

THE INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND STUDENT COUNSELING ON SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS: A CASE STUDY OF SHANDONG ENGINEERING VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of educational administration and student counseling on school effectiveness within Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from a sample of 240 faculty and staff members selected from a population of 600 personnel across academic and administrative units. A structured questionnaire measured perceptions of educational administration, student counseling practices, and overall school effectiveness, and its validity and reliability were confirmed through expert evaluation and Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed to examine the relationships among the variables.

The findings reveal that both educational administration and student counseling significantly contribute to school effectiveness, with regression results indicating a strong predictive capacity of the combined model. Effective administrative processes, supportive organizational structures, and well-implemented counseling services were identified as key factors enhancing institutional functioning, staff performance, and student development. The results highlight the importance of integrating systematic administrative practices with responsive counseling mechanisms to support academic quality and organizational improvement. These findings provide empirical evidence to guide educational leaders in strengthening management and student support systems to promote long-term institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Educational Administration, Student Counseling, School Effectiveness

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INTRODUCTION

School effectiveness has become a central focus of contemporary educational research, reflecting the increasing global emphasis on improving institutional performance, student development, and overall educational quality. Effective schools are characterized not only by strong academic outcomes but also by the presence of coherent administrative systems, supportive student services, and organizational practices that foster positive learning environments. Educational administration, which encompasses institutional leadership, policy implementation, organizational management, and resource allocation, is widely recognized as a critical determinant of school effectiveness. Research has shown that well-functioning administrative structures and consistent leadership practices contribute to improved instructional quality, enhanced staff collaboration, and stronger student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Scheerens, 2013). Complementing administrative functions, student counseling services play a pivotal role in addressing students' academic challenges, emotional needs, career planning, and psychosocial development. Studies have emphasized that comprehensive counseling programs significantly enhance students' academic motivation, mental health, and institutional engagement, thereby strengthening overall school performance (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Lemberger & Clemens, 2012).

Within the context of Chinese higher vocational education, institutions such as Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University face growing demands for accountability, student-centered services, and high-quality management systems. Vocational universities operate at the intersection of academic training and workforce development, requiring them to implement efficient administrative procedures while simultaneously offering counseling services that support students' career readiness, personal development, and mental well-being. Prior research in Chinese vocational institutions suggests that administrative efficiency and student support systems are essential for institutional stability, educational quality, and student success (Liu & Zhao, 2021; Zhang, 2020). However, limited empirical work has examined how these two components jointly influence school effectiveness, particularly within a rapidly changing educational landscape shaped by technological advancement, economic restructuring, and evolving labor market demands.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how educational administration and student counseling influence school effectiveness at Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University. The purpose of this research is to examine the extent to which administrative processes and student counseling systems together shape institutional performance and contribute to the effectiveness of the university as a whole.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Educational Administration and Student Counseling

Educational administration encompasses the structures, processes, and policies that guide the functioning of schools, including leadership practices, resource management, organizational routines, and the coordination of educational services. Effective administration is widely recognized as a key determinant of school quality, as it establishes the conditions necessary for teaching, learning, and student support to occur efficiently. Research has shown that well-organized administrative processes contribute to a positive school climate, enhance teacher collaboration, and strengthen institutional capacity to respond to student needs (Leithwood et al., 2020). Student counseling, as an integral component of school support systems, focuses on promoting students' academic, emotional, and social well-being. Peer-reviewed studies emphasize that comprehensive counseling services can improve students' academic motivation, reduce problem behaviors, and support mental health development (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012; Lemberger & Clemens, 2012). Together, administrative structures and

counseling services form a coordinated mechanism that enables schools to address diverse student needs and maintain operational coherence.

School Effectiveness

School effectiveness refers to the extent to which a school achieves its educational goals, including academic performance, student well-being, and social development. The literature consistently highlights that effective schools are characterized by strong instructional leadership, stable organizational processes, supportive learning environments, and robust student support systems (Scheerens, 2013). Furthermore, school effectiveness research emphasizes that both structural and psychosocial dimensions contribute to desirable outcomes, including academic engagement, reduced behavioral problems, and improved long-term student trajectories (Muijs et al., 2011). A growing body of evidence also underscores the importance of student-centered support mechanisms—such as counseling, mentoring, and career guidance—in shaping students' academic pathways and holistic development (Whiston et al., 2011). Schools that integrate administrative efficiency with comprehensive support services tend to demonstrate stronger educational outcomes and higher levels of organizational resilience.

Relationship between Educational Administration and Student Counseling on School Effectiveness

A considerable amount of empirical research suggests that educational administration and student counseling jointly influence school effectiveness. Effective administrative systems enhance the capacity of the school to implement policies, coordinate support services, and respond to student needs systematically. At the same time, counseling services provide individualized assistance that helps address academic challenges, socioemotional issues, and behavioral concerns. When these two components function cohesively, schools are better positioned to create supportive learning environments, streamline institutional operations, and ensure continuity of care for students (Lopez-Murphy & Murphy, 2019). Studies indicate that schools with strong administrative leadership and well-developed counseling systems exhibit improved student outcomes, greater organizational stability, and more effective intervention mechanisms for at-risk learners (Martinsone & Sile, 2020; Owen et al., 2020). These findings highlight the synergistic relationship between administration and counseling, suggesting that their combined influence plays a pivotal role in determining overall school effectiveness.

Based on the significance of these interconnected factors, the following hypothesis is proposed: H1: Educational Administration and Student Counseling significantly influence School Effectiveness.

From the literature review, the conceptual framework can be drawn as shown in Figure 1.

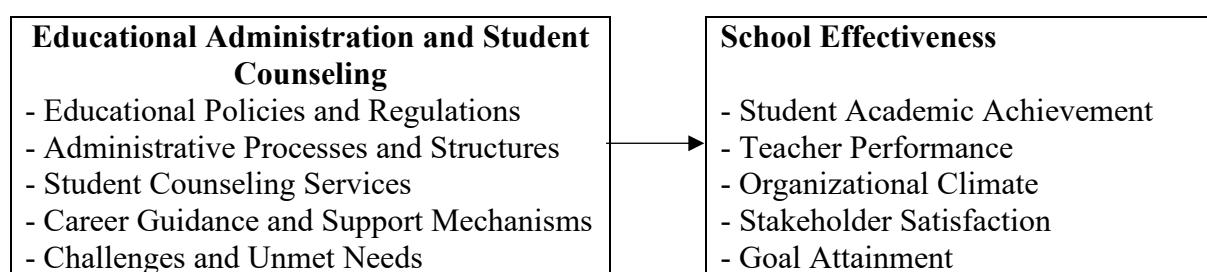


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative research design to examine the influence of educational administration and student counseling on school effectiveness at Shandong Engineering Vocational and Technical University. The population consisted of 600 faculty and staff members employed across various academic and administrative units of the university. Using Cochran's (1977) sample size determination formula at a 95 percent confidence level, a total sample of 240 respondents was determined to be appropriate. To ensure the inclusion of personnel directly involved in academic administration and student support processes, purposive sampling was first used to identify three key groups: faculty members, teachers, and administrative officers. Convenience sampling was then applied within each group to recruit respondents who were accessible and willing to participate. The final sample comprised 65 faculty members (27.08 percent), 159 teachers (66.25 percent), and 16 administrative officers (6.67 percent), reflecting the actual distribution of roles within the university and ensuring that all relevant personnel categories were adequately represented in the study.

The data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of four sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including gender, age, position, years of experience, and academic qualifications. The second, third, and fourth sections assessed educational administration, student counseling, and school effectiveness, respectively. All scale-based items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The questionnaire was developed based on established theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies related to administrative efficiency, counseling practices, and institutional effectiveness.

Prior to data collection, the instrument underwent an evaluation of content validity by three experts using the item-objective congruence (IOC) index. The IOC value of 0.88 indicated strong alignment between questionnaire items and the constructs being measured. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha also yielded high internal consistency values ($\alpha = 0.874$), confirming the adequacy of the instrument for field administration (Polit & Beck, 2006; Hair et al., 2012). Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires directly to faculty and staff members through the academic affairs office and administrative departments of the university.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize respondent characteristics and the levels of the key variables. Multiple regression analysis was employed as the sole inferential statistical technique to determine the predictive influence of educational administration and student counseling on school effectiveness. All analyses were conducted in accordance with standard methodological guidelines and statistical assumptions to ensure the validity and reliability of the results.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Results of general data analysis of respondents

The majority of the respondents were instructors, totaling 159 individuals (66.25%), and most were female, totaling 131 individuals (54.58%). A total of 92 respondents (38.33%) were between 31 and 40 years old, and 131 respondents (54.58%) had more than 10 years of work experience.

Level of Respondents' Opinions

Table 1 Shows the mean and standard deviation of educational administration and student counseling

Educational Administration and Student Counseling	\bar{X}	SD	Level of opinion
Educational Policies and Regulations	3.56	.86	High
Administrative Processes and Structures	3.52	.83	High
Student Counseling Services	3.53	.87	High
Career Guidance and Support Mechanisms	3.52	.80	High
Challenges and Unmet Needs	3.52	.85	High
Overall	3.53	.72	High

From Table 1, it was found that most respondents expressed an overall high level of agreement regarding educational administration and student counseling ($\bar{X} = 3.53$, $SD = .72$). When examined by dimension, the respondents rated Educational Policies and Regulations the highest ($\bar{X} = 3.56$, $SD = .86$), followed by Student Counseling Services ($\bar{X} = 3.53$, $SD = .87$), while Challenges and Unmet Needs received the lowest rating ($\bar{X} = 3.52$, $SD = .85$).

Table 2 Shows the mean and standard deviation of school effectiveness

School Effectiveness	\bar{X}	SD	Level of opinion
Student Academic Achievement	3.53	.82	High
Teacher Performance	3.57	.85	High
Organizational Climate	3.58	.78	High
Stakeholder Satisfaction	3.55	.82	High
Goal Attainment	3.51	.84	High
Overall	3.55	.70	High

From Table 2, it was found that respondents expressed an overall high level of agreement regarding school effectiveness ($\bar{X} = 3.55$, $SD = .70$). By dimension, Organizational Climate received the highest rating ($\bar{X} = 3.58$, $SD = .78$), followed by Teacher Performance ($\bar{X} = 3.57$, $SD = .85$), while Goal Attainment received the lowest rating ($\bar{X} = 3.51$, $SD = .84$).

Educational Administration and Student Counseling influence School Effectiveness

Table 3 Shows the relationship between educational administration and student counseling on school effectiveness

Educational Administration and Student Counseling	School Effectiveness						
	b	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.630	.113		5.553***	.000		
- Educational Policies and Regulations	-.072	.063	-.088	-1.152	.251	.176	5.669
- Administrative Processes and Structures	.168	.068	.197	2.462*	.015	.160	6.245
- Student Counseling Services	.090	.060	.111	1.493	.137	.184	5.437
- Career Guidance and Support Mechanisms	.275	.056	.314	4.892***	.000	.248	4.033
- Challenges and Unmet Needs	.368	.047	.445	7.879***	.000	.321	3.117

$R = .872$, $R^2 = .761$, Adjusted $R^2 = .756$, Std. Error of the Estimate = .348,

$F = 148.972$, $Sig. = .000***$

*** $p < .001$ ** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

The results of the regression analysis indicate that educational administration and student counseling collectively exert a strong influence on school effectiveness. With $R = .872$, $R^2 = .761$, and Adjusted $R^2 = .756$, the model explains 76.1 percent of the variance in school effectiveness, demonstrating an exceptionally high level of predictive power. Among the predictors, three components show statistically significant effects. Challenges and Unmet Needs present the strongest influence on school effectiveness ($b = .368$, $\beta = .445$, $t = 7.879$, $p < .001$). The second strongest predictor is Career Guidance and Support Mechanisms ($b = .275$, $\beta = .314$, $t = 4.892$, $p < .001$). Administrative Processes and Structures also show a meaningful positive effect ($b = .168$, $\beta = .197$, $t = 2.462$, $p < .05$).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that educational administration and student counseling exert a substantial influence on school effectiveness, with the regression model explaining 76.1 percent of the variance. The strongest predictor, Challenges and Unmet Needs, underscores the importance of identifying students' academic, emotional, and social difficulties and responding with targeted interventions, a result that aligns with previous research suggesting that unaddressed challenges pose significant barriers to learning and school performance (Durlak et al., 2011; Suldo et al., 2014). The second most influential factor, Career Guidance and Support Mechanisms, further supports the argument that structured guidance programs enhance students' motivation, future orientation, and school engagement, consistent with findings from international studies demonstrating that career education contributes to improved academic persistence and overall school functioning (Watson et al., 2015; Schaefer et al., 2019). Administrative Processes and Structures also significantly predicted school effectiveness, reaffirming research indicating that efficient administrative systems and clear operational structures enhance communication, resource allocation, and organizational stability, which in turn support high-performing school environments (Leithwood et al., 2020).

In contrast, Educational Policies and Regulations and Student Counseling Services did not show significant direct effects in the current model. This finding warrants deeper interpretive analysis. Educational policies often function as broad institutional frameworks rather than direct operational drivers of school outcomes, meaning their influence typically emerges indirectly through mediating variables such as administrative leadership, teacher implementation fidelity, or school-wide monitoring systems. In the context of vocational universities in China, policies may be viewed as top-down directives that require substantial adaptation, coordination, and resource alignment before producing measurable impact. When these mechanisms are not fully established, policy intentions remain distal and may not translate into observable improvements in school effectiveness. Similarly, the non-significant effect of Student Counseling Services may relate to the broad and general nature of counseling activities, which may not be consistently delivered, adequately specialized, or sufficiently targeted to specific student needs. Counseling programs that lack structured interventions, intensity, or alignment with academic and career pathways may contribute less directly to overall institutional effectiveness. This interpretation corresponds with studies noting that counseling services generate meaningful impact only when they are strategically integrated with academic advising, career development, and individualized student support systems (Louis & Murphy, 2017).

Collectively, these findings indicate that the most impactful determinants of school effectiveness are those that directly address student needs, provide structured support, and operate through well-managed administrative systems, whereas policy frameworks and general counseling services require targeted implementation strategies and stronger institutional linkages to exert measurable influence.

In conclusion, this study illustrates that improving school effectiveness requires a coordinated and multilayered approach that integrates responsive student support, comprehensive career guidance, and efficient administrative processes. The hierarchy of influence observed in the findings indicates that schools become more effective when they prioritize meeting students' unmet needs, strengthening guidance systems, and ensuring stable and transparent administrative operations. Although policies and general counseling services are essential components of school governance, their contributions to effectiveness depend on robust implementation strategies, institutional alignment, and close connection to students' academic and psychosocial realities. The present results therefore offer valuable insight for school leaders seeking to enhance school performance: efforts should focus on strengthening support systems that directly engage with student challenges, expanding structured career guidance, and reinforcing administrative operations to foster an environment conducive to academic and personal development. Future research may deepen these insights by examining how these influential factors interact across different school contexts or by incorporating qualitative perspectives to better understand how students and staff experience these administrative and counseling mechanisms in practice.

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