Counseling For Distance Learners in Malaysia According to Gender

A.A.Andaleeb, Rozhan.M.Idrus and Issham Ismail

Abstract—This survey highlights a number of important issues which relate to the needs to counseling for distance learners studying at the School of Distance Education in University science Malaysia (DEUSM) according to their gender. Data were obtained by self-report questionnaire that had been developed by the researchers in counseling and educational psychology and interviews were take place. 116 voluntary respondents complete the Questionnaire and returned it back during new student's registration week.64% of the respondents were female and 52% were males that means 55%ofthem were females and 45% were males. The data was analyzed to find out the frequencies of respondents agreements of the items. The average of the female was 18 and the average of the male was 19.6 by using t- test there is no significant values between the genders. The findings show that respondents have needs for counseling. (22) Significant needs for mails (DEUSM) the highest was their families complain about the amount of time they spend at work. (11) Significant needs for females the highest was they convinced themselves that they only need 4 to 5 hours of sleep per night.

Keywords—Counseling, Needs, Distance Education, Malaysia.

I. INTRODUCTION

DISTANCE Education: A form of education where the student and the instructor are not in the same place. This may occur through formats such as online instruction, correspondence courses, or television or multimedia packaged formats. Keegan [1] gives a more thorough definition. He says that distance education and training result from the technological separation of teacher and learner which frees the student from the necessity of traveling to "a fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person, in order to be trained".

Counseling and guidance appear to have "moved from a single vocational counselor in schools to an organized programme that focuses on (a) content (core competencies that all students can acquire) (b) organizational framework (structural components and programme components) and resources (human and political)" [2].

The goals of counseling should be stated as those specific behavior changes which are: (1) desired by each client, (2)

A.A. Andaleeb is with the School of Distance Education post doctoral fellow, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Minden 11800 Pinang. Malaysia (e-mail: andaleeb09@gmail.com)

Rozhan M. Idrus, Ph.D Professor of Open and Distance Learning &Technology Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia http://www.rozhanidrusprof.com(email:rozhanmidrus@gmail.com)

Issham Ismail Coordinator / Prinsipal Researcher mobile Learning School of Distance Education Universiti Sains Malaysia USM 11800, Penang, Malaysia (email: issham@usm.my)

compatible with his counselor's values, and (3) externally observable. Such behavioral goals would be both more consistent with the guidance tenet of individual worth and more scientifically useful than the traditional goals of counseling such as "self-understanding" and "self-acceptance." The use of behavioral goals would result in a clearer anticipation of what counseling could accomplish, a better integration of counseling psychology with the mainstream of psychological theory and research, a facilitation of the search for new and more effective techniques for helping clients, and the use of different criteria for assessing the outcomes of counseling with different clients. [3]

Advocacy Brief Gender Issues in Counseling and Guidance in Post-Primary Education that schools, especially secondary schools, should have their own guidance teachers" [4] p. 3. In 1998, Act 580 of the Malaysian Government (the Counselors Act), established counseling as a profession However, leading proponents continue to call for increased standards and certification procedures, enhancing quality of counselor training to reflect labor market needs and cultural issues, and expanding the role of counselors as agents of transformation and advocacy. In addition, it is also noted that gender inequalities continue to persist, and girls continue to be disadvantaged within the school context [5],[6] .There is a call to pay attention to such inequalities within the context of counseling and guidance[7].

An overview of developing trends and issues in some Asian countries points to common issues that almost all countries in the region face as they promote strategies for counseling and guidance. One, there appears to be a pressing need for establishing quality counseling and guidance programmes that are integrated and provide a broad range of services; and two, there is an emphasis on the need for a "gender-perspective" that addresses equity and equality for both sexes in the context of delivering these quality counseling and guidance services.

Romano, Goh & Wahl [8] summarize four major issues faced in promoting counseling and guidance. To address these issues, this brief proposes the following specific recommendations for incorporating gender responsiveness into counseling and guidance programmes:

- Understanding the importance of the cultural context in which school guidance programmes operate,
- Situating school counseling and guidance programmes within the larger sociopolitical Umbrella,
- Defining the role of a school counselor and clarifying how this meets the large needs of the country.

Working with existing ecological aspects and customs of care [9].

According to the researchers opinions in this field there is no researches on this fit research and they find research done by Klevea, Robinsonb [10] in their survey of psychological need amongst adult burn-injured patients in that study of 71 burn-injured adults was carried out to inform clinical psychological practice in a newly developed service for individuals Self-completion questionnaires were administered to patients attending outpatient clinics and information was collated on a range of variables including time since injury, cause, location and perceived severity of injury. Questions were also asked about the level of psycho-social support received and needed during hospitalization and post discharge and people were asked to indicate the type of help that they wanted. Results indicate no correlation between the amount of time since injury and the degree of emotional difficulty experienced. 56% reported current emotional problems and 38% of the sample felt that they would benefit from professional help. There was a significant correlation between individuals' perception of the severity of the injury and the degree of distress experienced ($p < 0.05$). The two most popular preferences for help were individual counseling followed by professionally led groups.

II. METHOD

The purpose of this study was to survey and identify the needs of counseling and Preferences of distance learners studying at the School of Distance Educational in University science Malaysia (DEUSM). In order to fulfill this purpose, views and questionnaire was administered to (DEUSM) students in order to collect data about their needs for professional counseling.

Yin [11] suggested that case studies benefit from using two different sources of data: (1) data received from a smaller pool through interviews or observations, and (2) data received from a larger pool through surveys or questionnaires. The degree of convergence of the interview data (from a smaller sample) and survey data (from a larger sample) helps the researcher identify whether the phenomenon being studied is prevalent and consistent [12]. Moreover, using multiple sources of data provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon and, therefore, can address the potential problems of construct validity [13], [11]. Based on these suggestions, this study utilized two different data collection methods to collect data from students. First, a questionnaire was designed and administered to a large sample of the students of (DEUSM). Second, in-depth follow-up interviews were conducted with a small sample of questionnaire participants this qualitative data is the primary source that reflects the client more successfully. Such information gathering ways enable counselor's help clients get to know themselves and become aware of their Current situations [14]. This process has paved the way for counselors to go from psychometric evaluation to a story-based evaluation. Moreover; such quantitative studies give precedence to the problem whereas hearing the clients' stories and metaphors keep counselors focused on clients as individuals rather their problems [15]. The language client's

use is of paramount importance for constructivists and gives clues to counselors to get to know clients as these stories are shaped by the environment clients have been raised in, that is why counselors need to know their cultural heritage and background very well to increase their sensitivity towards clients [16]

.

This paper aimed to answer the following questions:

Q1-Did the students of Distance Educational in University Science Malaysia (DEUSM) needs counseling?

Q3-Is their Gender differences between the students of Distance Educational in University Science Malaysia (DEUSM) in the needs of counseling?

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to answer the questions of the study discrepancy, the average of the students respondents were counted it was 19.6 for males, 18.1 for females . "t" test were conducted and the results show that there is no significant results between the males and the females .as shown in table1.

TABLE I
"T" TEST RESULTS OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE AVERAGE MARKS OF STUDENTS ACCORDING TO GENDER

Dependent Variable		The need for Counselling
f	m	gender
64	52	N
18.1	19.6	Mean
9.00461	9.98375	Std. Deviation
	.886	t
	114	df
	.378	Sig. (2-tailed

Scale of Student Opinion on their needs was prepared by authors in the form of a questionnaire related to students' opinion. Content and validity of questions were investigated by 5 experts (experts of educational psychology, counseling and measurement experts) in this field and were found to be satisfactory. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was found to be 0.94 using Cronbach alpha. 49 carefully prepared questions were given to students to answer 116complete questionnaire was returne back. Once the data was collected, the data was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistic to determine the percentage of the respondents towards the priority in needs of counseling the results of this study revealed that the average of their answers was 19 the range of the degrees was from (6-49),

TABLE II
THE CATEGORY OF THE MALE (DEUSM) DEGREES OF THEIR NEED
TO COUNSELING

Category	M	PERSENTAG
6-15	18	36%
16-21	15	31%
22-31	10	20 %
32-41	5	10%
42-51	1	2 %
TOTAL	49	

By the experience of the researcher, the mark you score the need you have to counseling. when a person score more than 15 score he needs counseling . from a look to table 2 if we add Category (42-51) to Category (32-41)That shows nearly 12% of the respondents needs professional counseling immediately and as fast as we can, and when we add Category(22-31) to Category (16-21) the results of nearly 51% of the respondent show that they needs help quickly and 36% of them can wait.
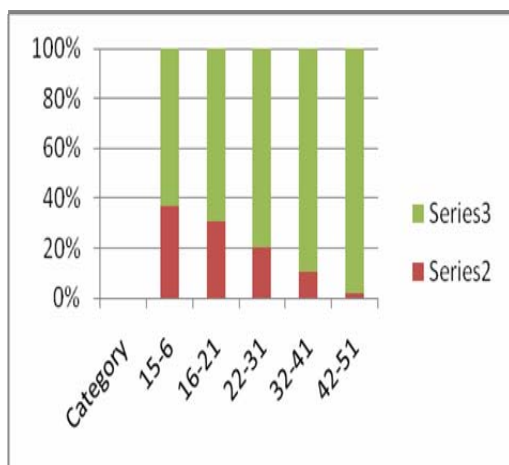

Fig. 1 comparison between the (yes/no) answers of the male (DEUSM) in the category of the respondent degrees of their need to counseling

Fig.1 shows a Comparison between the (yes/no) answers of the male (DEUSM) on the category of the respondent degrees of their need to counseling Items of the questionnaire .the most as seen in the figure 1was in category (6-15) they were 36% of the male (DEUSM), they can wait before we can provide counseling for them but for the respondent of category (16-21) and category (22-31) we must provide counseling for them faster and the male (DEUSM of category (32-41) and category (42-51) we must provide counseling for them as faster as we can do that.

TABLE III
THE CATEGORY OF THE FEMALE (DEUSM) DEGREES OF THEIR
NEED TO COUNSELING

Category	F	PERSENTAG
6-15	32	48%
16-21	13	19%
22-31	13	19 %
32-41	8	12%
42-51	1	1 %
TOTAL	67	

From a look to table 3 if we add Category (42-51) to Category (32-41)That shows nearly 13% of the respondents needs professional counseling immediately and as fast as we can, and when we add Category(22-31) to Category (16-21) the results of nearly 38% of the respondent show that they needs help quickly and 48% of them can wait.
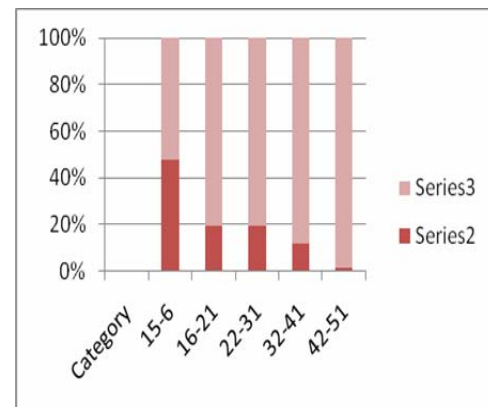

Fig. 2. Comparison Between The (Yes/No) Answers Of The Female (DEUSM) In The Category Of The Respondent Degrees Of Their Need To Counseling

Fig.2 shows a Comparison between the (yes/no) answers of the male (DEUSM) on the category of the respondent degrees of their need to counseling Items of the questionnaire .the most as seen in the figure 1was in category (6-15) they were 48% of the female (DEUSM), they can wait before we can provide counseling for them but for the respondent of category (16-21) and category (22-31) we must provide counseling for them faster and the female (DEUSM of category (32-41) and category (42-51) we must provide counseling for them as faster as we can do that.

The main needs for male (DEUSM) were:

TABLE IV
THE MAIN NEEDS FOR THE MALE (DEUSM)

N	ITEMS	PE
1	Does your family complain about the amount of time you spend at work?	73%
2	Are you searching for spiritual direction for your life?	71%
3	Have you convinced yourself that you only need 4 to 5 hours of sleep per night?	69%
4	Do you find yourself becoming emotional over little things?	69%
5	Do you often get angry with yourself over your inability to do things right?	67%
6	Are you experiencing a major disappointment because of financial failure?	67%
7	Have you considered counseling but feel you can't afford it?	65%

8	Do you depend upon your relationship with someone for your self esteem?	63%
9	Are you facing some strong fear in your life?	63%
10	Are you wrestling with the issues concerning a job loss?	63%
11	Do you find yourself using excuses for not fulfilling your responsibilities?	61%
12	Does your family complain about the money you spend on entertainment?	61%
13	Have your friends suggested that you get counseling?	61%
14	Have you experienced sudden unplanned weight loss or gain?	59%
15	Are you experiencing long term sadness over the death of someone?	59%
16	Do you find yourself in repeated moral failures?	57%
17	Do people tell you that you are cold and insensitive?	5%
18	Do you wrestle with doubts about God's love for you?	5%
19	Do Do you find yourself lying about unimportant issues?	53%
20	Do you find yourself lying about unimportant issues?	5%
21	Are you having difficulty making a decision concerning marriage?	50%
22	Do you find yourself plotting revenge in your mind toward someone?	50%

The table shows that 73% agreed that their families complain about the amount of time they spend at work. 51% having difficulty making a decision concerning marriage and find themselves plotting revenge in their mind toward someone. For the researchers they find that seems normal for (SDEUSM) because they have many rules on their life's they are workers, parents, part of big family and students.
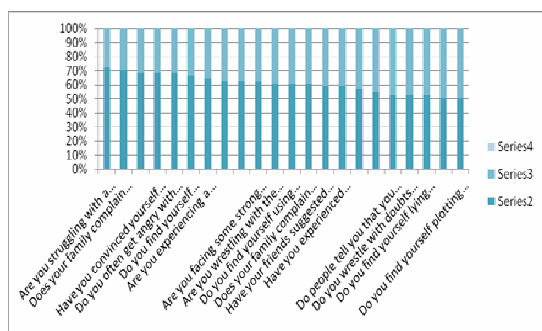

Fig. 3. Comparison Between The (Yes/No) Answers Of The Mail Needs (DEUSM)

Figure3 shows a Comparison between the (yes/no) answers of the mail (DEUSM) on the significant items of the questionnaire .the most as seen in the figure say (yes) for the items , 73% of the respondents agreed with the item Does your family complain about the amount of time you spend at work?, 51% of the respondents agreed with the item Are you having difficulty making a decision concerning marriage? and Do you find yourself plotting revenge in your mind toward someone?

For the females of (DEUSM) the main significant needs were:

TABLE V
THE MAIN SIGNIFICANT NEEDS FOR FEMALE (DEUSM)

N	Items	PE
1	Have you convinced yourself that you only need 4 to 5 hours of sleep per night?	83%
2	Are you struggling with a choice of a career?	75%
3	Do you often get angry with yourself over your inability to do things right?	67 %
4	Are you searching for spiritual direction for your life?	64 %
5	Are you wrestling with the issues concerning a job loss?	63%
6	Have you considered counseling but feel you can't afford it?	59%
7	Do you find yourself becoming emotional over little things?	58%
8	Does your family complain about the amount of time you spend at work?	56%
9	Do you wrestle with thoughts of jealousy or envy?	53%
10	Do people tell you that you are cold and insensitive?	52%
11	Are you experiencing a major disappointment because of financial failure?	50%

The table shows that 83% agreed that convinced their selves that they only need 4 to 5 hours of sleep per night? 50% experiencing a major disappointment because of financial failure. For the researchers they notice through being with the students on the intensive weeks that many of the females were pregnancy wish added another load to the female (DEUSM) besides playing many roles on their life's as mothers daughters, wife's and students.
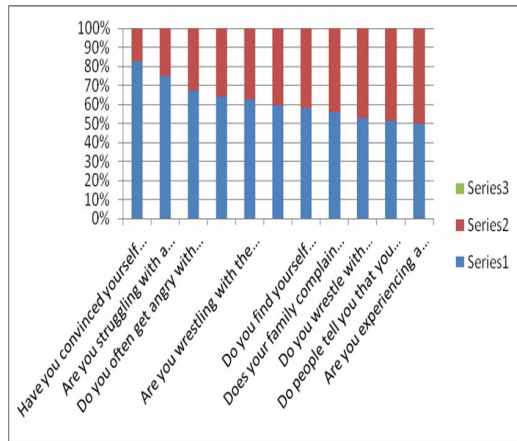
Fig. 4. Comparison Between the (Yes/No) Answers of the (DEUSM) Female Needs

Figure 4 shows a Comparison between the (yes/no) answers of the female (DEUSM) on the significant items of the questionnaire .the most as seen in the figure say (yes) for the items , 83% of the respondents agreed with the item Have you convinced yourself that you only need 4 to 5 hours of sleep per night? , 50% of the respondents agreed with the item Are you experiencing a major disappointment because of financial failure?

Through the interviews the students give some comments:

❖ Counseling is something new for us, I wish it will continue.
❖ I dream of that moment when I can spend more time with my children.
❖ Before one year I really need counseling but for now I am hyponastic.
❖ My friend's advice me to talk to a counselor many times but I didn't find any, thanks to be here.
❖ Can you feel and understand my personality? I can't understand myself.
❖ Sadness and crazing that's me. I like to change.
❖ I miss my childhood and playing under the huge and green tree beside my grand house.
❖ It's not usual thing to discuss things about myself and future with aprofititional its something different and exciting for me.
❖ I feel comfortable when I meet you thanks for the discussion.
❖ I am 63 years old .I study hard but I always forget what I spend along time to learn it by heart, I need help.
❖ I feel that there is big wall that I can't speak .something inside me didn't allow me to did so I am afraid.
❖ Me and my family facing big problem. Our mirage is in danger.
❖ I am scaring of ghosts and animals.
❖ If the counselor face a problem who will help him. Do you think his studding this field will help him to improve his problems? Do you advice me to study counseling?

❖ Its good idea to have counseling, but I don't know if it will be successful her in Malaysia or not.
❖ I have no idea about counseling.
❖ I am working for a long time that I didn't find time to discuss anything even with those who are so near from me. I am so happy to talk about my dreams to someone ells , greeting.
❖ Is it hard to sleep without bad dreams?
❖ Is the life deserve all of that work.

IV. CONCLUSION

An overview of developing trends and issues in some Asian countries points to common issues that almost all countries in the region face as they promote strategies for counseling and guidance. One, there appears to be a pressing need for establishing quality counseling and guidance programmes that are integrated and provide a broad range of services; and two, there is an emphasis on the need for a "gender-perspective" that addresses equity and equality for both sexes in the context of delivering these quality counseling and guidance services. I wish this research will lead the society to design and developmental programmes to help the students and lead them to the light. Local training programs to develop systematic supervision training career guidance programmes which can successfully mediate between a student's interests and the country's larger labor needs .programmes for Study habits and study skills ,Low motivation ,Poor concentration ,Time management ,Decision making, Anxiety and stress ,Depression, Anger management, Social and relationship problems and Personal growth and self esteem.

REFERENCES

[1] Keegan, D. (1995). Distance education technology for the new millennium: compressed video teaching. ZIFF Paper. Hagen, Germany: Institute for Research into Distance Education. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 389 931).
[2] Gysbers, N. C., and Henderson, P. (2000) .Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
[3] (Psyc INFO Database Record (c) 2006 APA, all rights reserved)
[4] Amir, A. & Latiff, M. (1984). Guidance and counseling in Malaysian schools: A review and critique. In Third Asian workshop on child and adolescent development, 2, pp 1-18. University of Malaya, Faculty of Education, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia.
[5] Hutchings, K. (1998) Good Corporate Citizens or Perpetrators of Social Stratification? International business in Malaysia, In M, A, Rahim & R, T, Golembiewski (Eds,), Current topics in management (Vol, 3, pp, 345-364), Stamford, CT: Jai Press.
[6] Mahathir, M. (1997). In liberal doses. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Archipelago Press.
[7] Quek, A. H. (2001) Career Guidance and Counseling in Malaysia: Development and Trends. In Abstracts of the 9th Asian Regional Association for Career Development (ARACD) Conference (p. 39). Singapore: ARACD & Singapore Professional Centre.
[8] John's Romano,Michale Goh and Kay Herting Wahl.(2005). School counseling in the United States: Implications for the Asia-Pacific region.Journal Asian Pasific Education Review, 6(2),113-123.
[9] Raghavan, Chemba .(2009). Gender issues in counseling and guidance in post-primary education: advocacy brief / Chemba Raghavan. http://www.voced.edu.au/td/tnc_98.745 .IN 6/5/2010.
[10] L. Kleve, E. Robinson.(1999). A survey of psychological need amongst adult burn-injured Patients. Burns 25 (1999) 575-579 www.elsevier.com/locate/burns

[11] Yin, R. K. (1989). Case study research: Design and methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

[12] Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

[13] Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). Educational research: An introduction. Boston: Pearson Education's:

[14] Brott, P .E.(2004). Constructivist assessment in career counseling. Journal of Career Development, 30(3), 189-200.

[15] Patton, W. & McMahon, M. (2006) Constructivism: what does it mean for career counseling? (Ed. M. McMahon & W. Patton). Career counseling. Constructivist approaches. Oxon: Rutledge

[16] Watson, M. B. (2006). Career counseling theory, culture, and constructivism. (Ed. M. McMahon & W. Patton). Career counseling. Constructivist approaches. Oxon: Rutledge

Andaleeb Ahmad Abdullah Abdullah is with the School of Distance Education post doctoral fellow, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Minden 11800 Pinang. Malaysia (e-mail: andaleeb09@gmail.com)

Rozhan M. Idrus, Ph.D Professor of Open and Distance Learning &Technology Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Penang, Malaysia http://www.rozhanidrusprof.com(e-mail:rozhanmidrus@gmail.com)
Issham Ismail Coordinator / Prinsipal Researcher mobile Learning School of Distance Education Universiti Sains Malaysia USM 11800, Penang, Malaysia (email: issham@usm.my)