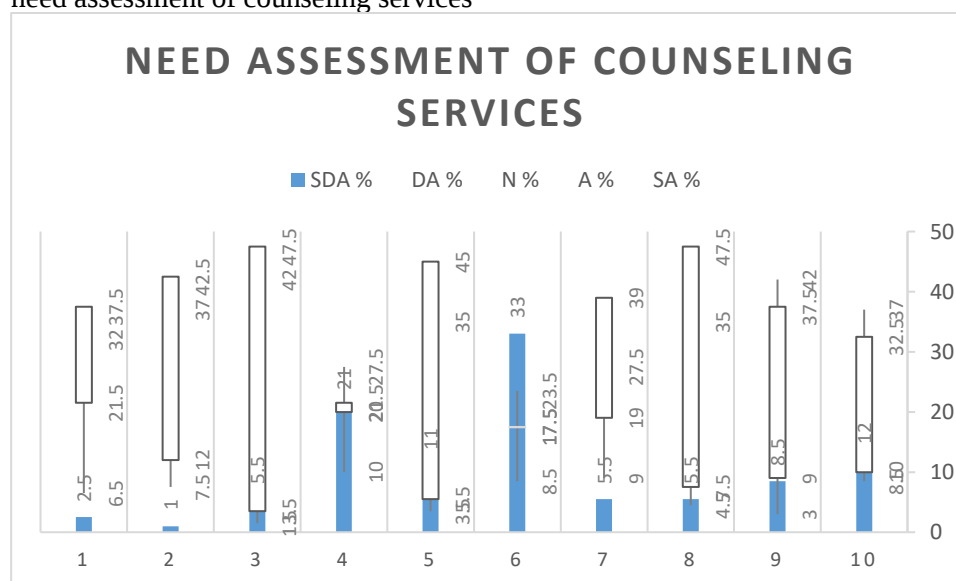
4. Results and discussions

This part covered up the responses ratio through data collection techniques as well the analysis interpretation of the data collection using study instruments which consist of SPSS version 29.0.2.0 was employed to analyze the dataset, utilizing mean, percentage, standard deviation, and correlation measures. The researcher organized the data by ranking statements in tabular format. Ratings ranged from,1 (indicating strongly disagree) to 5 (indicating strongly agree), with 1 representing the lowest achievable score in terms of mean and 5 representing highly achievable score in term of mean values. Figure 1.1 higher secondary student's responses about the need assessment of guidance



The figure 1.1 showed the need assessment of guidance services at higher secondary school level which were explored from 118 higher

secondary students by asking the statement:1,majority of students 47.5% strongly agree, 35% of students agree, 10.5% of students strongly disagree, 4% of students' neutral, and 3% of students were disagree, statement:2 has majority of students 41.5% agree, 35% of students strongly agree, 11% of students disagree, 6.5% of students strongly disagree, and 6% of students were neutral. Statement:3 has majority of students 35% strongly agree, 25.5% of students agree, 14% of students strongly disagree, 13% of students disagree, and 12.5% of students were neutral. Statement:4 has majority of students 33% disagree, 25.5% of students strongly agree, 19.5% of students agree, 17% of students strongly disagree, and 5% of students were neutral. Statement:5 has majority of students 31% strongly disagree, 30% of students disagree, 20% of students strongly agree, 16.5% of students agree, and 9.5% of students were neutral. Statement:6 has majority of students 39.5% agree, 35% of students strongly agree, 12% of students strongly disagree, 7.5% of students disagree, and 6% of students were neutral. Statement:7 has majority of students 40% strongly agree, 35% of students agree, 12% of students strongly disagree, 8% of students disagree and 5% of students were neutral. Statement:8 has majority of students 45% strongly agree, 42.5% of students agree, 5% of students disagree, 4% of students strongly disagree, and 3.5% of students were neutral. Statement:9 has majority of students 30% agree, 25% of students strongly agree, 20% of students disagree, 15% of students strongly disagree, and 10% of students were neutral. Statement:10 has majority of students 29% strongly disagree, 27.5% of students agree, 20% of students strongly agree, 15.5% of students disagree, and 8% of students were neutral. Figure 1.2 higher secondary school student's responses about the need assessment of counseling services



The figure 1.2 showed the need assessment of counseling services at higher secondary school level which were already explored from 118

students by asking statement:1 has majority of students 37.5 strongly agree, 32% of students agree, 21.5% of students disagree,6.5% of students' neutral, and 2.5% of students were strongly disagree. Statement:2 has majority of students 42.5% strongly agree, 37% of students agree, 12% of students disagree,7.5% of students' neutral, and 1% of students were strongly disagree. Statement:3 has majority of students 47.5% strongly agree, 42% of students agree, 5.5% of students strongly disagree,3.5% of students disagree, and 1.5% of students were neutral. Statement:4 has majority of students 27.5% agree, 21.5% of students strongly agree, 21% of students strongly disagree,20% of students disagree, and 10% of students were neutral. Statement:5 has majority of students 45% strongly agree, 35% of students agree, 11% of students strongly disagree,5.5% of students disagree, and 3.5% of students were neutral. Statement:6 has majority of students 33% strongly disagree, 23.5% of students agree, 17.5% of students strongly agree,17.5% of students agree, and 8.5% of students were strongly neutral. Statement:7 has majority of students 39% strongly agree, 27.5% of students agree, 19% of students disagree,5.5% of students strongly disagree, and 1% of students were neutral. Statement:8 has majority of students 47.5% strongly agree, 35% of students agree, 7.5% of students disagree,5.5% of students strongly disagree and 4.5% of students were neutral. Statement:9 has majority of students 42% agree, 37.5% of students strongly agree, 9% of students disagree,8.5% of students strongly disagree, and 3% of students were neutral. Statement:10 has majority of students 37% agree, 32.5% of students strongly agree, 12% of students strongly disagree,10% of students disagree, and 8.5% of students were neutral.

Teachers interview responses about the need assessment of guidance and counseling services at higher secondary school level

Figure 1.3

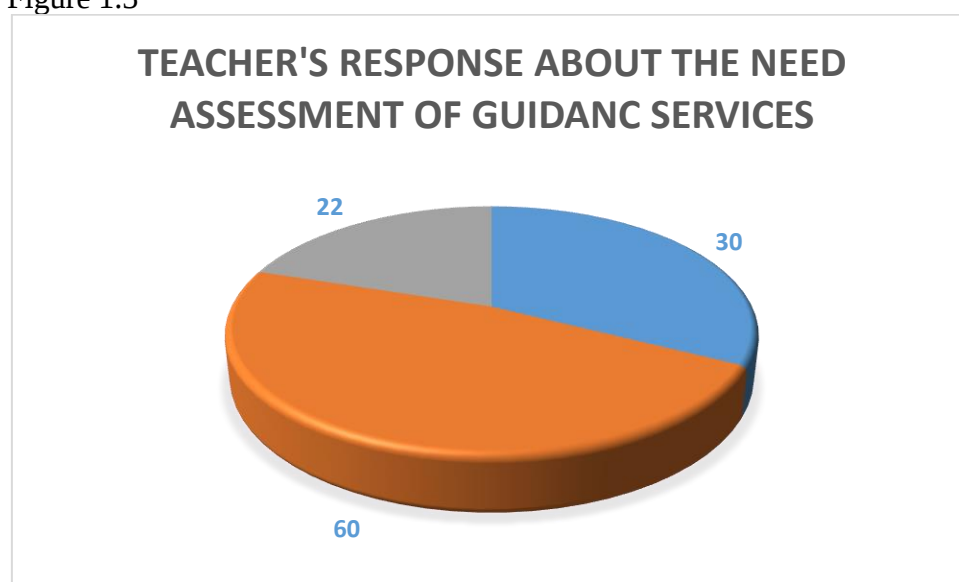


Figure 1.3 reveals that most teachers, about 60%, reported that their schools offer counseling services for higher secondary students. They believe these services have a positive effect on students' academic performance. However, 30% of teachers acknowledged that while guidance services are available, there is still a need for improvements to better support students. Additionally, 22% of teachers rated the overall availability of guidance and counseling services in their schools as an 8 out of 10, indicating that while the services are generally satisfactory, there is still room for enhancement.

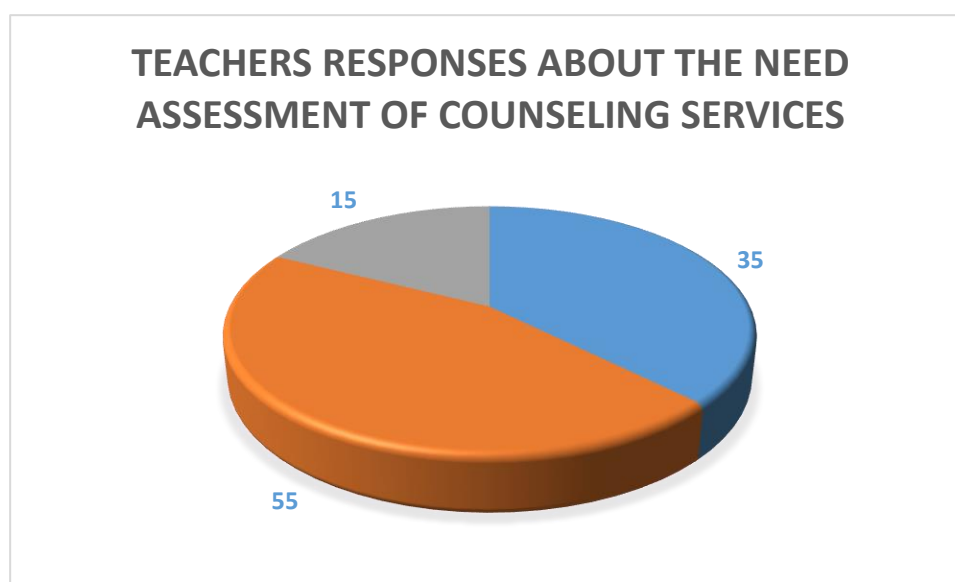


Figure 1.4 shows that 55% of teachers believe their institutions should offer career counseling services for higher secondary students to enhance their academic performance. They feel that such services are crucial for helping students make informed decisions about their future education and career paths. Additionally, 35% of teachers think that academic guidance should be a key focus in seminars, helping students choose the right fields or areas of study for university or other institutions after completing higher secondary school. Interestingly, 15% of teachers also reported that participating in career and academic guidance seminars not only benefits the students but also contributes to their own professional development.

Table 1.1 Chi square analysis

Variables	N	DF	(Sig)	Crit (χ^2)	Calc (χ^2)	Decision
Guidance Services	118	1	0.05	6.583	65.87	Accepted
Counseling services	118	1	0.05	4.181	53.63	Accepted

Table 1.1 presents the chi-square analysis for the study variables related to the need assessment of guidance and counseling services at the higher secondary school level. The critical value for the chi-square test is 6.583. If the calculated chi-square value exceeds this critical value, we reject the research question; if it falls below, we accept it. In our analysis, we determined whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis based on a comparison of the computed chi-square values with the critical value shown in the table. This process helped us draw conclusions about the effectiveness and needs of the guidance and counseling services under review.

Table 1.2 Guidance and counseling

S.No	Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Significant level (1 tail)
1	Guidance	0.773**	<.000
2	Counseling	0.938**	<001

Table 1.2 illustrates the correlation between the need assessment of guidance services, showing a correlation coefficient of 0.773. This indicates a moderately positive association between the need for guidance services and the overall effectiveness of these services. The p-value is less than 0.01, signifying that this relationship is statistically significant. This means that as the need for guidance and counseling services increases, so does the perceived effectiveness of these services. Additionally, the table also provides a correlation coefficient of the above given table with the value of 0.938 for counseling services, with a significance level of less than 0.001. As a result, this strong correlation suggests a very close and statistically significant relationship between the need assessment and the effectiveness of counseling services, further highlighting the importance of addressing and improving these services.

Table 1.3: Interview Analysis from teachers about the need assessment of guidance and counseling service.

S.no	Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Mental Health and Well-being	10	20.95
2	Academic Stress and Performance Anxiety	25	60.23
3	Family and Peer Relationships	5	18.22

Table 1.3 reveals that most teachers feel that the mental health and well-being their higher secondary schools is on the rise, and they believe this has positively influenced student behavior and learning. Many teachers also noted that family and peer relationships having these guidance services available helps foster a more supportive and friendly classroom environment.

Additionally, some teachers rated the academic stress and performance reflecting a strong sense of satisfaction with the current level of support, while also acknowledging areas where further improvements could be made. This feedback highlights the ongoing impact and importance of counseling services in enhancing the overall educational experience for students.

Table 4.10 Enhance the need assessment of guidance and counseling services

S.no	Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Career guidance and decisions making	20	50.10
2	Personal development and self-identity	4	40.80
3	Assess to resource and support system	6	9.10

Table 1.4 shows that most teachers are actively conducting seminars on career counseling at the higher secondary school level. Many teachers have observed that these Career guidance and decisions makings help students gain a clearer understanding of the future opportunities available in various academic fields. Additionally, Personal development and self-identity highlight the potential career paths but also emphasize the importance of guidance and counseling. By providing this information, the seminars contribute to students' awareness of how crucial these services are for their academic and professional development.

5. Findings and discussion

The results of this need assessment highlight the critical importance of prioritizing guidance and counseling services in higher secondary schools across District Skardu. Clearly defined research objectives have guided this investigation, helping achieve its intended goals effectively. By analyzing factual evidence gathered during the study, we've been able to draw meaningful and comprehensive conclusions. Generalizing these findings enhances their reliability and validity, making them more applicable and understandable to a wider audience, especially within educational settings. These conclusions serve as key outcomes of our study. Below, we present the results aligned with the hypotheses established for this research.

Hypothesis 1:

The first hypothesis was that there is no significant impact of need of guidance services at higher secondary school level which was tested by statistical method using chi square test and it was found that χ^2 value is 6.583, the correlation value was 0.773 and the significant level was $<.000$ which means that it is statistically significant and moderate negative correlation.

6. Summary

The need assessment of guidance and counseling services at the higher secondary school level in District Skardu aimed to evaluate the need

assessment of guidance and counseling services and pinpoint areas needing improvement. The initial findings reveal a significant gap in the availability of adequate guidance and counseling services. Many students face challenges related to academics, personal issues, and career planning, but there are limited resources to support them. Cultural factors and societal norms may also contribute to the stigma around mental health, making it harder for students to seek help when they need it. The assessment underscores the importance of implementing comprehensive counseling programs tailored to the diverse needs of students. This includes training school counselors, raising awareness about mental health, and building partnerships with community organizations to strengthen support services.

7. Conclusions

In wrapping up the need assessment, it's clear that prioritizing guidance and counseling services at the higher secondary school level in District Skardu is crucial. By tackling the challenges identified and implementing focused interventions, schools can significantly enhance their support for students' academic, personal, and career growth. This will help nurture a healthier and more resilient student community. The assessment also sheds light on the challenges and opportunities in supporting students' mental health and well-being, offering valuable insights through a thorough evaluation of current services and feedback from stakeholders. The assessment underscores the urgent need for enhanced guidance and counseling services in higher secondary schools in District Skardu. Students face a myriad of academic, personal, and career-related challenges, and the current level of support available is inadequate to meet their needs.

8. Recommendations

- 1) Engage school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders to get a comprehensive understanding of the current needs.
- 2) Conduct focus group discussions and interviews with students, teachers, and parents to identify specific needs, expectations, and gaps in the existing counseling services.
- 3) Review the existing guidance and counseling services in schools to assess their effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses.
- 4) Check the availability of trained counselors, infrastructure (like counseling rooms), and resources (like career guidance materials)
- 5) Recommend training programs for teachers and existing counselors to enhance their skills in student guidance and counseling.
- 6) If the need is significant, advocate for the hiring of qualified counseling professionals in school

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