



## Assessment of Psychological Services and Psychological Well-being of Students in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions of Kunduz Province

**Abdul Mahmood Sadry<sup>1\*</sup>; Mohammad Nasir Habibi<sup>1</sup>; Shokrullah Zeerak<sup>2</sup>;**  
**Abdul Hakim Sediqi<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>. Department of Psychology, Faculty Education, Kunduz University, Kunduz, Afghanistan

<sup>2</sup>. Department of Psychology, Faculty Psychology & Educational Science, Kabul University, Kabul, Afghanistan

<sup>3</sup>. Department of Physic, Faculty Education, Kunduz University, Kunduz, Afghanistan

\*Corresponding Email: [abdulmahmood\\_sadri@kunduz.edu.af](mailto:abdulmahmood_sadri@kunduz.edu.af) Phone Number: +93700739694

### Article History:

Received: 05. 08.2025

Accepted: 15. 08.2025

Online First: 20.09.2025

### Citation:

Sadry, AM et al. (2025). Assessment of Psychological Services and Psychological Well-being of Students in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions of Kunduz Province. *Kdz Uni Int J Islam Stud and Soc Sci*;2(3):336-347

e-ISSN: 3078-3895

This is an open access article under the Higher Education license



Copyright: © 2025 Published by Kunduz University.

## Abstract

This study investigates the provision of psychological services and the psychological well-being of students in public and private higher education institutions in Kunduz province. The research is descriptive-survey in nature and employs a causal-comparative design. The statistical population included 4,214 students from three higher education institutions, from which a stratified random sample of 478 students was selected. Data collection instruments consisted of a questionnaire measuring the level of psychological services and the Maslow Psychological Security Scale. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. In the descriptive analysis, data were summarized using frequencies, percentages, and means. For the inferential analysis, one-sample t-tests and chi-square tests were employed to examine and compare the means. The results indicated that the provision of psychological services in these institutions was below the desired level, and students had insufficient awareness of the existence and functioning of counseling centers. Although students' psychological security was evaluated as relatively satisfactory, significant differences were found in the need for counseling services among groups with varying levels of psychological security. Moreover, overall student satisfaction with psychological services was moderate, with considerable variability. In conclusion, strengthening and expanding psychological services, together with enhancing students' awareness of counseling centers, should be regarded as essential components of psychological support systems. Neglecting these aspects may undermine students' mental well-being. Therefore, it is recommended that both public and private higher education institutions in Kunduz Province design and implement targeted strategies to play a more effective role in promoting students' mental health and improving their academic performance.

**Keywords:** Counseling, Higher education institutions, Psychological services, Psychological well-being, Students, Kunduz.

## Introduction

Universities and educational environments encompass a significant portion of the country's intellectuals and cultural elites and bear the responsibility of their upbringing. Meanwhile, this group, given their micro and macro environments and conditions, faces numerous challenges and transformations. Therefore, ensuring the psychosocial security of students, providing mental support, and establishing mutual interaction with them is a matter that compels higher education institutions to plan more precisely (Ardabil, 2011). Among the various dimensions of security, psychological security is one of the most important and fundamental aspects of human life, the provision and attention to which is an indispensable necessity. Just as humans are complex and remarkable beings, their security also possesses unique complexity and significance. This issue is especially evident in the psychological security of students, as its provision is closely linked to their academic success and progress (Moulazadeh, 2010).

Psychological security, which can also be referred to as mental security or an inner sense of safety, provides the most conducive environment for the emergence of creativity and mental innovations. The feeling of psychological safety is a prominent characteristic of creative and capable individuals and is the most effective means of motivating people to think and strive towards growth and progress in various individual, familial, occupational, and social domains (Yarian et al., 2019). The study of psychological security is critically important because it may significantly impact educational performance and outcomes (Spomer, 2022).

Students are among the most important and sensitive social groups because they will be tomorrow's managers and planners, and the health of society depends on their well-being. On the other hand, efforts and budgets allocated to student education are effective only when students are psychologically in a favorable condition. Psychological problems lead to disruption in academic tasks, decreased motivation, anxiety, fear, and worry, causing students to spend a considerable portion of their mental energy on such problems, which undoubtedly results in the loss of their capacity and interest in academic and educational activities (Adham et al., 2008). Therefore, identifying deficiencies and problems that threaten students' mental health is one of the critical responsibilities of university management, especially the academic guidance and counseling centers. These centers must be aware of the reasons students seek counseling and the prevalence of problems among them to better plan for providing appropriate psychological services (Habibzadeh, 2013).

Counseling encompasses all activities in which the counselor seeks to help the individual take steps to solve their problems. In fact, counseling is a purposeful relationship formed through the cooperation of the counselor and the counselee based on the needs of the client. In this relationship, the counselee is guided according to their needs and the professional abilities of the counselor (Lotfi, Abuyi, Ghane, & Vatani, 2012).

Academic counseling is a dynamic and purposeful relationship based on the participation of the counselor and student, conducted through methods tailored to the student's needs (Aghajani, Ghorbani, Janani, & Sadegh, 2003). Academic counseling programs are widely implemented in educational systems to support students (Roessger, Eisentruit, & Hevel, 2019).

Student counseling centers operate under the umbrella of university student affairs offices and provide targeted services aimed at enhancing students' physical, psychological, and social health. Among the duties of these centers is to help create a healthier environment for personality development and improve academic performance and individual and social growth (Sam, Seyfi, & Ehsani, 2012).

Counseling services have been informally and limitedly offered by faculty members since the inception of higher education. However, student services, including counseling as a specialized field, emerged between the end of World War I and the economic crisis of the 1930s, rapidly growing within higher education (Fenske, 1989). These services were popularized by Williamson, the then student affairs vice president of the University of Minnesota in the USA, and by the 1970s had become an integral part of student affairs in American universities and higher education institutions (Nurani Pour, 2000).

Students face numerous challenges during their academic life, which can lead to destructive and irreparable harm. Psychological pressures arising from changes in life conditions, separation from home and family, financial and economic problems, marriage, employment during studies, academic inadequacy, dropping out, failure to achieve educational goals, and prolongation of study duration highlight the critical responsibility of university officials to identify, control, and prevent these harms (Rezapour Shahkalani et al., 2020). Academic, personal, psychological, and social problems hold significant importance for students, and failure to manage them will lower their academic performance and efficiency. Besides causing difficulties for the student and their family, these issues also result in substantial losses for society and the country (Shakournia et al., 2013).

University life is often a transition period from adolescence to early adulthood. Although students may be at their physical peak during this stage, they must gain psychological independence from their parents and establish themselves in the adult world, where they are inexperienced and novices. Higher education sometimes brings about significant changes in students' personal and social identity, creating situations where counselors can assist students (Nurani Pour, 2000).

Since the degree to which students' needs are met and their psychological security is ensured directly affects their performance, policymakers and higher education administrators must pay close attention to this issue (Soleimani Moghadam & Doroudi, 2018). Proper counseling by a qualified professional can resolve students' problems, teach them how to cope with life events, broaden their perspectives, resolve internal conflicts, foster constructive relationships with others, and ultimately enhance the efficiency and productivity of educational systems, increase academic progress, reduce dropout rates, and provide opportunities for behavioral growth and change (Rezapour Shahkalani et al., 2020).

Universities bear a heavy responsibility for student development, and providing academic counseling and ensuring psychological security by faculty members is essential. University life poses serious risks for many students. Students from diverse backgrounds (urban or rural) enter the university's broader environment, and due to political, cultural, and social differences, moral deviations may be observed among them. Moreover, the simultaneous presence of male and female students, separation from family, lifestyle changes, living in dormitories or unfamiliar houses, emotional needs, educational limitations, youthful and ambitious thoughts, university staff behaviors, academic problems, and many other

threats are factors that can cause severe stress, anxiety, and psychological harm, consequently affecting academic performance (Dehghan et al., 2022).

Guidance and education are inseparable. Guidance can be considered the aspect of education that facilitates the fulfillment of students' physical, mental, social, ethical, and emotional needs (Mohammadi et al., 2013). Research findings indicate that academic counseling and ensuring students' psychological security lead to higher productivity and efficiency in educational systems and reduce academic dropout rates (Tayari et al., 2016). A study at Baskent University in Turkey showed that 20% of students sought counseling services (Shakournia et al., 2013). Another study at a university in the United Kingdom reported that only 3% of 4,699 enrolled students visited counseling centers for their problems (Cooke, Bewick, Barkham, Bradley, & Audin, 2006).

Haji Aghajani et al. (2003) in their study on the selection process and job description of academic advisors from the perspective of Semnan University of Medical Sciences students emphasized the necessity of academic counseling by advisors for students. In research conducted by Dr. Shafabadi regarding student problems and the necessity of establishing counseling centers at universities, students from medical sciences, humanities, and technical fields in Tehran expressed the importance of such centers in alleviating their pains and problems (Nurani Pour, 2000, citing Shafabadi, 1995).

In recent years, the number of students seeking support from the counseling center at Kunduz University has increased significantly, with many reporting various psychological disorders. Given the critical role that psychological services play in promoting mental well-being and supporting academic achievement, this study was designed to assess both the availability of psychological services and the mental security of students in public and private universities in Kunduz. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based guidance for enhancing counseling center services and developing targeted interventions aimed at improving students' mental health and academic performance.

## Material and Method

This study is descriptive in nature and of a survey type, applied in terms of purpose, cross-sectional in terms of field data collection, and employs a causal-comparative method for data analysis (Khaki, 2017). In descriptive research, the researcher seeks to understand the "what" and "how" of the subject, aiming to determine the nature of the phenomenon, variable, object, or issue (Sarvari, 2021).

## Study Area

The statistical population consists of a set of individuals, events, or units that share at least one or more common traits or characteristics. The statistical population of this study includes all students of Kunduz State University, Salam Private University (Kunduz Branch), and Afghan Shirzi Private Higher Education Institute in the year 2024, totaling 4,214 individuals. The research locations are Kunduz State University and Salam Private University in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan.

## **Samples Collection**

The sample size was determined based on Cochran's formula, with a confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of 0.5%, resulting in 353 participants from the student bodies of Kunduz State University, Salam Private University (Kunduz Branch), and Afghan Shirzi Private Higher Education Institute. To reduce sampling error, the sample size was increased by 36%, yielding a final sample size of 478 participants. The sampling method is stratified sampling, followed by simple random sampling.

The data collection instruments include two questionnaires. The first scale, developed by the researcher, assesses the level of psychological services provided. This questionnaire covers dimensions such as the need for the center's existence, awareness of the center, service provision, and satisfaction with services. It consists of 9 items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very high" to "very low." The second scale is the Maslow Psychological Security Questionnaire (shortened student form), which measures dimensions such as self-confidence, dissatisfaction, environmental incompatibility, and perception by others. This scale contains 18 items with yes/no responses (Zare & Aminpour, 2011). To establish content validity, the questionnaires were reviewed by three senior psychology faculty members, whose feedback was incorporated.

## **Statistical Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted using Excel and IBM SPSS version 24. For instrument validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by five faculty members from Kunduz University, who confirmed the alignment of items with the research variables and concepts. Reliability was assessed via a pilot test using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.851 for the psychological services scale and 0.892 for the psychological security scale, indicating acceptable reliability. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and percentages, were used. Inferential statistics included chi-square tests and one-sample t-tests.

## **Findings**

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in the study. Among the respondents, 72% were enrolled at Kunduz Public University, 15% were students of the Kunduz branch of Salaam Private University, and 13% were affiliated with the Afghan Shikh Zai Private Institute of Higher Education.

In terms of academic year distribution, 33.6% of the participants were first-year students, 9% were in their second year, 37.6% were in the third year, and 19.8% were fourth-year students enrolled in bachelor's degree programs at the aforementioned higher education institutions.

Regarding living arrangements, 42.2% of the students reported residing with their family members, while 57.8% were living either in dormitories or in rented accommodations.

**Table 1.** Presents the demographic characteristics of the participants in the statistical sample.

| NO    | Variable              | Measurement indicator            | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1     | University/ institute | Kunduz University                | 345       | 72%     |
|       |                       | Salam University (Kunduz Branch) | 72        | 15%     |
|       |                       | Afghan Shirzai Institute         | 62        | 13%     |
| Total |                       |                                  | 479       | 100%    |
| 2     | Class                 | First                            | 161       | 33.6%   |
|       |                       | Second                           | 43        | 9%      |
|       |                       | third                            | 180       | 37.6%   |
|       |                       | Fourth                           | 95        | 19.8%   |
| Total |                       |                                  | 479       | 100     |
| 3     | Living arrangement    | With family at home              | 202       | 42.2%   |
|       |                       | In a dormitory or rented room    | 277       | 57.8%   |
| Total |                       |                                  | 479       | 100%    |

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics pertaining to the age distribution of the students who participated in the study. The findings reveal a notable range in participants' ages, with the youngest respondent being 17 years old and the oldest 50 years old. The average (mean) age was 21.98 years, accompanied by a standard deviation of 3.785, indicating a moderate level of variability around the mean.

**Table 2.** Presents the average age of the students who participated in the study.

| Variable | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Age      | 479 | 17      | 50      | 21.98 | 3.785          |

Table 3 presents the results of the one-sample *t*-test conducted to assess students' perceptions regarding the provision of psychological services and their level of mental security in public and private higher education institutions in Kunduz Province.

The results show that the mean score for the provision of psychological services was  $M = 2.59$ , which is significantly lower than the hypothesized test value of 3.00 ( $SD = 1.156$ ). The significance level was  $p = 0.000$ , which is below the conventional alpha threshold of 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that students perceive the level of psychological service provision to be significantly below average in these institutions.

In terms of mental security, the mean score was  $M = 13.91$ , slightly above the test value of 13.5 ( $SD = 3.195$ ). Although this difference was statistically significant ( $p = 0.005 < 0.05$ ), the relatively high standard deviation suggests substantial variability in students' responses. Consequently, despite the mean being above the test value, the perceived level of mental security among students may still be considered unsatisfactory.

**Table 3.** One-Sample t-Test Statistics on the Provision of Psychological Services and Mental Security among Students.

| Variable               | Mean  | St. Deviation | Test Value | T      | Different of mean | Df  | Sig   | $\alpha$ |
|------------------------|-------|---------------|------------|--------|-------------------|-----|-------|----------|
| Psychological Services | 2.59  | 1.156         | 3          | -3.595 | -0.401            | 478 | 0.000 | 0.05     |
| Psychological Security | 13.91 | 3.195         | 13.5       | 2.796  | 0.41              | 478 | 0.005 | 0.05     |

Table 4 shows that 29% of students at Kunduz University are aware of the presence of academic counseling centers, while 58% are unaware and 13% believe such centers do not exist. In contrast, only 1.4% of Salaam Private University students reported awareness, with 37.5% unaware and 61.1% believing these centers are absent. At the Afghan Shirzi Private Institute, 6.5% acknowledged awareness, 50% were unaware, and 43.5% perceived the centers as nonexistent. A chi-square test confirmed a significant difference in awareness levels across the institutions ( $\chi^2 = 101.124$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 4.** Chi-Square Test Statistics Comparing Awareness of Counseling Centers among Students in Public and Private Universities of Kunduz Province.

| Awareness of Psychological Services Centers | Amount     | Kunduz Uni | SalamUni | Afghan Shirzi Inst | Total   |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|--------------------|---------|
| yes                                         | Number     | 100        | 1        | 4                  | 105     |
|                                             | Percentage | 29.0 %     | 1.4 %    | 6.5 %              | 100.0 % |
| Not aware                                   | Number     | 200        | 27       | 31                 | 144     |
|                                             | Percentage | 58.0 %     | 37.5 %   | 50.0 %             | 100.0 % |
| no                                          | Number     | 45         | 44       | 27                 | 0       |
|                                             | Percentage | 13.0 %     | 61.1 %   | 43.5%              | 100.0 % |
| Total                                       | Number     | 345        | 72       | 62                 | 479     |
|                                             | Percentage | 100.0%     | 100.0%   | 100.0%             | 100.0 % |

Chi-Square=101.124<sup>a</sup> Sig=0.000

Table 5 summarizes the distribution of perceived need for psychological counseling services among students from Kunduz University, Salaam Private University, and Afghan Shirzi Private Institute.

Among Kunduz University students, 55.7% reported a severe need, 24.3% a moderate need, and 20.0% a mild need. At Salaam Private University, 73.6% indicated a severe need, 15.3% moderate, and 11.1% mild. Students at Afghan Shirzi Institute reported 61.3% severe, 21.0% moderate, and 17.3% mild need for these services.

Overall, 59.1% of the total sample expressed a severe need, 22.5% moderate, and 18.4% mild. A chi-square test showed no statistically significant difference in need levels across institutions ( $\chi^2 = 8.140$ ,  $p = 0.051$ ), suggesting a relatively uniform demand for psychological counseling services among students from these educational centers.

**Table 5.** Chi-Square Test Statistics Comparing Awareness of Counseling Centers among Students in Public and Private Universities of Kunduz Province.

| Need for Psychological Counseling Services | Amount     | Kunduz Uni | SalamUni | Afghan Shirzi Inst | Total   |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|--------------------|---------|
| Severe Need                                | Number     | 192        | 53       | 38                 | 283     |
|                                            | Percentage | 55.7 %     | 73.6 %   | 61.3 %             | 59.1 %  |
| Moderate Need                              | Number     | 84         | 11       | 13                 | 108     |
|                                            | Percentage | 24.3 %     | 15.3 %   | 21.0 %             | 22.5 %  |
| Mild Need                                  | Number     | 69         | 8        | 11                 | 88      |
|                                            | Percentage | 20.0 %     | 11.1 %   | 17.3%              | 18.4 %  |
| Total                                      | Number     | 345        | 72       | 62                 | 479     |
|                                            | Percentage | 100.0%     | 100.0%   | 100.0%             | 100.0 % |

|                               |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Chi-Square=8.140 <sup>a</sup> | Sig=0.051 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|

Table 6 presents the findings of a one-sample t-test conducted to evaluate students' satisfaction with the provision of psychological services. The mean satisfaction score among the participants was 3.235 ( $SD = 1.212$ ), compared against a neutral test value of 3, which represents a baseline or average level of satisfaction. The t-test results yielded a value of  $t (104) = 1.992$  with a p-value of 0.049, indicating that the mean satisfaction score is statistically significantly higher than the test value at the 0.05 significance level. This suggests that, overall, students report a satisfaction level slightly above average regarding the psychological services provided. However, the mean difference of 0.235 above the test value reflects a modest effect size, implying that while satisfaction is positive, it is not markedly high. Furthermore, the relatively large standard deviation (1.212) points to considerable variability in students' responses, indicating that perceptions of satisfaction differ among participants. These findings highlight that although psychological services are generally appreciated by the students, there remains room for improvement to elevate satisfaction levels more uniformly across the student body.

**Table 6.** One-Sample t-Test of Satisfaction with Psychological Services and Mental Security.

| Variable                                 | Mean  | St. Deviation | Test Value | T     | Difference of means | Df  | Sig   | $\alpha$ |
|------------------------------------------|-------|---------------|------------|-------|---------------------|-----|-------|----------|
| Satisfaction with Psychological Services | 3.235 | 1.212         | 3          | 1.992 | 0.235               | 104 | 0.049 | 0.05     |

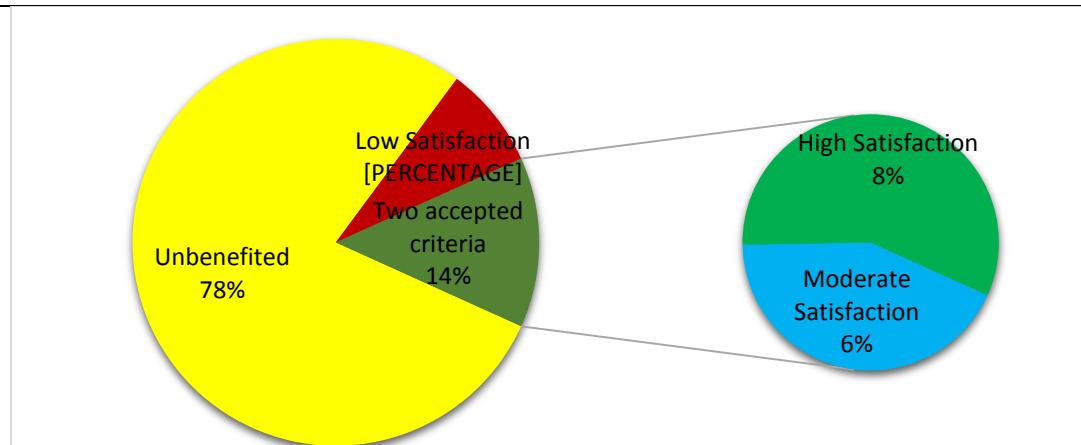


Figure 1. Frequency of Satisfaction Levels with the Provision of Psychological Services

As shown in Figure 1, 78% of the students participating in the study did not benefit from the university's psychological services, while only 22% of the participants used these services. Among the students who utilized the university's psychological services, 8% reported low satisfaction, and 14% expressed acceptable satisfaction. Of these, 8% described the services as excellent, and 6% considered them average.

The results presented in Table 7 reveal that among students with high psychological security, 24.6% reported a severe need, 56% a moderate need, and 19.4% a low need for the availability of psychological counseling services at the university. Students with moderate psychological security indicated 15.4% severe need, 51.5% moderate need, and 33.1% low need for such services. In contrast, students experiencing low psychological security reported 20.8% severe need, 37.5% moderate need, and 41.7% low need for the counseling center.

To verify the statistical significance of these differences, the chi-square test was conducted, yielding a value of  $\chi^2 = 15.587$  with a significance level of  $p = 0.004$ . This indicates that the observed differences in perceived need across the psychological security groups are statistically significant.

**Table 7.** Chi-square Test Statistics Comparing the Level of Awareness of Counseling Centers and Psychological Security among Participating Students in the Study.

| Need for Psychological Counseling Services | Amount     | High Psychological Security | Moderate Psychological Security | Low Psychological Security | Total   |
|--------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| Severe Need                                | Number     | 90                          | 20                              | 5                          | 105     |
|                                            | Percentage | 24.6 %                      | 15.4 %                          | 20.8 %                     | 21.9 %  |
| Moderate Need                              | Number     | 182                         | 67                              | 9                          | 258     |
|                                            | Percentage | 56 %                        | 51.5 %                          | 37.5 %                     | 53.9 %  |
| Mild Need                                  | Number     | 63                          | 43                              | 10                         | 116     |
|                                            | Percentage | 19.4 %                      | 33.1 %                          | 41.7%                      | 24.2 %  |
| Total                                      | Number     | 325                         | 130                             | 24                         | 479     |
|                                            | Percentage | 100.0%                      | 100.0%                          | 100.0%                     | 100.0 % |
| Chi-Square=15.587 <sup>a</sup>             |            | Sig=0.004                   |                                 |                            |         |

## Discussion

The provision of psychological services at universities is widely recognized as an effective means of protecting and supporting students within the higher education system, as it prepares them both academically and socially. Numerous studies have demonstrated that academic counseling positively influences students' academic integration and success at university. Specifically, academic counseling serves as a valuable learning process for students as they explore various career opportunities and fields (Anderson, Oju, & Falkner, 2001). Furthermore, human creativity and talents flourish in an environment of psychological security, facilitating individuals' self-actualization and personal growth (Zofghari & Javari, 2014).

The present study aimed to assess the level of provision and satisfaction with psychological services and compare these with the psychological security of students at private and governmental higher education institutions in Kunduz province. The findings reveal that psychological services are provided at a level below the desired standard (see Table 1). The decline in the quality of psychological service provision may be attributed to multiple factors; nonetheless, this inadequacy can adversely affect the quality of teaching

and learning, as well as hinder the development and flourishing of students' academic and social capabilities. In support of this, Dehghan et al. (2022) examined the current and desired status of academic counseling from the perspective of students at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences, reporting that the provision of academic counseling services was below satisfactory levels—findings consistent with the present research.

Although the current study's results indicate that students' psychological security is relatively satisfactory (see Table 1), there remains a significant need to strengthen and expand psychological services across all student groups (see Table 7). Prior research has shown that academic counseling and the promotion of psychological security among students enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of educational systems, thereby reducing academic dropout rates (Tayari, 2016). Similarly, Nazar's findings align with the present study by underscoring students' need for academic counseling and psychological services to attain psychological security.

Studies conducted at Baskent University in Turkey revealed that 20% of students utilized student counseling centers (Shakournia et al., 2013). Conversely, a study at a university in the United Kingdom reported that only 3% of 4,699 enrolled students sought counseling services for their issues (Cooke, Bewick, Barkham, Bradley, & Audin, 2006). In the current research, although the utilization rate of psychological service centers was moderate, a lack of awareness about the existence of such centers contributed to low referral rates (see Table 4).

## Conclusion

Guidance and education are inherently interconnected, functioning like two sides of the same coin in meeting the physical, cognitive, social, ethical, and emotional needs of students. Universities, entrusted with the critical responsibility of nurturing the future generation, must establish conducive conditions to successfully fulfill this mission. In this context, the establishment of a psychological counseling center within the university is regarded as a significant and strategic initiative. The creation, enhancement, and provision of sufficient and effective services through such centers can not only improve students' psychological security but also contribute to the optimal utilization of university budgets and resources. Therefore, it is imperative that both public and private higher education institutions in Kunduz province prioritize and address this issue with utmost seriousness. Despite the formal existence of a psychological counseling center in the public university of Kunduz province, its activities remain limited or insufficiently acknowledged by the student body. Consequently, it is essential for the center's administrators and relevant stakeholders to develop and implement systematic, well-organized programs aimed at increasing student engagement and ensuring the center's effective role in supporting student well-being.

## Conflict of Interest

The researchers of this study hereby express their readiness to engage in constructive dialogue, provide detailed explanations, and present reasoned arguments regarding the findings of this research. This engagement will be conducted within the appropriate legal,

scientific, and administrative frameworks. The researchers welcome such interactions with any organization, institution, or individual expressing interest in discussing or analyzing the results. For further correspondence or to arrange discussions, interested parties are encouraged to contact the research team through the official channels provided.

## Acknowledgment

The authors also thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

## Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## References

Adham, D., Parwiz, S., Safi, M. A., Behrooz, D., Mohammadi, M. A., et al. (2008). Investigating the mental health status of students admitted in the academic year 2007-2008 at Ardabil University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Ardabil University of Medical Sciences*, 8(3), 229-234.

Aghajani, H., Ghorbani, S., Janani, R., & Mohammad, S., et al. (2003). Way of choosing and job description of the counseling tutors from viewpoints of the students of Semnan University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Babol University of Medical Sciences*, Special Issue of Medical Education Articles, No. 2, 12-17. [In Persian]

Anderson, M. S., Oju, E. C., & Falkner, T. M. (2001). Help from faculty: Findings from the Acadia Institute Graduate Education Study. *Science and Engineering Ethics*, 7(4), 487-503.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-001-0006-x>

Ardabil, U. (2011). *Principles and techniques of guidance and counseling in education*. Basat Publishing.

Cooke, R., Bewick, B. M., Barkham, M., Bradley, M., & Audin, K. (2006). Measuring, monitoring, and managing the psychological well-being of first-year university students. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling*, 34(4), 505-517.

Dehghan, S., Nikookar, S. H., Nadiqara, S. A., Asgari, S., & Shabani Kordshooli, R. (2022). Assessing the current and desired status of academic counseling from the perspective of students at Mazandaran University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Medical Education Research*, 14(4), 66-74.

Fanske, R. H. (1989). Evolution of the student services professional. In U. Delworth, G. R. Hanson, & Associates (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the professionals* (2nd ed., pp. 25-56). Jossey-Bass.

Habibzadeh, A. (2013). Investigation of reasons for student referrals to the student counseling center at Qom University. *Culture in Islamic University*, 3(8), 455-474.

Khaki, G. R. (2017). *Research methods (with a thesis writing approach)*. Fojan Publishing. (Original work published 1396 [2017])

Lotfi, M. F. S., Abuyi, M., Ghane, B., & Vatani, J. (2012). To evaluate the role of advisor teacher in average score of Shahed & Isargar students of Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Science, 2002–2007. *EDC Journal*, 4(7), 54–60. [In Persian]

Mohammadi, A. R., Afrasiabi, O., & Sharafi, J. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of counseling services in reducing behavioral and academic problems of students at Imam Ali Military University. *Quarterly Journal of Military Science and Technology*, (9), 100–115.

Moulazadeh, H. (2010, April 22). How to achieve psychological security in society. *Kayhan Newspaper*.

Nurani Pour, R. (2000). Student counseling as a fundamental service for growth, progress, and success of students. *Counseling Research (News and Research)*, 2(5-6), 41–56. <https://sid.ir/paper/70199/fa>

Rezapour Shahkalani, F., Salimi, F., Nooshin, E. R., Ghisvandi, K., Parsa, E., Dogonchi, P., & Mitra. (2020). Students' perspectives on academic guidance and counseling at the university. *Journal of Medical Education Studies and Development Center of Yazd*, 15(3), 171–181.

Roessger, K. M., Eisentruit, K., & Hevel, M. S. (2019). Age and academic advising in community colleges: Examining the assumption of self-directed learning. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 43(6), 441–454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2018.1490669>

Sam, S., Seyfi, S., Ehsani, M., & Pourghasem, M. (2012). Academic counselors' attitude toward university counseling and counselors' duties: Babol Dental School. *Scientific Journal of Educational Strategies in Medical Sciences*, 5(2), 83–88. [In Persian]

Sarvari, K. A. R. (2021). *Research methods in psychology and educational sciences* (4th ed.). Saeed Publications.

Shakournia, A. H., Mahtedi, A. R., & Elhampour, H. (2013). Causes of student referrals to counseling centers at Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz. *Iranian Journal of Medical Education*, 13(5), 388–398.

Soleimani Moghadam, H., & Doroudi, M. H. (2018). Examining students' satisfaction with the services and facilities provided by the university. *Journal of Geography and Human Relations*, 1(3), 572–588.

Spomer, K. (2022). *Psychological safety and academic performance: A quantitative correlational study* (Unpublished master's thesis). Grand Canyon University.

Tayari, F., Sepehr, S., Yousefi, S., & Zare Zadeh, Y. (2016). Investigating counselors' attitudes and awareness toward academic counseling and related factors at Kurdistan University of Medical Sciences. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 6(2), 161–170.

Yarian, S., Rahian, H., Asgharnejadfarid, A., Vahedi, H., Ameri, N. F., & Dehghan Najmabadi, M. (2019). Effectiveness of ontological security training on psychological safety and existential anxiety of elder people. *Journal of Gerontology*, 4(1), 1–10.

Zofghari, S., & Javari, M. J. (2014). Ways to establish psychological security and its barriers in the thought of Ayatollah Khamenei. *Security Research Quarterly*, 12(44), 123–148.