Assessment of Graduate Students' Research Advising Preference in Samar State University: A Correlational Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This correlational study delved into the research advising preferences of graduate students, examining the factors influencing their choice of an adviser and correlating these preferences with their profile characteristics. The findings revealed that effective communication and feedback were of utmost importance to the participants, emphasizing the need for clear, timely, and honest interactions between advisers and students. Respect for the advisee and career advising were also highly valued components, highlighting the significance of creating a supportive and intellectually stimulating advising environment and preparing students for future career prospects. Notably, age exhibited a statistically significant negative correlation with the "Communication and Feedback" component, indicating that younger students placed greater importance on effective communication. Thus, the study recommends that academic institutions and advisers tailor their approaches to meet the communication needs of younger students, fostering regular interactions and providing constructive feedback to enhance their academic progress and overall advising satisfaction. By considering individual preferences and needs, academic institutions can optimize the advising experience and support the academic success of their graduate students.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of higher education, research advising played a pivotal role in guiding and shaping the academic and professional journeys of students pursuing advanced degrees (Louis & Freeman, 2018). Selecting an appropriate adviser and understanding students' preferences for specific advising components were crucial for fostering a supportive and enriching academic environment (Roach et al., 2019). Effective research advising had been shown to significantly impact research productivity, academic persistence, and overall satisfaction with the research process (Xu, 2018 & Shin et al., 2018). However, limited research had explored the specific preferences of students when choosing an adviser and the components of advising they prioritized during their research journey (Mckiney et al., 2022).

Existing literature such as of Young et al. (2019), Mbindyo et al. (2021) and Sanczyk et al. (2021)

emphasized the importance of effective communication and mentorship skills in fostering a positive and enriching adviser-advisee relationship. Additionally, their studies highlighted the significance of aligning the adviser's area of expertise with the research interests of the student to ensure relevant and productive guidance. Furthermore, research indicated that career guidance and support played a vital role in preparing students for future academic and professional opportunities (Wong, 2021). These findings underscored the relevance of investigating students' advising preferences and their correlation with other factors.

This study aimed to fill the research gap by conducting a comprehensive correlational analysis of students' profile variables, adviser considerations, and advising preferences. The primary objective was to explore the factors that influenced students' choices when selecting an adviser and the specific components of advising they valued the most. By examining these

correlations, the study sought to provide valuable insights into the attributes and qualities students sought in their research mentors and the areas of advising that significantly impacted their academic journey.

The present research assessed and correlated students' research advising preferences with their profile characteristics, such as writing status, age, sex, and employment sector. Additionally, the study explored the factors students considered when choosing an adviser, including coaching and mentoring abilities, field of specialization, interest in research, availability, attitude of the person, and research reputation. The research also examined the respondents' advising preferences concerning communication and feedback, respect for the advisee, and career advising for future prospects.

The findings from this study contributed valuable insights for academic institutions and advisers to tailor their mentoring approaches, enhance advising experiences, and ultimately support students' academic success. Understanding students' preferences and their correlation with profile variables and adviser considerations could guide institutions in providing personalized and meaningful support to their students, fostering a nurturing and supportive environment for research and academic growth. As students embarked on their research journeys, it was essential to empower them with an advising environment that aligned with their individual needs and aspirations, thereby maximizing their potential and fostering academic excellence.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research utilized a correlational design to examine the relationship between students' research advising preferences and their profile variables and adviser considerations. This design allowed for the investigation of associations and potential patterns between variables without manipulating them. The study aimed to identify any significant correlations between the factors of interest, providing a comprehensive understanding of the students' preferences and considerations when it came to research advising.

Instrumentation

To gather data, a structured questionnaire was developed as the primary instrument. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: (a) Respondents' Profile, (b) Adviser Consideration, and (c) Advising Preferences. The first section collected demographic information, including

writing status, age, sex, and employment sector. The second section assessed factors influencing students' choice of an adviser, such as coaching and mentoring abilities, field of specialization, interest in research, availability, attitude of the person, and research reputation. The third section explored students' preferences for specific advising components, including communication and feedback, respect for the advisee, and career advising.

Instrument Validation

The questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process to ensure its reliability and validity. A panel of experts in the field of educational research, advising, and questionnaire development reviewed the instrument. Their feedback was used to refine the questionnaire and improve its clarity and relevance. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted with a small sample of students (n=20) to test the questionnaire's comprehensibility and identify any potential issues with item wording or response options. Based on the pilot study results, minor revisions were made to enhance the questionnaire's effectiveness.

Sampling Procedure

A purposive sampling method was employed to recruit participants for the study. The sample consisted of graduate students enrolled in thesis/dissertation writing programs from various academic institutions. The selection criteria included students actively engaged in research projects and willing to participate in the study. The sample size (n=72) was determined based on considerations of the research's scope and available resources.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted through an online survey platform, ensuring accessibility and convenience for participants. The questionnaire's link was distributed to potential participants via email, and informed consent was obtained from each respondent before proceeding with the survey. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Data collection spanned a period of four weeks to allow sufficient time for participation and to maximize the response rate.

Data Analyses

Upon completion of data collection, the gathered data underwent a rigorous data analysis process. Initially, the normality of the data was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test as can be gleaned in Table 1. The results indicated that the assumption of normality was met only for

the variable "Age," with a p-value of 0.096, thereby accepting the null hypothesis (Ho) that the data for "Age" follows a normal distribution.

However, for all other variables, namely "Writing Status," "Sex," "Employment Sector," "Consideration in Choosing Adviser," "Advising Preferences (Communication and Feedback)," "Advising Preferences (Respect for the Advisee)," and "Advising Preferences (Career Advising)," the p-values were less than 0.00001, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho). Consequently, the data for these variables did not adhere to a normal distribution.

Following the test of normality, descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the respondents' profile variables, adviser considerations, and advising preferences. To explore the relationships between the variables despite the lack of normality assumption, Spearman's rank correlation coefficients were calculated. The significance of the correlations was determined using the p-value, with p < 0.05 considered statistically significant.

relationships between the variables under investigation. Despite the departure from normality for several variables, Spearman's rank correlation proved to be a suitable method for examining associations in the dataset. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of students' research advising preferences, which can inform academic institutions and advisers in tailoring effective advising practices that align with the needs and expectations of their diverse student population.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their responses. The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring the anonymity of respondents and the protection of their personal data. Any potential risks to participants were carefully evaluated, and appropriate measures were implemented to mitigate them. The research design and data collection procedures were conducted with utmost

Table 1. Result of Test of Assumption for Normal Distribution

Variable	K-S Statistic D	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Writing Status	0.494	<0.00001	Reject Ho/Not Normal
Age	0.143	0.096	Accept Ho/Normal
Sex	0.461	<0.00001	Reject Ho/Not Normal
Employment Sector	0.447	<0.00001	Reject Ho/Not Normal
Consideration in Choosing Adviser	0.202	0.005	Reject Ho/Not Normal
Advising Preferences (Communication and Feedback)	0.424	<0.00001	Reject Ho/Not Normal
Advising Preferences (Respect for the Advisee)	0.467	<0.00001	Reject Ho/Not Normal
Advising Preferences (Career Advising)	0.363	<0.00001	Reject Ho/Not Normal

The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 1, and they reveal several noteworthy findings. Notably, "Age" displayed a non-significant correlation with the other variables, indicating that age, being normally distributed, did not exhibit strong associations with other factors in the study. On the contrary, "Writing Status," "Sex," "Employment Sector," "Consideration in Choosing Adviser," and the components of "Advising Preferences" demonstrated significant correlations among themselves, suggesting interrelated patterns in students' research advising preferences. These findings shed light on the complex dynamics that influence students' preferences when seeking research advising and emphasize the importance of considering non-normal variables in future research endeavors.

The data analysis process, which encompassed normality testing and correlation analysis, provided valuable insights into the

integrity and respect for the rights and well-being of the participants.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

Table 2 presents the profile of the respondents. Among the profile variables examined in the study, "Writing Status" was found to have the highest representation, with 80.56% of the participants enrolled in thesis/dissertation writing, while 19.44% were not enrolled. This highlights the significance of capturing the preferences of individuals actively engaged in advanced research projects.

Additionally, the "Sex" variable exhibited a notable gender disparity, with 73.61% of the

participants identifying as female, while males constituted 26.39% of the sample. Such gender imbalances could have implications for research advising practices and opportunities in academia (Liani et al., 2020). Moreover, in terms of "Employment Sector," the public sector significantly dominated the sample, comprising 76.39% of the participants, while the private sector accounted for 20.83% and other sectors for a mere 2.78%. These findings emphasize the importance of considering diversity in research advising and the potential impact of employment sector preferences on academic career trajectories.

Table 2. Respondents' Profile

Profile	Description	f (%) where n=72
Writing Status	**Enrolled**	**58 (80.56)**
	Not Enrolled	14 (19.44)
Age (in years)	**23 – 30**	**32 (44.44)**
	31 – 38	17 (23.61)
	39 – 46	15 (20.83)
	47 – 54	6 (8.33)
	Above 55 years old	2 (2.78)
Mean	*34.72*	
S.D.	*1.08*	
Sex	Male	19 (26.39)
	Female	**53 (73.61)**
Employment Sector	Private	15
	Public	**55**
	Others	2

Respondents' Consideration in Choosing Adviser

Table 3 presents respondents' considerations in choosing an adviser for their research. Among the various factors examined, "Coaching and Mentoring Abilities" received the highest percentage, with 40.28% of participants indicating it as a crucial consideration. This underscores the significance of having advisers who possess effective coaching skills and are capable of providing valuable guidance throughout the research process (Graesser et al., 2018). Following closely, "Field of Specialization" garnered 36.11% of the responses, highlighting the importance of aligning the adviser's expertise with the research area of interest.

Table 3. Respondents' Consideration in Choosing Adviser

Reason	f (%)
Attitude of the Person	3 (4.17)
Availability	4 (5.56)
Coaching and Mentoring Abilities	**29 (40.28)**
Field of Specialization	26 (36.11)
Has Interest in Research	8 (11.11)
Research Reputation	2 (2.78)
Total	*72 (100)*

Also, 11.11% of the respondents considered an adviser's "Interest in Research" as a key factor, emphasizing the value of shared enthusiasm for the research topic. Other considerations, such as "Availability" (5.56%), "Attitude of the Person" (4.17%), and "Research Reputation" (2.78%), also contributed to the overall decision-making process. These findings offer valuable insights into the priorities and preferences of students when selecting an adviser, underscoring the significance of mentoring abilities and expertise in guiding successful research endeavors.

Respondents' Advising Preference

Table 4 presents the respondents' advising preferences, revealing their perceptions on various components of research advising. Among the components, "Communication and Feedback" received the highest mean score of 3.87, indicating its significant importance to the participants. This component highlights the need for clear, timely, and honest communication between advisers and advisees, emphasizing the value of mutual understanding and regular interactions to ensure successful dissertation work. "Respect for the Advisee" closely followed with a mean score of 3.88, reflecting its prominence in creating an intellectually stimulating and supportive advising environment. This component stresses the importance of understanding and respecting individual perspectives and goals.

Table 4. Respondents' Advising Preference

Advising Preference Component	Statement Indicator	Mean Score	Interpretation
A. Communication and Feedback	1. Provide clear, timely, and honest communication about dissertation work. Communicate frequently with advisees about expectations and responsibilities, ensuring with each communication that there is mutual understanding	3.94	Very Important
	2. Help advisees to plan, set attainable goals, and establish a timeline for the completion of the dissertation.	3.92	Very Important
	3. Assist advisees in matters concerning the dissertation committee.	3.86	Very Important
	4. Decode or demystify departmental and policies, requirements, and terminology regarding the dissertation.	3.76	Very Important
(A) Grand Weighted Mean		3.87	Very Important
B. Respect for the Advisee	1. Provide an environment that is intellectually stimulating, emotionally supportive, safe, and free of harassment.	3.90	Very Important
	2. Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences and interests.	3.85	Very Important
	3. Listen to and support an advisee's scholarly and professional goals	3.88	Very Important
(B) Grand Weighted Mean		3.88	Very Important
C. Career Advising: *(Preparing Advisees for Future Careers)*	1. Recognize and promote an advisee's contributions to research in 2ations or presentations in conferences;	3.82	Very Important
	2. Support the development of teaching skills when relevant to career goals	3.82	Very Important
	3. Acknowledge the advisee's service as, for example, mentors and graduate student peers, etc.	3.79	Very Important
	4. Connect an advisee to your own professional networks and support opportunities for the advisee to cultivate professional and technical skills that may open up broader career outcomes	3.83	Very Important
	5. Be realistic, open, and honest about career prospects and options.	3.89	Very Important
	6. Understand and respect that each advisee brings different perspectives, experiences and interests	3.86	Very Important
	7. Listen to and support an advisee's scholarly and professional goals.	3.90	Very Important
(C) *Grand Weighted Mean*		3.84	Very Important

Legend: 1.0 – 1.75 (Not at All Important); 1.76 – 2.50 (Slightly Important); 2.51 – 3.25 (Important); 3.26 – 4.00 (Very Important)

Moreover, "Career Advising" obtained a notable mean score of 3.84, underscoring the significance of preparing advisees for future careers through various means such as promoting research contributions, providing networking opportunities, and realistic career guidance. These findings demonstrate that students highly prioritize effective communication, respect, and careerguidance in their research advising experiences, warranting increased emphasis on these components to enhance overall advising satisfaction and success.

Profile and Adviser Consideration Correlation

As can be gleaned from Table 5, the correlation analysis between respondents' profile variables (writing status, age, sex, and employment sector) and their considerations in choosing an adviser revealed no statistically significant relationships. None of the profile variables exhibited a strong correlation with the factors influencing the choice of an adviser.

Table 5. Profile and Adviser Consideration Correlation

Profile	r_s	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Writing Status	-0.224	0.058	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Age	-0.012	0.920	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Sex	-0.157	0.188	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Employment Sector	-0.004	0.973	Accept Ho/Not Significant

*Significant if p value < 0.05

The implications of these findings are that the respondents' profile variables (writing status, age, sex, and employment sector) do not significantly influence their considerations in choosing an adviser. This suggests that students, regardless of their writing status, age, gender, or employment sector, prioritize similar factors when selecting an adviser. The lack of significant correlations indicates that advising preferences are relatively consistent among different student groups, which can be beneficial for academic institutions and advisers as they can focus on common attributes that students value when seeking guidance and support (Chaudry et al., 2021). However, it is essential for advisers and academic institutions to remain aware of the specific needs and expectations of individual students, as preferences may still vary on a case-by-case basis.

Profile and Advising Preferences

The correlation analysis between respondents' profile variables (writing status, age, sex, and employment sector) and their advising preferences are shown in Table 6.

support their academic progress. By tailoring advising approaches to cater to the preferences of younger students, academic institutions can enhance the overall advising satisfaction and effect.

On the other hand, "Respect for the Advisee" and "Career Advising" components did not show any significant correlations with the profile variables, suggesting that these aspects of advising preferences are relatively consistent regardless of writing status, age, sex, or employment sector. These findings imply that academic institutions and advisers should prioritize effective communication for younger students, while ensuring that respect and career guidance remain integral aspects of advising for all students (Worsley et al., 2021). The results also emphasize the importance of considering individual student needs and preferences to enhance the overall advising experience and support academic success.

Table 6. Profile and Advising Preferences

(A) Communication and Feedback			
Profile	r_s	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Writing Status	0.079	0.509	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Age	**-0.294**	***0.012**	**Reject Ho/Significant**
Sex	0.040	0.739	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Employment Sector	-0.085	0.478	Accept Ho/Not Significant
(B) Respect for the Advisee			
Profile	r_s	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Writing Status	-0.117	0.328	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Age	-0.117	0.328	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Sex	0.033	0.783	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Employment Sector	0.117	0.328	Accept Ho/Not Significant
(C) Career Advising: *(Preparing Advisees for Future Careers)*			
Profile	r_s	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
Writing Status	-0.184	0.122	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Age	-0.208	0.079	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Sex	0.054	0.652	Accept Ho/Not Significant
Employment Sector	-0.004	0.973	Accept Ho/Not Significant

*Significant if p value < 0.05

In terms of "Communication and Feedback" as an advising preference component, age demonstrated a statistically significant negative correlation (r_s = -0.294, p = 0.012), indicating that younger participants tended to place more importance on effective communication and feedback from their advisers. The result suggests that they value clear and timely communication as well as constructive feedback in their advising experiences (Williams et al., 2018). This finding highlights the need for advisers and academic institutions to be attentive to the communication needs of younger students, ensuring regular and meaningful interactions to

Adviser Consideration and Advising Preferences Correlation

The correlation analysis between adviser considerations and advising preferences (Communication and Feedback, Respect for the Advisee, and Career Advising) revealed no statistically significant relationships as shown in Table 7.

The correlation coefficients for all components were close to zero, indicating a very weak or negligible association. Consequently, the p-values were well above the significance level (p < 0.05), leading to the acceptance of the null

Table 7. Adviser Consideration and Advising Preferences Correlation

Advising Preferences Component	r_s	p-value	Decision/Interpretation
A. Communication and Feedback	-0.121	0.311	Accept Ho/Not Significant
B. Respect for the Advisee	-0.030	0.802	Accept Ho/Not Significant
C. Career Advising: *(Preparing Advisees for Future Careers)*	-0.055	0.646	Accept Ho/Not Significant

*Significant if p value < 0.05

hypothesis (Ho). This suggests that there is no significant correlation between the factors considered by students when choosing an adviser and their preferences for specific advising components. While there may be no direct relationship between these variables, it is essential for advisers to continue providing comprehensive support and guidance to students, considering various advising preferences and individual needs to ensure a successful academic journey for their advisees.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study underscores the importance of acknowledging individual needs and preferences in the advising process to facilitate a successful academic journey for students. It has been revealed that providing clear communication, fostering respectful environments, and offering career guidance are pivotal in enhancing overall advising satisfaction and success. The correlation analysis further established that students' profile variables, including writing status, age, sex, and employment sector, did not significantly influence their considerations in choosing an adviser. This suggests that advising preferences remain relatively consistent among different student groups, enabling academic institutions and advisers to concentrate on shared attributes valued by students seeking guidance and support.

A significant finding worth considering is the statistically significant negative correlation between age and the "Communication and Feedback" advising preference component. To optimize the advising experience for younger students, it is highly recommended that academic institutions and advisers tailor their approaches to meet the specific communication needs of this demographic. Emphasizing clear and timely communication, providing constructive feedback, and engaging in regular interactions with younger students will be instrumental in supporting their academic progress effectively. By fostering a supportive and communicative advising relationship, academic institutions can elevate the overall advising satisfaction and academic success of their younger students.

This study brings attention to the importance of personalized advising approaches

and highlights the value of effective communication, respect, and career guidance in the advising process. By catering to the unique preferences of individual students and addressing the needs of younger students, academic institutions and advisers can create a more enriching and rewarding advising experience, ultimately contributing to the success and development of the students they serve.

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