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## STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND SATISFACTION TOWARD ACADEMIC ADVISING

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### ABSTRACT

Academic advising is “a situation in which institutional representative gives insight or direction to the college student. It leads to fruitful improvement in learning experience. It helps students to initially grasp and subsequently master learning outcomes. Student satisfaction may provide an indicator of an optimally functioning academic advising system. The findings may shed some light, and provide some help to college leaders and academic advisers to improve and minimize the obstacles facing the academic advising system. This is a descriptive cross-sectional study, constructed to explore the students' Knowledge, attitude, and satisfaction toward the academic advising system, at the faculty of the Medicine at University of Tabuk during the academic year 2021-2022. Eighty-nine students participated voluntarily in this study (58.4% were male and 41.6% were female). Thirty-three percent from preclinical years (years 2 and 3) and 67 % from clinical years (years 4, 5, and 6). In summary, the students showed a low level of knowledge (3.11) (Neutral score 3), a fair attitude (3.37) poor satisfaction (2.91), and an overall low rating of academic advising (3.12). Low student satisfaction with academic advising is probably due to their lack of understanding of the functions of academic advising. other elements such as advisor unavailability and a lack of assistance. The results of this study will provide college leaders and academic advisers with valuable insight to improve academic advising, enhance student knowledge and attitude, and increase overall satisfaction and will serve as a basis for a large study evaluating obstacles hindering academic advising.

**Keywords:** Academic advising, Satisfaction, Attitude, Advising knowledge.

### INTRODUCTION

Academic advising is “a situation in which institutional representative gives insight or direction to the college student about academic, social, or personal. It leads to fruitful improvement in learning experience”. It's one of the most important tools that help students to initially grasp and subsequently master learning outcomes (Tewary *et al.*, 2020). With sufficient training, providing enough time, and application of effective communication, academic advising proved to represent a mutual benefit for the advisees and advisors (Chan *et al.*, 2019).

The aspects of academic advising are broad and include but are not limited to helping students to transition from general school to medical school curriculum and guiding them in adopting new study skills, improving their academic performance and grades, possessing students with the necessary skills to cope with bio-psychosocial stressors, helping them to explore career and hobbies interests, work with them to planning for research opportunities, and prepare them for board examination and registration process and prepare them thoroughly for residency

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interviews (Santiesteban *et al.*, 2022). Students usually rate academic advising services from their assigned advisors positively, this is particularly females and higher rank students (4), factors improve students if the advisor devotes sufficient time, access, and to counseling and solving their active problems (Issrani *et al.*, 2020).

Many obstacles may preclude the successful implementation of academic advising, these lie in equilateral triangular aspects, first, the side of the advisor, second the advisee, and third the administrative section. The first advisor side obstacle is; failure to identify student's needs and their abilities, with consequent failure to align directions with their needs and abilities, lack advisor training which manifest in poor instructions and regulations, discrimination between students in any aspect of gender, age, social class may break the confidence between the two sides and have a deleterious effect on the process, from the administrative sides obstacles are mainly organizational and include; disturbed time table and lack of time for the guidance process, failure to familiarise the advisors and advisees with the university pieces of evidence, policies, and procedures, and failure to provide incentives for hard workers advisors (Etway, 2017).

Advisers' role in students' development and their academic success is crucial, faculty perceptions of successful academic advising from their side are numerous factors, starting from the most important factor which is mastering knowledge about rules and regulations of the college and general educational philosophy to provide students with information about course selection and academic problems, policies and procedures, long term goals and career plans, available to be approached by the students when they need them, should possess excellent communication skills and approach, has good moral values and legitimacy to keeps students information's and avoid using them in unscrupulously (Harrison, 2009).

Universities and colleges should develop effective advising systems because a proper academic advising program enhances students' success, increases retention, minimizes attrition, and helps students overcome academic obstacles, and choose their future careers. Advisors can help students meet their academic needs by using this information (Gudep, 2007). In the developmental type of academic advising, the students actively contribute to the decision-making process, the role of the academic advisor is a facilitator (Crookston, 1972), and the advisor provides the student with pieces of advice on how to handle the many difficulties that can occur in an education and career context.

Student satisfaction may provide an indicator of an optimally functioning academic advising system. This study was conducted to explore the students' Knowledge, attitude, and satisfaction toward the academic advising system and discover some obstacles facing our academic advising system. The findings of this study may shed some light, become a base for a large study, and provide some help to college leaders and academic advisors to improve and minimize the obstacles facing the academic advising system.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study, constructed to explore the students' Knowledge, attitude, and satisfaction toward the academic advising system, at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Tabuk during the academic year 2021-2022.



### *Academic Advising System*

The faculty of medicine at the University of Tabuk constructed a developmental advising system. Every group of students is assigned to a specific advisor (faculty member). The advisor is required to meet with his group once a month to discuss academic progress, exam results, research activity, and social barriers that affect academic progress. In addition to the advisor's weekly office hours, to facilitate individual contact with students. Additionally, electronic communication via the Blackboard network, email, or social media is an option for the student and adviser. The academic adviser is in charge of sending the meeting report to the academic advising committee through the committee email. There is a specific clinic to provide psychological support to the students. The advising committee is responsible for following the academic advising process as a whole.

### *Study Population*

The medical students at the University of Tabuk voluntarily responded to the questionnaire sent to them via University email. In the study, the students in years 2 and 3 were classified as preclinical students, while those in years 4, 5, and 6 were considered at their clinical stage of learning. Due to their limited exposure to academic advising at the time of the study, students in the preparatory year were excluded from the study.

### *Study Instrument*

The study used a self-administered questionnaire that was adopted after a thorough review of the literature on academic advising and contained certain questions from validated questionnaires (Zimmerman & Mokma, 2004; Al-Asmi & Thumiki, 2014). To investigate the student's knowledge, attitude, and satisfaction with academic advising, we selected 13 items and grouped them into three subscales. The instrument also includes two demographic items about academic year and gender; however, we omitted one item about student Grade point average (GPA) during the piloting phase due to concerns of some students. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale, with the options being strongly agreed, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. After that, the instrument underwent a thorough review by a group of faculty advisors, two expert medical educators, and an outside reviewer from Al-Kharj College of Medicine. The questionnaire was subsequently piloted with 30 students and the results of the alpha Cronbach's was found to be (0.904).

### *Data Analysis*

Data were gathered and analyzed using SPSS (IBM Inc. Chicago, Illinois) version 28. The means and standard deviation were reflected using descriptive statistics. To demonstrate the statistical significance, the independent T-test was performed, and to be significant, the P value (*PV*) was set at 0.05. The questionnaire's internal consistency and reliability were evaluated using the Alpha-Cronbach test.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**



Eighty-nine students participated voluntarily in this study (58.4% were male and 41.6% were female). Thirty-three percent from preclinical years (years 2 and 3) and 67% from clinical years (years 4, 5, and 6). The characteristics of the responders are shown in (Table 1).

The mean of the student's response to the total survey is 3.12, (A neutral score is 3). There is no statistically significant difference between male and female responses to the total survey (Male Students 3.25 and female students 2.93, PV 0.209, as shown in (Table 2). The total response to the survey sub-scale was as follows, Knowledge 3.11, Attitude 3.37, and satisfaction 2.91. The comparison between male and female responses to the survey subscale is shown in (Table 3) and the Comparison between preclinical and clinical year students' responses to the survey subscale is shown in (Table 4). The detailed students' responses to the survey are shown in (Table 5). In summary, the students showed a low level of knowledge, a fair attitude poor satisfaction, and an overall low rating of academic advising.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the responders (N 89)

Responder	N of responders	Percentage
Male	52	58.4%
Female	37	41.6%
Preclinical year students	29	32.6%
Clinical years students	60	67.4%

**Table 2.** The mean and standard deviation of the student's response to the total survey (N 89).

Responder	Mean score $\pm$ SD	Neutral score	PV
Total Students	3.12 ( $\pm$ SD 0.89)	3	
Male Students	3.25 $\pm$ (SD 0.83)	3	0.209
Female students	2.93 $\pm$ (SD 0.95)	3	
Preclinical years students	2.94 $\pm$ (SD 0.93)	3	0.626
Clinical years students	3.2 $\pm$ (SD 0.87)	3	

**Table 3.** Comparison between male and female responses to the survey subscale

Subscale	Male Mean score $\pm$ SD	Female Mean score ( $\pm$ SD)	PV	Total Responders Mean score ( $\pm$ SD)	Neutral Mean score
Knowledge	3.18 $\pm$ 1.02	3.02 $\pm$ 1.97	0.199	3.11 $\pm$ 1.09	3
Attitude	3.44 $\pm$ 0.77	3.28 $\pm$ 0.95	0.213	3.37 $\pm$ 0.85	3
Satisfaction	3.16 $\pm$ 1.10	2.57 $\pm$ 1.95	0.38	2.91 $\pm$ 1.19	3

**Table 4.** Comparison between preclinical and clinical years students' responses to survey subscale

Subscale	Preclinical years Mean score $\pm$ SD	Clinical year Mean score $\pm$ SD	PV	Neutral Mean score
Knowledge	2.96 $\pm$ 1.24	3.19 $\pm$ 1.01	0.198	3
Attitude	3.16 $\pm$ 0.71	3.48 $\pm$ 0.89	0.089	3

Satisfaction	2.77±1.19	2.98±1.19	0.840	3
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**Table 5.** Detailed students' responses to the survey (N 89)

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean score±SD
<b>Knowledge subscale</b>						
1- The role of academic advising is to follow up on the student's progress throughout their academic years.	8	7	22	33	19	3.54±1.18
2- Academic advising Increases the students' understanding of their roles and responsibilities.	11	13	26	24	15	3.21±1.25
3- Academic advising helps students to plan their academic careers.	18	24	21	12	14	2.78±1.35
4- Academic advising assists the students in developing their educational goals.	12	19	32	16	10	2.92±1.18
<b>Attitude subscale</b>						
1- I respect the appointments of my advising session with my academic advisor.	2	17	29	20	21	3.46±1.11
2- I discuss important information that affects my academic performance with my advisor.	18	20	18	20	13	2.89±1.36
3- I provide true and accurate information to my academic advisor regarding my academic performance challenges hindering my progress.	7	6	25	22	29	3.67±1.22
4- I am willing to share the social obstacles that may negatively affect my academic performance with my academic advisor.	10	13	15	27	24	3.47±1.33
<b>Satisfaction subscale</b>						
1- My advisor is usually available when I need assistance.	21	9	19	25	15	3.04±1.42
2- My advisor encourages me to achieve my educational goals.	22	12	22	20	13	2.89±1.39
3- I am satisfied with the amount of time in each advising session.	12	19	23	19	16	3.09±1.30
4- My academic advisor provides me with accurate information that helps me to improve my academic performance.	16	14	30	17	12	2.94±1.27
5- I am generally satisfied with the quality of academic advising I received at the college.	28	15	22	12	12	2.61±1.40



This study aimed to explore students' knowledge, attitude, and satisfaction toward academic advising conducted in our college. The student's satisfaction with academic advising may serve as a very clear judging requirement of how well the academic advising system functions (Chathaparampil, 1970).

### *Knowledge*

To determine the effectiveness and importance of academic advising, our study explored the students' knowledge of the roles of academic advising and their perception of the function of academic advising.

Our study demonstrated low students' perception of the roles and knowledge of academic advising (mean of the total cohort of males and females 3.11) without statistically significant differences between male and female responses. Contrary to what has been asserted by Saba'Ayon (2015) in her study at a Lebanese University, students seem to be aware of the importance of the advising process and academic advisors in their university careers but the academic advising they received did not match with their expectations. Students in the clinical years showed a slightly higher perception of knowledge toward academic advising than those in preclinical years without statistically significant differences, and this was reflected in their satisfaction. The importance of the 12 functions of academic advising and how satisfied students are with it were both examined by Smith and Allen (2006), the findings showed that while students regarded each function as extremely important, their satisfaction with advising did not match their comprehension of the roles that academic advising plays. Additionally, they found that while students' perceptions of the significance of academic advising were influenced by their gender, age, academic level, and status, their satisfaction with it was unaffected. As long as the students are aware of the functions and outcomes of academic advising, academic advising can be student-driven (Tewary *et al.*, 2020). This finding might imply that to maximize the value of our advising system, we need more awareness sessions for both the advisee and the advisor to improve their understanding of the function and roles of academic advising.

### *Attitude*

Our students showed a fair attitude toward academic advising (Mean score of 3.37). The male students showed slightly higher rates of attitude compared to Their female counterparts, without statistically significant differences (Mean score 3.44 vasa 3.28). However, Saba'Ayon (2015), discovered that the participant's attitude was unaffected by the students' gender. In a study by Guep *et al.* (2007), 482 undergraduate Emirati students from various colleges were asked how they felt about academic advising, in addition, the students noted that their advisors had a positive attitude toward their issues and enjoyed their sessions.

### *Satisfaction*

Our study showed that the female students exhibited low ratings and poor satisfaction toward the academic advising (Mean score 2.57) in comparison with the male students (Mean score 3.16) but the difference is not statically significant, this finding is contrary to what has been asserted by Issrani *et al.* (2020) when they found the females are more satisfied with academic



advising in compare to male with a statically significant difference. In contrast, Ismail *et al.* (2021) found in their study that female students showed higher satisfaction than male students without a statistically significant difference. in the literature, there is no clear consensus regarding academic advising satisfaction and student gender, but other factors may influence the student's satisfaction like how the advising session is delivered and the academic adviser's Knowledge (Elliott & Shin, 2002; Wolfe, 2016; Tobi-David *et al.*, 2018), sympathy (Ismail *et al.*, (2021) and positive relation (Hamed & Hussin, 2015). Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) suggested individual student characteristics such as age, and GPA may affect student satisfaction. In our college, the males and females receive the same type of academic advising, but the difference is that the female advisors take the female students, and the male advisors take the males. The other difference is the number of students for every advisor it differs between male and female advisors due shortage of female advisors in comparison to female students. However, Nemeth (2017) found that Female students do not have a preference for working with an advisor of a specific gender.

The students of the clinical years showed slightly higher satisfaction compared to the students of the preclinical years (Mean score 3.2 vasa 2.94) without statically significant difference, and this is similar to what has been agreed with the results of Issrani *et al.* (2020), which showed that students' ratings of academic advising tend to improve as they climb the academic ladder. Moreover, this can be explained by, the students in the clinical years and near the time of graduation becoming more eager to plan their postgraduate careers. However, Suvedi *et al.* (2015) contradicted our result when they concluded that, junior female students were happier with academic advising than their older female and male counterparts. Ali *et al.* (2015), and his colleagues have shown that when compared to students in the clinical years, those in the pre-clinical years gave their mentors higher ratings for the role-modeling components of mentoring. To discover the factors that hinder the student's satisfaction with academic advising, the survey contains an open question to students about their suggestions to improve academic advising. Some students prefer individual academic sessions more than group academic sessions, though the group advising session is considered an effective method of academic advising as suggested by Battin (2014). Holland (2020) and his colleagues have mentioned that students are in favor of individual academic sessions. In our academic advising system, the choice of individual or group discussion is open to be arranged between the academic advisor and his group; however, the advisor has office hours that can facilitate students' contact. Some students suggested giving them the option to choose their academic adviser rather than having one assigned to them without their consent. However, this will result in a variation in the number of students paired with each advisor. Although our academic advising system recommends that the advisor schedule one meeting every month and the adviser has weekly office hours, some students complain about the advisor's unavailability or difficulty contacting them. Some students feel that their advisor's feedback primarily takes the form of criticism rather than supportive advice.

### *Study Limitation*

Despite the small number of participants in our study, the study shed some light to explore our system and improve the outcome. Moreover, they will serve as a piloting base for a larger comprehensive study with a large number of participants.



## CONCLUSION

Low student satisfaction with academic advising is probably because of their lack of understanding of the functions of academic advising. Other elements such as advisor unavailability and a lack of assistance. The results of this study will provide college leaders and academic advisors with valuable insight to improve academic advising, enhance student knowledge and attitude, and increase overall satisfaction and will serve as a basis for a large study evaluating obstacles hindering academic advising.

### *Recommendation*

The awareness of the students toward academic advising and conducting multi-college studies to explore academic advising from the advisor and advisee perspective should be increased.

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