Differences in Guidance Services Provided by School and Career Counselors to Academically High-Achieving and Low-Achieving Third-Year Secondary Students

Lylia KHABET

Mouloud MAMMERI University Tizi-Ouzou (Algeria); The laboratory of individual, family and society: A psycho-social approach; lylia.khabet@ummto.dz

Receipt date : 07/05/2026 ; Acceptance Date: 01/06/2026

Abstract: This study aimed to identify differences in the level of counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between two groups: academically high-achieving and academically underachieving students. The study also examined gender-based differences within each group with regard to the level of counseling services received. To achieve the objectives of the study, a sample of 170 students was selected, comprising 82 high-achieving students and 88 underachieving students. The results revealed statistically significant differences in the level of counseling services provided to high-achieving versus underachieving students. In addition, statistically significant gender differences were found among high-achieving students, as well as among underachieving students in the third year of secondary education. These findings indicate disparities in the extent to which counseling services are accessed and utilized across academic groups and between genders.

keywords: Counseling services; school and vocational guidance counselor; academically high-achieving students; academically underachieving students.

* lylia KHABET.

1 - Introduction

The third year of secondary education is considered a critical stage in students' academic lives, as it is during this period that their future academic and career pathways are largely determined. This stage represents a transitional phase characterized by a range of academic, psychological, and social challenges, which vary according to students' levels of academic achievement. Consequently, providing appropriate counseling and guidance support becomes essential to ensure students' success and the realization of their aspirations.

Counseling services delivered by school and vocational guidance counselors play a pivotal role in helping students cope with these challenges. These services aim to enhance the academic abilities of high-achieving students, support underachieving students in improving their academic performance, and provide the necessary psychological and social assistance to help students manage examination-related stress and personal challenges.

The types of counseling services offered are diverse, encompassing academic counseling, which focuses on providing educational programs tailored to each student group; vocational counseling, which assists students in selecting educational and career pathways aligned with their abilities and interests; and psychological and social counseling, which seeks to develop students' skills in coping with academic pressures and everyday life demands.

However, several studies suggest that these services are not delivered with the same level of efficiency or effectiveness to all students, as their provision is influenced by differences in students' academic achievement levels. The nature and objectives of counseling services provided to high-achieving students differ from those offered to underachieving students, highlighting the need to examine these differences in order to develop more targeted and appropriate counseling programs for each group.

In addition to academic differences, gender-based differences also emerge in the ways students benefit from counseling services. Previous research has shown that male and female students may respond differently to guidance and counseling programs, both in terms of the type of support they require and their responsiveness to counseling interventions. This underscores the importance of taking gender differences into account when designing and implementing counseling services.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine differences in the counseling services provided to high-achieving and underachieving third-year secondary school students, with particular emphasis on gender differences within each group. The study seeks to offer findings that may contribute to improving strategies for delivering counseling services, thereby ensuring that all students receive support aligned with their academic, psychological, and social needs.

1.1- Statement of the Problem:

Counseling services constitute one of the fundamental pillars for ensuring the success of the educational process in schools, as they go beyond the mere provision of advice or information to become a vital bridge connecting students with their psychological, academic, and social needs. These services contribute to enabling students to identify their abilities and interests, develop critical and analytical thinking skills, and enhance their independence in decision-making. Such contributions support the development of a well-balanced personality capable of confronting the challenges of school and community life and achieving success in future academic and career pathways. From this perspective, understanding the nature of counseling services and their impact on students—particularly the differences between high-achieving and underachieving

students—represents a crucial issue for the development of comprehensive and effective counseling programs that meet the needs of all student groups.

Guidance and counseling is essentially a human-centered process that focuses on the most valuable component of society—individuals who represent the future of the nation. It provides educational, psychological, and social services that help students understand their environment and the nature of their activities, acquire the competencies and skills necessary to adapt to the demands of school life, and make decisions aligned with their psychological and cognitive capacities, thereby achieving higher levels of psychological and social adjustment. This role is undertaken by a qualified professional capable of assuming responsibility and assisting students in addressing the various problems they encounter throughout their academic journey (Mokadem, 2023, p. 220).

Among the most prominent challenges faced by third-year secondary school students are poor academic performance and low self-confidence, as students may prematurely judge their own abilities and future outcomes, which weakens their self-concept and capacity for achievement. In this context, counseling services intervene by offering effective solutions that help strengthen students' self-efficacy and motivate them to achieve academic success, whether through individual counseling sessions or well-designed group programs. These services also provide continuous support to help students confront personal and social challenges that may hinder their academic progress, thereby enhancing their sense of competence and control over their academic future.

Counseling services are defined as a set of services delivered within planned and systematic programs in the form of counseling sessions, during which essential information related to education and career pathways is provided. These services assist students in developing self-awareness, exploring their abilities, and receiving guidance in solving their problems in ways that promote adjustment and success (Bezzai & Ben Amara, 2023, p. 57). They include preventive, developmental, and remedial programs that support students in selecting appropriate academic tracks, persisting in them, and overcoming difficulties they encounter, thereby contributing to improved academic achievement and personal development in accordance with the principles of modern education (Boufarès & Ben Taleb, 2019, p. 330).

With the notable advancement of modern educational approaches, it has become imperative to integrate counseling services into the school's overall strategy, encompassing educational planning, curriculum development, and the enhancement of students' abilities and skills, as well as fostering motivation for learning and academic adjustment. Research indicates that these services are not limited to high-achieving students alone but also extend to new students and those who are academically underachieving. In this regard, counseling services facilitate students' adaptation to new environments, promote values of citizenship and democracy, and prepare them to assume effective roles within society (Rouibibi & Berou, 2016, p. 146).

Counseling services also represent an essential component of the educational system, aiming to address students' psychological and academic needs through the provision of appropriate guidance and support. They encompass a wide range of activities, such as individual counseling, workshops, and training programs that focus on developing coping and decision-making skills. Furthermore, these services contribute to enhancing students' self-efficacy, increasing their self-understanding and awareness of their abilities, and enabling them to deal effectively with the demands of school life. Through open and continuous communication with counselors, students can strengthen their self-confidence, which in turn enhances their motivation, improves academic

performance, and fosters a positive educational environment that supports students' personal and social development (Saraya & Belkacemi, 2019, p. 125).

In addition to academic and psychological dimensions, counseling services seek to develop students' social competencies by enhancing their communication, cooperation, and problem-solving skills within the context of their school and community environments. These services provide students with opportunities to understand social values, respect diversity, and build positive relationships with peers and teachers, thereby reinforcing their sense of belonging and social responsibility. Moreover, counseling services promote social adjustment among students, reducing negative behaviors and increasing their capacity for active participation in group activities, thus preparing them to face the challenges of school and social life with competence and self-confidence.

In light of the foregoing, the importance of examining differences in the counseling services provided to high-achieving and underachieving third-year secondary school students becomes evident, while also taking into account gender differences within each group. Understanding these differences can contribute to the development of more precise and effective counseling programs that support the objectives of education and psychological and social guidance, ensure that all students receive support tailored to their individual needs and abilities, and enhance their academic, psychological, and social success within both school and society.

Accordingly, this study seeks to address the pressing need to identify differences in the level of counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to high-achieving and underachieving third-year secondary school students. It also aims to examine gender differences within each academic group with regard to the level of counseling services provided. In pursuit of these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

✓ Are there statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between high-achieving and underachieving students?

✓ Are there statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female high-achieving third-year secondary school students?

✓ Are there statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female underachieving third-year secondary school students?

1.2- Study Hypotheses:

- **First Hypothesis:**

There are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between academically high-achieving and academically underachieving students.

- **Second Hypothesis:**

There are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically high-achieving third-year secondary school students.

- **Third Hypothesis:**

There are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically underachieving third-year secondary school students.

1.3- Study Objectives: The study aimed to examine the following:

✓ Differences in the level of counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between academically high-achieving and academically underachieving groups.
✓ Differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically high-achieving third-year secondary school students.
✓ Differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically underachieving third-year secondary school students.

1.4- Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study is reflected in several key aspects, including:
✓ Identifying the nature and effectiveness of counseling services provided to each group of students.
✓ Contributing to the design of counseling programs that are aligned with students' academic, psychological, and social needs.
✓ Revealing gender differences within each group in order to enhance the delivery of precise and individualized support.
✓ Supporting counselors in improving methods of school and vocational guidance and counseling.
✓ Providing a scientific basis for the development of guidance and counseling policies and programs in schools.
✓ Assisting researchers, educators, and decision-makers in strengthening school counseling practices and maximizing students' benefits from counseling services.

1.5- Key Concepts of the Study and Their Operational Definitions :

1.5.1- Counseling Services:

Counseling services are defined as a set of activities and programs aimed at supporting individuals in understanding themselves and effectively dealing with their problems. These services include individual counseling sessions, workshops, and training courses, and employ various psychological approaches to enhance individuals' capacities for adaptation and positive interaction with their environment and social context (Bordji & Khabet, 2025, p. 830).

Counseling services are also defined as a set of organized programs and activities provided by school and vocational guidance counselors with the purpose of supporting students in developing self-awareness, discovering their abilities and skills, making appropriate decisions regarding their academic and career pathways, and resolving their academic, psychological, and social problems. These services encompass individual and group counseling sessions, consultations, workshops, and training courses, in which psychological and counseling strategies and techniques are applied to ensure the improvement of students' psychological, social, and academic adjustment.

1.5.2- School and Vocational Guidance Counselor:

The school and vocational guidance counselor is considered the primary professional responsible for implementing guidance processes in both the educational and vocational domains. The counselor is regarded as an expert in this field, possessing the ability to collect, analyze, and effectively utilize student-related information through the application of various psychological principles and techniques (Salmani & Bouanani, 2023, p. 468).

The school and vocational guidance counselor is also defined as a specialized professional responsible for providing counseling services to students within the school setting. This role involves implementing programs and activities aimed at helping students develop self-awareness, choose appropriate academic or career pathways, resolve academic, psychological, and social problems, and enhance personal and social adjustment. The counselor's responsibilities include collecting and analyzing student data, designing and conducting individual and group counseling sessions, and applying psychological and counseling techniques to achieve the objectives of effective guidance.

1.5.3- Academically High-Achieving Students:

Academically high-achieving students are defined as students enrolled in the third year of secondary education across various scientific and literary streams who are not beneficiaries of special preparatory programs and who have obtained an average grade of 12/20 or higher, in addition to receiving one of the following academic distinctions: Honor Roll, Encouragement, Commendation, or Excellence (Sardaoui & Khabet, 2017, p. 46).

Academically high-achieving students are also described as those who demonstrate regular attendance and sustained commitment to their studies during the third year of secondary education, and who exhibit outstanding academic performance reflecting a solid understanding of course content and the ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills. They are characterized by effective time management, persistence in learning, and a continuous pursuit of personal excellence, as evidenced by their high academic results and positive academic distinctions. These students serve as role models of diligence and academic discipline and represent the group most capable of benefiting from counseling services to further develop their future potential.

1.5.4- Academically Underachieving Students:

Academically underachieving students are defined as students enrolled in the third year of secondary education across various scientific and literary streams who are not beneficiaries of special preparatory programs and who have obtained an average grade of less than 10/20, in addition to receiving one of the following academic distinctions: Warning or Reprimand (Sardawi & Khabat, 2017, p. 46).

Academically underachieving students are also described as those who regularly attend third-year secondary school but face difficulties in achieving the expected academic performance due to a range of educational, psychological, or social factors. These students are characterized by below-average academic achievement, which may affect their self-confidence and motivation toward learning. Despite these challenges, they require ongoing counseling support to help them understand their strengths and weaknesses, develop effective learning skills, and motivate them to overcome academic and social obstacles, enabling them to improve their performance and achieve psychological and social adjustment within the school environment.

2- Method and Tools:

2.1- Research Method:

The research method refers to the framework and approach adopted by the researcher to examine the problem under investigation. In this study, the comparative descriptive method was employed due to its suitability for achieving the study's objectives. This method focuses on describing the phenomenon under study, analyzing its characteristics, and identifying differences among its various variables.

2.2- Study Sample:

The study instrument, represented by the Counseling Services Questionnaire, was administered to a sample of 170 third-year secondary school students, comprising 82 academically high-achieving students and 88 academically underachieving students from several secondary schools in the Tizi Ouzou province. The following table presents the characteristics of the study sample:

Table 1: Study Sample Characteristics by Academic Achievement and Gender

Academic Achievement	Male	Female	Total
High-Achieving	34	48	82
Underachieving	50	38	88

As shown in Table 1, the number of academically high-achieving students was 82, including 34 males and 48 females, while the number of academically underachieving students was 88, including 50 males and 38 females.

2.3- Study Instrument: Counseling Services Questionnaire

The Counseling Services Questionnaire was used in this study, adapted from the original questionnaire on the needs of secondary school students for counseling services, which primarily focused on identifying students' psychological, social, and educational needs (Ben Daïma, 2021). In this study, the instrument was modified to measure the level of counseling services provided by school guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students.

The questionnaire was divided into three main dimensions: psychological counseling services, social counseling services, and educational counseling services. The following table shows the distribution of item numbers across each dimension:

Table 2: Distribution of Counseling Services Questionnaire Items by Dimension

Dimension	***Item Numbers***
Psychological Counseling Services	4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 31, 32, 43
Social Counseling Services	1, 2, 17, 18, 24, 27, 30, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 58, 59, 60, 63, 73
Educational Counseling Services	3, 5, 12, 16, 21, 22, 28, 29, 34, 35, 36, 45, 46, 48, 49, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75

***Psychometric Properties of the Questionnaire in the Algerian Context :** (Bordji & Khabet, 2025)

A. Validity of the Questionnaire :

1. **Internal Consistency Validity:**

The questionnaire was administered to a pilot sample of 60 students to examine the correlation of each item with the total score. Items were retained if they met the following criteria:

- ✓ The item had a statistically significant correlation with the total score.
- ✓ The item-total correlation was not less than 0.25.

Based on these criteria, the following items were excluded due to lack of statistical significance: 18, 21, 29, 33, 37, 75.

2. Discriminant Validity:

Discriminant validity was tested by ranking the pilot sample (60 students) in descending order according to total scores. The top 27% (19 students) and bottom 27% (19 students) were selected to perform a t-test for differences between means, which revealed statistically significant results, confirming that the questionnaire possesses an acceptable level of discriminant validity.

B. Reliability of the Questionnaire :

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using two methods:

1. Cronbach's Alpha for the total score, which was 0.97, indicating statistical significance.
2. Split-Half Method using Spearman-Brown and Guttman coefficients. Results are presented in the following table:

Table 3: Reliability of the Counseling Services Questionnaire Using the Split-Half Method

Correlation between halves	Spearman-Brown	Guttman	Alpha First Half	Alpha Second Half
0.841	0.914	0.914	0.945	0.949

As shown in Table 3, the split-half reliability coefficients were 0.945 for the first half and 0.949 for the second half, while the Spearman-Brown and Guttman coefficients were both 0.914, indicating that the Counseling Services Questionnaire demonstrates a high level of reliability and consistency.

***Scoring of the Counseling Services Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire uses three response options for each item: Yes, Sometimes, and No, scored as follows:

Table 4: Scoring Method for the Counseling Services Questionnaire Items

Response Option	*Yes*	*Sometimes*	*No*
Score	3	2	1

3- Results and Discussion

3.1- Presentation of Field Study Results :

- Results of the First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis stated: "There are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between academically high-achieving and academically underachieving students." To test this hypothesis, a t-test for differences between two independent groups was conducted, as shown in the following table:

Table 5: Differences in Counseling Services Provided to Third-Year Secondary School Students Between High-Achieving and Underachieving Groups

Academic Achievement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Calculated Significance	Adopted Significance Level
High-Achieving	82	286.30	23.99	3.06	168	0.00	0.05
Underachieving	88	271.93	35.62				

As shown in Table 5, the mean score for academically high-achieving students was 286.30 with a standard deviation of 23.99, while the mean score for academically underachieving students was 271.93 with a standard deviation of 35.62. The calculated t-value was 3.06 at a significance level of 0.00, which is less than the adopted significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between high-achieving and underachieving students. The first hypothesis is therefore supported.

- Results of the Second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis stated: "There are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically high-achieving third-year secondary school students." To test this hypothesis, a t-test for differences between two independent groups was conducted, as shown in the following table:

Table 6: Differences in Counseling Services Provided to Third-Year Secondary School Students Between Male and Female High-Achieving Students

Academic Achievement	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Calculated Significance	Adopted Significance Level
High-Achieving	Male	34	279.85	26.66	-2.13	80	0.03	0.05
	Female	48	291.20	18.35				

As shown in Table 6, the mean score for academically high-achieving males was 279.85 with a standard deviation of 26.66, while the mean score for academically high-achieving females was 291.20 with a standard deviation of 18.35. The calculated t-value was -2.13 at a significance level of 0.03, which is less than the adopted significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically high-achieving students in the third year of secondary school. The second hypothesis is therefore supported.

- Results of the Third Hypothesis:

The third hypothesis stated: "There are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically underachieving third-year secondary school students." To test this hypothesis, a t-test for differences between two independent groups was conducted, as shown in the following table:

Table 7: Differences in Counseling Services Provided to Third-Year Secondary School Students Between Male and Female Underachieving Students

Academic Achievement	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Calculated Significance	Adopted Significance Level
Underachieving	Male	50	283.22	40.15	3.39	86	0.00	0.05
	Female	38	258.63	22.44				

As shown in Table 7, the mean score for academically underachieving males was 283.22 with a standard deviation of 40.15, while the mean score for academically underachieving females was 258.63 with a standard deviation of 22.44. The calculated t-value was 3.39 at a significance level of 0.00, which is less than the adopted significance level of 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors between male and female academically underachieving students in the third year of secondary school. The third hypothesis is therefore supported.

3.2- Discussion and Interpretation of Field Study Results :

The statistical results related to the first hypothesis showed the presence of statistically significant differences in the level of counseling services provided by school and vocational guidance counselors to third-year secondary school students between academically high-achieving and underachieving students. This finding aligns with the study's expectations and confirms the validity of the hypothesis. It reflects a clear differentiation in the perception of counseling services between the two academic performance groups.

These differences can be explained by the fact that high-achieving students often benefit from more consistent counseling follow-ups and participate more actively in educational and vocational guidance activities, particularly those related to academic and career planning. This group is generally characterized by higher cognitive and emotional readiness, which facilitates positive interaction with guidance programs, resulting in higher perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of the services provided.

The higher mean scores among high-achieving students can also be attributed to their greater awareness of the importance of counseling services, stronger ability to utilize these services to support their educational and vocational choices, higher achievement motivation, and greater self-confidence. These factors enhance effective communication with counselors, enabling optimal use of various guidance supports. Conversely, academically underachieving students may experience lower motivation or self-efficacy, which can limit their interaction with counseling services and reduce their benefit.

Moreover, these results may indicate a relative under-emphasis on directing counseling services to underachieving students, despite their urgent need for intensive psychological, educational, and social support. Field practices suggest that guidance programs often focus more on academic and career-oriented guidance, which aligns better with the needs of high-achieving students. In contrast, underachieving students require more therapeutic and targeted interventions aimed at addressing academic and emotional challenges and enhancing self-efficacy.

These findings are consistent with theoretical perspectives that highlight how the effectiveness of counseling services is linked to students' readiness to engage with them, their academic achievement, and their motivation. Educational literature indicates that high-achieving students are more likely to leverage guidance in building their academic and career projects, whereas underachieving students require more flexible and tailored approaches to match their psychological and academic characteristics.

For example, Alan (1999) explored the characteristics of university students benefiting from psychological counseling services compared to non-beneficiaries, showing that students receiving guidance exhibited positive attitudes toward counselors, higher academic achievement, and stronger social relationships (Boufarès & Ben Taleb, 2019, p.334). Similarly, Qourah and Hamaimi (2017) found that guidance programs effectively increased students' motivation and academic performance, while Shaabani (2022) concluded that counseling services enhance students' awareness of the importance of improving their academic achievement. Gysbers and Henderson (2012) emphasized that counseling effectiveness largely depends on students' readiness, achievement level, and motivation, while ensuring equitable distribution of services across different student groups. Whiston and Quinby (2009) also noted that highly motivated and academically successful students tend to benefit more from guidance programs, which aligns with the current study's finding that high-achieving students have a higher perception of received counseling services.

Based on these findings, it is evident that educational institutions should reconsider the planning and implementation of counseling programs to ensure equitable access, with particular attention to underachieving students through therapeutic and supportive programs that improve academic and psychological adjustment and increase their chances of educational success.

The results of the second hypothesis indicate statistically significant differences in the level of counseling services provided to academically high-achieving students between male and female students, confirming the hypothesis. This difference is attributed to the higher mean scores among females, suggesting that academically high-achieving girls perceive higher levels of counseling services or benefit from them to a greater extent.

This outcome can be explained by several psychological and educational factors, including that females tend to demonstrate greater school engagement, consistent participation in educational and guidance activities, and more attention to planning their academic and vocational pathways, which enhances their interaction with guidance programs. Additionally, females are generally more likely to seek psychological and educational assistance and are more open to dialogue with counselors, while males may display greater reserve or reliance on self-directed strategies, potentially limiting their utilization of available counseling services despite their academic success.

Furthermore, some differences may reflect the nature of the guidance activities themselves, which may be more aligned with the interests and inclinations of female students, particularly in academic counseling and career planning, resulting in higher perceived service quality. These results align with theoretical perspectives emphasizing that the effectiveness of counseling is influenced not only by academic achievement but also by individual and social variables, such as gender, interaction styles, motivation, and psychological readiness. Educational literature indicates that females tend to benefit more from guidance programs due to higher self-awareness and motivation for future planning. Therefore, the observed differences between male and female high-achieving students in perceived counseling services highlight the need to consider the psychological and social characteristics of both genders when designing and implementing guidance programs, and to develop strategies that engage male students more effectively, ensuring equity in access to counseling services. Previous research by Berji and Khabet (2025) also found statistically significant differences in counseling services between male and female first-year secondary school students.

The results of the third hypothesis indicate statistically significant differences in counseling services between male and female underachieving students in the third year of secondary school, confirming the hypothesis.

This difference may be explained by several factors. The relative advantage of males in perceiving counseling services may be linked to their degree of engagement with programs and initiative in seeking guidance compared to underachieving females, who may be affected by emotional or social factors that limit their full utilization of services. Additionally, this difference may reflect unconscious or conscious tendencies among counselors to focus certain guidance activities on male underachievers, leading to disparities in benefit.

Moreover, differences in communication style between counselor and student may play a role. Research indicates that males are often more open to receiving practical advice and guidance, whereas females may exhibit hesitation or shyness when participating in individual or group guidance activities that require expressing academic difficulties.

These findings underscore the necessity to review and adapt counseling strategies to ensure inclusivity and equity between genders, guaranteeing access to support for all underachieving students, with particular focus on enhancing self-efficacy and motivation among females, ultimately improving their academic, psychological, and social adjustment.

Overall, these results are consistent with previous literature emphasizing that interaction with counseling services varies by gender and academic achievement, and that the design of guidance programs should account for the psychological and emotional characteristics of each group to maximize benefit (Whiston & Quinby, 2009).

4- Conclusion

This study set out to answer the central question of whether statistically significant differences exist in the counseling services provided to third-year secondary school students according to academic achievement level and gender. The findings clearly indicate that such differences do exist. Through the use of the comparative descriptive method and hypothesis testing, the results confirmed all three hypotheses. First, statistically significant differences were found between academically high-achieving and underachieving students, with high-achieving students reporting higher levels of counseling services. This suggests that counseling programs may be more aligned with the needs, motivation, and readiness of high-achieving students, while underachieving students—despite their greater need for intensive support—may not benefit equally from existing services.

Second, significant gender differences were identified among high-achieving students, with females reporting higher levels of counseling services than males. This implies that female students may engage more actively with guidance programs or perceive them as more accessible and supportive. Third, among underachieving students, significant gender differences were also observed, with males reporting higher levels of counseling services than females, highlighting the need to strengthen targeted support for underachieving female students.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that counseling services are not perceived uniformly across student groups. Therefore, it is recommended that educational institutions adopt more equitable, differentiated, and needs-based counseling strategies. Greater emphasis should be placed on remedial and therapeutic programs for underachieving students and on gender-sensitive approaches to ensure that all students

receive comprehensive academic, psychological, and social support aligned with their individual characteristics and aspirations.

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