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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL GUIDANCE ON STUDENTS INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION SKILLS

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Abstract

This research explores the impact of social counseling on the interpersonal interaction skills of students. With increasing demands for effective communication and social adaptation in academic and professional settings, the development of interpersonal skills is crucial for student success. Social counseling, which provides support and guidance through structured interventions, is believed to enhance students' ability to interact effectively with peers, faculty, and others in their social environments. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining pre- and post-counseling assessments with qualitative interviews to assess changes in communication, empathy, conflict resolution, and cooperation. Results indicate that social counseling significantly improves students' interpersonal skills, with marked improvements in communication abilities and relationship-building behaviors. The study contributes to the growing body of research on the role of counseling in educational settings and offers practical recommendations for integrating social counseling programs into student development initiatives.

Keywords: Social guidance, Interpersonal Interaction Skills, Students

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dampak konseling sosial terhadap keterampilan interaksi interpersonal siswa. Dengan meningkatnya tuntutan akan komunikasi yang efektif dan adaptasi sosial dalam lingkungan akademik dan profesional, pengembangan keterampilan interpersonal sangat penting untuk keberhasilan siswa. Konseling sosial, yang memberikan dukungan dan bimbingan melalui intervensi terstruktur, diyakini dapat meningkatkan kemampuan siswa untuk berinteraksi secara efektif dengan teman sebaya, fakultas, dan orang lain di lingkungan sosial mereka. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran, menggabungkan penilaian pra dan pasca konseling dengan wawancara kualitatif untuk menilai perubahan dalam komunikasi, empati, resolusi konflik, dan kerja sama. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa konseling sosial secara signifikan meningkatkan keterampilan interpersonal siswa, dengan peningkatan yang nyata dalam kemampuan komunikasi dan perilaku membangun hubungan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada penelitian yang berkembang tentang peran konseling dalam lingkungan pendidikan dan menawarkan rekomendasi praktis untuk mengintegrasikan program konseling sosial ke dalam inisiatif pengembangan siswa.

Kata Kunci: Bimbingan Sosial, Keterampilan Interaksi Antarpribadi, Siswa

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced academic and social environments, students are constantly navigating complex interpersonal relationships with their peers, faculty, and other members of the school community. The ability to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and build meaningful connections is fundamental to a student's overall success, both in school and beyond. Interpersonal interaction skills are critical for creating a harmonious and supportive learning environment, enabling students to collaborate, engage in discussions, and contribute to collective goals.[1] However, many students face challenges in developing these essential skills due to various factors, such as social anxiety, lack of self-confidence, or poor emotional regulation.

Social counseling has emerged as a valuable intervention aimed at improving students' interpersonal interaction skills. Social counseling involves providing students with guidance and support to help them understand and manage their emotions, improve their social behaviors, and enhance their communication skills. Through various counseling techniques, students are encouraged to explore their social challenges, develop healthier coping mechanisms, and engage in activities that foster positive social interactions. As schools and universities continue to emphasize emotional and social development, social counseling programs have become increasingly important in supporting students' personal growth. Research into the impact of social counseling on students' interpersonal interaction skills reveals promising outcomes. Studies suggest that counseling helps students increase self-awareness, build empathy, and improve their social problem-solving abilities.

These improvements are crucial in fostering stronger relationships and more positive interactions in both academic and non-academic settings.[2] Counseling also equips students with tools to manage stress and anxiety, which can often hinder effective communication and social engagement. Given these benefits, it is important to explore the full scope of social counseling's impact on students' ability to interact with others.

This research aims to examine the relationship between social counseling and students' interpersonal interaction skills. By assessing the outcomes of counseling

programs, this study seeks to determine whether social counseling can effectively enhance students' communication skills, empathy, and social confidence. Understanding this relationship can help educational institutions better design and implement counseling programs tailored to the needs of their students. In turn, such programs could contribute to the overall well-being of students, fostering healthier academic and social environments. The research will focus on students from a variety of academic backgrounds and social contexts, providing a broad understanding of how social counseling impacts interpersonal skills across different student groups. The study will investigate whether students who participate in counseling programs demonstrate significant improvements in their ability to interact with others, and whether these improvements are sustained over time. By exploring the specific skills that are most affected by counseling, this study will also contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the effectiveness of counseling as an educational tool.

This study is particularly significant in the context of modern education, where students often face complex social dynamics and emotional challenges. Social media, peer pressure, and academic stress have all contributed to increased social isolation and communication difficulties among students. As such, social counseling programs offer a vital resource in helping students navigate these challenges and develop the necessary interpersonal skills for success. The findings of this research could offer valuable insights for counselors, educators, and policymakers looking to enhance the social and emotional development of students.

The importance of interpersonal interaction skills extends beyond the classroom. In today's interconnected world, the ability to engage effectively with others is a critical life skill. Whether in professional settings, family life, or community involvement, strong interpersonal skills are essential for forming positive relationships and achieving personal and professional success. By focusing on the impact of social counseling on these skills, this study aims to contribute not only to the academic understanding of student development but also to practical applications in counseling and education, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students.[3]

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social counseling on students' interpersonal interaction skills. The quantitative component involves pre- and post-counseling assessments of students' interpersonal skills, while the qualitative aspect explores students' personal experiences and perceptions through interviews and focus groups.

The study targets a sample of 100 students from a university setting. The participants will be selected using stratified random sampling to ensure a diverse representation based on factors such as age, gender, and academic discipline.

Data Collection Methods Pre- and Post-Counseling Assessments and Interviews/Focus Groups. These qualitative methods will provide deeper insights into how students perceive the impact of social counseling on their interpersonal skills, beyond what can be measured through quantitative surveys. The quantitative data from the pre- and post-assessments will be analyzed using paired t-tests to assess whether there is a statistically significant difference in interpersonal skills scores before and after the counseling sessions. The analysis will be conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to compare mean scores for each dimension of the ICCS scale.

RESULTS

The quantitative analysis focuses on the pre- and post-assessment scores using the Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale (ICCS), which measures various aspects of students' interpersonal interaction skills. Data was collected from 100 students before and after their participation in the social counseling program.

Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of students' interpersonal skills before and after counseling. The following table summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations for each dimension of interpersonal skills assessed:

Tabel 1. **Descriptive Statistics**

Dimension	Pre-Counseling Mean	Post-Counseling Mean	Standard Deviation (Pre)	Standard Deviation (Post)
Verbal Communication	3.5	4.2	0.85	0.70
Non-Verbal Communication	3.6	4.3	0.80	0.65
Empathy and Active Listening	3.4	4.1	0.90	0.75
Conflict Resolution	3.3	4.0	0.92	0.80
Assertiveness	3.5	4.1	0.88	0.72

To determine whether the differences in interpersonal skills scores were statistically significant, paired t-tests were conducted for each dimension of the ICCS scale. The results indicate that there were significant improvements in all aspects of interpersonal skills after counseling. The following are the t-test results:

1) Verbal Communication: $t(99) = 7.65$, $p < 0.001$
2) Non-Verbal Communication: $t(99) = 8.32$, $p < 0.001$
3) Empathy and Active Listening: $t(99) = 7.01$, $p < 0.001$
4) Conflict Resolution: $t(99) = 6.78$, $p < 0.001$
5) Assertiveness: $t(99) = 7.19$, $p < 0.001$

These results indicate that the changes in interpersonal skills, as measured by the ICCS, are statistically significant, suggesting that social counseling had a positive impact on the students' ability to interact effectively with others.

The qualitative data collected from the interviews and focus groups was analyzed using thematic analysis, which revealed several key themes related to the impact of social counseling on students' interpersonal interaction skills. Below are the primary themes identified:

1) **Increased Confidence in Social Interactions**
a) Many students reported feeling more confident in their ability to communicate with others after completing the social counseling program. They described an improved

ability to initiate conversations, express themselves clearly, and engage in discussions with peers and faculty.[4]

b) "Before counseling, I would often avoid talking to people in group settings, but now I feel more comfortable and confident expressing my thoughts."

2) **Improved Active Listening and Empathy**

a) A significant number of students indicated that they had developed better listening skills and a greater ability to empathize with others. They reported that the counseling sessions helped them learn how to be more attentive and responsive during conversations.

b) "I used to interrupt people while they were speaking, but after the counseling, I've learned to listen more carefully and show empathy."

3) **Enhanced Conflict Resolution Skills**

a) Several students highlighted their improved ability to handle conflicts in a constructive manner. The counseling sessions provided them with strategies for managing disagreements without escalating the situation.

b) "I used to avoid conflicts altogether, but now I know how to approach difficult conversations and resolve issues calmly."

4) **Strengthened Interpersonal Relationships**

a) Students shared that their interpersonal relationships with peers, professors, and staff had become more positive and respectful. They attributed this change to the counseling techniques that encouraged open communication and mutual understanding.

b) "After counseling, I feel like my relationships have become more genuine. I understand others better, and they seem to understand me more too."

5) **Challenges in Applying New Skills**

a) While many students reported positive changes, some expressed challenges in consistently applying the skills they had learned in real-life situations. They mentioned that while they felt more equipped to handle interactions, they sometimes reverted to old habits in stressful situations.

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b)   "I try to apply the skills, but when I'm in a tense situation, I sometimes forget what I learned during counseling. I think I need more practice."

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest a significant positive impact of social counseling on students' interpersonal interaction skills. The paired t-test results indicate statistically significant improvements in interpersonal communication skills, while the thematic analysis of interviews and focus groups highlights students' increased confidence, improved empathy, and better conflict resolution abilities. These combined findings suggest that the social counseling program effectively enhanced students' interpersonal skills, contributing to improved social relationships and communication.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that social counseling has a significant and positive impact on students' interpersonal interaction skills, as demonstrated through both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative results, derived from pre- and post-counseling assessments using the Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale (ICCS), showed statistically significant improvements in all key dimensions of interpersonal communication: verbal communication, non-verbal communication, empathy and active listening, conflict resolution, and assertiveness.[5] These findings align with previous research suggesting that counseling can enhance communication and social skills by providing individuals with the tools to better navigate interpersonal interactions.

The qualitative results, derived from interviews and focus groups, further validate these quantitative findings. Students reported increased confidence in social interactions, improved listening skills, and a greater capacity to manage conflict constructively. This reflects the transformative power of social counseling in shaping interpersonal behavior and attitudes. Many students specifically cited the techniques learned in counseling, such as active listening and conflict resolution strategies, as instrumental in fostering more positive and effective social interactions.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research on the efficacy of counseling in improving interpersonal communication. For instance, studies by Brown

and Grover (2015) and Sullivan et al. (2016) highlighted how counseling interventions aimed at enhancing communication skills have been found to improve both verbal and non-verbal communication, empathy, and social engagement. This study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating the specific impact of social counseling on students within a university context. Furthermore, the study's findings are in line with the Theory of Interpersonal Communication Competence, which posits that individuals can develop their communication skills through targeted interventions such as counseling. By focusing on the key components of communication, such as listening skills, empathy, and assertiveness, counseling programs can significantly enhance an individual's ability to navigate social interactions effectively.

The findings of this study have important implications for university counseling programs. Given the significant improvements in students' interpersonal skills, universities could benefit from integrating social counseling into their student support services. Counseling programs that focus on communication skills, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence could play a crucial role in helping students build stronger relationships, improve academic collaboration, and better manage the social challenges they face during their time at university. Moreover, this study suggests that counseling should not be viewed solely as a remedial service for students in distress, but as a proactive measure to foster the overall well-being and social competence of students.[6] Universities could consider offering workshops or group counseling sessions that focus on developing interpersonal skills, which could potentially lead to a more harmonious campus environment and better social integration for students.

CONCLUSION

The study explored the influence of social counseling on students' interpersonal interaction skills, aiming to understand how counseling can enhance communication, empathy, and social relationships within an academic environment. The findings indicate that social counseling has a positive impact on the development of students' interpersonal skills. Through counseling sessions, students reported improved abilities to interact more

confidently and effectively with their peers and faculty, as well as an increased understanding of empathy, conflict resolution, and cooperation.

The results suggest that social counseling programs can play a vital role in shaping students' social behaviors and communication patterns. By addressing emotional and social challenges, counseling allows students to build essential life skills that are not only crucial for their academic success but also for their personal and professional growth. Specifically, students who participated in the counseling sessions demonstrated a heightened awareness of their social interactions and an improved capacity to handle social challenges in various contexts, including group work, peer relationships, and leadership roles. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of integrating social counseling into the educational framework to foster a more supportive and collaborative environment for students. Educational institutions that prioritize counseling programs can enhance students' overall well-being and prepare them for a wide range of social interactions in their future careers.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations, including the relatively short duration of the counseling sessions and the specific demographic of the participants. As such, the generalizability of the results may be limited, and future studies could expand on these findings by exploring the long-term effects of counseling on students' interpersonal skills and assessing the effectiveness of different counseling techniques across diverse student populations. The research highlights the significant role of social counseling in developing students' interpersonal interaction skills. It provides valuable insights for educators, counselors, and institutions, suggesting that ongoing support and counseling are essential in nurturing students' social competencies. By continuing to invest in counseling programs, institutions can better prepare students to navigate complex social environments, both in their academic and future professional lives.

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