

Review of: "Inclusive Academic Advising for students with mental health issues. The views and experiences of Academic Advisers"

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I am thrilled to give my first review Qeios. I've never given a public peer review before, so I find it necessary to give a brief on how I understand peer review.

In short, peers are other scholars who can assess the quality of new academic work. As a scholar, when I read academic articles or books, I am concerned with the quality of theory –its logic, assumptions, predictions, and ethics – and with how data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted in light of the theory, including any practical implications.

I also have in mind the Qeios peer review guidelines:

"Qeios does **not have editors** who handle articles, so peer feedback is exclusively meant to provide authors with **constructive suggestions** to improve their papers, and to inform readers of their validity."

When it comes to this article, Inclusive Academic Advising for Students with Mental Health Issues, I am generally impressed and would recommend that readers can consider it valid.

Theory

The background provided gives a good understanding of the role of academic advisors as it concerns student mental health.

The theoretical framework is adequate, although parts of it seem to be general declarations of the researchers' intent rather than informing the study and its analysis. I am speaking in particular about the reference to social justice. The researchers might reflect deeper on the role of their study and social justice. For instance, are the mental health problems described associated with any structural or cultural disadvantages facing students? Thus, addressing how academic advisors support student mental health might be said to further social justice along those lines – by alleviating some structural/cultural disadvantage. The discussion of different perceptions between advisors in different schools (i.e., business vs. humanities) fits this concern nicely. Certain programs attract certain types of students, thus differences in the support they receive are pertinent for social justice. To be fair, there were several moments where this happened, such as the discussion around female academic advisors perceiving a greater willingness of students to ask them for mental health support than males.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Interpretation

The qualitative survey is an interesting choice. Presumably it was easier to administer however it may have resulted in shorter responses than other qualitative data collection techniques. Interviews, for instance, might have produced deeper insights from each respondent. Still, there is a tradeoff in that interviews are more time intensive and may have received less responses overall. While there is no right or wrong choice, providing some data (e.g., mean words per response) to give readers an understanding of how long and detailed the responses were would help us understand the depth of the response.

The coding scheme used generally followed good practices, and the overall themes produced seem logical. Some studies make use of coding silos which are then compared for determine “inter-coder reliability.” While not strictly necessary, the researchers could have employed such a strategy to increase the perception of trustworthiness. Still, the use of in vivo codes supported the themes and provided a strong level of trustworthiness.

The researchers note the limits of qualitative studies – that they do not seek generalizability.

Finally, the practical implications of the article are important. As an instructor in higher education, I frequently have students report mental health concerns to me. Like the participants in like study, I tend to listen sympathetically and direct them to proper services, yet I myself have not been adequately trained to provide greater support to their mental health. Understanding this challenge for higher education faculty in staff is a first step in overcoming it.

This is a fascinating article, well-done, and worth reading for higher education administrators, faculty, and staff. My compliments to the researchers.