

The Perception of Secondary School Teachers on the Availability of Counseling Services for Students With Learning Disabilities

Emad M. Alghazo
Al Ain University

Maher Tayseer Sharadgah
Umm Al-Qura University

The current research aimed to assess the status of counseling services offered to students with Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in Macca as perceived by their teachers. The research methodology employed was descriptive. The sample consisted of 330 teachers (174 males and 156 females) who work in the government schools in Macca during the 2021 academic year. The data was collected using a questionnaire that covered three areas: 1) Psychological counseling services (PCS) consisting of 12 items, 2) Social counseling services (SCS) consisting of 10 items, and 3) Educational counseling services (ECS) consisting of 9 items. The questionnaire was validated and its reliability was established.

The findings revealed that the counseling requirements of secondary school students with Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in Macca, as perceived by their teachers, had a moderate average mean of 2.83. Additionally, the educational counseling services dimension was the top priority with an average mean of 2.88 and a moderate level of consistency, followed by psychological counseling services with an average mean of 2.81 and a moderate level of consistency. Lastly, the social counseling services dimension had the lowest average mean of 2.80 and a moderate level of consistency.

The results also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the responses about the availability of counseling services for secondary school students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in Macca based on gender, academic background, work environment, years of experience, or the overall survey instrument. The study suggested establishing clear guidelines for counselors to effectively deliver the necessary counseling services for SLDs.

Keywords: counselling services, students with learning disabilities, secondary education, teachers

INTRODUCTION

Children with disabilities have equal rights, as well as children in general, to get quality education services. In a teacher survey, 99% believed that addressing and managing their students' mental health was a crucial part of their job (Roeser and Midgley, 1997). Teachers have consistently expressed the importance of mental health education (Graham et al., 2011) and managing mental health concerns in the classroom (Walter, Gouze, and Lim, 2006). They recognize their ability to recognize mental health issues in the

classroom (Rothì, Leavey, and Best, 2008) and the correlation between academic and emotional well-being (Kidger et al., 2009). The vast majority of teachers believe that schools should serve as a venue for addressing mental health concerns (Reinke et al., 2011).

Previous research on teachers, both qualitative and quantitative, has emphasized the need for teachers to receive extensive specialized training in mental health (Graham et al., 2011; Moon, Williford, and Mendenhall, 2017; Rothì, Leavey, and Best, 2008; Walter, Gouze, and Lim, 2006). Without such training, teachers lack confidence in their knowledge and ability to identify mental health issues, provide support, and handle emotional challenges in the classroom (Moor et al., 2007; Roeser and Midgley, 1997; Cohall et al., 2007). Teachers have reported feeling powerless due to their perceived inability to assist their students (Kidger et al., 2009).

Lately, there has been a growing focus on students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) due to the various mental, educational, social, and academic challenges they face. These difficulties can impact the student and their relationships with others in environments such as school and home. Additionally, these students often struggle with self-expression, leading to mental health issues that significantly affect their academic and social lives. Therefore, researchers are concerned about the academic and personal well-being of this group, with the aim of helping them overcome these challenges.

It is important to note that students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) have less abilities compared to their peers without disabilities, thus requiring special attention and care. To meet this need, intensive educational programs and services should be offered to help them adjust to their living environment. These services should be tailored to meet the unique needs and circumstances of these students. (Shaqran, Megdad, Alsherfen & Mhedat, 2015).

Zoubi and Hadidi (2020) emphasized that the difficulties faced by students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) that affect their academic progress are caused by poor educational quality, low academic achievement, and low self-esteem. As a result, counseling services such as psychological and educational support are essential to help guide and prepare these students to overcome any academic and social challenges. Additionally, these students should be encouraged to participate in social activities to enhance their social and psychological adaptation.

Therefore, these counseling programs and services would expand our understanding of the needs of these students in regards to their behavior and social performance. By providing such programs and services, we can help students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) improve their social, cultural, psychological, and mental well-being, ultimately leading to higher levels of social and psychological adaptation.

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) are among the vulnerable groups that require support and attention from teachers and experts in educational institutions. This places a heavy responsibility on teachers to identify and address these students' academic and social challenges. This, in turn, requires the support of others to ease the burden on teachers who are working with students with Learning Disabilities.

According to Abdullah (2012), school counselors play an active role in assisting students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) by offering counseling services. These services include specialized programs in academic, personal, social, and educational areas to help these students overcome the challenges they face in the learning process.

According to Mumeni and Shimari (2017) and Dempsey, Megan, and Colyvas (2016), counseling services provided to students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) can aid in their adaptation to these difficulties and help reduce their mental disorders. Zoubi and Hadidi (2020) also found that counseling services for SLDs could help these students manage their disorders and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to cope with them. These services can help overcome the learning challenges that are hindering the progress of these students.

A study conducted by Abahusain (2016) aimed to assess the perception of guardians regarding the effectiveness of support services offered by resource rooms for students with Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in Saudi Arabia. The study involved 283 guardians of female students. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the quality of services provided by the resource room based

on the gender of the guardians. Additionally, the results indicated that educational and academic services received the highest ratings among the services provided by professionals in resource rooms for SLDs in schools.

In 2016, Dempsey and colleagues conducted a study to assess the quality of support services for students with Learning Disabilities in primary schools in Australia. The study included all primary schools under the jurisdiction of the Australian Ministry of Education that offer support services. The results revealed that the highest quality of support was for educational, behavioral, and counseling services. The study also found statistically significant differences among students in terms of the quality of services received.

The study by Abdullah (2012) aimed to examine the type of counseling services provided for students with Learning Disabilities in schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and the connection between these services and social competence and academic performance. The researcher created a scale for counseling services and translated Walker’s social competence scale. The sample group included 276 guardians, 33 students with Learning Disabilities, and 33 counselors. The results showed that the quality of counseling services provided to SLDs was moderate, according to the perceptions of teachers, guardians, and counselors.

The researcher’s practical experience has shown that in most inclusive schools, students with Learning Disabilities experience psychological and social difficulties, and the quality of counseling services they receive is inadequate. The importance of this research is due to the scarcity of research and studies focused on the state of counseling services provided to students with Learning Disabilities, which highlights a need for improvement in these services.

The objective of the present study is to determine the status of counseling services offered to secondary school students with Learning Disabilities in Makkah as perceived by their teachers. Additionally, the study aims to investigate if there are any statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the perceived quality of counseling services based on the teachers’ gender, level of academic qualifications, location of the workplace, city, and years of experience.

METHOD

Participants

The study was conducted with a sample of 330 teachers of students with Learning Disabilities who worked in the schools of the General Administration of Education in Makkah during the 2021 academic year. The sample was selected randomly and the demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES BASED ON THE RESEARCH VARIABLES
(330 PARTICIPANTS)

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	174	52.7%
	Female	156	47.3%
	Total	330	100%
Academic Qualification	Bachelor	243	73.6%
	Postgraduate diploma	57	17.3%
	Higher education	30	9.1%
	Total	330	100%
Workplace	Institute	101	30.6%
	Center	80	24.2%
	Program	149	45.2%
	Total	330	100%

Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	105	31.8%
	5-10 years	134	40.6%
	More than 10 years	91	27.6%
	Total	330	100%

These are the findings related to the demographic information of the sample group of 330 teachers of students with Learning Disabilities who participated in the study.

1. *Gender*: Out of 330 participants, 174 were male (52.7%) and 156 were female (47.3%).
2. *Academic qualification*: The most common academic qualification among the participants was a bachelor's degree with 243 participants (73.6%) having this degree. The second most common was higher education, which was possessed by 30 participants (30.1%).
3. *Workplace*: The workplace with the highest number of participants was "program," with 149 participants (45.2%) working there. The second highest was "center," with 80 participants (24.2%).
4. *Years of experience*: Participants with 5-10 years of experience were the most frequent, with 134 participants (40.6%) having this amount of experience. The second highest group was those with more than 10 years of experience, with 91 participants (27.6%).

Instrument

The main objective of this research was to determine the status of counseling services offered to students with Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in secondary education, as perceived by their teachers in Macca. To achieve this, a questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire was divided into two parts:

1. The first part included the demographic information of the participants such as gender, academic qualification, workplace, and years of experience.
2. The second part consisted of three sections:
 - Psychological counseling services (PCS) for SLDs in secondary education (12 items).
 - Social counseling services (SCS) for SLDs in secondary education (10 items).
 - Educational counseling services (ECS) for SLDs in secondary education (9 items).

Validity

The questionnaire was evaluated for its validity by having it reviewed by experts in the field of Learning Disabilities and counseling from universities. This evaluation was performed to assess the suitability, clarity, and accuracy of the items and dimensions in the questionnaire. Based on the suggestions for improvement that were agreed upon by 80% of the referees, the questionnaire was revised and its final form was established.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients. This was done for each individual item as well as for the entire questionnaire using a pilot sample of 15 participants. The results of this assessment are presented in table 2 that displays the reliability of each item and the overall reliability of the questionnaire.

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT VALUES OF THE INSTRUMENT

Dimensions	Item Frequency	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological counselling services	12	0.83
Social counselling services	10	0.73
Educational counselling services	9	0.80

Overall performance	31	0.91
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RESULTS

To address the primary inquiry regarding the perception of teachers in Macca towards the counseling requirements of SLDs in secondary education, the mean and standard deviation for all dimensions were computed and presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE COUNSELLING NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

No.	Dimension	Mean	SD	Degree of Correspondence
1	Educational counselling services	2.88	.54	Moderate
2	Psychological counselling services	2.81	.57	Moderate
3	Social counselling services	2.80	.53	Moderate
	Overall performance	2.83	.55	Moderate

Table 4 displays the mean score of 2.83 with a standard deviation of .55 for overall performance. The results indicate that the educational counseling needs dimension was ranked first, with a mean of 2.88 and a standard deviation of .54, showing a moderate level of agreement. Next in line was the psychological counseling needs dimension, with a mean of 2.81, a standard deviation of .57, and a moderate level of agreement. Lastly, the social counseling needs dimension came in last with a mean score of 2.80, a standard deviation of .53, and a moderate level of agreement.

First: Psychological Counselling Services Dimension

TABLE 5
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING SERVICES DIMENSION

Item Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Degree of Correspondence
1	10	Severe cases of SLDs are referred to specialized persons.	3.48	.92	High
2	11	Support is provided for SLDs to understand and accept themselves.	3.43	.92	High
3	12	Support is provided for SLDs to express their feelings and emotions objectively.	3.34	.99	Moderate
4	9	Applying the psychological tests required to assess the condition of students with Learning Disabilities, to perceive their weaknesses, and to address them.	3.23	.95	Moderate
5	4	Training SLDs on emotional self-regulation.	3.00	1.01	Moderate
6	5	The counsellor helps to engage SLDs in dealing with the problem of lack of attention and concentration.	3.00	1.06	Moderate
7	3	Counselling sessions are provided for SLDs having test anxiety.	2.97	1.02	Moderate

8	1	Counselling aims at the psychological problems of SLDs.	2.96	1.02	Moderate
9	6	Support is provided for SLDs to confront disappointment and frustration in many circumstances.	2.29	1.09	Low
10	2	Preventive counselling programs are offered to SLDs.	2.25	1.04	Low
Item Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Degree of Correspondence
11	7	Behavioural modifications are performed periodically when needed.	2.03	.99	Low
12	8	Counselling helps increase the awareness of SLDs in relation to the importance of mental health.	1.91	.98	Low
		Overall performance	2.81	.57	Moderate

As depicted in Table 5, the means for the psychological counseling services dimension were classified as low, moderate, or high. The overall performance mean was 2.81, with a moderate level of agreement and a standard deviation of .57. The item means ranged from 1.91 to 3.48. The highest mean was found for item 10, "Severe cases of SLDs are referred to specialized persons," with a mean of 3.48, high level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.92. Item 11, "Support is provided for SLDs to understand and accept themselves," was ranked second, with a mean of 3.43, high level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.92. Item 7, "Behavioral modifications are performed periodically when needed," had a mean of 2.03, low level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.99. Lastly, item 8, "Counseling helps increase the awareness of SLDs in relation to the importance of mental health," had the lowest mean of 1.91, low level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.98.

Second: Social Counselling Services Dimension

TABLE 6
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE SOCIAL COUNSELLING SERVICES DIMENSION

Item Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Degree of Correspondence
1	9	SLDs are helped to adapt to their problems and solve them in a realistic way.	3.52	.88	High
2	1	SLDs are helped to increase their awareness about teamwork.	3.51	.86	High
3	6	SLDs are taught on the necessity to respect each other.	3.46	.90	High
4	5	SLDs are taught on how to perceive the social needs of individuals similar to them.	3.32	1.00	Moderate
5	10	Increasing SLDs' opportunities to have group play with others.	3.27	1.00	Moderate
6	4	SLDs are taught on how to be critical in relation to the negative habits and customs in society.	2.50	1.12	Low
7	8	SLDs receive support to develop positive relationships with others.	2.47	1.11	Low

8	7	SLDs are provided with awareness on the harmful social problems.	2.37	1.16	Low
9	3	SLDs are helped to identify their social interests and concerns.	2.31	1.06	Low
10	2	SLDs are encouraged to participate in the social activities of the school.	2.08	1.02	Low
Overall performance			2.08	1.02	Low

As displayed in Table 6, the means for the social counseling services dimension were classified as high, moderate, or low. The overall performance mean was 2.80, with a moderate level of agreement and a standard deviation of 0.53. The means of each item ranged from 2.03 to 3.52. The highest mean was found for item 9, “SLDs are helped to adapt to their problems and solve them in a realistic way,” with a mean of 3.52, high level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.88. The second highest mean was recorded for item 1, “SLDs are helped to increase their awareness about teamwork,” with a mean of 3.51, high level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.86. The lowest mean was recorded for item 2, “SLDs are encouraged to participate in the social activities of the school,” with a mean of 2.08, low level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 1.02.

Third: Educational Counselling Services Dimension

TABLE 7
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICES DIMENSION

Item Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD	Degree of Correspondence
1	8	Educational information is given to SLDs in a loving and encouraging way.	3.53	.87	High
2	1	Educational services provided for SLDs in the resource rooms are more than those in the inclusive classes.	3.50	.88	High
3	9	Families of SLDs participate in the educational programs offered to their children.	3.37	.93	Moderate
4	4	SLDs are helped by the educator to learn the problems they face with teachers in the inclusive class.	3.21	.97	Moderate
5	7	The condition of SLDs is studied by an interdisciplinary team.	2.64	1.09	Moderate
6	4	Learning for SLDs is characterized by comfort and neatness.	2.41	1.06	Low
7	3	Participation in setting educational and learning goals for SLDs in an inclusive manner.	2.39	1.10	Low
8	5	There is an integrated planning by the educator for the educational programs and services provided for SLDs.	2.35	1.16	Low
9	6	There is a continuous assessment of the educational services provided for SLDs.	2.88	.54	Moderate
Overall performance			2.88	.54	Moderate

As depicted in Table 7, the means for the ECS were classified as high, moderate, or low. The overall performance mean was 2.88, with a moderate level of agreement and a standard deviation of 0.54. The means of each item ranged from 2.19 to 3.60. The highest mean was found for item 8, “Educational information is given to SLDs in a loving and encouraging way,” with a mean of 3.53, high level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.87. The lowest mean was recorded for item 6, “There is a continuous assessment of the educational services provided for SLDs,” with a mean of 2.21, low level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 1.11.

The second question asks whether there are any significant statistical differences ($\alpha=0.05$) in the counseling services provided to SLDs, as perceived by their teachers in Macca, based on gender, academic qualifications, workplace, and years of experience. To answer this question, the researchers calculated the mean and standard deviations of the counseling services for SLDs in secondary education as perceived by their teachers, based on the mentioned variables. The results are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS BASED ON GENDER, ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION, WORKPLACE, AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Variable	Dimension	Levels	PCS	SCS	ECS	Overall Degree
Gender	Male	Mean	2.82	2.83	2.91	2.85
		SD	0.56	0.52	0.54	0.48
	Female	Mean	2.79	2.78	2.85	2.81
		SD	0.59	0.55	0.55	0.51
Academic Qualification	BA	Mean	2.83	2.80	2.89	2.84
	Postgraduate diploma	Mean	2.75	2.79	2.83	2.74
		SD	0.58	0.58	0.53	0.51
	Higher education	Mean	2.74	2.87	2.91	2.84
		SD	0.62	0.51	0.61	0.53
	Workplace	Institute	Mean	2.88	2.84	2.93
SD			0.60	0.56	0.55	0.52
Centre		Mean	2.86	2.86	2.95	2.89
		SD	0.60	0.56	0.55	0.52
Program		Mean	2.72	2.75	2.81	2.76
		SD	0.62	0.58	0.61	0.55
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	Mean	2.85	2.80	2.85	2.83
		SD	0.58	0.52	0.53	0.49
	5-10 years	Mean	2.79	2.81	2.92	2.84
		SD	0.56	0.53	0.54	0.48
	More than 10 years	Mean	2.77	2.81	2.86	2.81
		SD	0.58	0.55	0.56	0.50

The results in Table 8 indicate that there may be differences between the means. To determine if these differences are statistically significant, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted, and the results are displayed in Table 9.

TABLE 9
RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Source of Variance	Dimension	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F.	Sig.
Gender	PCS	.033	1	.033	.098	.755
	SCS	.139	1	.139	.489	.485
	ECS	.245	1	.245	.832	.363
	Total	.122	1	.122	.504	.478
Academic qualification	PCS	.558	2	.279	.836	.434
	SCS	.139	1	.139	.489	.485
	ECS	.245	1	.245	.832	.363
	Total	.122	1	.122	.504	.478
Academic qualification	PCS	.558	2	.279	.836	.434
	SCS	.444	2	.222	.784	.457
	ECS	.383	2	.192	.650	.523
	Total	.339	2	.169	.699	.498
Workplace	PCS	1.683	2	.842	2.524	.082
	SCS	1.056	2	.528	1.865	.157
	ECS	1.079	2	.539	1.828	.162
	Total	1.233	2	.616	2.543	.080
Years of Experience	PCS	.274	2	.137	.410	.664
	SCS	.127	2	.064	.225	.799
	ECS	.233	2	.112	.379	.685
	Total	.025	2	.013	.052	.949
Error	PCS	106.700	320	.333		
	SCS	90.631	320	.283		
	ECS	94.397	320	.295		
	Total	77.572	320	.242		
General	PCS	2716.349	330			
	SCS	2697.851	330			
	ECS	2847.325	330			
	Total	2733.240	330			

The results in table 9 indicate that there are no statistically significant differences (at $\alpha = 0.05$) between the mean responses regarding the quality of counselling services for SLDs in secondary schools in Macca from the viewpoint of their teachers, based on gender, academic qualification, workplace, and years of experience.

DISCUSSION

According to the findings, the situation of counselling needs of secondary education SLDs in Macca is seen as moderate by their teachers, with an average score of 2.88. The “ECS” dimension ranked first, with a moderate mean of 2.88, followed by “PCS” with a mean of 2.81 and a moderate degree, and lastly, “SCS” with a mean of 2.80 and a moderate degree of correlation.

The results could be due to the fact that some SLDs have unique needs that require attention from specialists. Additionally, teachers may not have strong skills and understanding in regards to providing educational counselling. Furthermore, teachers may not place much importance on helping SLDs develop into responsible and adaptable members of society.

The findings about the “PCS” in general indicate that educational counselors have a moderate level of knowledge and expertise. The item with the highest score, item 10, pertains to the belief that serious cases of SLDs should be referred to specialized professionals for treatment. The mean score for this item was 3.48, reflecting a high level of agreement among teachers, with a standard deviation of 0.92. It is believed that these severe cases require not only counseling services, but also treatment from psychologists under the supervision of specialized individuals, as they are considered to be complex cases.

The researcher attributes this result to the lack of engagement by counselors with students through workshops and meetings to educate them about mental health issues. Additionally, the counselors have not effectively conveyed the concept of mental health, which includes psychiatric terms that may be beyond the students’ understanding. This finding aligns with the study by Mohaidat (2013) which showed that the counseling services provided to students with SLDs in schools were moderate.

However, item 11 (which pertains to providing support for SLDs to understand and accept themselves) came in second place with a mean score of 3.43, a high level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.92. In contrast, item 7 (which deals with periodically modifying behavior when needed) had a low level of agreement with a mean score of 2.03, a standard deviation of 0.99. Finally, item 8 (which concerns the role of counseling in raising awareness about the importance of mental health among SLDs) had the lowest mean score of 1.91, a low level of agreement, and a standard deviation of 0.98. This result is consistent with the study by Qahtani and Sheiha (2019), which found that teachers of secondary education SLDs view psychological counseling as a crucial supportive service.

However, this finding contradicts the results of Hamidah and Howsawi (2020), which showed a varying level of satisfaction among participants with the supportive academic services provided for students with SLDs at Qassim University. The study also found that a majority of university courses were not suitable for the abilities of SLDs and that the psychological counseling provided for SLDs regarding effective communication with professors and colleagues was inadequate.

The results regarding the “SCS” show that this dimension has a moderate mean, reflecting the belief among teachers that there is a need for this type of counseling. Social counseling is seen as a way to help students with SLDs to become more responsible and to foster social connections with their peers. This type of counseling is thought to assist individuals in adapting to difficulties and to society as a whole, enabling them to be more productive in spite of the challenges they face.

The study showed that item 9, which states that SLDs are assisted in adapting to and solving their difficulties in a practical manner, ranked first with an average score of 3.52 and a standard deviation of 0.88. The researcher attributes this finding to the belief of teachers that the counsellor is confident that adapting to the issue is a crucial step in building the student’s confidence and helping them understand that their problems do not hinder their social life and relationships, but rather make them a stronger person. Many students struggle with coping with problems, leading to frustration and difficulty in fitting into society, but this approach helps address this challenge.

Finally, item 2, which states that SLDs are encouraged to take part in the social activities of the school, was ranked last with a mean score of 2.03, low agreement, and a standard deviation of 1.01. The researcher believes that the student’s participation in these activities is self-determined and the counsellor is not in control of them. For example, the student may choose to participate in activities outside the school, making it beyond the counsellor’s jurisdiction to manage those activities.

This finding aligns with the findings of Abdullah (2012), who reported that the quality of counseling services provided to students with SLDs was deemed to be moderate by teachers, guardians, and counselors. This is also consistent with the study by Mumeni & Shimari (2017), which found that the counseling services provided in resource rooms for SLDs were considered to be of moderate quality according to the teachers of these students. On the contrary, this result contradicts the findings of Abahusain (2016), who found that educational and academic services were rated the highest by participants and were ranked first among the services provided by experts in resource rooms for schools serving students with SLDs.

Analysis of the results concerning overall “ECS”: showed that means for this dimension which is indicated in Table 9 were either high, moderate, or low. This can be attributed to the possibility that a counselor may excel in certain aspects related to educational counseling services. This may be due to the

limited theoretical background in educational counseling and the lack of supervision in training beyond the counselor's practical experience. As a result, the counselor may be proficient in educational counseling methods and motivational strategies for students, but may not take into account other responsibilities.

The results of Mumeni & Shimari (2017) were similar, revealing that the counseling services provided in programs for students with SLDs in resource rooms were considered to be moderate, as reported by their teachers. However, item 8 (i.e., educational information is presented to students with SLDs in a loving and supportive manner) had the lowest mean score at 3.53, with a high level of agreement and a standard deviation of 0.87. This could be because teachers believe that SLDs have a unique condition that requires additional support in terms of the type and presentation of educational information. As a result, the information is presented to them in a supportive and encouraging manner to make the learning process easier and more engaging.

Item 6 (i.e., continuous evaluation of the educational services provided for students with SLDs) had the lowest mean score at 2.21, with a low level of agreement and a standard deviation of 1.11. This may be due to the fact that teachers feel it is imperative to pay closer attention and provide additional support to SLDs. This can be achieved by closely monitoring the educational services provided to students through continuous evaluation to identify strengths and weaknesses and address any gaps. This will help ensure high-quality educational services for students and aid in overcoming difficulties and improving educational outcomes for SLDs.

This result aligns with the findings of Abahusain (2016), which showed that educational and academic services were rated highest by participants and were the least provided in resource rooms for schools for students with SLDs. This result is also in line with the study by Dempsey et al. (2016), which found that educational, behavioral, and counseling services were the top services provided for students and that there were statistically significant differences among children in this regard.

Examination of the findings related to the second major inquiry "Is there a statistically significant variation ($=\alpha 0.05$) in the counseling services provided for students with SLDs as perceived by their teachers, based on gender, educational background, place of work, and years of teaching experience?". The findings indicate that there is no significant difference ($=\alpha 0.05$) between the mean scores of the sample's responses concerning the provision of counseling services for secondary school students with SLDs in Macca, as perceived by their teachers, with regards to gender, educational background, workplace, and years of experience. The analysis was conducted across all dimensions and overall. Teachers seem to believe that counsellors, regardless of gender, expertise, academic qualifications, and years of experience, are largely similar in terms of the counseling services they provide for students with SLDs. All participants showed empathy towards the challenges faced by counsellors and believed that they possess good counseling skills, can maintain objective counseling relationships, and are capable of employing counseling techniques and methods in a comprehensive manner.

This conclusion aligns with the results of Zoubi and Hadidi (2020) who found no significant differences based on gender. However, it contradicts the findings of Mumeni and Shimari (2017), who reported a statistically significant difference in the mean responses concerning the dimension of counseling services and in relation to gender.

However, this finding contradicts the results of Qahtani and Sheiha (2019), which showed no statistically significant differences in the mean responses of teachers regarding the significance of psychological counseling as a supportive service for secondary school students with SLDs based on academic qualifications, years of experience in working with students with learning disabilities, and teaching experience in secondary education. Additionally, it contradicts the study by Mumeni and Shimari (2017), which found statistically significant differences in the mean responses of participants concerning counseling services as a whole and based on experience, with male teachers scoring higher. The results also showed a statistically significant difference in the responses of participants concerning the counseling services dimension based on gender, with males receiving higher scores.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establishing well-defined guidelines for counsellors to deliver the essential counseling services for students with specific learning disabilities;
- Encouraging counsellors to participate in training programs aimed at enhancing the counseling services for SLDs; and
- Undertaking research and studies focused on the counseling services for students with specific learning disabilities to gain a deeper understanding of its role in delivering effective treatments.

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