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Alanood Alshamsi

Zayed University, alanood.alshamsi@zu.ac.ae

Laila Mohebi

Zayed University, laila.mohebi@zu.ac.ae

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Academic Advising Policy and Procedure in a Selected Federal University in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Alanood Alshamsi 

Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Laila Mohebi* 

Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Abstract. Academic advising and tutoring policies play key roles in achieving students' satisfaction and engagement, and thereby improving students' retention and career development. However, universities do not give enough attention to developing the Student Affairs entities or advising quality. This study aims to conduct a systematic review of the literature, in order to determine the needs of UAE federal universities, with a special emphasis on the roles of academic advising and counselling in improving students' retention and satisfaction. The target population of this study consisted of related works published in peer-review journals, books and websites. A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted on a list of 28 selected manuscripts published from 2000 to 2021. The data were collected manually from the articles, by the researchers. This study draws the attention of policy-makers and advisory boards, to launch proper policies and advisory services, so that, the students of higher classes will achieve good academic performance, leading to students' retention. Furthermore, our findings revealed that academic advising can improve the students' satisfaction, gender identity or expression. Thus, academic advising is the groundwork for all fruitful learning institutes. This paper gives an overview of the flaws in academic advising policies and the limitations of the available tools to support the policy goals in federal universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Consequently, further research in this subject and the implementation thereof could improve the quality of student-affair programs in the federal universities of the UAE.

Keywords: academic advising; career development; policy making; Higher Education in UAE; student affairs

* Corresponding author: Laila Mohebi; Laila.Mohebi@zu.ac.ae

1. Introduction

In spite of being a rich country, with a good infrastructure, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a considerable outflow of its citizens to foreign universities in pursuit of higher education. Around 7.1% of the UAE nationals choose foreign universities for higher education, compared to 1.9% in China and 0.9% in India (Shukla, 2020). This scenario raises the question of why the UAE is not competitive enough in the higher education sector. Flaws in the academic advising and counselling programs could contribute to this scenario (Ashour & Fatima, 2016; Almaghaslah & Alsayari, 2022). As most Universities are trying to boost student retention and enrolment, academic advising becomes an important and crucial task that is related to students' success, satisfaction, and retention. The academic advising entities come under the Students' Affairs Department or the Students' Success Department that foster many other entities supporting and helping students to fulfill their personal and professional goals (Gudep, 2007). In a word, academic advising is a developmental process that aids students in clarifying their career goals and developing educational strategies to help them achieve those goals.

Academic advisory policies are instrumental to the university's strategic planning for establishing a well-defined, efficient, and successful system of academic advice. It is based on the concepts of accountability and responsibility, with the goal of providing high-quality advisory services to students. "One of the main responsibilities of any institution of higher education involves Academic the advice of students" (Ward, 1979, p.1). So, what is Academic advice, and how do different researchers explain it? Academic advice is the foundation of any academic institute that intends to be an environment of growth and excellence.

According to Miller (2012), academic advice is responsible for educating students about the institution's objectives, preparing the students and informing them about the course requirements, assisting them in understanding the course, and enhancing their personal development. Davis and Cooper (2001) defined it as "methodical and structured services that take place in the campus, in order to facilitate a dynamic interaction with the administration" (p.53). Academic advice helps students to understand the learning process and to make valuable decisions. In addition, academic advice develops students' core skills, such as problem-solving and critical thinking (Drake, 2011).

Similarly, previous works of literature show evidence of the importance of academic advice for increasing students' levels of satisfaction and academic retention (Tinto, 1987). According to Drake (2011), academic guidance is the ability to build relationships with students and to help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Academic Advisory Procedures are a part of the operational processes required to implement institutional policy. These processes are known as procedures. Procedures can be formal or informal between departments, or ministries. If a policy is an operational "what to do", then the procedure is a "method" intended to implement those operational policies (Smith College, 2021). The advisees have accountability for their educational choices and instructional selections. They

must make clear values, competencies, interests, and aims. In each semester, the students are expected to schedule an appointment with their academic or faculty advisor. In addition, advisees are asked to be prepared for an academic advisement and have all the materials and resources needed. (Thorne, 2011; Hatherley-Greene, 2012; Smith College, 2021)

The procedures should also include a variety of advising tools that should promote efficient and effective communication between students and advisors, such as the Degree Audit, Career & Internship Office, Student Accessibility Department for students of determined, Tutoring & Leadership Program, GPA Calculation, Students' E-Forms, Students' Policies & Procedures, Zoom, University Catalogue, and Library and study areas.

Thus, for academic advice to be successful, a good design and the implementation of policies and procedures, which meet the need of the university society, should be addressed. All the stockholders should be involved and educated on policies and the importance of the available tools. Similarly, workshops and orientations should be developed to spotlight the importance of the Academic Success Department, especially the advising entities (Thorne, 2011; Hatherley-Greene, 2012; Smith College, 2021).

When we read these articles, most of the academic advising definitions contained processes of work, procedures, responsibilities of advisors and the way of advising methods. All these descriptions led us to the roots of work, which are 'policies of the institutions that develop and outline the process of the tasks, and also the responsibilities. Nowadays, academic advising in higher education faces structural challenges and issues that must be addressed, through changes in educational policies and practices, which also include academic advising.

According to Poole (2021), policies clarify the values and the operations of the university, thereby making it easier for the different university members to understand them. These rules provide rubrics, guidelines, and principles that help the university, or any other educational institution to achieve target goals and learning outcomes (Welsh & Harris, 2016). Furthermore, the educational policies cover a huge variety of issues, including fairness in the opportunities provided for students, learning and teaching quality, the ability of the university to put together college students for effective governance, and financing (Viennet & Pont, 2017).

Although the UAE is a rich country, the federal universities of UAE often fail to perform at higher educational levels, when compared to the western universities. Furthermore, the federal universities of the UAE are often unable to retain their students; and the students often prefer foreign countries for their higher studies and career development. When comparing with the international standards, the UAE has a high outbound student mobility ratio. Around 7.1% of the UAE nationals undergoing tertiary degree programs prefer foreign universities, when compared with the 1.9% in China and only 0.9% in India (Shukla, 2020). This scenario raises the question of what makes the federal universities of the UAE to perform below par when compared with the Western universities. Being a rich

country, the universities of UAE have adequate infrastructure to enable them to excel in all areas of higher education, including research. However, the infrastructure is not helping the UAE universities to achieve academic success, students' career development, students' satisfaction and expression, and student retention. Such scenarios can arise from pitfalls in academic advice and counselling, as well as from the lack of proper student-affair programs (Annemarie, 2011; Ashour & Fatima, 2016; Almaghaslah & Alsayari, 2022).

Consequently, we decided to assess the efficacy of the Academic-advice programs, student-affair programs, student satisfaction and the effect of these modalities on the students' career development and retention through a review of the research articles published in the areas of our concern.

2. Policy Models

When it comes to policy development, there are plenty of models encompassing different disciplines (Poole, 2021). These models can be listed as "the institutional model", "the rational model", "the incremental model", "the group model", "the elite model", "and "the process model". According to Dye (2013), these models are inter-related, concentrating on the distinct political characteristics (Figure 1). One of the best models to be used in the field of advising policy is explained by Welsh and Harris (2016), in their book 'Criminal Justice Policy and Planning' (Figure 2). It is a process that includes seven steps, as cited by (Poole, 2021), which are given below.

Stage 1: Analysis

Stage 2: Setting goals

Stage 3: Design policy

Stage 4: Creating an action plan

Stage 5: Implementation and monitoring (Data collection)

Stage 6: Evaluating the progress

Stage 7: Re-assessing and reviewing (to identify the gap areas)

The first stage is the analysis of the problem. In this stage, the issues and the problems encountered at the institution or department level should be analysed by the university professionals and administrators. This step includes describing the history of the problem, identifying the reasons behind it, considering any previous intervention, and identifying the obstacles that prevent any change. The second step involves setting clear and concise goals. Thirdly, the stockholders should be taken into consideration, while designing the policy.

In the fourth step, a precise action plan is created, which defines the process that should be followed to change the policy. A Gantt chart may be used in this step. The fifth step is a very crucial part – implementing and monitoring the policy - which involves translating the goals and objectives into actions. It includes the instruments for the data collection. In the sixth step, one evaluates the outcomes of the new policy implementation. The policy-maker should consider the kind of evaluation that suits the changes needed for the planned goals and values., re-assessing and reviewing, in order to make it identify with the gap area and to make the necessary updates. In academic advising, these steps are mostly used

to measure learning outcomes and student satisfaction, in addition to the percentage of the retention and graduation time.

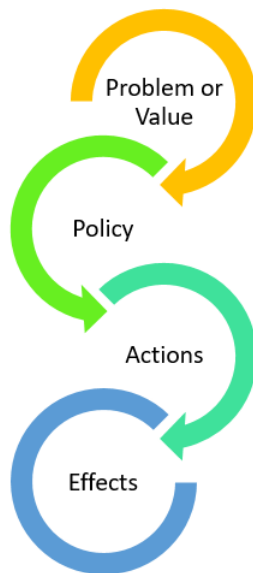


Figure 1. Hierarchical diagram from the problem to its effects

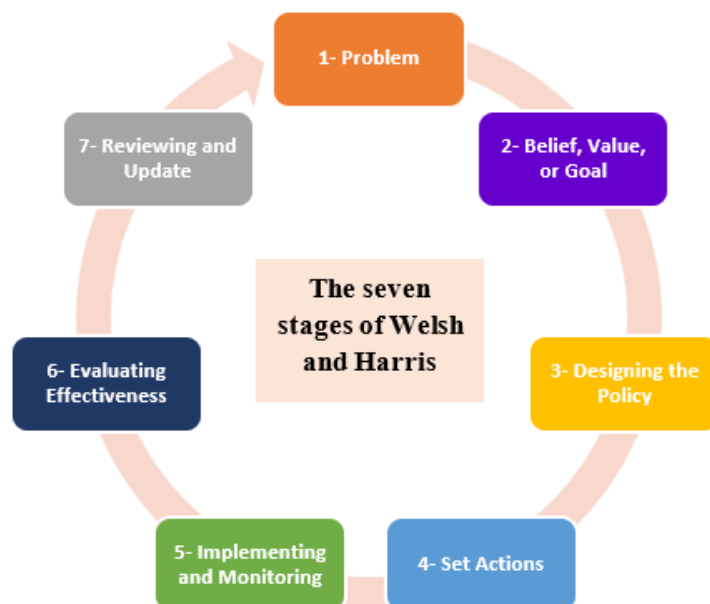


Figure 2. The seven steps involved in the Welsh and Harris advisory policy.

According to Knill and Tosun (2008), it is also important to consider the costs and the benefits, when designing a policy. As per Cooper and Munger (2000), it

combines three thoughts regarding the cost which comprises the activities of cost and benefit, the potential errors and the opportunities for achieving, and the value of the upcoming benefit and the percentage of the cost. Every step of the ones mentioned above is crucial to consider, while designing a policy; however, not every step will be used when designing and implementing a policy (Knill & Tosun, 2008; Viennet & Pont, 2017).

According to Fullan (2000), there is no guarantee that the success of a policy's implementation will last. Fullan (2000) also noted that both local institutional development and the quality of the surrounding infrastructure are essential for lasting success.

3. Tools that Support the Policy

Based on the study of Poole (2021), there are plenty of useful tools that can support the design of the policy. These science and knowledge-based tools and methods can assist in developing valuable decisions and in improving policy design and the implementation thereof, and according to Floden (2004), "policy tools" are designed, in order to boost the capacity of the university and academic advisement, in particular. Below are seven different groups of tools and methodologies that could be used in developing a policy (Fowler, 1996, pp.203-239).

Group 1. Assembling data and knowledge (including monitoring): This includes a collection of the data, monitoring and changing in databases, history, and scanning.

Group 2. Assessment and evaluation: this include different tools, which are based on various techniques and values.

Group 3. Public discussion, involvement, and participatory processes

Group 4. Selection and design of policy instruments: This includes setting aims and objectives and meeting the administration.

Group 5. Implementation, outreach, and enforcement: Evaluating the potential of the policy designed and the institutions' setting in which this policy is to be implemented, and comparing the policy designed with previous policies.

Group 6. Tutoring, institution-building, and economic development: Providing stakeholders with the appropriate instruments, guidelines and the perceptions needed for policy implementation.

Group 7. Authority policy and societal learning: Detecting the gaps and working on fixing them, by improving the skills and the competence of the members involved.

According to Cobb's (2012) study, providing the advisor's committee with enough and convenient resources, materials and tools could support the policy design implementation, and analysis, thereby, improving the instructional institution. It adds that the incorporation of tools can support the re-organisation of practices and procedures.

4. Policy Implementation in the UAE

The late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan stated that “A country's greatest investment lies in building generations of educated and knowledgeable youths” (Higher Education, 2021). According to Hatherley-Greene (2012), the government in UAE is putting pressure on higher education to bring about extended economic changes. Similarly, it stated that higher education is used as a measure of how well-reformed initiatives are working in any society, especially in the Arab countries currently in the process of restructuring.

Although the government considers higher education as a priority, and despite the increase in higher education student enrolment, the previewed works of literature and the scientific researches indicated that this area is facing many issues and challenges, including the discrepancy between the graduates and the labour market, the shortage in the governmental database, the shortage in the resources needed, the incompatibility between the universities offered programs and the labour market demands (Sebihi, 2014).

To overcome these challenges the Department of Pedagogy establishes rules, guidelines, procedures, and policies to enhance the quality of studying programs and to govern the operation of higher education institutions in Abu Dhabi (Higher Education, 2021). The UAE, unlike other developing countries, is a great purchaser of policy options (Thorne, 2011). According to O’Sullivan (2013), the UAE uses a variety of educational policies sampled, before choosing one to adopt.

However, Croucher's (2014) study emphasizes that the UAE government, as well as educational institutions, should find and design a policy that meets the needs of the country. Policy implementation is experiencing many issues. Gaad, Arif, and Scott, (2006) reported that the UAE government lacks the level of organisation required to review and reflect on their work, and to detect that the outcomes are not what they want them to be. In addition, the UAE does not perform deep analyses for its policies, where the policies are blindly taken up “without considering the cultural context in which they would be applied” (Harold, 2005).

Annemarie (2011) and Tabari (2014) suggest that the UAE should start working for an original policy that meets the demands of the country and that allows it to receive international recognition. Nowadays, many UAE universities are in the transformative process. There is a high demand and emphasis on in-house developed applications and tools, outsourcing jobs, and merging programs and colleges, in order to cut down budgets and to establish new programs that meet the needs of the country and the developed economy.

Over time, many programs will be developed, new colleges will be presented, and new policies should be developed to meet the needs of the country with the given data and resources.

5. The Research Problem

Regardless of the importance of the existing advisory policies and procedures, student advising has never been a priority in an institution's agenda, in which most universities place more value on their buildings, making new programs, and securing outside funds that are more important than advising. In addition, the universities do not give sufficient attention to developing the Student Affairs entities or advising quality.

The advising system in federal UAE universities is a newly developed concept, that previous works of literature provide little information presented about its effect on students, advisors, and universities (Al-Ali, 2014; Banat, 2015; Thomas 2021). Moreover, there are a small number of universities and educational institutes that focus on providing advisory workshops, or looking into the newest tools, or the procedures needed to help at-risk students. Therefore, federal universities are always importing advisory programs from foreign outstanding universities.

These programs need a huge budgeting system, in order to cover the cost of planning, applying and updating in local universities. It is always the top-bottom method, when it comes to foreign programs, which most of the time need updates after application. Therefore, they need to take a look at what others are developing; and they should try to create their own plans and policies with the available data and resources, which are suitable for their goals, culture, people, and resources (Banat, 2015; Ashour & Fatima, 2016).

Applying new educational policies requires the development of a new process for improving the education system and the quality of learning. This can be achieved by the development of a professional academic advisory policy. As mentioned previously, the infrastructure alone is not sufficient for UAE universities to achieve academic success, student's career development, student's satisfaction and expression, and student retention. The reason for this could be the drawbacks in academic advising and counselling, the lack of proper data collection and assessment tools, inadequacy in student affair programs and less chances for the freedom of expression (Ashour & Fatima, 2016; Thomas, 2021; Almaghaslah & Alsayari, 2022).

Therefore, we decided to assess the efficacy of the Academic-advice programs, student-affairs programs, student satisfaction, as well as the effect of these modalities on the students' career development and retention in the federal universities of UAE, through a review of the research articles published in the areas of our concern.

6. Limitations

Every study has some limitations and requires future directions. This study is limited in its context; particularly, it targeted the articles, books and other published works on federal/public universities in UAE. Limited numbers of articles were found that meet the needs of the study. The study was based on a systematic literature review, so there is a need for empirical and qualitative studies, in order to interpret the findings in general and specific ways. Other

factors should also be discussed that contribute to the needs of advisory policies, i.e., learning outcomes, university culture, academic self-efficacy and most importantly, the use of social-media applications. Although this study reached its goal, there are a number of limitations that could not be avoided. A limited number of articles were found discussing academic advising in UAE and its policy. In addition, many articles were excluded; since they are not peer-reviewed, or they are not written in English. Moreover, while scanning the reference list, some articles could not be accessed.

7. The Current Study and the Major Objectives

The major objective of the current study is to investigate the academic advisory policies in UAE universities, as well as the importance of an advisory policy and its goals. Also, it aims to provide several definitions of academic advice, and to explain the policy-generating process.

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

Research Question 1: How well does the local entity define advising?

Research Question 2: What are the advisory procedures and policies?

8. The Methodology

This work was designed and performed by the researchers, in order to accomplish the main objectives of this study. It includes the research design, data collection, as well as sample sorting, data analysis, and sorting out the ethical concerns. The methodology involved in this study is explained below.

8a. Selection of the Study Design

Indeed, one-on-one interviews and personal questionnaires are superior tools for research, because of its flexibility, ability to collect minute details and ease in conducting deeper analysis (Young et al. 2018). However, instead of personal interviews we opted for conducting a review of the literature because of the COVID-19 restrictions. Many of the respondents were not interested in personal interviews, due to perceived fatigue from mental and behavioural stress associated with the COVID-19 restrictions. Further, we were not able to collect the students' contact details from the institutions because many of the institutions were not fully functional when we started this work during early 2021.

In addition to this, the imposed travel restrictions also reduced the possibility of conducting personal interviews (Mosleh et al. 2022). Consequently, we decided to conduct a literature review of the peer-reviewed publications, in order to overcome these shortcomings and to get an answer to our research questions. The literature review is a "form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature in an integrated way, such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated" (Kennedy, 2007).

8b. The data collection

The data were collected from sources like Journal articles, books, the internet, websites, and from the library. The data-collection process was done in two steps, as described previously (Bramer et al. 2017). The first step was the database

selection and search, while the second step involved scanning the reference lists of the selected articles.

Step 1: Database selection: The most appropriate search terms and databases were chosen, as sources for the initial data search. This included: NACADA, OECD, ERIC and Google Scholar. The following border lines were used in the search: full-text, scholarly journals and journals written in English. All the articles chosen were related to policy and academic advising. The keywords used in the research were as follows: Academic Advising, Academic counselling, Academic success, Student Affairs, Policy-making Procedures, Federal Universities, and other sources.

Step 2: The Scanning of reference lists: In this step, the list of references in all the articles and the books chosen in step 1 were scanned for other relevant publications that could be included in this paper. Publications that featured relevant research topics were added, and the same process was repeated in which the references of the newly selected articles were scanned. Two book chapters, and 2 dissertations were added to the list of the already selected samples.

8c. Sample

Inclusion criteria: Articles published after 2000 until 2021. The availability of external referencing; the credibility of the data presented (whether the article has undergone the peer-review process, or not); Articles published in English. The publications prior to 2000 were avoided; because towards the end of the 1990s, the government's higher education policies and study programs in UAE were changed (Ashour & Fatima, 2016; Matsumoto, 2019). Therefore, articles prior to 2000, might not reflect the present scenario.

Exclusion criteria: non-peer reviewed articles; non-English articles; the lack of availability for external referencing; publications dated prior to 2000.

Out of the 126 publications collected, 98 did not meet the inclusion criteria (Table 1). The final sample includes 28 publications published from 2000 until 2021; these consist of articles, books, and websites (Table 2).

8d. The data analysis

Each article is read once, in order to scan the categories related to academic advising, their policies and procedures. During the first reading many notes, ideas, and relationships were taken and recorded. We assessed the efficiency of the institutions related to the academic advisory program and student affairs using the model described under Section 2. Policy Models in this article, which was based on the model described by Welsh & Harris (2016). Seven stages (criteria) were set for assessing the efficiency of institutions in policy-making and implementation. These comprised: the collection of data and monitoring, assessment of the progress, students' involvement and the participatory process, the advisory program design, implementation of the policies, academic tutoring and identifying the gap areas and improving these. Two researchers independently assessed the data in the selected 28 publications; and the averages of the points given by the two independent evaluations were taken. A score of

75% and above was considered as good; scores between 50% to <75% were considered as average (needs to improve) and scores <50% were regarded as poor.

When the information about a particular assessment criterion (for example: identifying the gap areas) was not available in a publication under evaluation, then the points were calculated, after omitting that article from the calculation for that particular assessment criteria.

9. The Results

After the initial literature search, we were able to collect 126 publications, related to the area of research involved in this study. The category wise split-up of these documents is given in Table 1. However, during the assessment of these items, we had to omit 98 items from the analysis, because they were not adhering to the selection criteria. The main reason for exclusion was 'that the item was not subjected to the peer-review process' (50 items), followed by the reason – 'the language used is other than English' (30 items). A further 15 items were excluded from the analysis because they are published before the year 2000; and 3 items were excluded because these items were not available for external referencing.

None of the websites met the review criteria, because they were not peer-reviewed and were personally rejected in many cases (Table 1). After sorting, 28 items were selected for the final analysis. The details of the finally selected 28 items for analysis are given in Table 2.

Table 1: Category-wise split-up of the initially collected items for this study:

Item	Number of items collected initially	Number of items excluded from this study	Items qualified for the final review of literature	Reasons for omission
Book/Book Chapter	24	22	2	Dated prior to year 2000; Language used is other than English; Item is not available for external referencing; and the Item has not subjected to the Peer-review process.
Research Articles	62	38	24	
Website data	34	34	0	
Thesis	6	4	2	
Total	126	98	28	

We manually checked all the 28 manuscripts selected for analysis; and we noted how the higher education departments perform the Advisory programs, how they monitor and collect data, how Assessment and evaluation were performed, student satisfaction and retention records, as well as the involvement of students in these programs. Furthermore, how well the programs are implemented, the efforts from the authorities to identify the gap areas and efforts made for improvement were also noted. It was noticed that universities in UAE performed well with regard to the design of the advisory systems and the tutoring systems.

Also, they made some efforts to implement these two stages as well. Average performance was seen in the areas of data collection and monitoring, as well as

confirming student participation in the program. However, if the federal universities of the UAE want to make a good impact, then they need to make substantial improvements in the areas of assessing the progress, and identifying the gap areas. The Table 3 given below shows the stages and how well universities followed the stages of policies creation, adapting, or exporting.

Regarding the first question of this literature review – How well do the local entities define Academic advising? we found that most of the regional literature provided the same definition of academic advising, where they defined it as ‘a program or an approach that contributes to preparing students for university life and supporting their academic career progression’. This definition also coincides with other definitions, such as the one provided by NACADA which cited that academic advising is an operation that is based on a co-operation between the student and the advisor, which is aimed at helping students in achieving educational, vocational goals. Furthermore, the definition of academic advising provided by local UAE entities coincided with that found in other literature, such as that Miller (2012), and Larson (2018).

Table 2: List of 28 publications included in the final analysis

Sl. No	Title	Year	Category (Article/ Book/ Thesis /Website/ Document)	Author name(s)	Link /DOI
1	Systems analysis of the UAE education system	2006	Article	Gaad et al.	https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/09513540610665405/full/html
2	Issues And Challenges In Academic Advising: A Multivariate Study Of Students' Attitudes Towards Academic Advising In United Arab Emirates (UAE)	2007	Article	Gudep, V. K	https://doi.org/10.7903/cmr.87
3	The United Arab Emirates: Policy Choices Shaping the Future of Public Higher Education.	2007	Article	Fox	https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3f17n04j
4	Integrating ICT in Education: Impact on Teachers' Beliefs and Practices	2010	Book Chapter	Hammo & Saraireh	https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-60960-048-8 .
5	Higher education in the United Arab Emirates: an analysis of the outcomes of significant increases in supply and competition	2010	Article	Wilkins, S	https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2010.491112
6	The Impact of Educational Reforms on the Work of the	2011	Article	Thorne, C	https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143210390058

	School Principal in the United Arab Emirates				
7	Cultural border crossings in the UAE: Improving transitions from high school to higher education	2012	Doctoral Thesis	Hatherley-Greene	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11937/1734
8	Understanding student satisfaction and loyalty in the UAE HE sector	2013	Article	Fernandes, et al.	https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2012-0082
9	The Development of the UAE Federal Higher Education System: Main Characteristics and Influences	2014	Doctoral Thesis	Al. Ali	https://purehost.bath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/187934572/Thesis_final_version_Maytha_June_2014.pdf
10	Challenges of Higher Education in United Arab Emirates (UAE)	2014	Article	Sehibi, A	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308802587
11	An analysis of the instructional leadership model at an institution of higher education in the United Arab Emirates	2015	Article	Pettaway, et al.	http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/view/54427/29388
12	Academic advising problems at Al-Quds University, as perceived by students, and its relationship with students' academic performance.	2015	Article	Banat, B. Y. I	https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v4n1p97
13	Education in Ras Al Khaimah and the United Arab Emirates.	2015	Article	Ridge, et al.	https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep41602
14	Specialty preferences and motivating factors: A national survey on medical students from five uae medical schools	2016	Article	Abdulrahman, et al.	https://doi.org/10.4103/1357-6283.204225
15	Factors favouring or impeding building a stronger higher education system in the United Arab Emirates	2016	Article	Ashour & Fatima	https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2016.1196925
16	An analysis of higher education leadership in the United Arab Emirates.	2016	Article	Iskander, et al.	https://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/8694
17	Revisiting perceived service quality in higher education: uncovering service quality dimensions for postgraduate students	2019	Article	El Alfi & Abukari	https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2019.1648360
18	A Pilot Study on the Challenges of the UAE Ministry of Education's "Advanced Science Program": The Critical Gap Between Strategic Planning and Strategic Practice	2019	Book Chapter	Shishakly & Lutta	https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-8048-5.ch014

19	How technology has shaped university students' perceptions and expectations around higher education: an exploratory study of the United Arab Emirates	2019	Article	Ashour, S	https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1617683
20	Literature Review on Education Reform in the UAE	2019	Article	Matsumoto	https://doi.org/10.1177/1056787918824188
21	Determinants of Student Satisfaction in Higher Education: A Case of the UAE University	2019	Article	Gargoum, A. S	https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCRMM.2019100102
22	Quality higher education is the foundation of a knowledge society: where does the UAE stand?	2020	Article	Ashour, S	https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2020.1769263
23	A longitudinal cohort study to explore the relationship between depression, anxiety and academic performance among Emirati university students	2020	Article	Awadalla, et al.	https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-020-02854-z
24	Impact of Data Mining Techniques on Student Retention, within International Universities in the U.A.E.	2021	Article	Thomas, L. J.	http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3017646
25	The Transformation of Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates: Issues, Implications, and Intercultural Dimensions	2021	Article	Kirk & Napier	https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9318-0_10
26	Positive psychology interventions in the United Arab Emirates: boosting wellbeing - and changing culture?	2021	Article	Lambert, et al.	https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02080-0
27	Medical education in the United Arab Emirates: Challenges and opportunities	2021	Article	Alameri, et al.	https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2021.1908978
28	Exploring the Relationship Between Students' Academic Success and Happiness Levels in the Higher Education Settings During the Lockdown Period of COVID-19	2022	Article	Moussa, N. M.	https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294121994568

Concerning the second question of this literature review – What are the advising procedures and policies? – our study results also showed that, through academic advising and policy-taking, students would have the opportunity to align their aspirations with UAE federal academic institutions which they are attending. In this way, academic advisors might be able to reduce the anxiety and the doubts of the students in UAE federal universities, through proper advising policies and

implementation in the academic surroundings. The process of advising first-year students begins with the development of interpersonal bonds. Through the advising policies and counselling, they exposed the complexities of this interaction.

All these measures assist in improving the student-advisor relationships, that lead to self-assessment and assist the student in recognising their abilities and shortcomings. Advising via self-assessment necessitates that, students review their abilities, study goals, and willingness to complete their education in the UAE federal universities.

Table 3. Stages and the performance of universities regarding the following of policies. The 'x' mark shows where the federal universities of UAE stand with regard to the particular criterion being questioned. Good = >75% score, Average = 50% to <75% scores, and Poor = <50% score.

Level of performance	Stages						
	Collection of Data and Monitoring	Assessment of the progress	Students' Involvement, And Participatory Process	Program Design	Implementation	Tutoring	Identifying The Gaps and Improving
Good				X		X	
Average (Needs more effort)	X		X		X		
Poor		X					X

10. Discussion

We found that after the year 2000, there was a marked change in the academic advisory practices and policies of the higher educational institutions in UAE and Arab countries. Therefore, we omitted all the items dated prior to 2000 from our literature review; because those items did not relate to the present policies and scenario. The reason for the considerable changes in advising principles and policies in Arab countries may be due to the establishment of new international-level higher educational institutions in the area, which deal with the problem in a more professional way.

Furthermore, during the last 20 years, the information technology has improved considerably in the area and online services, including the advising and counselling that are now available. This could also have contributed to the changes in the policies of the federal universities of UAE (Annemarie, 2011; Ashour & Fatima, 2016; Matsumoto, 2019).

It was found that most local works of literature provide the same definition of academic advice where they defined it as a program, or an approach that

contributes to preparing students for university life and supporting their academic-career progression. Pargett (2011) defines the approaches of advising academic students, such as the prescriptive approach and the developmental approach. The first approach deals with the educational completion needs and requirements, while the second approach deals with the belief of achieving a graduation degree on time. The prescriptive approach does not allow academic students to make their own choices to complete the study; but rather the students are obliged to receive instructions, advice and directions to the needy, according to the advisors. Therefore, there is an impersonal and authoritative relationship between the students and the advisors.

Academic advice in higher education is facing many problems. Developing good academic advising policies could be one of the methods used to face such struggles, and thereby to increase the university students' enrolment and retention. A successful policy designation includes different steps, starting from the analysis of the problem and setting goals before reaching the review and evaluation. In addition, according to the studied works of literature, academic advising-policy designation should address the needs of the institution, and should take into account the institutions' cost and benefit. Policies also should be accompanied by the appropriate procedure that assigns the role of individuals involved in the academic advisory process. This includes the advisee, faculty and academic advisor, as well as the director. The ability to analyse one's own abilities and become aware of one's strengths and shortcomings is a key step towards academic achievement (Gudep, 2007; Annemarie, 2011).

A recent study by Tinto (2012) concluded that academic advisors should systematically measure new students' attitudes. According to Kuh et al. (2005), public universities provide timely advice to their students on how to improve their academic performance. Academic policies on advising are methods through which institutions can analyse and get feedback from the students on personal attitudes that might affect the ability to succeed in universities. For example, they could use advising to assess students' attitudes towards the instructors, their use of institutions, and their likelihood of dropping out.

Academic advisors develop relationships between students by guiding them through advising policies and assessments. They also refer students to appropriate institutional services, in order to meet their requirements. More importantly, they also instruct students on creating a study roadmap. Consequently, students understand the importance of scheduling and balancing other activities, as well as the importance of deciding on which courses to enrol for.

Moreover, the policy comes with clear procedures and available tools in most students' handbooks, which are published online for everyone and is easy to get. The advising program is new to our universities; and it needs a dedicated advisor who believes in the importance of their work. It's not only about available policy, or the listed tools; it is about giving alternatives and building UAE capabilities (Hammo & Saraireh, 2010). In the same way, Davis and Cooper (2001)

investigated students' opinions of academic advising and tutoring in connection with diverse adviser models, including full-time academic advisors, professional advisors, and housing advisors.

The previous studies took part in students' satisfaction as regards academic counselling and advising, noting that it was collaborative, rather than deciding procedures. Professional advisers were given a somewhat higher rating than academic advisors; because faculty advisors typically have greater responsibilities (i.e., tutoring, teaching, assisting, and supervising the students). However, advising is one of many obligations that they must complete, although professional advisors, have the best strategy to promote students' learning and academic performance in the federal UAE universities.

The UAE is a rich country; it can import policies, skilled professionals, and programs. However, there is always a missing key that makes the government change and to seek a new system. A study by Fox (2007) shapes the megatrends and advising policies for the public universities of UAE. He proposed that students and UAE itself would not gain from federal academic institutions unless the UAE is dedicated to preserving advisory programs at public universities and the Higher Institutes of Technology. If this does not happen, the top students would leave the UAE for more academic prospects and career development.

In HEI, there are several different ways to assess advising policies. These include well-prepared student applications, appropriate funds, highly skilled teachers, modern infrastructure, high-quality IT services, strong external bodies, and shareholders who would protect the best future of the federal universities of UAE. The result of any educational system needs at least 4 years of dedicated work, evaluation, and analysis. It is pleasing to have such a government seeking to get the best for their citizens. According to Gaad, Arif, & Scott, (2006) importing is good; but it has the dark side of wasting money, effort, and capacities unless it is planned and evaluated according to the given data and culture.

Fowler's (1996) study describes the policy-development stages, and how these are applied to the advising-policy procedure. There is little effort to collect the data from the source (advisors). Always looking to data through the available tools, which have not always given clear data that reflect numbers only. Gudep (2007) conducted a study targeting higher academic institutions in UAE; and this author found the best practices for adjusting higher-level students' behaviours and attitudes towards academic advising and policy-making.

Al-Ali (2014) also conducted a study in UAE federal universities and drew the intentions of university management to handle the students' needs and requirements. He targeted three federal universities of UAE, in order to discover the educational needs and change the educational advising policies, according to the new year. The research was an interpretive approach/qualitative study, so he talked about advising policies and other educational development reforms in UAE universities. Banat (2015) also conducted a study in UAE universities and attempted to negotiate the advising problems students face in their academic performance and career development.

The study of Banat (2015) was a qualitative interpretive study in UAE federal universities; and they found significant issues with students' advising at Al-Quds University. They reported that 74.8% of college students have issues with academic advising and counselling. The students always share the advising problems and issues with Al-Quds University, UAE; and they assert that this university with social, cultural, psychological and academic learning could pay attention to proper advising policies, so that the students would not have to face a dark future. The average university student confronts numerous issues. As students undergo transition from high school to university, they need guidance to resolve and adjust to these challenges within their skills and potential outcomes. The assessment and the evaluation should be from in and outside the field of advising, in order to get a clear picture of what is there and how to improve the situation.

In the next stage, a professional person and a presenter from the advising team should be present to discuss the plan and then design or import the suitable policy or tool to adapt. On the implementation process, workshops and tutoring systems should be available for the guidance of academic advisors; because follow-up with the data collection and detecting gaps areas is essential for the successful implementation of the policies. Although this process is hard, if it's applied in the right process, it would save money and effort. The study findings also supported the belief that the academic advisors are conscious of the students' information; they regularly contact their parents, while they communicate clearly with their advisees, develops programmes to facilitate advisor-advisee relationships and focus on peer-collaborative activities among the advisees in UAE federal universities (Banat, 2015).

They also experienced that their advisor recognised their strengths and limitations and assisted them in evaluating their professional and vocational progress. In addition, they believe in academic advisors to meet good advising policies and manners. While one may consider academic advising as a tool, which increases the probability of students sticking onto the UAE universities and achieving personal development, the actual benefits of academic advising extend beyond the universities and the students (Gudep, 2007; McIntosh, 2021).

Our work suggests that there is a need for improvement in the quality of the academic advisement system, by developing a good policy and standard operating procedures that meet the needs of the university, as well as those of the country. In brief, academic advising is an indispensable part of higher education institutions, because academic advising plays a vital role in students' achievement, as well as in the institutions' success.

11. Conclusion

This study has discussed the academic advising policies and the role of these policies in mediating the academic advising process in the federal universities of UAE. In addition, our work provides a framework for the research scholars and the universities to assess how they could increase their institutional success and

students' retention. Further, this review of literature identifies academic advising as an essential tool for achieving students' emotional attachments, and for improving learning outcomes, curricular and extra-curricular activities. In UAE, federal universities, faculty programs and professional advising facilities, and policies should be modernised and innovative, in order to have a tremendous impact on students' growth and development.

Previous literature studies and the results of this study provide evidence that academic advising and tutoring policies are very important; and they have an effect on learners during their college or university careers. Institutions should establish modern criteria to identify those students who are in danger of dropping out. Particularly, UAE federal universities should take the necessary measures to launch advising policies and manners for the betterment of the students and federal universities. The university advising board should implement the necessary measures to attain high-quality education in technology and development.

The deficiency in training programs or workshops for academic advisors in the UAE may result in an inaccurate representation of information, and hence inaccurate advice. At present, there are very few studies in the literature review models, that are best suited to UAE federal universities. We could find only 28 peer-reviewed publications, published over the past 20 years. Although there are a few more articles in the local language (Arabic), these articles are not useful for the international community. Our study lists the flaws in the academic advising policies and the limitations of the available tools to support the academic policy goals in the federal universities of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Thus, further research in this subject and the implementation of the findings could well improve the quality of student-affair programs in the federal universities of the UAE.

12. Future Research Recommendations

The UAE universities are still relying on traditional advising methods, which have many limitations. Additionally, the traditional method of advising relies mainly on the advisor's efforts, which are directly affected by time and experience (Assiri, Al-Ghamdi, & Bredesen, 2020). The limitations of resources provided to the academic advisors in the United Arab Emirates is another area that needs to be addressed (Gudep, 2007). In addition to the previously mentioned limitations, traditional academic advising is influenced by the length of the meeting time, and students' files and documents submitted for the process (Assiri, Al-Ghamdi, & Bredesen, 2020).

This paper suggests that there is a need for improvement in the quality of academic advising, by developing a good policy and procedures that meet the economic and social needs of the university, as well as those of the country. For improving the present academic advice programs of UAE, it is necessary to design well-defined policies, and to provide the advisors with the necessary tools and training, to set up proper monitoring and evaluation systems, and lastly, the identification of crucial gap areas and improving these is necessary.

Furthermore, organizing local conferences to share the knowledge and experiences of students and advisors could greatly benefit the academic advisory program. Furthermore, we have noticed that only a few articles discussing academic advising processes in the UAE are available at present. Thus, there is a need for more research works that addresses this topic. In addition, research works on the students' perception of academic advising programs in UAE is necessary, because the advisee is an important part of the advising process. Continuous evaluation of academic advisory tools could help in the improvement thereof and also its efficiency and productivity.

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