

Reality of Advisory Work in Special Education Programs from Special Education Teachers' Perspectives

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Reality of Advisory Work in Special Education Programs from Special Education Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract: This study's objective is to understand the reality of advisory work in special education Programs from special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City. The endeavor utilized a descriptive methodology where a (17-item) questionnaire was designed by the researcher, with the purpose of soliciting information about the reality of advisory work in special education Programs, which was administered to (119) female special education teachers. Specifically, the intervention sought to establish if there were differences between the participants' responses attributed to the variables of: qualification, years of experience, and presence of an educational advisory in the work environment. The findings revealed that the overall participants' perspective on the implementation of advisory work in special education programs was moderately favorable. Furthermore, statistically significant differences were observed in the mean scores of participants' responses across various study variables. As the results showed significant differences attributable to the qualification with a significance level of (0.005) in favor of postgraduate, significant differences at the level of (0.002) attributed to years of experience in favor of more than 10 years of experience, and significant differences at the level of (0.009) attributed to presence of an educational advisory in the work environment in favor of the presence of a counselor. These findings prompt the introduction of development suggestions aimed at enhancing the efficacy of advisory work within local special education programs .

Keywords: Advisory work, special education, inclusive education, special education teachers, educational advisory.

واقع العمل الاستشاري في برامج التربية الخاصة من وجهة نظر معلمات التربية الخاصة

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المستخلص: هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى التعرف على واقع العمل الاستشاري في برامج التربية الخاصة من وجهة نظر معلمات التربية الخاصة بمدينة الرياض. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي، وصُممت استبانة خاصة تكونت من (١٧) عبارة بهدف قياس واقع العمل الاستشاري شارك فيها (١١٩) معلمة. كما هدفت الدراسة إلى التعرف على الفروق بين استجابات المشاركات بحسب متغير: المؤهل العلمي، وسنوات الخبرة، ووجود مستشارة تربوية في بيئة العمل. وقد أوضحت النتائج أن وجهة نظر المشاركات نحو واقع تطبيق العمل الاستشاري في برامج التربية الخاصة كانت إيجابية بشكل عام. كما أشارت النتائج إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين متوسطات استجابات المشاركات في جميع متغيرات الدراسة، حيث أظهرت النتائج وجود فروق دالة تُعزى لمتغير المؤهل العلمي بلغ مستوى دلالتها (٠,٠٠٥) لصالح حملة الدراسات العليا، وفروق دالة عند مستوى (٠,٠٠٢) تُعزى لمتغير سنوات الخبرة لصالح ذوات الخبرة لأكثر من ١٠ سنوات، كما أظهرت النتائج فروق دالة عند مستوى (٠,٠٠٩) تُعزى لمتغير وجود مستشارة تربوية في بيئة العمل لصالح وجود المستشارة. وبناءً على النتائج الحالية، قُدمت مجموعة من المقترحات التطويرية التي يمكن أن تسهم في تفعيل العمل الاستشاري في برامج التربية الخاصة ضمن البيئة المحلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العمل الاستشاري، التربية الخاصة، التعليم الشامل، معلمي ومعلمات التربية الخاصة، الاستشارة التربوية.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent decades, the educational landscape has undergone significant transformations, with a notable expansion and redefinition of advisory work's role within educational frameworks. Once perceived as a peripheral aspect of pedagogy, advisory work has emerged as a pivotal driver for reshaping traditional educational paradigms into more effective and inclusive practices. This evolution reflects a growing acknowledgment within the educational community of the indispensable nature of collaborative advisory skills, as emphasized by esteemed organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (Rogers et al., 2020). Within this context, the imperative to foster collaborative advisory practices has become increasingly salient, particularly in the realm of special education, where addressing the diverse needs of students with disabilities demands innovative and evidence-based approaches (Concannon, 2023). In this study, the advisory work is procedurally defined as an interactive process between an educational advisor, a special education teacher, and a public education teacher to exchange information, and experiences and introduce consultations to improve the education process.

As societies endeavor for educational equity and inclusivity, the role of advisory work in facilitating the academic and socio-emotional development of students with disabilities has garnered heightened attention and significance. By providing targeted advisory support services to stakeholders—including educators, parents, and students—and leveraging evidence-based practices, educators can effectively address the multifaceted challenges encountered in special education settings. Furthermore, as Molina et al. (2021) contend, integrating advisory work into educational frameworks not only enhances the quality of instruction and support provided to students with disabilities but also fosters a collaborative and inclusive educational environment conducive to the holistic development of all learners.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to explore the state of advisory work within special education programs from the perspective of special education teachers in Riyadh City. By examining the perceptions, challenges, and contributions associated with advisory work, this research endeavors to shed light on the current state of advisory practices and their implications for the educational landscape in Riyadh City. Specifically, the study aims to investigate potential variations in perceptions of advisory work among special education teachers based on variables such as qualification, years of experience, and the presence of an educational advisor in the work environment. Through an in-depth analysis of these dimensions, this study aspires to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding advisory work in special education and inform efforts to enhance the efficacy and impact of advisory practices within educational settings. By

elucidating the perspectives and experiences of special education teachers, this research endeavors to offer valuable insights that can inform policy, practice, and future research endeavors aimed at advancing inclusive and equitable education for all students, including those with disabilities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Existing research has underscored the potential of advisory work to address educational deficiencies and bolster teachers' professional competencies and mental well-being (Warren & Gerler, 2013). Recent studies, such as those by Alzahrane (2023) and Kausik and Hussain (2023), have delved into the nuanced impacts of inclusive education on students with learning disabilities (LDs), shedding light on the multifaceted nature of educational practices and their effects on student outcomes. Furthermore, Miller and Kass (2023) have explored the academic challenges faced by pupils with various disabilities and the effective inclusive practices that can mitigate these challenges. These studies highlight the evolving landscape of educational practice and policy, underscoring the significance of collaborative approaches to addressing the challenges of inclusive education. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the practical realities of advisory work within special education programs in Riyadh City. By exploring the perspectives of female special education teachers, this research endeavors to delineate the current state of advisory practices, identify challenges and strengths, and elucidate the implications for the educational landscape in Riyadh City.

1.3 Research Questions

In general, the study attempts to answer this question: What is the reality of the advisory work in special education programmes from special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City? Specifically, the intervention seeks to answer the question “Are there any statistically significant differences between the situation of the advisory work in special education programmes from special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City attributed to the variables of qualification, years of experience, and presence of an educational advisor in the work environment?”

1. What is the reality of the advisory work in special education programmes from female special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the reality of the advisory work in special education programmes from female special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City attributed to the variables of qualification, years of experience, and presence of an educational advisor in the work environment?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study holds paramount significance in the realm of special education, particularly within the context of Riyadh City, as it endeavors to address critical gaps in understanding the practical realities and efficacy of advisory work within special education programs. By delving into the perspectives of female special education teachers, the research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform policy, practice, and future research endeavors aimed at advancing inclusive and equitable education for all students, including those with disabilities. The findings of this study have the potential to inform strategic initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of instruction and support provided to students with disabilities. By elucidating the current state of advisory practices, identifying challenges and strengths, and exploring their implications for the educational landscape, the research can serve as a catalyst for the development of targeted interventions and resources designed to optimize the educational experiences and outcomes of students with diverse learning needs. Again, the study contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding collaborative approaches to addressing the challenges of inclusive education. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of fostering effective collaboration among stakeholders in the educational environment. By shedding light on the role of advisory work in promoting collaboration and facilitating the academic and socio-emotional development of students with disabilities, the research can inform efforts to cultivate a more collaborative and inclusive educational environment conducive to the holistic development of all learners. Furthermore, the study has implications for the professional development of special education teachers and other stakeholders involved in advisory work. By exploring the perspectives and experiences of special education teachers, the research can identify areas for targeted training and capacity-building initiatives aimed at equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to effectively engage in advisory practices and support the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

Context: The scope of this study is delimited to special education programs within the geographical context of Riyadh City. By focusing specifically on this locale, the research aims to provide insights that are directly relevant to the local educational landscape and the unique challenges and opportunities it presents.

Time: The study confines its investigation to the second semester of the academic year 2023. This temporal delimitation ensures that the research captures a specific period within the academic calendar, allowing for a focused examination of the current state of advisory work in special education programs during this timeframe.

Topic: This study is delimited to the evaluation of the situation of advisory work within special education programs, specifically from the perspective of female special education teachers in Riyadh City. By honing in on this specific aspect of educational practice, the research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of advisory practices and their implications for special education within the local context.

Participants: The study's participants consist exclusively of special education teachers working within the educational institutions of Riyadh City. This delimitation ensures that the research captures insights and perspectives directly relevant to female educators actively engaged in special education practice within the study's context. By focusing specifically on female teachers, the study aims to explore any gender-specific factors that may influence perceptions, experiences, and practices related to advisory work in special education programs. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the unique challenges, strengths, and contributions of female special education teachers in Riyadh City, thereby enriching the depth and breadth of the study's findings.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

Advisory work

An advisory work is an interactive work between two parties; one is an advisory, specialized in introducing special consultations in his/her field while the other is a client who needs a specialized consultation on a problem in the former's field (Long et al., 2013). In this study, the advisory work can procedurally be defined as an interactive process between an educational advisor, a special education teacher, and a public education teacher to exchange information, experiences and introducing consultations to improve the education process.

Special Education Programmes

The Procedural Manual of Special Education defined special education programmes as "specialized programmes in special education devoted to students with disabilities which are applied in public education schools" (Procedural Manual of Special Education, 1436, P. 6). This study defines "special education programmes" procedurally as educational programmes introduced to students with disabilities at public education schools.

Special Education Teachers

A teacher of special education is "a specialized teacher in special education who participates directly in teaching students with disabilities" (Procedural Manual of Special Education, 1436, P. 7). Procedurally, teachers of special

education can be defined in this study as female teachers qualified academically to teach students with special disabilities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Advisory Work in Special Education Programs

Advisory work within special education programs plays a crucial role in shaping educational practices and supporting the diverse needs of students with disabilities. This introductory section provides an overview of the conceptual framework, historical evolution, and significance of advisory work within the context of inclusive education.

Definition and Conceptual Frameworks

Advisory work encompasses a range of practices aimed at enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities. It involves the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, including educators, specialists, and families, to address the unique needs of students and promote their academic and socio-emotional development. In the Saudi Arabian context, where families of special needs children often encounter conflicting information and suggestions from specialists, the concept of consultation and collaboration assumes paramount importance (AL-Shamare, 2018). The evolution of advisory work within special education programs can be traced back to the mid-20th century, marked by the development of strategies for providing advisory services to students with disabilities. During this period, school counseling and psychosocial services gained prominence, reflecting a growing recognition of the influence of individuals, groups, and systems on student outcomes (Friend & Cook, 1992; Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck, 2005). The 1970s witnessed significant advancements in the integration of advisory services into special education practices. Models such as the teacher consultant program emerged, emphasizing the role of consultant teachers in serving students with disabilities (Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck, 2005). Additionally, federal policies and technical developments during this era underscored the importance of counseling and teamwork in addressing the needs of students with special needs (Friend & Cook, 1992). Advisory work holds immense significance in the context of inclusive education, where efforts are directed towards ensuring equitable access and support for all students. By fostering collaboration among educators, specialists, and families, advisory work promotes the implementation of evidence-based practices and the provision of tailored interventions to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. As educational systems strive to achieve inclusive environments, the role of advisory work becomes increasingly pivotal in driving positive educational outcomes and enhancing the overall quality of instruction and support provided to students.

Theoretical Contribution

This study holds significant theoretical implications by providing an objective assessment of the status of advisory work within special education programs, drawing insights from specialized teachers in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia. The research enriches the Arabic and local literature by contributing to the advancement of knowledge regarding the pivotal role of advisory work in special education programs, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context. Al-Shammary (2018) emphasized the importance of consultation and collaboration in special education programs, highlighting its relevance in addressing the diverse needs of students with disabilities. By adapting the American model to the Saudi Arabian context, Al-Shammary's work underscores the value of integrating evidence-based practices into local educational frameworks.

Moreover, the theoretical contributions of this study align with findings from other research conducted in Saudi Arabia. Alahmari (2022) explored mothers' perceptions of collaborative practices with special education professionals, shedding light on the importance of effective collaboration in supporting students with disabilities. This underscores the significance of collaborative approaches, which are central to advisory work in special education settings. Additionally, Bashiri et al. (2021) demonstrated the effectiveness of adapting evidence-based clinical practice guidelines, such as those for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), to the Saudi Arabian context. Their work highlights the importance of tailoring interventions to local contexts and emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts to enhance the quality of services provided to individuals with disabilities. By synthesizing insights from these studies and conducting an empirical investigation within the local context of Riyadh City, this research contributes to our theoretical understanding of advisory work in special education. It underscores the importance of contextually responsive approaches to advisory practices, particularly in the context of transitioning towards inclusive education and accommodating an increasing number of students with disabilities within public education systems.

Empirical Contribution

The empirical findings of this study are poised to make substantial contributions to practice and policy in the field of special education. By identifying strengths and weaknesses in the current implementation of advisory work within local special education programs, the study aims to foster an interactive climate conducive to addressing deficiencies and leveraging strengths. This developmental approach has the potential to enhance support for students with disabilities, elevate teacher competencies, and ultimately improve outcomes within the framework of inclusive education (Patrikakou et al., 2016). Furthermore, the study's insights are particularly relevant in environments where

access to specialized health, mental, and psychological services within school settings may be limited, thereby emphasizing the importance of enhancing advisory practices as a means of effectively meeting the diverse needs of students within the universal education context.

Overview of Existing Studies

A comprehensive review of key research articles provides insight into the current landscape of advisory work in special education. Beckman (2003) emphasizes strategies for working with families with special needs, highlighting the importance of collaborative practices in supporting students' educational journey. Caplan (1970) contributes to the theoretical foundation of mental health consultation, offering valuable insights into the principles and practices of advisory work in educational settings. Additionally, Shakhs and Damati (1994) provide a comprehensive dictionary of special education and rehabilitation, offering a rich resource for understanding terminology and concepts relevant to advisory work.

Effects of Advisory Work on Student Outcomes

Research suggests that advisory work plays a crucial role in influencing student outcomes across various domains. Studies have demonstrated its positive impact on academic achievement, behavioral improvement, and social-emotional development. Beckman (2003) discusses the importance of family involvement in special education, highlighting how advisory practices can enhance parental engagement and support students' academic progress. Furthermore, Caplan (1970) emphasizes the role of mental health consultation in promoting positive behavioral outcomes and fostering social-emotional well-being among students with disabilities.

Impact on Teacher Professional Development

Advisory work not only benefits students but also contributes to the professional development of teachers. By providing support and guidance, advisory practices enhance teachers' pedagogical practices and classroom management skills. Beckman (2003) underscores the importance of collaborative partnerships between educators and specialists in addressing the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Additionally, Caplan (1970) discusses how mental health consultation empowers teachers to implement evidence-based strategies and interventions, thereby improving their effectiveness in supporting students' learning and development.

Relationships Between Advisory Work and Stakeholder Engagement

Effective advisory work fosters meaningful relationships between various stakeholders, including parents, educators, and community partners. Beckman (2003) highlights the importance of parent-professional collaboration in promoting student success, emphasizing the need for open communication and shared decision-making. Similarly, Caplan (1970) emphasizes the value of interdisciplinary collaboration in mental health consultation, advocating for a team-based approach to supporting students' diverse needs.

Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Advisory Work

Despite its potential benefits, implementing advisory work in special education settings comes with challenges and barriers. Resource constraints, professional development needs, and organizational factors can hinder the effective implementation of advisory practices. Beckman (2003) discusses the challenges faced by families of children with special needs, including access to support services and navigating complex systems. Additionally, Caplan (1970) acknowledges the importance of addressing systemic barriers to mental health consultation, such as limited funding and inadequate training opportunities for educators.

Contextual Considerations in Advisory Work:

Cultural and Societal Influences on Advisory Practices

Cultural competence and sensitivity play a pivotal role in delivering effective special education services. Understanding and respecting diverse cultural norms, beliefs, and practices are essential for fostering trust and collaboration among stakeholders. Research by Al-Shammary (2018) highlights the importance of adapting advisory models to local contexts, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive practices in Saudi Arabian special education programs.

Policy and Legislative Frameworks

National and international policies provide a regulatory framework for inclusive education practices, including advisory work. Alahmari (2022) explores mothers' perceptions of collaborative practices with special education professionals in Saudi Arabia, shedding light on the alignment between local policies and stakeholders' experiences. Understanding policy implications is crucial for guiding the development and implementation of effective advisory practices within educational systems.

Organizational Structures and Support Systems

The organizational structure and support systems within educational institutions significantly influence the success of advisory work. School leadership, administrative support, and staff collaboration are vital components of a conducive environment for effective advisory practices. Bashiri et al. (2021) discuss the adaptation of evidence-based clinical practice guidelines for ADHD management in Saudi Arabia, emphasizing the importance of organizational buy-in and resource allocation for successful implementation.

Gaps and Future Directions

First of all, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors influencing advisory practices, particularly within specific regions such as Riyadh City. While existing literature has delved into theoretical and conceptual aspects of advisory work, there remains a dearth of research focusing on its practical implementation. Understanding the unique challenges and opportunities faced by special education teachers in Riyadh City is crucial for informing targeted interventions and support strategies that resonate with the local context. Moreover, there is a notable gap in the examination of stakeholder perspectives, particularly those of special education teachers. While some studies have explored the impacts of inclusive education on student outcomes, there is a paucity of research that directly investigates the perspectives and experiences of special education teachers regarding advisory practices. By neglecting the voices of these key stakeholders, existing research may overlook the nuanced realities and challenges encountered in the field, hindering efforts to develop effective advisory interventions and support mechanisms.

Recommendations for Future Research

Conducting qualitative studies to delve deeply into the lived experiences and perspectives of special education teachers regarding advisory work in Riyadh City is crucial. Such research endeavors can shed light on the nuanced challenges, facilitators, and best practices associated with advisory work within this specific context. Additionally, comparative studies are essential for understanding the variations in advisory practices across diverse cultural and geographical contexts. By juxtaposing the experiences of special education teachers in Riyadh City with those in other regions, researchers can uncover contextual factors that shape advisory practices and outcomes, thereby enriching our understanding of effective strategies. Furthermore, longitudinal studies play a vital role in assessing the enduring impacts of advisory interventions on both student outcomes and teacher practices. By tracking changes over an extended period, researchers can gauge the effectiveness and sustainability of advisory initiatives in fostering positive educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations, empirical research, contextual considerations, and identified gaps in the field of advisory work within special education programs. Theoretical contributions have elucidated various perspectives and models of advisory work, emphasizing its importance in enhancing student outcomes, teacher professional development, and stakeholder engagement. Empirical research has demonstrated the positive impacts of advisory interventions on student achievement, behavioral improvement, and teacher competencies, while also highlighting challenges in implementation and stakeholder collaboration. Contextual considerations underscore the importance of cultural competence, policy frameworks, and organizational support structures in shaping advisory practices. However, gaps in the literature persist, including limited contextual understanding and a lack of examination of stakeholder perspectives, particularly those of special education teachers. Addressing these gaps requires conducting qualitative studies to explore lived experiences, conducting comparative analyses across diverse contexts, and undertaking longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts.

METHOD

Research Methodology

A descriptive research methodology was employed in this study to analyze the data, as it is deemed the most suitable approach for achieving the objectives of the research. Descriptive methodology aims to address a phenomenon by collecting and quantitatively analyzing data to describe it and assess its relationship with surrounding factors (Obeidat et al., 2014).

Participants

A sample of 119 female special education teachers in Riyadh City voluntarily responded to an electronic questionnaire. Table (1) provides a description of the sample based on variables such as qualification, years of experience, and the presence of an educational advisor in the work environment:

Table 1: Description of Sample Based on Variables

No.	Variable	F	%	
1.	Qualification	Bachelor's degree	93	78.2
		Postgraduate	26	21.8
2.	Years of experience	Less than 5 years	19	16.0
		5 – 10 years	37	31.1
		More than 10 years	63	59.9
3.	Presence of an educational advisory in the work environment.	Yes	8	6.7
		No	111	93.3
Total		119	100%	

1. **Qualification:** Most participants held a bachelor's degree comprising 78.2% of the sample, while 21.8% reported having postgraduate qualifications. This distribution suggests a predominantly well-educated sample of special education teachers in Riyadh City.
2. **Years of Experience:** Participants' tenure in the field of special education varied significantly. A notable proportion (16.0%) reported having less than 5 years of experience, indicating a presence of relatively inexperienced educators within the sample. Conversely, 31.1% reported 5-10 years of experience, and a majority (59.9%) reported more than 10 years of experience. This distribution highlights a diverse range of experience levels among the participating teachers, potentially influencing their perspectives on advisory work.
3. **Presence of an Educational Advisory in the Work Environment:** A small percentage (6.7%) of participants reported the presence of an educational advisory in their work environment, while the majority (93.3%) indicated its absence. This disparity suggests that the majority of special education teachers in Riyadh City operate within environments lacking dedicated advisory support, which may impact their perceptions and experiences regarding advisory work. The data indicating that the majority of participants (93.3%) reported the absence of an educational advisory in their work environment suggests a common scenario where special education teachers operate without dedicated advisory support. This finding sets the stage for understanding the context in which advisory work takes place and its potential impact on teachers' perceptions and practices. The absence of dedicated advisory support may influence teachers' experiences in several ways. Firstly, it may lead to increased workload and stress as teachers navigate complex educational challenges without specialized guidance or assistance. This lack of support may also limit opportunities for professional development and collaborative problem-solving, potentially hindering teachers' ability to effectively address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Furthermore, the disparity between the small percentage (6.7%) of participants reporting the presence of an educational advisory and the majority indicating its absence underscores the variability in support structures across different educational settings. This variation highlights the importance of considering contextual factors such as organizational support and resources when examining the role of advisory work in special education programs.

This detailed analysis provides valuable insights into the demographic composition of the participant sample, shedding light on potential factors that may influence their perspectives on advisory work within special education programs in Riyadh City.

Setting and Materials

A thorough examination of the setting and materials utilized in the study offers valuable insights into the context and tools employed for data collection.

1. Setting

- The study was conducted within the special education programs in Riyadh City. Riyadh City, being the capital and largest city of Saudi Arabia, serves as a significant educational hub within the country.
- The research was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2023, aligning with the academic calendar of educational institutions in Saudi Arabia.

2. Materials

- **Questionnaire:** The primary research instrument utilized in the study was a structured questionnaire consisting of two parts.
- Part I - Demographic Data: This section collected participants' demographic information, including qualification, years of experience, and the presence of an educational advisory in the work environment.
- Part II - Situation of Advisory Work: This segment comprised (17) items designed to assess the situation of advisory work from the perspective of special education teachers in Riyadh City.

3. Psychometric Characteristics:

The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation procedures to ensure its reliability and validity.

- Face Validity: Initial version underwent assessment by three referees, resulting in refinement and finalization of the questionnaire with 17 items.
- Internal Validity: Pilot study involving (30) participants demonstrated significant correlations between each item and the overall degree of agreement.
- Reliability: Alpha Cronbach coefficient yielded a high coefficient of 0.927, indicating strong internal consistency.
- Scoring Criteria: Responses to the questionnaire were scored using a Likert-3 scale, facilitating interpretation of results.

Study procedure

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively explore the situation of advisory work in special education programs in Riyadh City. The qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews with special education teachers to gain in-depth insights into their experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to advisory work. The quantitative phase utilized a structured questionnaire to collect data on various aspects of advisory work, including perceptions, practices, and support needs. To ensure the study's suitability for the research context, the experimental design was adapted to

accommodate the cultural and organizational nuances of special education programs in Riyadh City. This involved tailoring interview questions and questionnaire items to align with the local educational landscape and the specific challenges faced by special education teachers in the region. Furthermore, the experimental design incorporated a participatory approach, involving collaboration with key stakeholders such as educators, administrators, and policymakers in Riyadh City. Their input was sought throughout the research process to enhance the relevance and applicability of the study findings.

These correlation coefficients, as shown in Table (2), help quantify the relationship between different aspects of advisory work and the overall perception of its effectiveness as perceived by female special education teachers.

Table 2: Results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Items and Overall, Degree

No.	Items	Correlation
1.	Consultation occurs between the advisor and teacher regularly.	**0.744
2.	Consultation occurs between the advisor and teacher when the need arises only.	0.643**
3.	The advisor holds periodical meetings with teachers.	0.787**
4.	The advisor follows the policy of "Open Door" to introduce off- meeting consultations.	0.794**
5.	The advisor contacts and coordinates with stakeholders to introduce consultations to them.	0.789**
6.	The advisor authorizes another employee to contact and coordinate with stakeholders to introduce consultations to them.	0.303*
7.	All stakeholders (i.e., teachers, student guides, and psychologists) participate in consultation meetings.	0.371*
8.	A guardian of a consultation-related student can participate in a certain meeting as a stakeholder.	0.633**
9.	A consultation-related student can participate in a certain meeting as a stakeholder.	0.533**
10.	Achievable objectives are stated in consultation meetings.	0.819**
11.	A minute (report) is written in every consultation meeting for following-up the progress of achieving objectives.	0.732**
12.	The advisor is responsible for following-up the consultation.	0.833**
13.	The advisor contributes in preparing individual educational plans.	0.716**
14.	The advisor introduces consultation experiences to teachers to improve teaching.	0.789**
15.	The advisor introduces information about educational updates.	0.794**
16.	The advisor introduces consultation experiences to reduce work pressure.	0.745**
17.	Consultations can be introduced on telephone calls, e-mails, or social media.	0.665**

* Significant at the level (0.05)

** significant at the level (0.01)

The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient analysis, presented in Table (2), indicate the strength of the relationship between different items related to advisory work and the overall perception of participants. Higher correlation coefficients signify a stronger association between the item and the overall construct being measured. For instance, items such as "Consultation occurs between the advisor and teacher regularly" and "The advisor holds periodical meetings with teachers" show significant correlations, denoted by asterisks (**), suggesting a robust relationship with participants' perceptions. Conversely, items with lower correlation coefficients, like "The advisor authorizes another employee to contact and coordinate with stakeholders," exhibit weaker associations.

Reliability of Research Tool

To ensure the reliability of the research tool, a sample of **30** participants, other than those of the main study, was used for pilot study. After using Alpha Cronbache Coefficient, the results indicated that the reliability of the tool was *high* (0.927) as shown in Table (3) below:

Table 3: Reliability of Research Tool Using Alpha Cronbache Coefficient

Items	No. of Items	Alpha Cronbach Coefficient
Reliability Coefficient	17	0.927

Furthermore, the reliability of the research tool was evaluated using the Alpha Cronbach coefficient, yielding a high reliability coefficient of 0.927, as displayed in Table 3. This indicates strong internal consistency among the items of the questionnaire, affirming its reliability for measuring participants' perceptions of advisory work.

Scoring Criteria

To interpret participants' responses effectively, a nominal scale was utilized, as outlined in Table (4), providing a clear framework for categorizing responses based on the degree of agreement. This scoring criteria facilitated the analysis and interpretation of participants' perceptions regarding advisory work in special education programs.

Table 4: Distribution of Responses Categories

Description	Degree	Range
Always	3	2.34 – 3.00
Sometimes	2	1.68 – 2.33
Never	1	1.67 – 1.00

Results and Discussion

Question No. 1. What is the situation of the advisory work in special education programmes from female special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City?

To know the situation of the advisory work in special education programmes from female special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation of the participants' responses were calculated, as shown in Table (5) below:

Table 5: Mean of Sample's Responses to Items of the situation of the advisory work in special education programmes from female special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City ordered from most to least.

No.	Items	Level of Response			Mean	SD	Rank
		Never	Sometimes	Always			
11	A minute (report) is written in every consultation meeting for following-up the progress of achieving objectives.	31 26.1%	33 27.7%	55 46.2%	2.20	0.829	1
2.	Consultation occurs between the advisor and teacher when the need arises only.	23 19.3%	51 42.9%	45 37.8%	2.18	0.736	2

No.	Items	Level of Response			Mean	SD	Rank
		Never	Sometimes	Always			
10.	Achievable objectives are stated in consultation meetings.	27 22.7%	50 42.0%	42 35.3%	2.13	0.754	3
4.	The advisor follows the policy of "Open Door" to introduce off- meeting consultations.	32 26.9%	43 36.1%	44 37.0%	2.10	0.796	4
12.	The advisor is responsible for following-up the consultation.	31 26.1%	46 38.7%	42 35.3%	2.09	0.781	5
7.	All stakeholders (i.e., teachers, student guides, and psychologists) participate in consultation meetings.	29 24.4	55 46.2	35 29.4	2.05	0.735	6
8.	A guardian of a consultation-related student can participate in a certain meeting as a stakeholder.	29 24.4	64 53.8	26 21.8	1.97	0.682	7
5.	The advisor contacts and coordinates with stakeholders to introduce consultations to them.	40 33.6	46 38.7	33 27.7	1.94	0.784	8
14.	The advisor introduces consultation experiences to teachers to improve teaching.	46 38.7	46 38.7	27 22.7	1.84	0.770	9
15.	The advisor introduces information about educational updates.	46 38.7	47 39.5	26 21.8	1.83	0.763	10
17.	Consultations can be introduced on telephone calls, e-mails, or social media.	42 35.3	56 47.1	21 17.6	1.82	0.709	11
1.	Consultation occurs between the advisor and teacher regularly.	42 35.3	59 49.6	18 15.1	1.80	0.684	12
13.	The advisor contributes in preparing individual educational plans.	57 47.9	31 26.1	31 26.1	1.78	0.835	13
16.	The advisor introduces consultation experiences to reduce work pressure.	55 46.2	44 37.0	20 16.8	1.71	0.741	14
3.	The advisor holds periodical meetings with teachers.	51 42.9	55 46.2	13 10.9	1.68	0.663	15
6.	The advisor authorizes another employee to contact and coordinate with stakeholders to introduce consultations to them.	57 47.9	50 42.0	12 10.1	1.62	0.664	16
9.	A consultation-related student can participate in a certain meeting as a stakeholder.	67 56.3	42 35.3	10 8.4	1.52	0.649	17
Overall Mean					1.90	0.504	

* Mean is out of (3.00).

Table (5) shows that the participant teachers' point of view concerning the situation of the advisory work in special education programmes was average (M

= 1.90); there was a diversity in mean scores of agreement responses ranging between 1.52 and 2.20; the degree of agreement on 15 items was average, beginning from item No. 11 (M = 2.20), followed by item No. 2 (M = 2.18), then, item No. 16 posited the least rank but one (M = 1.17), while item No. 3 (M = 2.18) scored the last rank (M = 1.68); the participants' responses showed no agreement on 2 items: item No. 6 (M= 1.62) and item No. 9 (M = 1.52); no item scored a higher degree of agreement; the degree of agreement of most items was average, particularly, the items of writing minutes of consultation meetings, and getting consultations when the need arises only (M= 2.20 and 2.18, respectively); the items "The advisor introduces consultation experiences to reduce work pressure" and "The advisor holds periodical meetings with teachers" scored the least scores of agreement (M= 1.71 and 1.68, respectively); and the participants did not agree on the item that measured the presence of a specialist employee to contact and coordinate with stakeholders, and the item that measured the extent of consultation-related student's participation in the advisory work (M = 1.62, 1.52, respectively).

The results of this study accord with the results of a study conducted by Romano et al., (2009) in the USA to know the opinions of 332 teacher guides on the situation of introducing services to students who were qualified to get special education services in accordance with the Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act in USA. The findings of the study revealed that the advisory services were weak; the case that required training programmes for advisory work skills in special education programs. In addition, the results of this study accord with the results of an experimental study conducted by Gravois and Rosenfield (2011) to identify the extent of effectiveness of the project of Instructional Consultation Teams (IC Teams) in referral decisions and determining the eligibility of special educational services in Mirland State, USA. This study was administered to 13 schools of the project (experimental group) and 9 schools were not affiliated to the project (control group). The findings of the study revealed that there was a reduction in the referral decisions reaching to the half of the experimental group showing a remarkable improvement in educational practices learning acquisition development with the project students.

Moreover, the results of this study accord with the results of a review study conducted by Dobson and Gifford-Bryan (2014) in New Zealand to identify the effect of collaborative consultations on educational practices. It was found that the review of a number of studies in the field of consultation and collaboration in special education showed weaknesses in the professional skills required to achieve advisory and collaborative work with administration staff, employees, students, and students' guardians. The most important skills were understanding roles, determining responsibilities, communication, and working within team. Furthermore, it was found that there was a limited number of studies done in this

field. Locally, the results of this study accord with the results of a study conducted by Al-Battal (2019) to identify the level of practicing consultation and working within team with 139 teachers of learning disabilities and 464 teachers of public education in primary schools in Riyadh City. The results of the questionnaire administered to the two samples showed that the level of practicing consultation by teachers was average while that of working with team was low.

In contrast, the results of this study oppose the results of Taher's study (2009) in Kuwait which aimed to identify the extent of interaction between psychologists and teachers of special education from the latter's point of view. The quantitative data obtained from 205 teachers showed that their point of view was positive towards the collaborative role of psychologists in reinforcing the professional competency with special education teachers.

Question No. 2. Are there any statistically significant differences between the situation of the advisory work in special education programmes from female special education teachers' point of view in Riyadh City attributed to the variables of qualification, years of experience, and presence of an educational advisor in the work environment?

Before using appropriate statistical techniques, the distribution of data was tested through using Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Table (6) below shows the results:

Table 6: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Variables

No.	Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		t	P	
1.	Qualification	0.324	* 0.00	Significant
2.	Years of experience	0.295	* 0.00	Significant
3.	Presence of educational advisor in the work environment.	0.401	* 0.00	Significant

* Level of significance is < 0.05

Table (6) shows that the values of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the variables of the study (i.e., qualification, years of experience, and presence of educational advisor in the work environment) were 324, 295, and 401, respectively, (level of significance = < 0.05). This indicates that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, the non-parametric statistical techniques were appropriate, namely Mann-Whitney Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test to identify any statistically significant differences between the participants' responses attributed to the variables of the study. Table (7) below shows the results:

Table 7: Significant Differences between Participants' Responses Based on Variables

No.	Variable	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Z-Value	P
1.	Qualification	Bachelor Degree	93	102.28	15.283-	*0.005 Significant
		Postgraduate	26	148.47		
2.	Years of experience	Less than 5 years	19	152.13	9.207	*0.002 Significant
		5 – 10 years	37	161.46		
		More than 10 years	63	205.67		
3.	Presence of an educational advisory in the work environment	Yes	8	168.26	9.118-	*0.009 Significant
		No	111	97.58		

* Level of significance = < 0.05

Based on the findings presented in Table (7), significant disparities in participants' perceptions regarding the efficacy of advisory work within special education programs in Riyadh City are evident. The analysis reveals distinct correlations between certain variables and participants' perspectives on advisory work effectiveness. Primarily, the data elucidates significant variances in participants' perceptions based on their educational qualifications. Notably, individuals holding advanced degrees exhibit substantially higher mean ranks compared to those with bachelor's degrees ($Z = 15.283$, $p < 0.005$), signifying the potential impact of higher academic attainment on fostering more positive views of advisory work. This finding is consistent with the studies of Romano et al., (2009) and Taher (2009), signifying the potential impact of higher academic attainment on fostering more positive views of advisory work.

Moreover, as Gravois & Rosenfield (2011) and Taher (2009) found out, discernible differences emerge concerning participants' professional experience in special education. Teachers with more extensive tenure, exceeding 10 years, demonstrate significantly higher mean ranks than their less experienced counterparts ($Z = 9.207$, $p < 0.002$), suggesting that prolonged engagement within the field may cultivate a more favorable outlook on advisory work efficacy. Additionally, the presence of educational advisories in the work environment yields notable disparities in participants' perceptions. Settings equipped with dedicated educational advisors evoke significantly higher mean ranks among participants ($Z = 9.118$, $p < 0.009$), underscoring the pivotal role of advisory resources in shaping perceptions of effectiveness. This finding is consistent with the result of Al-Battal (2019) study.

These findings highlight the intricate interplay between various factors and participants' perceptions of advisory work within special education programs. Factors such as educational background, professional tenure, and the availability of advisory resources exert considerable influence over teachers' perceptions, as indicated by Dobson and Gifford-Bryan (2014). Understanding these nuances is crucial in devising targeted strategies to enhance special education programs and improve educational outcomes. Casto (2008) indicates that factors such as

educational background, professional tenure, and the availability of advisory resources exert considerable influence over teachers' perceptions, highlighting the importance of understanding these nuances in devising targeted strategies to enhance special education programs and improve educational outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study shed light on the nuanced landscape of advisory work within special education programs, offering valuable insights into its current state from the perspective of participating educators in Riyadh City. The analysis reveals a mixed picture, where while certain practical applications for advisory work are perceived to be moderately available, there exists a notable degree of satisfaction among participants regarding the existing framework of advisory services. This evaluation holds significant implications, particularly in the context of the evolving educational landscape towards universal education. The recognition of advisory work as a fundamental necessity underscores the need for a structured and comprehensive approach to address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Indeed, the intricacies of advisory work within special education settings highlight its multifaceted nature, demanding tailored strategies grounded in empirical evidence and best practices. Against this backdrop, it becomes imperative for educational authorities and stakeholders to prioritize the development and enhancement of advisory work practices. This involves not only raising awareness about the importance of advisory services but also investing in the professional development of educators specializing in this domain. By fostering a highly qualified workforce equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge, the educational community can better support the holistic development and academic success of students with diverse learning needs.

In light of the study's findings, a set of actionable recommendations emerges. First of all, there is a pressing need to establish a systemic framework for advisory work within special education programs, accompanied by clear job designations and guidelines. Furthermore, universities are encouraged to integrate specialized tracks and training programs focused on advisory work within their higher education curricula, ensuring the cultivation of a skilled workforce adept at navigating the complexities of advisory services. Moreover, the promotion of active parental and student engagement in advisory work is paramount, fostering a collaborative partnership model that amplifies the impact of interventions and support services. Additionally, the exploration and adaptation of successful global practices in special education programs can offer valuable insights and strategies that are tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of the local educational context. By implementing these recommendations, educational stakeholders can collectively contribute to the continuous improvement and refinement of advisory work practices within special education programs. Ultimately, such efforts aim to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment that empowers students with disabilities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

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