

Guidance and the Relationship Between Students' Social Adjustment, Discipline and Academic Achievement in Ethiopian Science and Technology Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study examined guidance service and the relation between students' social adjustment,

discipline observance, and academic achievement in the two science and technology universities in Ethiopia. The study also examined the predictive validity of the three variables comprising guidance service, social adjustment, and discipline observance in students' academic achievement. The study used a descriptive survey research design with a quantitative method. Data was generated from 324 graduating students of the two institutions. The data was collected from the respondents via a questionnaire. Correlation and linear regression were employed in the analysis of data. The study reveals that there are strong associations among guidance service, students' social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement. The study also reveals that guidance service, students' social adjustment, and discipline observance predict students' academic achievement.

Keywords: University, guidance services, social adjustment, discipline observance, students' academic achievement

1. INTRODUCTION

Success in a university study is an interactive effect of multiple factors such as the university environment and students' characteristics (Berg & Hofman, 2005). University environment refers to the quality of education (in terms of curricula, teachers' readiness, and facilities) and student support system. Students' characteristics refer to students' intelligence, social and academic competence, motivation, self-image, and behaviour. As an essential component of students' support system, guidance service aims at the personal, social, educational, and vocational development (Dahir & Stone, 2007; Kabir, 2017) and self-actualization of individuals (Nkechi, Ewomaoghene & Egenti, 2016) who have normal emotional, mental, and social well-being that entails working with counsellors (Korkut, 2004).

Guidance interventions can contribute to quality education by developing students' sense of engagement, higher levels of motivation and fewer disciplinary issues (Kenny et al., 2006; Scheel & Gonzalez, 2007). Besides, guidance service has a high impact on students' social and emotional adjustment (Collin, 2007). The absence of this service can bear an immense impact on students' adjustments. Muango and Joel (2012) indicated that lack of

guidance increases indiscipline, rebellion behaviour, and maladjustment. Thus, the provision of guidance service to enhance students' social adjustment, discipline and academic achievement in a university is not a matter of option; rather, it is a vital aspect of education that enables each student to gain the maximum benefit from the education system, to make healthy interaction with the environment, and to be effective in meeting his/her various needs.

Academic achievement also differs with social adjustment. Failure to adjust oneself to school/university environment can lead to emotional and mental issues, poor academic achievement, and university dropout. Students who are socially adjusted exhibit good academic achievement (Lakhani, Jain & Chandel, 2017; Srivastava, 2018). Surekha (2008), Safari, Shirazi and Nejat (2014), and Mahmood (2015) also pointed out that there is a high positive correlation between academic achievement and social/psychological adjustment.

Students' academic achievement further differs with their discipline observance. The realization of effective student discipline at school is a key measure for the student in the journey to adulthood and academic success (Ehiane, 2014). Pasternak (2013) found a significant positive correlation between the four discipline skills (perseverance, the ability to meet schedules, the capacity for goal-setting and planning for goal achievement, and completion of unpleasant tasks), classroom conduct and academic achievement. Pasternak also found a significant positive correlation among the four discipline skills and all the chosen measures of academic achievement: arithmetic, science, written expression, grammar, reading comprehension, and other English language skills. Thus, discipline is one of the most important prerequisites for academic success (Tought, 2012). In the absence of discipline skills, students will find it exceptionally difficult to successfully perform at the desired levels. However, guidance services to enhance students' social adjustment and discipline observance in contemporary higher learning

institutions are generally found to be nominal and unlikely to ensure students' overall adjustment and academic excellence (Appiah, 2013).

From Incidental Model Theory points of view regarding the relationship between social adjustment and discipline observance, Adeyeye (2019) and Flook, Repetti, et al. (2005) claim that undisciplined students and those with behaviour difficulties tend to present relatively lower levels of social adjustment and social acceptance than their peer group. Haselager, Cillessen, Van Lieshout, Riksen-Walraven, and Hartup (2002) also claim that students with behaviour difficulties are likely to be rejected and socially dismissed as their ability to adapt to various social laws, rules and regulations are lower than expected. In general, significant relations were found among adaptive behaviour, social adjustment, and academic achievement (Richmond & Blagg, 2006).

In the Ethiopian context, the emphasis was given by the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy to the development of physical and mental potential of each learner and their problem-solving capacity (MoE, 1994). There was also a pressing need to review the provision of student guidance, social adjustment, and discipline observance. However, it seems that the existing support system in our universities falls short of expectations in promoting students' social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement (Yilfashewa, 2011; Yirgalem, 2013; Gezahegn, 2018). Consequently, university students have always experienced academic problems, disputes with fellow students, indiscipline, and poor social relationship. Not only have students grown more violent, destructive, and socially maladjusted, but they are also becoming academically more and more challenged (Amogne, 2014). There seems to be unabated lack of effective intervention strategy to contain student indiscipline, social maladjustment, and low academic achievement. This can be realized from the fact that universities in the country continue to experience students' indiscipline, on the one hand, and social and academic problems, on the other (Tirussew et al., 2014). There are some

local studies (e.g., Yirgalem, 2013; Selam, 2014; Adane, 2016) and international studies (e.g., Collin, 2007; Muango & Joel, 2012; Pasternak, 2013; Ehiane, 2014; Srivastava, 2018; Adeyeye, 2019) which have attempted to investigate the relationship between these topics separately. Most of these studies also focused on high school. As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, this is the first study that attempted to examine the interaction of guidance service, discipline observance, social adjustment, and academic achievement together. In the context of this study, guidance service is a programme that aims to avoid psychological difficulties, social maladjustment and indiscipline by designing proper guidance curriculum, developing individual plans and providing responsive services (Kabir, 2017). Social adjustment (love, acceptance, humility, integrity, and avoiding distrust, selfishness and normlessness) is a healthy interplay between the student and the university social environment (norms, standards, and values) that often need guidance intervention (Kabir, 2017). Discipline observance refers to developing time management skills, avoiding absenteeism, classroom disruptive behaviour, adversity and developing students' acceptable habits and adherence to university's rules and regulations that affect social adjustment and academic achievement (Ngwokabuenui, 2015; Stanley, 2014). Academic achievement is the extent to which a student has met his or her goals in intellectual fields taught at university. It is influenced by guidance, social adjustment, and discipline observance (Bhat, 2013).

The two universities where this study was conducted are no exception with regard to student indiscipline and social and academic problems. In view of this, the present study seeks to show the relationship between student guidance service, discipline observance, social adjustment and academic achievement in the two universities. It also seeks to show the predictive validity of students' guidance service, social adjustment, and discipline observance in their academic achievement. In light of this context, the research intends to answer the following research question: What are the relationships among student guidance service, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement in

Ethiopia Science and Technology Universities? Thus, the objective of this study is to examine the relationships among student guidance service, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement in Ethiopia Science and Technology Universities.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research design

The purpose of this study was to examine the association among students' guidance service, social adjustment, discipline, and academic achievement. The study used a descriptive survey research design with quantitative research method. The quantitative research method was used to obtain a substantive picture regarding the complex nature of guidance services, students' social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement. A descriptive survey design was used as it can generate a large amount of data from a relatively large population across wide-area. Such a study portrays the status of a phenomenon at a particular time, determines what happens during a given activity, and deals with the relationships between multiple variables. It focuses on the test and measurement procedure of reality and the statistical analysis that is entailed in working with responses to research questions requiring numerical data (Williams, 2007). The decision to make use of the quantitative method, therefore, emanated from a desire to generalize the findings from the sample to the entire population of the study.

2.2 Study population and the sample

The study population constitutes students of the two science and technology universities in Ethiopia, namely, Adama Science and Technology University (ASTU) and Addis Ababa Science and Technology University (AASTU). The two universities were chosen because of their similarities and the unique missions each were assigned. Fifth-year civil, electrical and mechanical engineering students were the source of data for this study. Multistage sampling technique was used to get the required study participants. First, schools/colleges were selected randomly; then, departments were selected using simple random sampling, and students within the selected departments were further selected by

simple random sampling using student register of the selected departments. The number of participants in each department was determined by their proportion in the study population. Finally, a total of 324 students (213 from ASTU and 111 from AASTU) were selected for data generation.

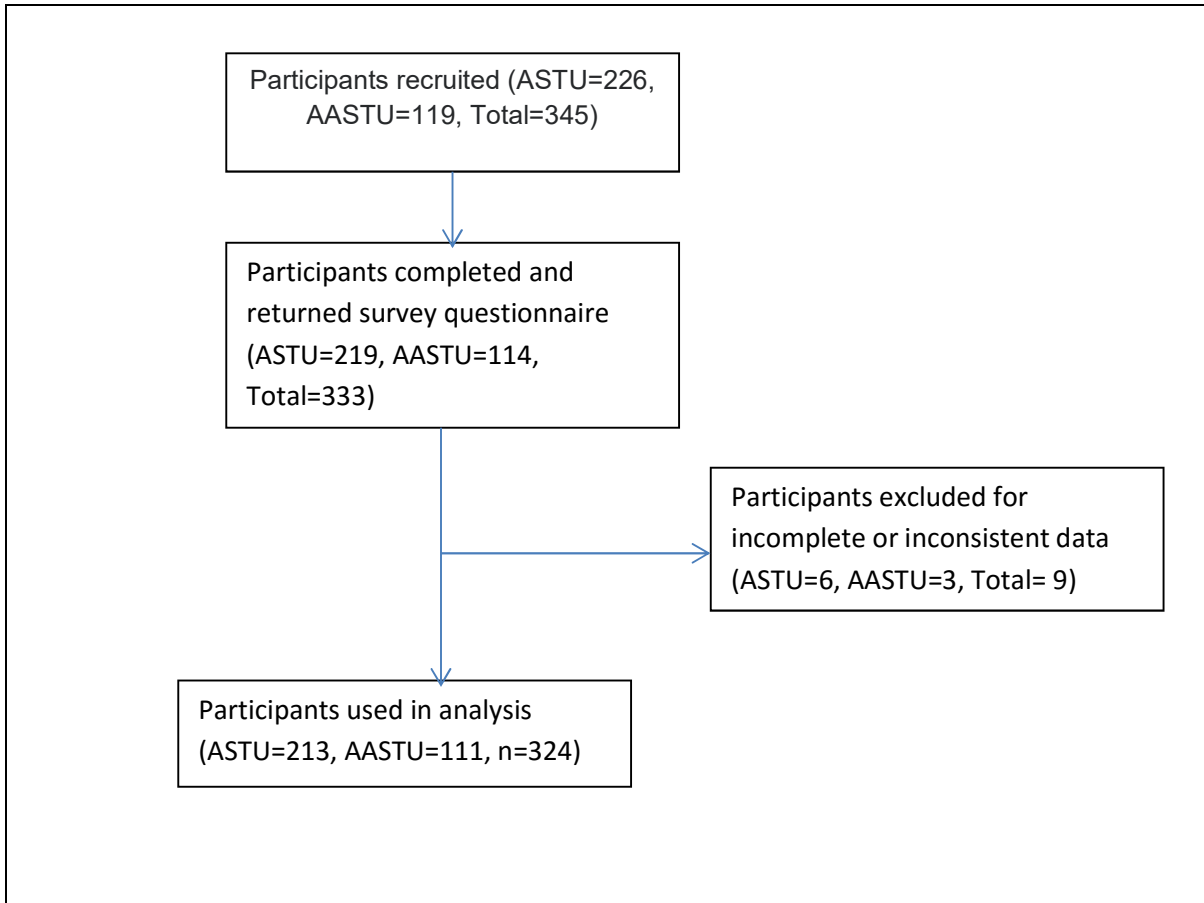


Figure 1 : Flow diagram of the study participants

2.3 Data gathering instruments

To gather information from the informants, self-reporting questionnaire with structured Likert scale type items was employed. The questionnaire items were developed by taking into account the context of the study and based on the existing guidance theories, students’ social adjustment practices, and studies reflecting students’ discipline. The instrument was

developed from literature (except 4 items adapted from “social adjustment” subscale of the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk, 1989) because the existing instruments were not developed in a way to measure the relationship among guidance service, social adjustment, discipline observance and academic achievement. The questionnaire mainly comprises structured items on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from “5=strongly agree” to “1=strongly disagree”. The items focus on the current practices and challenges associated with the provision of guidance service, students’ social adjustment and discipline observance. Academic achievement of students was measured by their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) that was obtained from students’ record in the registrar offices.

2.4 Data collection procedures

The data were gathered from students in a door-to-door situation by identifying their dormitories. Four data collectors (two from each university) were recruited and trained for data collection.

2.5 Pilot study

The questionnaire was pilot tested on 32 fifth-year students before being used as a data collection tool for this study. It was validated by five psychology instructors before being used as a data collection tool for this study. Following the pilot research, amendments were made to some of the questionnaire's items. The reliability of the questions was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. For all parts of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficients are greater than 0.80. The reliability for social adjustment was 0.97, and 0.95 for student discipline adherence. The high reliabilities of the items indicate the high level of dependability of the instrument to get the required information.

2.6 Methods of data analysis

The collected data were sorted and entered into SPSS version 24 for analysis. The coefficient of correlation was used to measure the relationship among guidance service, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic performance of students. Linear

regression was employed to examine the predictive validity of the guidance services, social adjustment, and discipline observance in students’ academic achievement.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Relationship among guidance programme, social adjustment, discipline observance, and students’ academic achievement

This section examines the relationship among guidance programme, students’ social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement. It further examines the contributions of guidance programme, social adjustment, and discipline observance to students’ academic achievement.

Table 1: Correlation among student guidance programme, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement (N=324)

		Guidance programme	Social adjustment	Discipline observance
Social adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.626**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Discipline observance	Pearson Correlation	.713**	.650**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
Academic achievement	Pearson Correlation	.696**	.754**	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Guidance programmes are designed to address the physical, emotional, social, vocational, and academic difficulties of students. In this study, it was found that there is a strong association between guidance programme and social adjustment ($r(324) = .626, p < 0.001$), guidance programme and discipline observance ($r(324) = 0.713, p < 0.001$), and guidance programme and academic achievement ($r(324) = 0.696, p < 0.001$). There is also a strong association between students' social adjustment and discipline observance ($r(324) = 0.650, p < 0.001$), social adjustment and academic achievement ($r(324) = 0.754, p < 0.001$), and discipline observance and academic achievement ($r(324) = 0.724, p < 0.001$).

3.1.2 Guidance programme, student adjustment, and discipline observance as predictors of academic achievement

Regression analysis was run to examine the predictive validity of guidance programme, social adjustment, and discipline observance in students' academic achievement.

Table 2: Influence of guidance programme, social adjustment, and discipline observance on students' academic achievement

<i>Model</i>		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	R Square	F	Sig.
1	<i>Regression</i>	79902.372	3	26634.124	.686	232.680	.000 ^b
	<i>Residual</i>	36629.320	320	114.467			
	<i>Total</i>	116531.691	323				

a. Dependent Variable: academic achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), discipline observance, social adjustment, Availability of guidance programme

The availability of the guidance programme, students' social adjustment, and discipline observance altogether influence the academic achievement of students ($F(3,320) = 232.680, p < 0.001$). About 68.6% ($R^2 = .686$) variation in academic achievement is accounted for by discipline observance, social adjustment, and availability of guidance

programme. The three variables independently have a significant contribution to the variance of academic achievement.

Table 3: Effects of guidance programme, social adjustment, and discipline observance on students' academic achievement

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.768	2.066		1.824	.069
Availability of guidance programme	.251	.052	.225	4.785	.000
Social adjustment	.374	.038	.429	9.894	.000
Discipline observance	.525	.089	.285	5.909	.000

The three variables, namely, guidance programme, social adjustment and discipline observance independently contribute to students' academic achievement. Social adjustment is the major contributing factor followed by discipline observance.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Correlation among guidance service, students' social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement

In this study, it was found out that there are strong associations among the availability of guidance programme, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement. They influence each other and have a direct interrelationship, indicating the importance of guidance service that addresses students' social adjustment and discipline in improving students' academic achievement. In other words, the higher the qualities of the guidance programme, the better students' social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement. The higher the social adjustment and discipline observance of

students, the better their academic achievement. Thus, putting guidance service in place and focusing on students' social adjustment and discipline will help in improving students' academic achievement by improving students' self-image, on-task behaviour, study skills and reducing test anxiety.

Other studies have found that guidance service helps in smoothening the transition from high school to university (Ashraf, 2017), avoids confusions, uncertainty, and alienation of students (Baugh, 2018), circumvents academic stress, poor academic performance, dropouts, and confusion in career choice (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2015). It also facilitates students' adjustment by developing their right attitudes towards themselves, others and towards their own studies (Ramakrishnan & Jalajakumari, 2013). Furthermore, it prevents educational, personal, social, mental, emotional, and other problems among school students (Nwachukwu, 2007).

With regard to students' social adjustment, guidance service enhance students' positive social and emotional adjustments (Gatua, 2014), contribute to students' positive behavior development such as respect for people and tolerance especially in times of crisis (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2008). It also helps students acquire social values such as love, acceptance, humility, and integrity (Theodore, 2002) thereby propagating their healthy interaction among themselves and with other persons in their surroundings (Stewart, 2003). Guidance services significantly minimize poor social relationships among students and teachers (Auni, Odhiambo & Lyanda, 2014).

Additionally, Auni, Odhiambo and Lyanda (2014) highlighted that guidance service plays a crucial role in students' discipline as it helps to avoid students' unrest and indiscipline problems such as lateness, bullying of other students, and disobedience. Moreover, it helps in avoiding absenteeism, non-completion of work, fighting in the school compound, disregarding school/university rules, refusal to carry out punishment, smoking, juvenile delinquency, and school drop-out (Muchiri, 1998). Thus, character formation can be

achieved and students will remain disciplined through intense formal and informal programme for guidance service (Mikaye, 2012; Samoei, 2012). Through the provision of effective guidance service, it is possible to avoid learner anxiety, poor self-concept, poor methods of study, faulty reading techniques, and indiscipline (Napier 1972 in Njeri, 2007), significantly reduce drop-out ratio (Mehmood, Rashid, & Azeem, 2011), and develop the right attitude to study and task orientation (Ladipo, 2000; Eweniyi, 2002).

In the Ethiopian context, Selam's (2014) study revealed that guidance is a remedy to student-related problems such as violation of school rule and regulation, bullying, socially unacceptable behaviour, low academic motivation, academic underachievement, and poor study habits. She further pointed out that guidance service is a remedy to student strikes, violence, damage of properties, the breakup of cultural norms, and unemployment. Yirgalem (2013) also identified that, by resolving physical, emotional, social and academic difficulties of students and by helping students understand their learning strengths and weaknesses, their academic achievement can be improved. As in the case of this study, significant relations were also found in some of the previous studies among student guidance, adaptive behavior, social adjustment, and academic achievement (Yilfashewa, 2011; Yirgalem, 2013).

3.2.2 The predictive validity of guidance services, social adjustment, and discipline in students' academic achievement

In this study, it was found that the availability of guidance programme, social adjustment, and discipline observance all together influence the academic achievement of students ($F(3,320) = 232.680, p < 0.001$). About 68.6% ($R^2 = .686$) of variation in academic achievement is accounted for by discipline observance, social adjustment, and provision of the guidance programme. Independently, the three variables also have a significant contribution to the variance of academic achievement. Consistent with the

findings in this study, Lakhani, Jain and Chandel (2017), Srivastava (2018), Safari, Shirazi, and Nejat (2014), and Mahmood (2015) found that there is a significant relationship between social adjustment and academic achievement. Richmond and Blagg (2006) also maintain that there are significant relations among adaptive behavior, social adjustment, and academic achievement. Similarly, Pasternak (2013) and Tought (2012) found that discipline is one of the meaningful and important prerequisites for academic success.

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary and conclusions

The main objective of this study was to examine association among guidance service, students' social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement at two science and technology universities in Ethiopia. Predictive validity of guidance services, social adjustment, and discipline observance in students' academic achievement was also examined. The following research question was formulated to guide the study: What are the relationships among student guidance service, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement in Ethiopia Science and Technology Universities?

The main sources of information were 324 graduating students of Ethiopian Science and Technology Universities. To gather information from the respondents, a questionnaire with Likert scale type items was developed from the literature. In the analysis of data, quantitative interpretation of data obtained from closed-ended questions was conducted and the data were converted into statistics such as correlation and linear regression.

The study reveals that there are strong associations among effective guidance programme, social adjustment, discipline observance, and academic achievement. It was also found that about 68.6% of the variation in academic achievement is accounted for by discipline observance, social adjustment, and practice of guidance programme. These findings lead to the conclusion that a guidance service is required to improve

students' social adjustment, discipline, and academic achievement. It is also conceivable to conclude that good guidance services, social adjustment, and strict disciplinary adherence can improve students' academic achievement.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings from this study and review of related literature, the following recommendations can be sought:

- First-year university life is crucial for students in their success in the succeeding years as it is a transition period from high school to university. They need to adjust themselves to new social and academic environment. Thus, there is a need for counselors to give more attention to freshman students, focusing on the prevention of psychological problems to avoid some academic stressors using alternative approaches like IT (online) guidance service, face-to-face guidance service by professionals, and student guidance committee at school/college level. Psychoanalysis, Behaviorism, Person-Centered, and Systems theories can be applied separately or in combination based on the context of the problem. On the basis of these theories, counselors can offer training for students on life skills, social skills, conflict management, crisis management, communication skills, effective study methods, adolescence behaviours, and other emerging issues.
- Guidance and counselling offices should create professional referral centres for students with issues beyond the counselors' capacity.
- University administration should take guidance and counselling seriously and allocate sufficient budget to cater for the programmes and facilities. Furthermore, university management should forge collaboration with the guidance and counselling office to improve students' social/emotional adjustment, warrant informed academic and career decision, avoid deviant behaviour, and ensure the mental stability and academic performance of students. Universities should also develop

strategies to supervise the guidance and counselling service to ensure its effectiveness in addressing the academic, social/emotional, and vocational issues facing students.

- Finally, further studies that include more universities and larger study participants are recommended.

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