

The Level of Psychological Services Provided to Students with Disabilities at Najran University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

At Najran University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the degree of psychological assistance offered to students with impairments was the focus of this study. Additionally, it found any statistical variations based on the respondent's characteristics and gender. With a university survey, the study employed a descriptive methodology. A stratified random sample of (139) participants, including (50) disabled male and female bachelor's degree students at Najran University and (89) male and female faculty members working in the psychological counseling departments at Najran University during the second semester of the academic year 2022–2023, served as the study sample. Data was gathered using an electronic questionnaire with 12 items after ensuring its validity and reliability. According to the study sample, the findings indicated a modest degree of accessibility for psychological services offered to students with disabilities at Najran University. According to the responses of the study sample members, it was also discovered that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of accessibility of psychological services offered to students with disabilities at Najran University as a result of the variables of gender and respondent type. The study recommended the need for Najran University, represented by the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Central Advising Unit to adopt a strategic development plan to improve the quality of psychological services provided to students with disabilities to contribute to reducing their psychological problems and how to overcome them.

Keywords: psychological services, students with disabilities, Najran University

Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has paid great attention to education from the beginning of the twenty-first century until now. Education constitutes the cornerstone of the wheel of growth and development. Therefore, the Kingdom seeks to invest in human resources among citizens by providing appropriate and free education to all of high quality. Among the groups that the state has focused on educating and caring for are people with disabilities, especially those who are amenable to university education, enabling them to study in the Kingdom's universities and colleges and providing them with the necessary support, to achieve a high ability to integrate and adapt (Al-Ghanimi & Al-Hassani, 2019). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has considered the provision of services to individuals with impairments. The most compelling illustration of this concern in disabled persons is the Kingdom's Vision 2030. One of the objectives of the vision was to "enable people with disabilities to access employment opportunities and educational opportunities that guarantee their independence and integration as contributing members of society, as well as to provide them with all the resources and tools necessary for success (The Kingdom's Vision Document, 2016). Therefore, Saudi universities have moved towards attracting students with disabilities and working to develop their abilities and skills to prepare them for the labor market in a way that suits their abilities and meets the various needs of society. Saudi universities strive to provide an appropriate environment that meets all services for students with disabilities and work to reduce the social and psychological effects resulting from their disability. They are an effective source in the progress and advancement of society (Ahmad, 2020).

University education requires providing a set of psychological and other services to students, in general, of all levels and abilities, including students with disabilities, to ensure that a supportive and supporting environment is provided for them to achieve good university adaptation (Vaughn & Bos, 2019). The university student's good adaptation constitutes a source of comfort, psychological security, and compatibility with the requirements of life

in general and university life in particular. It is also a source of satisfaction in coexisting with his university community and forming relationships with others such as university leaders, faculty members, peers, colleagues, administrators, and others in an appropriate manner (Abu Al-Eish, 2016). Therefore, providing services to students with disabilities in universities, especially in the psychological field, is one of the most important services that make them more capable of compatibility and adaptation to university life and its demands. They also constitute an essential pillar in their lives, making them feel happy, forming sincere relationships with others, and returning to normal after being exposed to any crisis or psychological pressure (Antony & Shore, 2015). Additionally, well-coordinated psychological treatments aid in ensuring that kids with impairments are as productive as they may be. They provide students the tools to meet the criteria of the university's programs and help them learn to trust and rely on themselves (Universal Access Program, 2018).

Development in contemporary life has led to an accumulation of demands and increased burdens on university students, including students with disabilities. University students are exposed to multiple forms of psychological problems, and there is no doubt that these problems have negative effects on university students in various academic, emotional, and psychological aspects (Duffy et al., 2019). Also, university students recently face many pressures and problems as a result of problems associated with adapting to the college and university environment and striving toward academic excellence. They also have fear of their future careers or of not entering the labor market and falling victim to unemployment due to their disability and how society and employers view them, which affects their level of mental health (Agrawal & Krishna, 2021). Moreover, Al-Hamidah and Hawsawi (2020) showed that although the university was described as a stage of rest, adaptation, and calm. However, reality proves that this is not only the case but rather indicates that it is a critical stage during which the demands of growth become more urgent than previous stages in which students in general, including students with disabilities, are exposed to a wide range of adaptive problems. Therefore, the present time has witnessed a huge increase in cases of poor mental health among university students, including students with disabilities. This increase has affected their psychological abilities and confirms their need for quality services, including psychological services. From this standpoint, the study aimed to identify the reality of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University.

Statement of the problem

The problem of this study emerged from the focus of countries and governments on providing facilities and services to university students with disabilities. These services facilitate the process of completing their studies, achieving their ambitions, and building their personalities and self-esteem. The laws about the education of people with disabilities emphasize providing them with the least restrictive environment and all services that facilitate the process of integration into the university community (Antony & Shore, 2015). In addition, students with disabilities have diverse needs according to their characteristics and the nature of their disability. Psychological needs are among the most important needs because of their role in reducing the psychological problems they suffer from and achieving good psychological adjustment that enables them to adapt to the university community (Abbas, 2021). In addition, psychological needs, such as feeling love, affection, and appreciation, are among the most important basic human needs desirable for every person. They represent a high emotional energy that enables a person, especially a person with a disability, to climb the ladder of success and progress (Al-Rosan, 2019). In this regard, Al-Zahrani (2019) emphasized the importance of strengthening the role of Saudi universities in assuming responsibility for providing appropriate services to students with disabilities to be more integrated into the university community. Ahmad (2020) also showed that the services provided to students with disabilities in Saudi universities need to make more efforts and intensify to meet the needs of these students and their interaction with the academic and social circles surrounding them in the university community. Therefore, the two questions below were the focus of this study:

1. How much psychological support are students with disabilities receiving at Najran University, according to both the students and the faculty?
2. Are the factors of gender and respondent type responsible for any statistically significant variations in the research sample's responses about the quality of psychological treatments offered to students with disabilities at Najran University?

Objectives of the study

This study sought to determine the extent of psychological assistance offered to Najran University students with disabilities from the perspectives of the students and staff. According to the variables of gender (male, female) and respondent type (student with disability, faculty member), it also showed statistically significant differences in the responses of the study sample concerning the degree of psychological services offered to Najran University students with disabilities.

Significance of the study

Students with disabilities are an integral part of the university community and have rights and duties. Appropriate services must be provided to them in general, especially psychological services which are considered positive emotional energy that motivates their behavior towards excellence and achievement. Hence, the importance of this study comes from the importance of its results, which may be a nucleus for the benefit of leaders and officials in the psychological counseling units at the university by identifying the weaknesses in the psychological services provided to students with disabilities. It is also possible to benefit from the results to improve their quality by setting development plans and programs. The programs lead these students towards enjoying university life, staying away from psychological problems, and being free of psychological disorders. They also prepare a generation of university graduates of people with disabilities who can cope with psychological pressures, anxiety, tension, and stress with great efficiency and contribute to building and progressing Saudi society.

Delimitations of the study

Through interviews with staff members and students, this study aimed to determine the quality of psychological treatments offered to Najran University's disabled students. Additionally, it showed the statistical variations within according to demographic factors (gender and respondent type). Additionally, the study was restricted to examining the perspectives of faculty members and students with disabilities who worked in psychological counseling units at Najran University in the southern part of the Saudi Arabian Kingdom during the second semester of the academic year 2022–2023. Furthermore, the study only employed one tool—a questionnaire. As a result, the degree of precision in determining the validity and reliability of the instrument and the degree of seriousness of the research sample members' responses to it define how generalizable the study's findings are.

Methods

This study followed a survey method with a descriptive approach. In order to gather quantitative information regarding the phenomena under study, it is most appropriate given the nature of this study to administer the research tool (the questionnaire) to a sample of Najran University staff members and students with disabilities.

Study population

The research population included all (150) male and female students with disabilities enrolled in the bachelor's degree program at Najran University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to statistics from the central advising units at Najran University for the academic year 2022-2023, it also included faculty members who worked in the psychological counseling units at the university, which are estimated to have had around (210) male and female members in the second semester.

The study sample

The study sample was represented by a stratified random sample consisting of (139) participants, including (50) male and female students with disabilities at the bachelor's level at Najran University and (89) male and female faculty members working in the psychological counseling units at Najran University in the classroom in the second semester of the academic year 2022/2023. After being published in collaboration with staff at the Central Guidance Unit at Najran University through official email to students and teachers, the study tool was electronically disseminated utilizing a link on the Google Drive form to the research sample. Between May 1 to May 15, 2023, the questionnaire was accessible. The distribution of the research sample in relation to its variables is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The research sample based on its variables.

Variable	Group	No.	%
Gender	Male	54	38.8
	Female	85	61.2
Nature of the participant	Student with disabilities	50	36.0
	Faculty member	89	64.0
Total		139	100

Tool of the study

The study tool (questionnaire) was developed based on previous studies (Al-Zahrani, 2019; Al-Ghanimi and Al-Hassani, 2019; Abbas, 2021) to achieve the study objectives. The researchers benefited from them in defining the items of the study tool and formulating them appropriately to reflect the extent to which the study sample members' answers of the level of availability of psychological services provided to students with disabilities represent Najran University. The responder marks each question on a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) with a sign () in order to estimate the replies of the research sample. By providing the numbers, respectively (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) for the scores (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree), Hamadneh and Khair Eddeen's (2023) criterion was used to fix the tool. The following results were authorized for the research tool items' achievement as well as the final score: A very low level is between 1.00 and 1.80, a low level is between 1.80 and 2.60, a medium level is between 3.40 and 4.20, and a very high level is between 4.20 and 5.00.

Validity of the study tool

In this study, content validity and consistency validity were the two forms of validity employed. Ten academic members with backgrounds in special education, educational psychology, and measurement and evaluation from Saudi institutions were shown the research tool when it was first developed. They confirmed the components' applicability to the instrument as a whole, checked the language formulation's correctness, and made sure the tool was appropriate for achieving the study's goals. Eighty percent of the experts agreed that it was important to make the necessary changes in light of their viewpoints, thus the changes were done. The language reformulation of several questions to make them more comprehensible, plain to responders, and quantifiable was one of the most striking observations. After that, the study tool's final version was created. Following application of the research tool to an exploratory sample from the study population and beyond its sample, consisting of (25) students and faculty members, the correlation coefficients for each item and the tool's overall score were also collected. Table 2 displays the outcomes.

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficients between each item's score and the tool's overall score.

Item	Correlation coefficients with the tool	Item	Correlation coefficients with the tool
1	**.50	7	**.62
2	**.55	8	**.57
3	**.49	9	**.44
4	**.46	10	**.53
5	**.56	11	**.50
6	**.47	12	**.63

**Statistically significant at the significance level (0.05)

According to Table 2, the correlation coefficients between the items and the entire tool varied from (0.44 to 0.63). According to Odeh (2014), all correlation coefficients were both acceptable and statistically significant. As a consequence, none of these items were removed, and this outcome demonstrates the tool's ability to accurately evaluate its intended outcomes.

Reliability of the study tool

To confirm the tool's dependability, the test-retest procedure and Cronbach's Alpha were both applied. The research tool was used initially on a group outside the study sample, which included (25) students and faculty members, and then again after two weeks. The Pearson correlation coefficient between their responses in the two applications was then determined. With this approach, the correlation coefficient was (0.85). In accordance with the tool's Cronbach's Alpha equation, the reliability coefficient was also determined. In this case, the correlation coefficient was (0.81). These are high values that show the instrument is effective in achieving the intended outcome of the study (Odeh, 2014).

Data analysis

To confirm the tool's dependability, the test-retest procedure and Cronbach's Alpha were both applied. The research tool was used initially on a group outside the study sample, which included (25) students and faculty members, and then again after two weeks. The Pearson correlation coefficient between their responses in the two applications was then determined. With this approach, the correlation coefficient was (0.85). In accordance with the tool's Cronbach's Alpha equation, the reliability coefficient was also determined. In this case, the correlation coefficient was (0.81). These are high values that show the instrument is effective in achieving the intended outcome of the study (Odeh, 2014). According to Odeh and Al-Qadi (2016), when comparing means produced from independent samples, when the variable used to construct the groups may already exist, the independent samples t-test is appropriate. On a continuous variable, though, a cut point can be offered to dynamically generate groups during analysis.

Results

Results of the first research question: How much psychological support are students with disabilities receiving at Najran University, according to both the students and the faculty?

In order to determine the degree of psychological services offered to students with disabilities at Najran University, means, standard deviations, and rank were computed for the research sample members' replies. Table 3 displays the outcomes.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for the level of psychological services for students with disabilities at Najran University from the point of view of the study sample

No.	Rank	Items	Means	Standard deviations	Degree
11	1	The university provides psychological counseling services to help students with disabilities reduce their psychological stress, isolation, and social withdrawal	3.36	.940	Medium
9	2	The university provides psychological counseling services to students with disabilities to train them on problem-solving strategies	3.34	.980	Medium
10	3	The university provides psychological counseling services to help a student with a disability adapt to himself on the one hand and to the surrounding environment on the other hand	3.23	.990	Medium
8	4	The university has psychological counseling services for students with disabilities aimed at giving them the ability to confront and solve their problems	3.22	1.06	Medium
1	5	The university is interested in developing the personality of a student with a disability by helping him overcome the negative psychological effects related to the impact of the disability on him	3.04	1.12	Medium

12	6	The university provides appropriate counseling services to achieve mental health for students with disabilities inside and outside the university	2.99	1.08	Medium
6	7	The university provides group psychological counseling services for students with disabilities according to the type of counseling required and the appropriate method for their disability	2.91	1.17	Medium
7	8	The university provides psychological counseling services to develop the social skills of students with disabilities and help them adapt to the university environment	2.69	1.13	Medium
5	9	The university provides individual psychological counseling services to students with disabilities according to the type of counseling required and the method appropriate to their disability	2.67	1.20	Medium
2	10	The university provides psychological counseling services that enable a student with a disability to discover himself, his inclinations, and desires	2.59	1.06	Low
4	11	The university provides psychological counseling services for students with disabilities whose need for it is determined based on an individual case study of each student	2.55	1.16	Low
3	12	The university provides psychological counseling services that enable students with disabilities to improve their attitudes and motivation towards learning	2.45	1.08	Low
		Total degree	2.92	.840	Medium

According to both students with disabilities and faculty members, Najran University's level of psychological services for students with disabilities scored generally at a medium degree, with a mean of (2.92) and a standard deviation of (0.84). Item (11) "The university provides psychological counseling services to help students with disabilities reduce their psychological stress, isolation, and social withdrawal" ranked first, with the highest mean of (3.36), standard deviation (0.94), and a medium degree. Item (9) "The university provides psychological counseling services to students with disabilities to train them on problem-solving strategies" came in second place with a mean of (3.34), a standard deviation of (0.98), and a medium degree. Item (3) "The university provided psychological counseling services that enable students with disabilities to improve their attitudes and motivation toward learning" came in last place with the lowest mean of (2.45), a standard deviation of (1.08), and a low small degree.

Results of the second research question: Are the factors of gender and respondent type responsible for any statistically significant variations in the research sample's responses about the quality of psychological treatments offered to students with disabilities at Najran University?

In order to demonstrate statistical differences in the overall level of psychological services offered to students with disabilities at Najran University according to the categories of the gender variable (male, female), and the nature of the respondent (student with disability, faculty member), means, standard deviations, and the t-test for independent samples were used. Table 4 and 5 shows the findings.

Table 4. T-test for showing the differences between the two means of the responses of the study sample members regarding the level of psychological services for students with disabilities at Najran University according to the gender variable.

Scale	Gender	No.	Means	Standard deviations	t	df	Sig.
The overall score for the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University	Male	54	3.04	0.95	1.364	137	.175
	Female	85	2.84	0.76			

Table 4 displays evident discrepancies between the two means of research sample participants' responses to the study instrument as a whole. The replies of the female category (n=85) on the study instrument as a whole had a mean of (2.84) and a standard deviation of (0.76), compared to the responses of the male category (n=54) with a mean of (3.04) and a standard deviation of (0.95). The statistical significance of these differences was shown using the independent samples t-test. At the significance level (0.05), it was discovered that there were no statistically significant variations in the replies of the research sample participants about the quality of psychological services offered to students with disabilities at Najran University based on the gender variable. Statistics were significant (175) and the t-calculated value was (1.364).

Table 5. T-test for the differences between the two means of the responses of the study sample members regarding the level of psychological services for students with disabilities at Najran University according to the variable of the nature of the respondent

Scale	Nature of the participant	No.	Means	Standard deviations	t	df	Sig.
The overall score for the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University	Faculty member	89	2.90	0.85	.383	137	.736
	Student with disabilities	50	2.95	0.83			

Table 5 shows that there were apparent differences between the two means of the estimates of the study sample members on the study tool as a whole. The responses of the faculty member category (n = 89) on the study tool as a whole came with a mean of (2.90) and a standard deviation of (0.85). The responses of the category of students with disabilities (n = 50) on the study tool as a whole scored a mean of (2.95) and a standard deviation of (0.83). To demonstrate the statistical significance between these differences, the researchers used the independent samples t-test. It was found that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level (0.05) for the responses of the study sample members regarding the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University according to the variable of the nature of the respondent. The t-calculated value was (.383) and statistically significant (.736).

Discussion

Discussion of the first research question

The results showed that the overall score for the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University from the point of view of students with disabilities and faculty members was medium. The result may be attributed to the fact that the psychological counseling units at the university focus on psychological services per se, without taking into account other services that would ensure the provision of psychological balance to students with disabilities. Also, they may believe that the psychological services provided to them may be sufficient, or the services are designed apart from surveys of the opinions of students with disabilities and their psychological needs and desires. Hence, this result confirms that the psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University did not reach the required level. These services did not meet the needs of students with disabilities to reduce their psychological stress, isolation, social withdrawal, psychological problems, the negative psychological effects of disability, and their psychological

needs and improve their attitudes and motivation towards learning at the university. Perhaps this result is useful and important for leaders and officials in the psychological counseling units at the university to develop plans and programs that will improve the weaknesses in the psychological services provided to students with disabilities.

Discussion of the second research question

The results showed that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level (0.05) for the responses of the study sample members regarding the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at Najran University according to the gender variable and the nature of the respondent variable. The result may be attributed to the similarity of the social and cultural conditions that the study sample members experience and perceive in the university community. This similarity led to their opinions not being affected about the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at the university and the emergence of differences in them, which confirms that the psychological services to students with disabilities require further efforts and improvement. The result can also be attributed to the study sample members' awareness that students with disabilities as a result of their disabilities suffer greatly in academic and social situations, which creates many challenges and psychological problems for them at university, which affects their psychological state and stability. The psychological services provided to them do not meet their needs and abilities in dealing with these challenges and problems, and this in itself is the source of poor adaptation, anxiety, stress, psychological pressure, and disturbances in the relationships of university students with disabilities with the university community. Therefore, for university education for students with disabilities to achieve its goals and objectives, university leaders and officials of psychological counseling units must work to identify appropriate methods, methods, and activities that support psychological services to meet and satisfy the psychological needs of students with disabilities and develop their skills.

Recommendations

In light of the study results, the researchers recommended that Najran University, represented by the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Central Advising Unit, adopt a strategic development plan to improve the quality of psychological services provided to students with disabilities. This plan contributes to reducing their psychological problems and how to overcome them. It is also recommended that psychological counseling units in colleges hold meetings with students with disabilities to identify their psychological needs and requirements to improve the quality of psychological services provided to them to improve their psychological and emotional balance and complete their academic journey without faltering. In addition, there is a need for student activities units in colleges to hold various activities for students with disabilities that are compatible with their desires, hobbies, and psychological needs. Moreover, the researchers recommend conducting a study similar to the current study by expanding the size of the researched population and examining other universities and additional variables. Finally, a qualitative study is suggested to examine the factors and reasons that affected the level of psychological services provided to students with disabilities at the university.

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