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Factors Affecting Teacher-Student Relationship from the Perspective of Students in School of Rehabilitation, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences

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Abstract

Background & Objective: Effective teacher-student relationship plays a fundamental role in the effective increase of the counseling process. This study aimed to recognize the factors affecting the advisor-student relationship from the perspective of students in school of rehabilitation in Hamadan, Iran.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional, descriptive study was performed on 117 students in the school of rehabilitation at Hamadan University of Medical Sciences. In this study, the teacher-student relationship questionnaire was applied in three individual, professional and scientific areas. Students filled the questionnaires through self-report, and data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, independent t-test, and analysis of variance.

Results: In this study, the mean scores related to three individual, professional, and scientific characteristics of advisors from the perspective of students were reported to be 4.07±0.4, 4.23±0.57, and 4.13±0.63, respectively. The items of sympathy with students, homogeneity of students and professors in terms of field of study, and having up-to-date knowledge in professors had the most impact on the teacher-student relationship, whereas the variables of age, gender and appearance had the least effect in this regard.

Conclusion: According to the results of the study, the character and ethical aspect of professors can affect the improvement of the teacher-student relationship, thereby increasing and enhancing the counseling process.

Introduction

Higher education plays a pivotal role in the development of societies and the coordination of different aspects of communities. The main goal of higher education is training specialized human resources with the necessary abilities to perform duties related to their area of activity. Faculty members and professors seek to improve the ability of the education system (1). University professors are the most important pillar of medical sciences universities (2). In addition to having the necessary scientific and specialized ability, a good instructor is someone who has adequate knowledge and skill in other fields and dimensions such as teaching method, moral and behavioral aspects, and student assessment method (3).

On the other hand, since the basis of education in any university is professors, students and the educational environment, disruption in each of these three components will result in a decline in educational quality (4). Contemplation over students' opinions and the criteria they refer to as a desirable and worthy professor can considerably affect the improvement of education and development of classes, mainly due to the fact that students are the main receptors of education, and the whole education system thrives on aiding this stratum of society (5). Identification of education-related

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problems, timely referral of problematic students, and coordination in various problem-solving stages are among the responsibilities of instructors to fructify the curriculum (6).

Counseling and guidance were introduced by Frank Parsons as "professional guidance" in 1908 as a regular and organized program (7). Counseling is a dynamic, purposeful relationship based on teacher-student participation, carried out in ways that are consistent with student needs (8). In addition, counseling is a facilitating process, where decision-making ability is empowered in volunteers by advisors (8). However, educational counseling is a dynamic, purposeful relationship based on teacher-student participation, performed in ways that are consistent with student needs (8). Improvement of counseling process has increased student satisfaction with university education and has become an incentive for achieving higher-education goals and increasing hard work among students (9).

In Article one of advising professor by-laws, an advisor is a faculty member responsible for educational guidance of students at various educational levels in education, research and individual areas (10). In addition, an advisor helps students match their interests and abilities to the educational programs and constantly evaluates their educational progress in the university. Moreover, an advisor must have up-to-date knowledge of different topics of the course, the correct registration method, and personal, medical and counseling services (7). Correct and scientific counseling with scientific techniques based on students' needs is fundamentally important in improving the quality of life and advancement of students (11). Communication skills are an essential need for counseling; in general, effective communication is defined as accurate perception, and communicators must transfer their beliefs in a way that receptors accurately perceive the generality and nature of the message (12).

Several researchers (e.g., Van Luijk et al.) have emphasized the positive effect of counseling on the educational success of students (13). In a study on communication skills of faculty members in the field of education, Attar et al. reported a moderate mean score of communication skills. Therefore, these authors suggested educational workshops to improve communication skills and teacher-student relationships in the educational process (14). Studies show that suitable advisor-student communication affects student satisfaction and inhibits their educational problems, thereby establishing better educational guidance in this regard (15).

While asking students' opinion about this relationship would significantly contribute to its improvement, it is often overlooked in the educational environments. In the present study, the key goal was determining the most important factors affecting the establishment of an efficient teacher-student relationship. Given the lack of research on this issue in the rehabilitation school of Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, the current research aimed to evaluate factors affecting the efficient advisor-student relationship in school of rehabilitation, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences from the perspective of students.

Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional, descriptive-analytical study was performed on all students in the school of rehabilitation, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences in March 2017. In total, 117 subjects (78 female and 39 male individuals) were selected by censussampling. Factorsaffecting the communication process were assessed using the questionnaire of factors affecting teacher-student relationship (16), content validity of which was approved by 10 faculty members in the field of medical education. In addition, its reliability was confirmed at the Cronbach's alpha of 0.88. In this 32-item questionnaire, the items are divided into three groups of individual (12 items), scientific (six items), and professional (14 items) characteristics of professors in order to better comprehend and analyze the topics

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and achieve more accurate results. Moreover, the items are scored based on a five-point Likert scale from very much to very low, where the minimum and maximum scores in the categories of individual, professional and scientific characteristics are 12 and 60, 14 and 70, and 6 and 30, respectively. Notably, the score range of the questionnaire is 32-160 (16).

The list of students was received from the education department of the school based on the field of study. Inclusion criteria were willingness to participate in the study, passing at least one semester and being student in one of the fields of speech therapy, occupational therapy and audiology in the school of rehabilitation. After receiving permission from the education department of school of rehabilitation, the questionnaires were completed by students at the end of classes. At first, the researcher explained the research objectives and ensured students of the confidentiality terms regarding their personal information. In addition, informed consent was obtained prior to the intervention. Data analysis was performed in SPSS version 16 using descriptive statistics (frequency tables, and central and dispersion indices such as mean and standard deviation), independent t-test and analysis of variance to compare the groups and evaluate the relationship between the variables. Furthermore, a P-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results

In total, there were 117 students (78 female and 39 male) with a mean age of 20.36 years (standard deviation of 2.21 years). In addition, 109 students were non-native, 113 were single and 114 were unemployed. Regarding the field of study, 47, 46, and 24 students were studying in the fields of speech therapy, occupational therapy, and audiology, respectively. The level of interest of students in their field of study is shown in Table 1. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of score of importance of individual characteristics of professors from the perspective of students in the school of rehabilitation in establishing a student-advisor relationship based on questions and fields of study. According to the results, the highest score (4.59±0.65) in this field was related to “sympathy with students”. Moreover, the overall score of the area was estimated at 49.92±4.84. In this study, we used ANOVA to compare the mean scores of subjects in the field of individual characteristics of advisors in different fields. As observed, no significant difference was observed ($P>0.05$) with the exception of “accountability” area ($P=0.04$).

Table 3 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of the score of the importance of professional characteristics of professors from the perspective of students in the school of rehabilitation in student-advisor relationships based on questionnaire items and fields of study. According to the results, the highest score (4.67±0.56) was related to “homogeneity between students and teachers in terms of field of study”. Moreover, the total score of the field was estimated at 59.34±6.96. In this study, we applied ANOVA to compare the mean score of professional characteristics of advisors, where a significant difference was observed among students in different fields of study in all areas with the exception of items 1, 2, 3, and 7, as shown in the table ($P<0.05$). Furthermore, no significant difference was observed in terms of the mean total score of the field among various disciplines ($P=0.81$).

Table 1: The level of interest of students in their field of study

level of interest	Number	percent
high	47	40.17
moderate	61	52.14
low	9	7.69

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Table 2: The mean score of individual characteristics of the advisor professor from the standpoint of the students

Individual characteristics of the advisor professor	Speech therapy	Occupational therapy	Audiology	Total	SD	Test statistics	p-value
age	3.52	3.56	3.68	3.56	.96	.22	.80
sex	3.31	3.20	3.16	3.25	1.14	.17	.85
appearance	3.52	3.50	3.58	3.53	1.05	.03	.97
high self-confidence	4.08	4.19	4.11	4.12	.89	.19	.83
flexibility	4.30	4.36	4.47	4.34	.72	.45	.64
humility	4.25	4.45	4.53	4.36	.80	1.27	.28
popularity among students	3.76	4.03	4.21	3.91	1.10	1.51	.23
sympathy with students	4.56	4.56	4.74	4.59	.65	.59	.56
criticism of	4.48	4.44	4.63	4.49	.73	.44	.65
justice in dealing with students	4.00	4.03	4.58	4.10	.99	2.74	.07
privacy	3.92	4.08	4.47	4.06	.94	2.59	.08
accountability	۴/۳۲	4.39	4.84	4.43	.78	3.42	.04
total	49.12	49.11	47.89	48.92	4.84	.54	.59

Table 3: The mean score of professional characteristics of the advisor professor from the standpoint of students

Professional characteristics of the advisor professor	Speech therapy	Occupational therapy	Audiology	Total	SD	Test statistics	p-value
being a master and a student	4.65	4.64	4.79	4.67	.56	.55	.58
observance of social norms and moral values	4.47	4.50	4.71	4.52	.66	1.00	.37
discipline	4.29	4.53	4.65	4.42	.81	1.93	.15
respect for students	4.44	4.47	4.98	4.53	.70	4.83	.01
trying to solve students' problems	3.81	4.17	4.63	4.05	.86	8.02	.001
involve students in group discussions	4.21	4.31	4.75	4.33	.75	4.04	.02
motivate students to learn	4.31	4.44	4.68	4.41	.85	1.48	.23
use of incentives	3.87	4.11	4.63	4.07	.81	7.25	.001
introducing counseling to students	3.58	3.83	4.63	3.83	1.01	8.93	.001<
follow up	3.87	4.28	4.63	4.12	.82	8.11	.001
ability to understand	3.53	3.94	4.53	3.82	1.13	6.43	.002
ease of access to the master	3.81	4.14	4.58	4.03	.93	5.82	.004
use an example appropriate to the student's problem	3.74	4.03	4.68	3.98	.97	7.65	.001
providing content with logical and practical procedures	4.19	4.33	4.74	4.32	.82	3.34	.04
total	59.50	59.58	58.39	59.34	6.96	.21	.81

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation of the score of the importance of scientific characteristics of advisors from the perspective of students in the school of rehabilitation in the advisor-student relationship based on questions and fields of study. In this respect, the highest score (4.62±0.72) was related to the area of "up-to-date knowledge of advisors". Moreover, the overall score of the area was 24.80±3.79. We used ANOVA to compare the mean score of scientific characteristics of advisors. As

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shown, a significant difference was observed between the students in various fields of study, with the exception of "up-to-date knowledge of advisors" (P<0.05).

Table 4: The mean score of scientific characteristics of the advisor professor from the standpoint of students

Scientific characteristics of the advisor professor	Speech therapy	Occupational therapy	Audiology	Total	SD	Test statistics	p-value
using a variety of counseling methods	3.89	3.97	4.63	4.03	0.95	4.95	0.009
master's scientific rank	3.94	4.08	4.53	4.08	۰,۸۳	3.85	0.24
mastering scientific concepts and educational rules	4.16	4.06	4.79	4.23	0.91	4.62	0.012
history of Professor's research activities	3.58	3.86	4.53	3.82	0.98	7.60	0.001
history of Master's Educational activities	3.85	3.94	4.58	4.00	0.85	5.82	0.004
up-to-date knowledge of advisors	4.53	4.64	4.84	4.62	0.72	1.39	0.252
total	24.87	24.83	24.52	24.80	3.79	0.06	0.938

Table 5 documents the mean and standard deviation of the mean score of student-advisor relationships in fields of the individual, professional and scientific skills of advisors from the perspective of students in school of rehabilitation based on questions. In this regard, we used the two-group independent t-test for female and male students to compare the score of advisor-student relationship. As observed, no significant difference was observed in this regard (P>0.05).

Table 5: The mean score of student-advisor relationships in fields of the individual, vocational and scientific skills of advisors professor by sex of students

Advisor-Student Relationship	Female	Male	Test statistics	p-value
individual characteristics of the advisor professor	49.24±4.23	48.28±5.51	1.05	0.297
Professional characteristics of the advisor professor	60.12±6.78	57.80±7.15	1.72	0.089
scientific characteristics of the advisor professor	25.11±3.76	24.17±3.84	1.27	0.208
total	49.24±4.23	48.28±5.51	1.05	0.297

Discussion

In the present study, the mean scores of individual, professional and scientific characteristics of advisors were estimated at 4.07±0.4, 4.23±0.57, and 4.13±0.63 (maximum score=5), respectively, from the perspective of students in the fields of occupational therapy, speech therapy, and audiology. According to the results, the items of sympathy with students in the area of individual characteristics of advisors, being homogeneous with advisors in terms of field of study, discipline and timely attendance at counseling sessions, and providing content with a logical and practical procedure and maintaining consistency in the area of professional characteristics of advisors, and having up-to-date knowledge and mastering scientific concepts and educational rules had the most impact on the scores of students. On the other hand, age, gender, appearance, the teacher's popularity and reputation among other students, providing students with a consulting plan,

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transparent and clear content transfer and comprehension ability, using examples related to students' problems, and history of teachers' research and educational activities had the least impact on the advisor-student relationship.

In a study by Abedini et al., the mean scores related to the individual, professional and scientific characteristics of teachers were estimated at 4.35, 4.27, and 4.50, respectively. In total, the factors of respecting students, mastering scientific content, up-to-date knowledge of professors, fairness in attitude toward students, and accountability had the highest impact on the teacher-student relationship, whereas the history of research activities of teachers and timely use of incentives had the least impact in this regard (16). In another research by Abidi, while proper behavior toward students, humility, and confidentiality and integrity had the most impact, age, gender, and appearance had the least effect on the teacher-student relationship (17). On the other hand, Ghadami et al. reported that the teachers' morality, ability to sympathize, mutual understanding and helping to solve problems played an effective role in establishing the teacher-student relationships, where age and gender play a less considerable role (18).

In a study by Bahador et al., respecting students, fair treatment of students, and teachers' openness to criticism were the most important factors affecting teacher-student relationship, whereas adherence to religious principles and beliefs, gender and age of professors were the least important factors from the perspective of medical students at the level of basic sciences (19). From the perspective of nursing students in Sabzevar, Iran, while respecting students, sympathy with students, fair treatment of students had the most impact on the teacher-student relationship, history of research activities and presentation of the plan had the least effect in this regard, reported by Yazhan et al. (20). In a research by Vakili et al., good-temperedness and self-confidence of professors were the most important individual factors in teacher assessment from the viewpoint of students. Moreover, the appearance of professors had significant importance in teacher assessment (21).

In sum, it seems that the individual skills of teachers and adherence to ethical principles by professors play the most important role in the improvement of teacher-student relationships. On the other hand, appearance, age, and gender of teachers have the least effect in this regard, which is in line with our findings. Regarding professional skills of teachers, students in the current study considered homogeneity of students and professors in terms of field of study, discipline and timely presence in counseling sessions, providing content with logical and practical procedures, and observing the continuity of the consultation were considered factors affecting the teacher-student relationship. According to Abidi Foroutani, safekeeping of teachers had the most effect on the teacher-student relationship (17). In another research by Ghadami et al., sympathy and mutual understanding, helping to solve the problems of students and motivating learning played an effective role in the teacher-student relationship (18).

In a study by Abedini, respecting students, including students in discussions, motivating learning, adhering to social norms and mutual respect played a fundamental role in the teacher-student relationship (16). In general, our findings are congruent with other studies in terms of the effects of professional factors on the teacher-student relationship. In this respect, adhering to social norms (e.g., discipline and mutual respect) played an important role in the teacher-student relationship. Regarding the emphasis on the similarity of field of study of professors and students, it should be noted that while rehabilitation disciplines are somehow similar, specialized questions asked about the job prospects have been raised by students.

Among the scientific characteristics of professors, having up-to-date knowledge and mastering

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scientific concepts and educational rules had the most impact on the teacher-student relationship. On the other hand, the history of educational-research activities had the least effect in this regard, which is in line with the results obtained by Abedini et al. (16). In the research by Ghadami et al., eloquence and teaching skill, as well as the scientific level and experience of professors played an important role in the teacher-student relationship (18), which showed that the scientific performance quality of advisors is more important than its quantity (background and duration of activities). Despite the lack of significant difference between male and female students, appearance, high self-confidence, sympathy with students, openness to criticism, homogeneity with professors in terms of field of study, timely use of incentives, and scientific ranking of professors (instructor, assistant professor, associate professor) had the most importance for female students. Meanwhile, safekeeping, availability of professors, and respecting students were more important to male students. Abedini et al. realized that female and male students were more concerned with the scientific content and up-to-date knowledge of professors, and appearance of professors and respecting students, respectively (17). Some studies find differences in the level of expectations, judgments, and understanding of students and professors and their academic motivation to be effective (17), which is consistent with our findings.

Some of the major drawbacks of the present research included the lack of cooperation in completing the questionnaire, lack of motivation of students, prolonged duration of questionnaire completion and lack of access to more comprehensive assessment tools. It is recommended that professors' opinions be assessed for improvement of the teacher-student relationship so that a better conclusion would be made by summing up comments from both sides.

The factors of sympathy with students, homogeneity between professors and students in terms of field of study, discipline and timely attendance of counseling meetings, and having up-to-date knowledge and mastering scientific concepts and educational rules had the most impact on the teacher-student relationship in the areas of individual, professional and scientific characteristics, respectively. Therefore, it is recommended that the mentioned skills of professors be improved and more attention be paid to students' demands to establish more effective interaction with students.

Conclusion

According to the results of the study, individual, professional and scientific skills of advisors play an important role in the establishment of a teacher-student relationship. Sympathy with students in the area of individual characteristics of teachers, homogeneity between students and professors in terms of field of study, and discipline and timely attendance in counseling sessions in the area of professional characteristics of teachers, and having up-to-date knowledge and mastering the scientific contents and educational laws in the area of scientific characteristics of the advisors.

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