

## Measuring the Nebulous: Psychometric Properties of an Academic Advising Assessment Tool

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The purpose of this study was to determine psychometric properties of a survey instrument that provides feedback to faculty academic advisors.

### BACKGROUND

- Academic advising is a continuous, developmental process, based on repeated collaboration between a student and faculty advisor for the purpose of achieving the student's academic, career, and personal goals.
- Academic advising is rooted in developing a relationship between the advisor and student (Alexitch, 2006; Heisserer & Parette, 2002; Nutt, 2000).
- Effective advisors guide students during their academic careers by helping them with planning and providing information or resources (Creamer & Scott, 2000).
- Good communication skills are necessary for building advising relationships (Heisserer & Parette, 2002; Nutt, 2000).
- By emphasizing motivation and learning, advisors encourage students to make plans for achieving goals and meeting academic requirements (Alexitch, 2006; Habley, 2000).
- Evaluation of advisors is key in developing an effective advising program.
- The purpose of this study was to determine psychometric properties of a survey instrument that provides feedback to faculty academic advisors.
- The survey instrument was assessed for content validity, face validity, test-retest reliability, split-half reliability, and factor analysis.

### STUDY 1: CONTENT VALIDITY

- **Participants:** 19 faculty department and committee chairs from each area of the College of Arts & Sciences.
- **Materials:** Survey items rated using the scale 0 = not at all important/useful to 3 = very important/useful.
- **Procedure:** Researchers read the consent script and administered the survey instrument. Participants put their rating forms in an envelope when they were finished.
- **Results:** Descriptive statistics calculated for each item. For the ratings of importance, only three of the items had a mean score of below a two but above a 1.7. For the ratings of usefulness, four items fell below the mean of 2 and were above a 1.7. Based on the mean ratings, we retained all items until we had more information from the subsequent experiments.

### STUDY 2: FACE VALIDITY

- **Participants:** Six undergraduate students over the age of 18 from a variety of disciplines.
- **Materials:** Survey items and four discussion prompts: (1) Comment on how important each survey item is, (2) Identify items most important for advising, (3) Identify missing information, and (4) Providing additional feedback about advising.
- **Procedure:** Researchers read the consent script, ensured that the participants understood the information, distributed the instrument, and asked the focus group questions. Student comments were recorded.
- **Results:** The face validity of each item discussed within the focus group. Very few negative comments. Suggestions made to combine certain items and to add a neutral "0" rating to the scale. The group found items 1, 2, 3, 14, and 24 to be the most important.

### STUDY 3: TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY

- **Participants:** 124 Capital University students enrolled in a Psychology 110 or Sociology 110 course during the spring semester.
- **Materials:** Survey items rated on a scale of -2 = Strongly Disagree to 2 = Strongly Agree.
- **Procedure:** Researchers entered the classroom and asked the professor to leave in order to prevent perceived coercion. Researchers distributed the survey and read the consent script to the students. The process was repeated a week later in each class.
- **Results:** Alpha coefficients calculated for each item, and any alpha coefficient less than .7 was considered unreliable. This resulted in eliminating three questions. Split-half reliability calculated and showed an internal consistency of .739. A factor analysis revealed a unidimensional scale.

### ADVISING ASSESSMENT TOOL

#### MY ADVISOR...

- gives me accurate information about course requirements, prerequisites, and electives.
- informs me about procedures for registration, adding/dropping courses, deadlines, and academic regulations.
- helps me understand why required courses are important for my professional development and future plans.
- considers my personal abilities, talents, and interests when advising me about courses or programs of study.
- has assisted me in developing a long-term education plan.
- helps me make important educational decisions (selecting elective courses, exploring academic majors/minors, etc.).
- asks me about my academic progress.
- assists in career guidance.
- helps me connect with campus resources.
- encourages me to make my own decisions.
- encourages me to come by for help.
- is available to meet with me within a reasonable timeframe.
- answers emails and/or responds to voice messages.
- keeps appointments.
- gives me as much time as I need when we meet.
- is comfortable for me to talk with.
- listens effectively.
- is interested in me as a person.
- treats me with respect.

#### AS AN ADVISEE, I...

- made appointments to see my advisor.
- kept appointments I made with my advisor.
- was well prepared for my appointments.
- have used much of the advice given to me by my advisor.

#### QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

- Would you recommend your advisor to other students?
- I would like my advisor to **continue** to:
- I would like my advisor to **add or change** this to make advising better: