

Students' Perception on Effectiveness of Academic Advising at Oman College of Health Sciences in Sultanate of Oman

Maria Luisa C. Javier¹, Maryam B. Farhan², Sameera Siddique³, Simy Mathew⁴, Zakiya Doloolat⁵.

¹PhD, M.A.N. RN, Oman College of Nursing, Dhofar-branch

²MSc, BSc. RN, Oman College of Nursing, Dhofar-branch

³PhD, MSc, BSc, RN, RM, Oman College of Nursing, Dhofar-branch

⁴PhD, MSc, BSc, RN, RM, Oman College of Nursing, Dhofar-branch

⁵MSc advanced practice (Education) RN, RM, Oman College of Nursing, Dhofar-branch

Corresponding Author:

Simy Mathew, Oman College of health sciences, Dhofar-branch

E-mail:

simymathew97@gmail.com

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How to cite this article: Javier MLC, Farhan MB, Siddique S, Mathew S, Doloolat Z. Students' Perception on Effectiveness of Academic Advising at Oman College of Health Sciences in Sultanate of Oman. Gfnpss-IJMR 2025; 6:09: 3108-3114

Submitted: 15 September 2025; **Accepted:** 30 September 2025; **Published:** 10 October 2025

Abstract

Introduction: Academic advising is an essential element for the educational development of students. The process of academic advising brings teacher student relationship closer and will help the students to express their feelings and concerns. A good academic advisor can mold the students in the right path.

Materials & Methods: The descriptive survey method is mainly concerned with the accurate description of the perception of the students about academic advising. Shona McCombes, (2019) emphasized that a descriptive research design can use a wide variety of methods to investigate one or more variables and aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. The study conducted at Oman Colleges of Health Sciences (OCHS) in Sultanate of Oman. OCHS main campus is located in Al Wattaya in Muscat with its seven branches from different regions namely, North Batinah, South Batinah, North Sharqiyah, South Sharqiyah, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah and Dhofar.

Results: In the orientation phase, 90.3% of students reported face-to-face contact for academic advising, while 62.3% met advisors only when needed. About 68% agreed that advising helps in course selection, 68.1% said it clarified study obstacles, and 70.4% received guidance on HAMS registration. Regarding available services, 69.3% agreed advising supports study planning, 62.2% noted strategy suggestions for better performance, 66.6% valued information for tutoring, and 69.3% felt motivated to participate in class. Additionally, 68.5% agreed it motivated them to aim for high scores. In terms of educational development, 74.4% agreed advising clarified educational goals, 61.1% felt it encouraged extracurricular involvement, and 66.9% believed it helped balance personal life and studies.

Conclusions: In conclusion, students in OCHS are in need of academic advising to achieve good academic performance as well as to adjust with their career in future.

Keywords: Perception; Effectiveness; Academic Advising

Introduction

Academic advising is an essential element for the educational development of students. The process of academic advising brings teacher student relationship closer and will help the students to express their feelings and concerns. A good academic advisor can mold the students in the right path. Academic advising is the process between the student and an academic advisor of exploring the value of a general education, reviewing the services and policies of the institution, discussing educational and career plans, and making appropriate course selection (Umar Tariq, 2017)

The undergraduate students are under more pressure due to the growing demands along with rapid social, technological, and scientific advancement in education. When the undergraduate students entering to the college it is good to assign an academic advisor with the purpose of developing good teacher student relationship and there by thereby allowing the student to connect with the institution. The role of the advisor in the advising process is crucial. The advisor serves as a personal mentor, an academic counselor, and a referral source.

Moreover, various studies shows that the importance of academic advising for providing encouragement to the student and also making the student think positively in various curricular and extracurricular activities in the institution which in turn help high quality achievement of student as well as institutional goals. According to Al-Asmi&Thumiki (2014), student advising is a necessary ingredient for the functioning of the institution and the key to student empowerment and improvement.

Guidance and advising is vital to help students to plan and organize their studies and also the advisor will be able to know the weak areas of the students where they need real help for their achievements in education. Some scholars trace the roots of academic advising to the beginning of higher education in the United States (Cate & Miller, 2015) Academic advising engages students beyond their own world views, while acknowledging their individual characteristics, values, and motivations as they enter, move through, and exit the Institution .Good academic advising and sharing the advisor's knowledge and experiences are among the advantages that enable students to make the right decisions to achieve their ambitions, which would affect their future (Baker et al., 2010)

Students' educational development is an asset of every

country so it is important to have good guidance and support for the highest possible level of educational achievements. The students' perception on to academic advising also needs to improve through good system of advising process and they need to feel that academic advising is important part of their educational process. The present study aims to explore the students' perception on academic advising and based on the perception of the students the researchers formulate recommendations for effective academic advising service among undergraduate students.

The specific Objectives:

- To identify the perception of students on academic advising provided in the college.
- To determine the effectiveness of academic advising based on students' perception.
- To recommend strategies for the improvement of academic advising based on the students' perception.

Materials & Methods.

Target Population

According to Fraenkel and Warren studies, (2015) population refer to the complete set of individuals (respondents, subjects or events) having common characteristics in which the researchers are interested. The present study has a total of 2442 students from the OCHS main campus which is located in Al Wattaya in Muscat and from seven branches from different regions namely, North Batinah, South Batinah, North Sharqiyah, South Sharqiyah, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah and Dhofar, who enrolled in six courses in OCHS and the distributions of the students are as follows in each course (OCHS students affair department.2022)

S.NO	PROGRAM	POPULATION
1	BSc Nursing Program	1774
2	Pharmacy	196
3	Physiotherapy	103
4	Medical Laboratory Science program	196
5	X-ray /Medical imaging	125
6	Health information & Management	48
Total		2442

The sample and sampling technique:

The researchers adopted simple random sampling technique for the selection of the respondents from Oman College of Health Sciences at Sultanate of Oman

registered for all the respondents who all are enrolled in the programmes during academic year 2021-2022 with the total population of 2442.

The sample size is 344. Sample size calculated using slovin's formula $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$. The margin of error is 5% (0.05), confidence level is 95%, the response distribution is 50% $n = 2442 / 1 + 2442(0.05 * 0.05)$ $n = 2442 / 1 + (2442 * 0.0025)$

$n = 2442 / 1 + 6.10$ $n = 2442 / 7.1 = 344$ $n = 344$

The sample unit contain some inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria

- All health sciences students of OCHS at Sultanate of Oman
- Students those who are agreed for the study

The exclusion criteria

- Foundation students.

Data collection

The data be collected for the study through an electronic survey by using self-administered questionnaire which consists of 2 parts. Part I demographic data includes 6 questions; Part II students' perception on academic advising which consists of 3 sections with a total of 31 questions in that

11 questions related to orientation phase, 10 questions related to available service and 10 questions related to quality of service. Each part will be answered by putting a tick based on the appropriate agreement of the respondents.

The researcher sent the web questionnaires to each research coordinators through the college. Then the research coordinator send to year level coordinators. After that each level coordinator send the web questionnaires to their respective students. The respondents have the freedom whether to participate or not for the online survey.

Data synthesis and management

The researchers used SPSS version 26. Descriptive and inferential statistical tests utilized to treat data and test the hypothesis 1. Mean, Percentage and Frequency

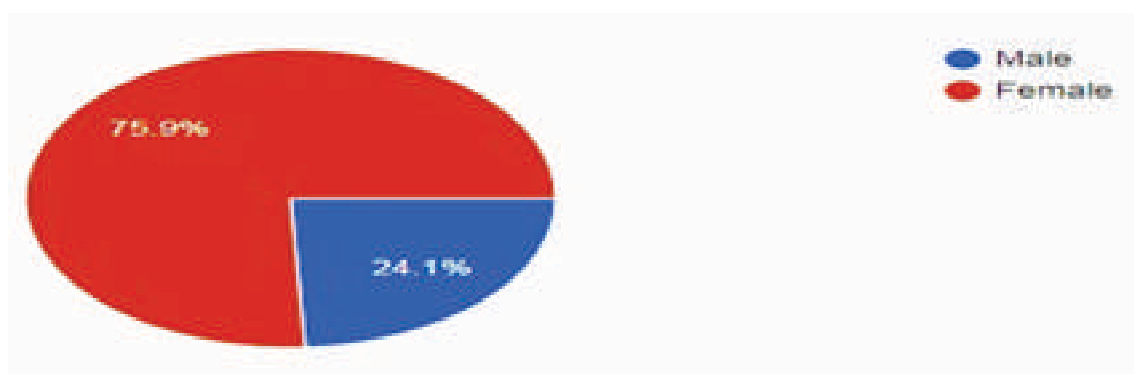
2. Test of Association - T-Test, Chi-Square

3. Regression Analysis

Result and Discussion

The findings of the current study indicated that the majority of students at OCHS demonstrated a positive relationship between academic advising and student performance. This result is supported by C.Y. Chan et al., who also found a positive correlation between academic advising and undergraduate performance.

Gender Distribution of Participants



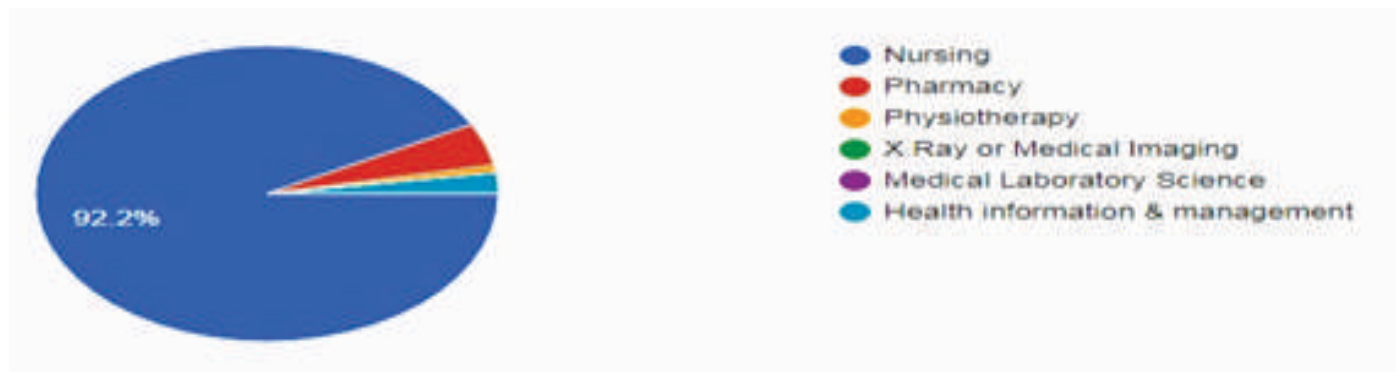
According to the demographic data, 75.9% of the participants were female, while 24.1% were male.

Student Living Arrangements During College



The majority of students reported living with their families during their college days. Additionally, 17.9% of students resided in on-campus accommodation, while 10.1% lived in rented housing.

Program of Study Distribution



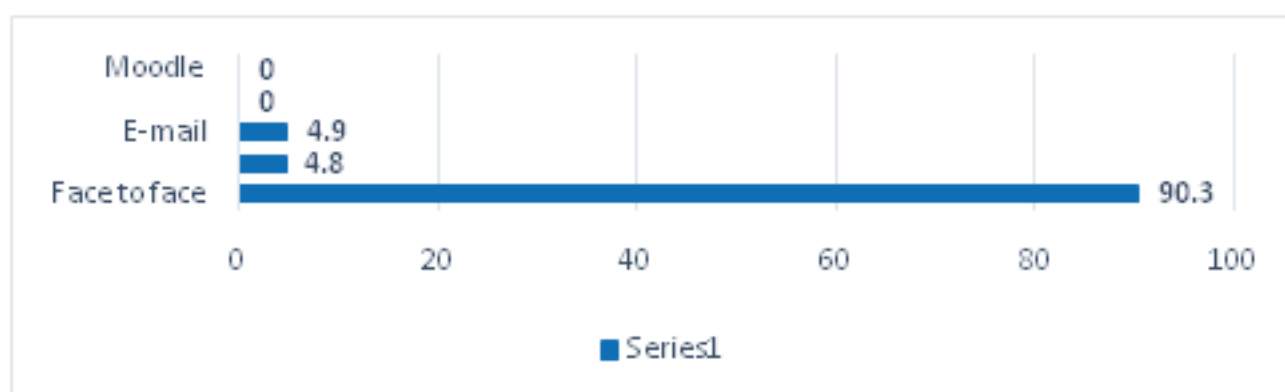
The majority of participants (92.2%) were enrolled in the Nursing program. Additionally, 4.7% were from the Pharmacy program, 2.3% from Health Information and Management, and 0.8% from the Physiotherapy program. This indicates that most respondents were from the Nursing program.

Cumulative GPA Range



The results show that the highest proportion of participants (36.2%) reported a cumulative GPA in the "Very Good" range, while the lowest proportion (13.2%) fell within the "Satisfactory/Pass" category.

Modes of Contact with Academic Advisor



The majority of respondents (90.3%) reported contacting their academic advisors face-to-face. Additionally, 4.8% communicated through WhatsApp and 4.9% via email. No participants reported using HAMS or Moodle as a means of contact. These findings indicate that face-to-face interaction is the primary method of communication for academic advising.

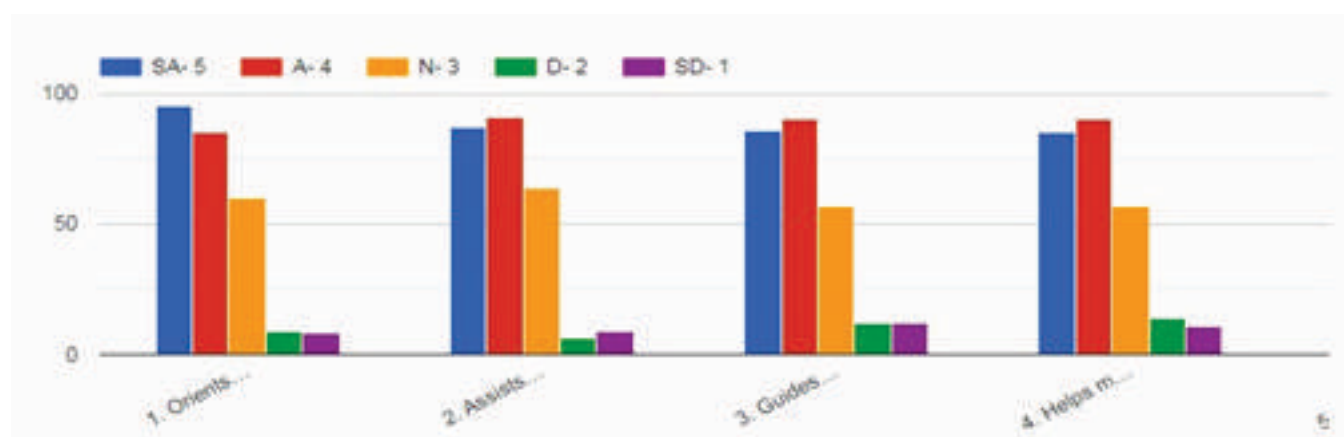
Frequency of Meetings with Academic Advisors



The results indicate that 62.3% of respondents meet their academic advisor only when needed. Additionally, 18.7% reported meeting their advisor once, 12.5% met twice, and only 6.6% met with their academic advisor three times.

Students' perception on effectiveness of academic advising

Participants were asked to indicate their perception of the effectiveness of academic advising using a Likert scale: SA– Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-Neutral – D - Disagree , SD– Strongly Disagree



The study results show that approximately 37% of respondents strongly agreed that academic advisors provide orientation related to academic policies and procedures, while around 3% strongly disagreed.

Additionally, between 34% of participants strongly agreed that their academic advisor helped them to understand their rights and responsibilities as college students, although about 4% disagreed.

Furthermore, around 33% strongly agreed and 35% agreed that academic advising supports them in making the best decisions when choosing courses.

Similarly, 35% of students agreed that academic advising helped them understand the obstacles they face in their studies.

Perceived Impact of Academic Advising on Student Development and Performance



Academic Advising and Strategic Study Planning

The findings show that approximately **37%** of participants acknowledged having a clear and strategic study plan as a result of academic advising. This suggests that advising plays a key role in helping students organize and manage their academic journey effectively.

Support in Achieving Learning Objectives

Around **43%** of respondents indicated that academic advising helps them achieve their learning objectives. However, about **32%** expressed disagreement, highlighting a gap in perceived effectiveness among some students.

Impact on Self-Esteem

Approximately **43%** of participants agreed that academic advising helps improve their self-esteem, while about **23%** disagreed. This reflects a positive psychological influence of advising for many students, though not universally experienced.

Motivation Toward Academic Excellence

About **63%** of students agreed that academic advising motivates them to perform at their best and aim for high scores in examinations. This underscores the role of advising in fostering academic motivation and goal-setting.

Association with Academic Performance

The study revealed a statistically significant association between students' cumulative GPA and their perceived effectiveness of academic advising, suggesting that students who perceive academic advising as effective are more likely to achieve higher academic performance.

Conclusions

The findings indicate that **academic advising at OCHS has a positive impact** on student development, academic performance, and self-confidence. Most students viewed advising as a helpful resource in understanding academic requirements, planning courses, and achieving personal goals. However, the data also showed that the majority of students only engaged in advising **when necessary**, suggesting that academic advising may not yet be fully integrated as a continuous support mechanism throughout students' academic journeys.

While the perception of academic advising was generally positive, there were areas of improvement identified, particularly in enhancing engagement,

increasing communication through digital platforms, and regular scheduling of advising sessions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the academic advising system at OCHS:

- 1. Implement Scheduled Advising Sessions:** Move from an “as-needed” advising model to a structured and scheduled approach, requiring students to meet with advisors at least once per semester.
- 2. Increase Awareness of HAMS and Digital Tools:** Promote the use of Health Academic Management System (HAMS), email, and Moodle for academic advising to ensure more accessible and documented communication.
- 3. Advisor Training and Development:** Conduct regular training workshops for academic advisors to improve communication skills, advising strategies, and digital literacy.
- 4. Establish Feedback Mechanisms:** Introduce a formal feedback system where students can evaluate their advising sessions, helping to monitor quality and effectiveness.
- 5. Early Identification and Support:** Use advising sessions to identify at-risk students early and provide targeted academic support to prevent academic failure or dropout.
- 6. Integration into Curriculum:** Integrate academic advising orientation sessions into first-year seminars or introductory courses to ensure early exposure and understanding of available services.
- 7. Encourage Peer Advising Programs:** Develop peer advising or mentorship programs, especially within the Nursing program where the majority of students are enrolled, to provide additional layers of support.

Suggestions for Future Research

- A similar study can be conducted including academic advisors' perspectives to compare insights.
- Explore the impact of academic advising on long-term student success, such as graduation rates and post-graduate outcomes.
- Conduct qualitative research (e.g., interviews or focus groups) to gain deeper insight into student experiences with academic advising.

Financial support and sponsorship: Nil

Conflicts of interests: There is no conflict of interest

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