

Original article

Comparison of Self and Students' Evaluation of academic advisor's educational in Arak University of Medical Sciences in 2010

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Abstract

Introduction: Students and faculty members are two key elements of evaluation so the use of both views can help better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the learning and teaching processes. Therefore, this study aimed to compare Self and Students' Evaluation of academic advisors' performance in Arak University of Medical Sciences.

Methods: This is an analytical and cross-sectional study that was carried out on 32 student advisors and 400 medical students currently studying and passing at least one semester of study in the university. Data collection using questionnaires included demographic information, evaluation of advisors regarding how to interact and communicate with students and monitor problems in the field of counseling - individual and family counseling in the future career of students according to their views and assessment of students' faculty advisor. Finally, data were analyzed using t tests and ANOVA.

Results: In the present study, the mean score of self-assessment for faculty advisors was 74.33 ± 16.6 , and the average student evaluation score was 43.66 ± 11.52 , which showed a significant difference (p -value $< 0/001$). There were no relationships between gender, history of academic rank and faculty advisor at the University teaching and student evaluation score (p -value $> 0/05$). However, there was a significant difference between having executive position and students' evaluation scores (p -value $< 0/001$).

Conclusion: The findings showed that providing consultation and guidance by counselors has not been satisfactory for the students. Retraining workshops to promote awareness, attitude and skills of faculty advisors is recommended.

Keyword: Self- Evaluation, Student, Advisor Counseling, Performance

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Introduction

Study consult is a goal-directed and dynamic communication which is carried out based on the students-faculty cooperation in accordance with a student's needs (1). Universities play a critical role in educating and cultivating students and study consult is necessary in this regard (2). Students gathering in a particular university come from different societies and cultures. While far from home

town and family living in dorms, facing students of the opposite sex may render some students vulnerable to identity crisis. Since it is a situation they might have never experienced before and is interpreted in various ways by students based on their cultural backgrounds (3).

As such it is mandatory that students be consulted by some skilled, committed, and

caring faculties lest they slip into demotion in terms of the educational achievement. Degradation of the students' educational achievement leads to waste of financial as well as spiritual, moral, and virtual resources. It has been shown that effective, organized measures should be implemented to tackle the emotional, psychological, and social problems students are currently facing while they study in universities. Here is the point where the importance of employing skilled consultant faculties comes through (4).

Tutors are teachers in a university or college who give individual instruction to undergraduates for study or welfare. They are charged with the instruction and guidance of students. They teach or guide students usually individually in a special subject or for a particular purpose e.g. personal issues, emotional problems, social conflicts, or family discomforts. The ultimate goal of the tutor system in the universities, colleges, or schools is to help students improve their educational achievements, attain healthy body and mind, and live a moral and spiritual life. Tutoring is the task of acting as a guardian toward a student; tutors are help student protecting themselves while facing different social, emotional, and educational situations that can be potentially devastating.(4, 5).Tutoring has been shown to be effective for both male and female students. Tutelage is a real need for students and if not provided with an accredited reliable source it will be sought from invalid sources where the consequence of the consult dire; by dire we mean that the future of a student could be permanently jeopardized (6).

Assessment of the consults provided by tutors by students, although necessary, is not sufficient (7) and needs to be supplemented (not supplanted) with other evaluation methods (8). It has been shown that girls are more likely to seek care from tutors. About 75% of student has been observed to be satisfied with the consults they were given by their tutors (9); the finding that was opposed by other studies (10).Several studies have demonstrated the tutoring to affect

students' performances in terms of education, finance, social and familial interactions (11-22).

Since students and tutors are two sine qua non to the tutoring, it is of great importance to investigate the effectiveness of the consults provided by tutors from viewpoints of both students and faculties. Such a comparison may lead to better understanding of the strength and weaknesses of the consultation process. Therefore, we conducted a study aimed at examining the performances of the tutors of the Arak University of medical sciences as perceived by themselves as compared to students they have consulted during 2010.

Materials and Methods

This was a cross-sectional study aimed at examining the performances of the tutors of the Arak University of medical sciences as perceived by themselves as compared to students they have consulted during 2010. We invited all tutor faculties (46 tutors) of which 34 agreed to participate. Students were considered to be eligible if they had spent at least one semester studying in the Arak University of medical sciences(400 students). We excluded the faculties and students who were not affiliated to the Arak University of medical sciences.

Data were obtained using two corresponding questionnaires for students and faculties. Both questionnaire included 20 statements and responders asked to weight their answers on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 5 being perfect, 4 good, 3 moderately good, 2 weak, and 1 very weak. The tutors performance index was calculated by summing up weights given to different attributed of tutoring. As such, the index of satisfaction ranged from 20 to 100. The questionnaire were designed so as cover different attributes of the tutelage including the tutor-student interaction and communication, study consult, and consultations regarding personal and familial problems, future job and employment. Questionnaire was developed in accordance with items mentioned in the

university evaluation forms as well as items mentioned in the regulations issued by ministry of health were used as criteria for evaluating tutors performance. To make sure that the questionnaires cover all attributes of tutoring we examined the content validity of them by asking faculties, students, and members of the Center for Study and Development of Medical Education to review the questionnaires and make their comments. The questionnaires were modified in accordance with advices given. The reliability of the questionnaires was measured by calculating Cronbach's alpha that equaled 0.85 which indicated good reliability.

All data analysis was performed using SPSS. Data presented as mean (SD) or frequency (%) for continuously and categorically distributed variables, respectively. Differences among subgroups were examined using t-test, chi-square test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Statistical significance was set at P-value < 0.05. The study protocol was approved by research committee of the Arak University Medical Sciences and students who agreed to participate voluntarily completed the questionnaire.

Findings

The demographic characteristics of students are presented in Table 1. The majority of were female and single with their fathers having none-office work and mothers not being employed. Only 11% of students were working and almost all were of middle socio-economic class. As shown in Table 2, the majority of tutors were female (53%), 68% of them were lecturer, and 65% have no executive task and were involved only in education and research.

Mean tutors performance index as perceived by tutors [74.3 (16.6)] was statistically significantly higher than what perceived by students [43.7 (11.5)] (p-value < 0.001).

The highest self-assessed tutors performance index assigned by tutors of the school of Para-medicine and the lowest one assigned by those of school of medicine (p-value < 0.05).

Students perceived the tutors performance index to be highest for Para-medicine school tutors and lowest for school of medicine (p-value < 0.001).

The performance of tutors as perceived by them was statistically significantly higher than those perceived by students. The widest student-faculty gap was observed in the school of medicine (Table 3).

No difference was observed across different academic ranks of tutors (0.411), years of their experiences (0.301), or sex of students in terms of the performance index as perceived by students (0.230).

Tutors in charge with executive tasks were perceived by students to have lower performance index than those without executive task (p-value = 0.001).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the student of the Arak University of the medical sciences.

		N(%)
Age	<20 year	43(10.8)
	20 years or above	357(89.3)
sex	Women	256(64)
	Men	144(36)
Marital status	Single	376(94)
	Married	24(6)
School	Medicine	90(22.5)
	Para-medicine	180(45)
	Nursing	130(32.5)
Father's job	Office worker	164(41)
	Others	236(59)
Mother's job	Not employed	336(84)
	Employed	64(16)
Father's education	Less than 12 years	216(54)
	12 years or above	184(46)
Mother's education	Less than 12 years	308(77)
	12 years or above	92(23)
Employment	Yes	44(11)
	No	356(89)
Semesters taken	2-3	124(31)
	4-5	172(43)
Probation for education	Yes	104(26)
	No	28(7)

Discussion

We documented a student-tutor gap in terms of the assessment of the performance of tutors. This implies that students are satisfied with the consults they have been given by their tutors.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the faculties of the Arak University of the medical sciences.

		N(%)
sex	Woman	15(46.8)
	Man	17(53.1)
School	medicine	10(31.2)
	Para-medicine	9(28.1)
	Nursing	13(40.6)
Academic rank	Lecturer	22(68.7)
	Assistant professor	9(28.1)
	Associate professor	1(3.1)
Years of experience in teaching	1-3 years	8(25.0)
	3-6 years	14(43.7)
	More than 6 years	10(31.2)
Executive	Yes	11(34.3)
	No	21(65.6)

Table 3. Comparing mean tutors performance index as perceived by themselves as compared with those as perceived by their students by schools.

Schools	Tutors		Students		P- value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Para-medicine	87	16.2	51	11.8	<0.001*
Nursing	75	15.7	46	12.2	<0.001*
Medicine	61	15.1	34	9.8	<0.001*

* Significant at 0.001 level

Few studies attempted to examine how the rating of performance of the tutors by themselves correlates with ratings made by students and observed the correlations to be poor (13, 23). We attempted to extend the works previously done by examining the factors that might have contributed to gaps observed. We observed that the satisfaction varied by the school in which the students were studying and perhaps by the subject areas they studied. Students of nursing or midwifery were generally more satisfied with the consults they were given by their tutors than were the students of medicine. It has been shown that tutors not meeting students expectation have been perceived not to care about their students'

educational achievement demotion, or their financials (25, 26). Attitude, knowledge, and practice of tutors are highly interwoven each can individually and synergistically contribute to how well tutors deliver their consults (27, 28). Students of medicine not being satisfied with their tutors' performances could be explained by lack of knowledge among their tutors. Considering the length of the course of study medical students should take they might have been involved with certain medicine-specific problems and needed more specialized consults. Tutors are required to be inclined to and feel responsibility for delivering consult to their students. Established a good rapport is equally important.

We found to difference between men and women in terms of how they perceived the performance of their tutors. Previous studies have not been conclusive in this regard. Aghamollayi conducted study finding no difference between men and women (24). It has been shown United States' female students assess their teachers more favorable than do their male counterparts (14). We observed that the performance of tutors as perceived by student did not differ by tutors' sex. Therefore, in the light of the potential emotional dependency that may occur to students, selecting tutors of the same sex as students can help establishing effective communication channel as well better understanding of the students' problems. Students could be embarrassed to share some their problems to a tutor of the opposite sex.

As shown in previous studies (24), we found to difference in the student-perceived performance of the tutors across tutors academic ranks. Our finding of interest was that tutors involved with executive task were perceived by students to have lower performance than were tutors without executive responsibilities. It is executive tutors are possibly spending less time with their students for understanding their problems. They might have also been less commonly available to their students. Consequently the consults made by executive

tutors might have not been efficient since consultation mandated focus and is time-consuming. The same explanation may apply to the finding that medical students were less satisfied with the performance of their tutors. Faculties in medical schools have several clinical responsibilities; this may interact with their duty as a tutor.

Conclusion

We observed that students are not satisfied with the consults they have been being given by their tutors and that the tutors' performance as assessed by student was considerably lower than what perceived by tutors themselves. It is an indication that consults provided by tutors is not client-based and that tutors either do not care about feedbacks from their students or they have not received or tried to receive such feedbacks at all. Near one third of tutors were reluctant to complete self-assessment forms. This is an implicit indication that they do not care about self-monitoring of their performance. Consequently, they are not expected to attempt self-modification or ever achieve self-improvement with respect to their tutoring duties. Future studies are required to compare performances of the tutors who are reluctant vs. those who are open to be evaluated as perceived by their students.

Acknowledgements

This study has been funded by the deputy of research, Arak University of medical sciences. The authors would like to express their appreciation to the students and faculties who participated in this survey for their time and support.

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