

EFFECTIVENESS OF RESEARCH GUIDANCE SERVICES IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES IN PAKISTAN

Almas Kiani¹, Javaria Ilyas²

¹Faculty of Social Sciences Arid Agricultural University Rawalpindi, Pakistan

²Arid Agricultural University Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Corresponding Author's Email: javariailyas90@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *This study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of research guidance services in public sector universities. It was descriptive in nature. The main objectives of this study were; to analyze the role of research advisor in different disciplines of Agriculture University Rawalpindi, to explore the perceptions of research students about research guidance services at university level. In general the major findings of this study reveal that the majority of the students agree with the positive role of advisor in maintaining momentum of research activities i.e. in reviewing literature, in research methodology, in instrument development, formulating analysis plan, interpretation of results, making recommendations and literature cited. Besides these some of major findings of student's responses show that the role of advisor is ineffective in psychological, intellectual, professional and technical competency development of students.*

Keywords: Effectiveness, Research, Guidance Services

INTRODUCTION

Effectiveness is the capability of producing a desired result. When something is deemed effective, it means it has an intended or expected outcome, or produces a deep, vivid impression. The degrees to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. In contrast to efficiency, effectiveness is determined without reference to costs and, whereas efficiency means "doing the thing right," effectiveness means "doing the right thing."

The success of a nation depends on the success of its citizens. The success of citizens depends upon the effectiveness of their education and effectiveness of education primarily depends on the guidance services provided to the learners in order to enhance their learning and enable them to achieve their goals. Thus to enhance the effectiveness of education it is compulsory to organize guidance services for students [1].

According to [2] Guidance refers to directing an individual to self-realization or enables an individual to develop his full potential. It is difficult to achieve self-realization if a student is unaware about his potential. According to [3] Guidance refers to leadership and direction. [2] Define guidance as a process of enabling an individual to find out the solutions of his problems. Guidance is an important part of education and an ongoing service, required both common and specialized services for the total personality development of the students. Guidance services are necessary to solve physical, psychological, social and academic problems of students by aiding students to know about their strengths and weaknesses of learning.

Guidance services also promote positive attitude of students towards academic achievement of students. Students faces many problems in today's life so they need advice in curricular and other activities, in acquisition of knowledge and skills for compulsory achievement, for adjustment with peers from different social and economical backgrounds with parents and teachers. Personal, professional and social development of the students is the responsibility of the institutions. Consequently, institutions organize guidance and counseling programs in order to fulfill this responsibility. As an individual goes through the university, he/she faces different situation which needs to take right and appropriate

educational, vocational, personal and social decisions, they need proper guidance to take correct decisions [3].

Among all the guidance services for students in the institution the major concern of the researcher to the effective research guidance services because sometimes students faces problems in handling their effectively, in managing timetable effectively, in explaining their thoughts in written work, in developing adequate reading and comprehension skills which will help them to use adequate reading material from the volume of reading. In research guidance is a two way process among researcher and his research advisor. Research advisor may act as a "guider, teacher, tutor and facilitator", helping the researcher in the learning difficulties in order to enhance performance and career development [4].

At times, research advisor may also perform the role as a supporter, providing insight from experience to help the researcher to handle different situations. A research advisor as an effective guider keeps in touch with the researcher, suggest appropriate resources and encourage the researcher to develop or find out professional or directive networks. A researcher do not be afraid or feel hesitate to approach the research advisor to take advice on specific research problems. Both research advisor and researcher must respect each other. The relationship between researcher and his/her research advisor must be based on clear vision and shared values [5].

Guidance services have a long tradition in higher education. In the traditional academic model a research advisor with noted achievement in a discipline may seek out the junior colleagues to enhance their development. He may encourage them to undertake particular research, to write thesis, part of an article or book with joint attribution or to become research assistance or associates on a large project. According to [6] the education and development of students are extremely important. Guidance services have positive influence on the students being guided because research advisor as a guider are a source of support for research students.

Guidance is the function of management. A successful implementation of research guidance services in higher education can only be through an effective as well as efficient educational planning and management. The institute must organize different formal guidance services programs; these programs have well organized system, achievable goals and

objectives as well as a proper evaluation system. This requires executive commitment comprises which is not possible without proper planning and management [7].

[8] Said that after the analysis of education system of advance countries, it is concluded that there are number of guidance programs regarding different issues from school to university level for example, guidance of research students, guidance program for female in higher education management, guidance programs for minorities, and guidance programs for teachers both at school as well as university level. Even in India, number of guidance programs was organized on the specific issues. This, why not in Pakistan? In Pakistan numbers of informal guidance programs are executed but need to be formalized and recognized, the study addressing the same issue.

In Pakistan research guidance services exist at the university level which needs to be systemized after its analysis. This aims to investigate the role of research advisor and perception of research students regarding the effectiveness of research guidance services during writing thesis from the "selection of the problem" up to the "writing bibliography" at university level. According to [9], research advisor rather than focusing solely on the student's thesis, research advisor must focus on the wide range of physical, social, psychological and professional development of students. This requires effective guidance services that allow the research advisor to nurture the student talent in atmosphere of trust, respect and care.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the role of research advisor in different discipline of public sector universities.
2. To explore the perceptions of research students about research guidance services at university level.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

According to [10] all over the world the research or scholarly work recognized as the major function of the university or higher education. Research is seen as having essential benefit to society. Research in higher education evolves innovation, development of creative knowledge, also a basis for dynamic, developing civil society and lay emphasis on the economical development of country.

In this study the effective research guidance services perceived by researchers needed for the effectiveness of their research work will have great value for the universities of Pakistan in respect to the value of scope as well intensiveness of research in higher education. The findings of this study are expected to make significant contributions of the effectiveness of research guidance services provided to the students. Through this study we would find out the different causes of effectiveness or ineffectiveness of research guidance services.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Type of study

The study is basically descriptive in nature.

Population

The population of the study was all the public sector universities and research students.

Delimitations of Study

- Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (Agriculture sciences and Social Sciences).

Sample

Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi and two disciplines; Agriculture sciences and Social Sciences of the university were randomly selected. Research students (50 university), (25 per discipline) from two different disciplines were selected as a sample of the study by using simple random sampling technique.

Instrument

After the in-depth review of the literature regarding research guidance services in Pakistan as well as in foreign countries, a questionnaire was developed as a tool of data collection. The questionnaire was designed by using five point likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree, Strongly Agree). The items in questionnaires consist of research guidance services provided in all the steps of thesis writing.

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher personally visits university for the purpose of data collection; respond to the queries of research students and research advisors.

Data Analysis

After the collection of the data, the data was organized, quantified, analyzed and tabulated through statistical packages for the social sciences (SPSS) using descriptive statistical analysis were include: (Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation).

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

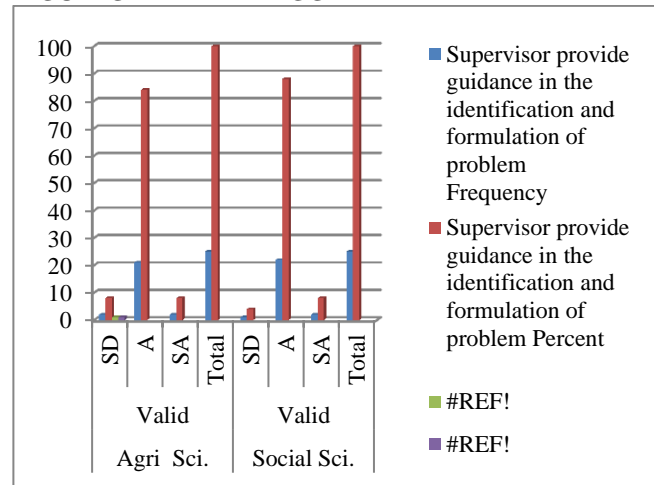


Figure 1: The majority (84.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (3.84) and social sciences (84.0%) with mean value (3.96) agree with the statement.

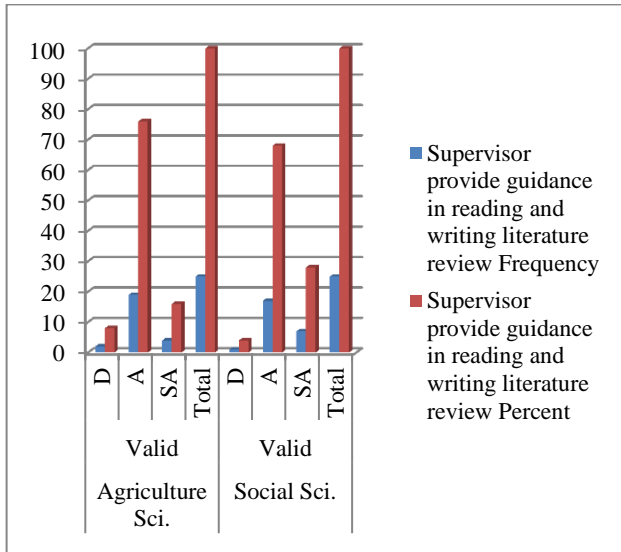


Figure 2: The majority (76.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (4.00) and social sciences (68.0%) with mean value (4.20) agree with the statement.

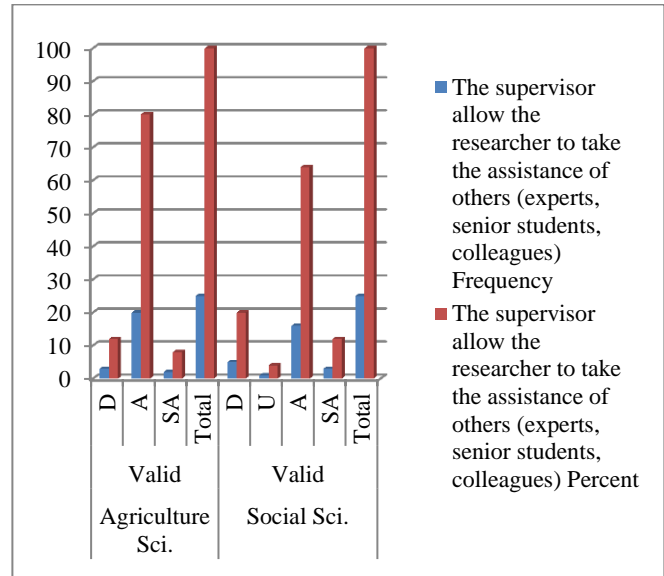


Figure 4: The majority (80.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (3.84) and social sciences (64.0%) with mean value (3.68) agree with the statement.

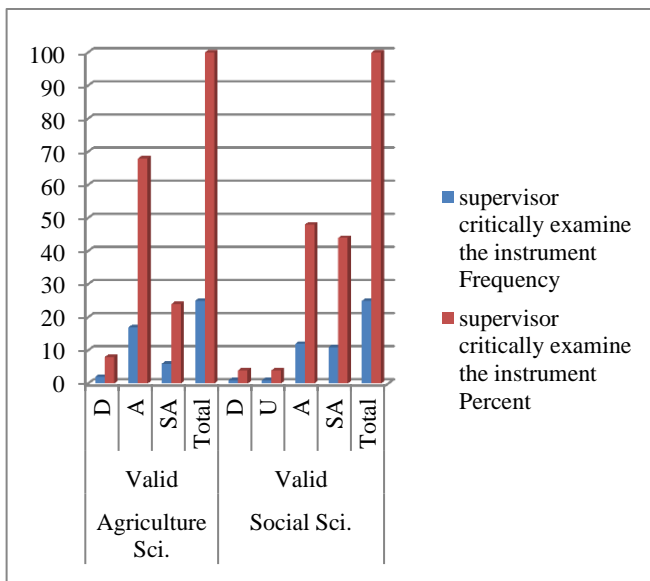


Figure 3: The majority (68.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (4.08) and social sciences (48.0%, 44.0%) with mean value (4.32) agree and strongly agree with the statement.

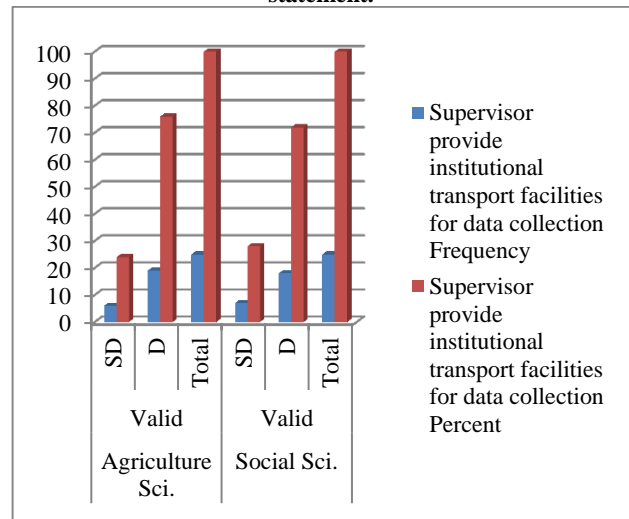


Figure 5: The majority (76.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (1.76) and social sciences (72.0%) with mean value (1.72) disagree with the statement.

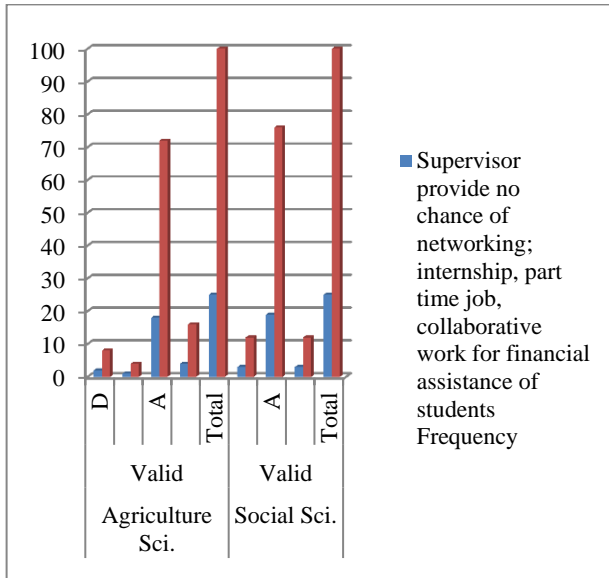


Figure 6: The majority (72.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (3.96) and social sciences (76.0%) with mean value (3.88) agree with the statement.

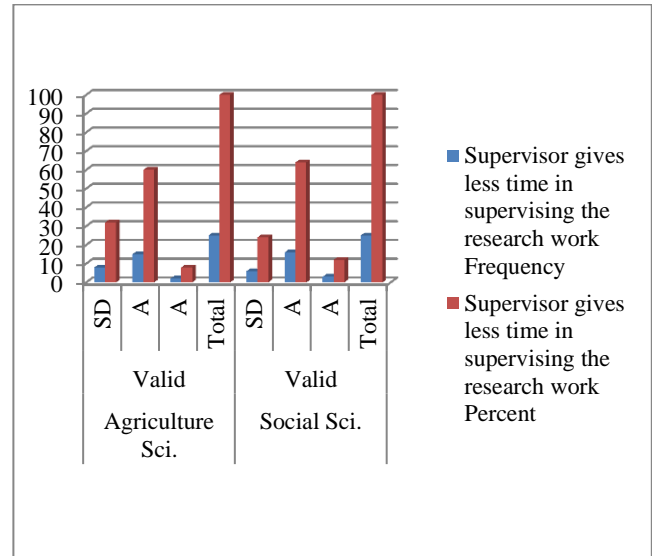


Figure 8: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (60.0%) agree with the mean value (1.84), similarly in social sciences majority (64.0%) with mean value (2.00) agree with the statement.

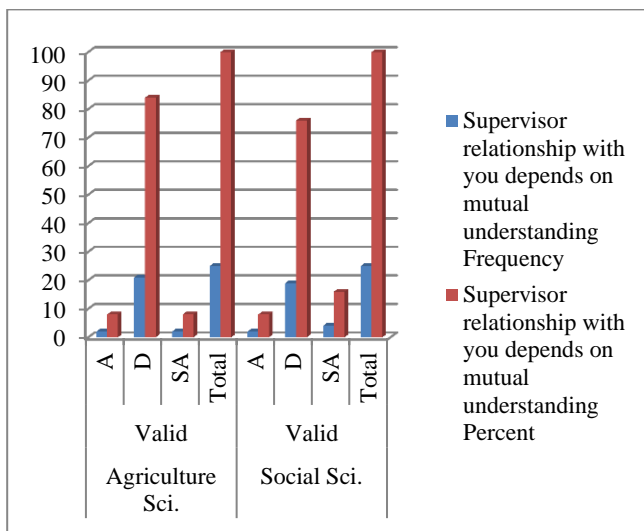


Figure 7: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (84.0%) agree with the mean value (3.92), similarly in social sciences majority (76.0%) with mean value (4.00) agree with the statement.

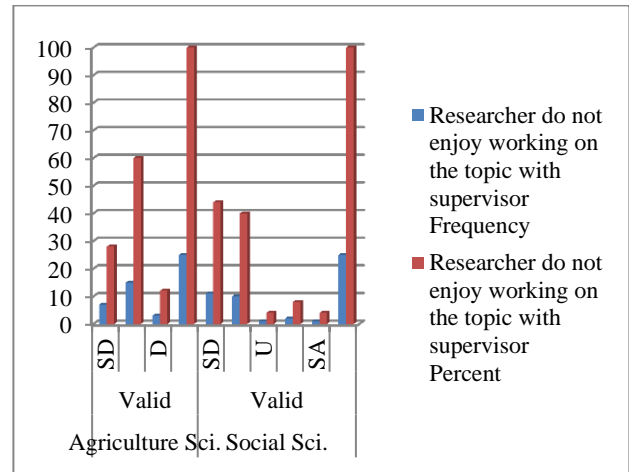


Figure 9: PMAS-AAUR students of agriculture majority (60.0%) disagree with the mean value (1.96), similarly in social sciences (44.0%) strongly disagree and (40.0%) with mean value (1.88) disagree with the statement.

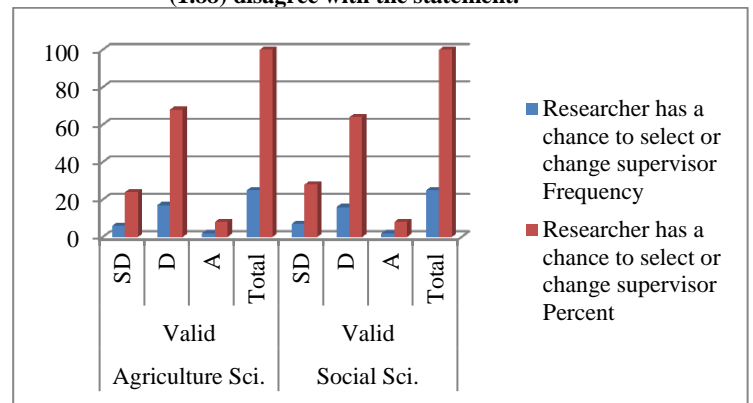


Figure 10: PMAS-AAUR students of agriculture sciences majority (68.0%) disagree with the mean value (1.92), similarly in social sciences majority (64.0%) with mean value (1.88) disagree with the statement.

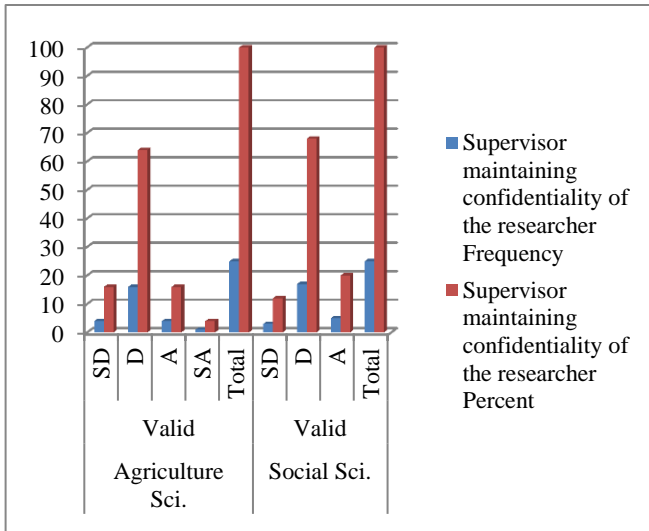


Figure 11: PMAS-AAUR students of agriculture majority (64.0%) disagree with the mean value (2.28), similarly in social sciences (12.0%) majority (68.0%) with mean value (2.28) disagree with the statement.

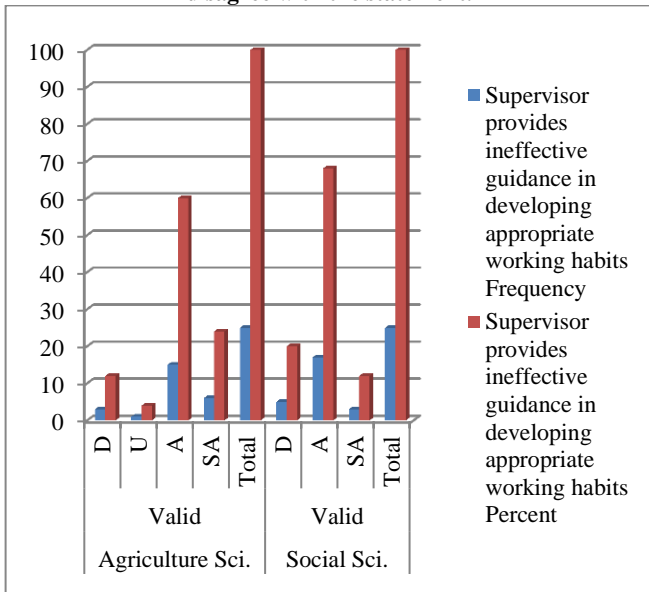


Figure 12: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (60.0%) agree with the mean value (3.96), similarly in social majority (68.0%) with mean value (3.72) agree with the statement.

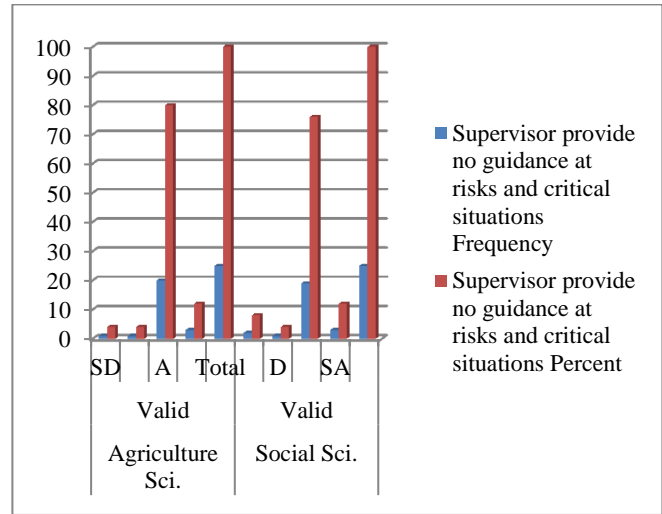


Figure 13: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (80.0%) agree with the mean value (3.92), similarly in social sciences majority (76.0%) with mean value (3.80) agree with the statement.

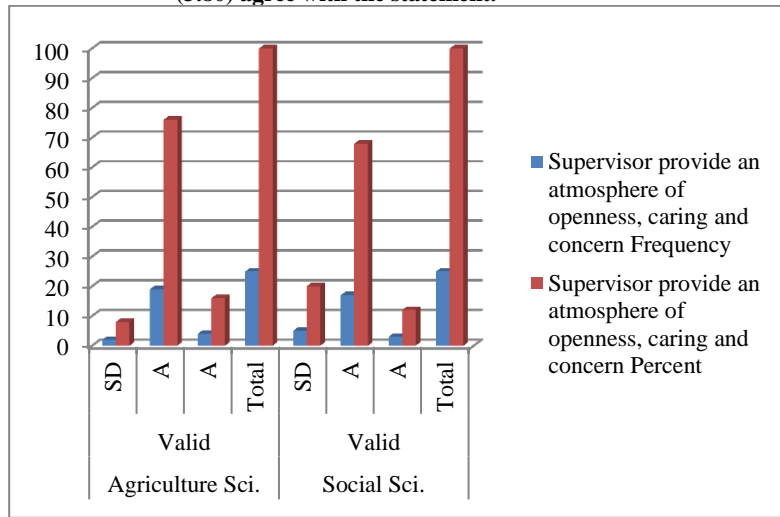


Figure 14: PMAS-AAUR students of agriculture majority (76.0%) strongly disagree with the mean value (2.24), similarly in social sciences majority (68.0%) with mean value (2.04) strongly disagree with the statement.

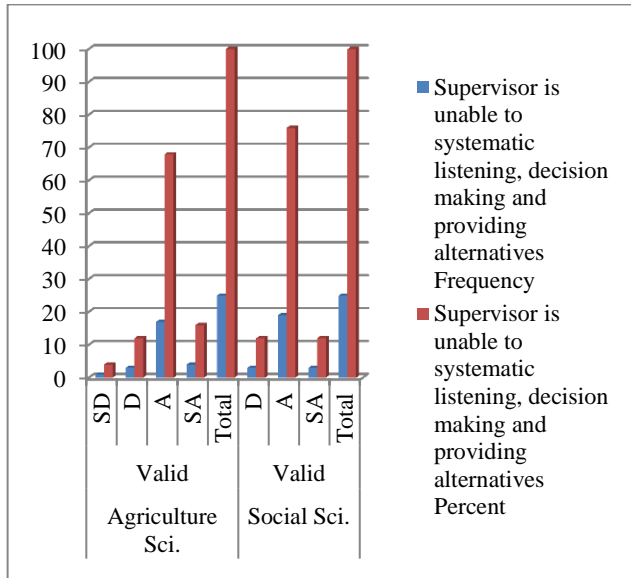


Figure 15: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (68.0%) agree with the mean value (3.80), similarly in social sciences (majority (76.0%) with mean value (3.88) agree with the statement.

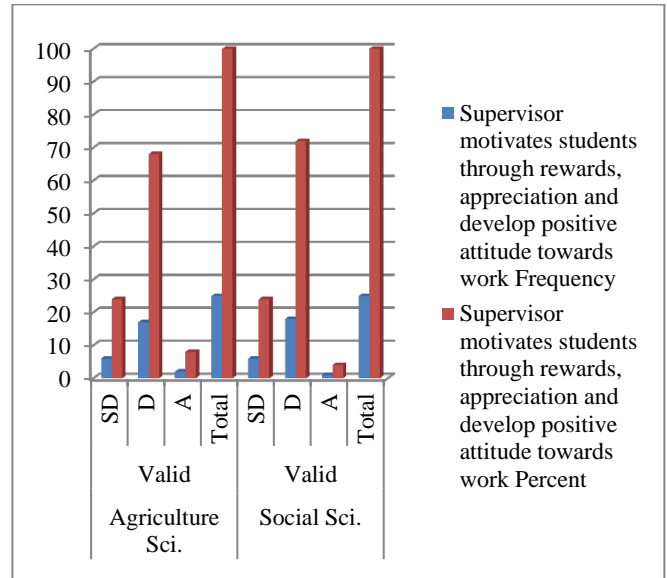


Figure 17: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (68.0%) disagree with the mean value (1.92), similarly in social sciences majority (72.0%) with mean value (1.84) disagree with the statement.

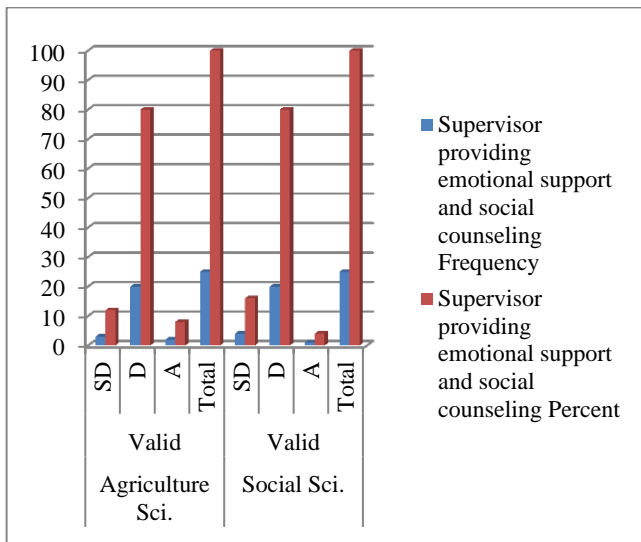


Figure 16: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (80.0%) disagree with the mean value (2.04), similarly in social sciences majority (80.0%) with mean value (1.92) disagree with the statement.

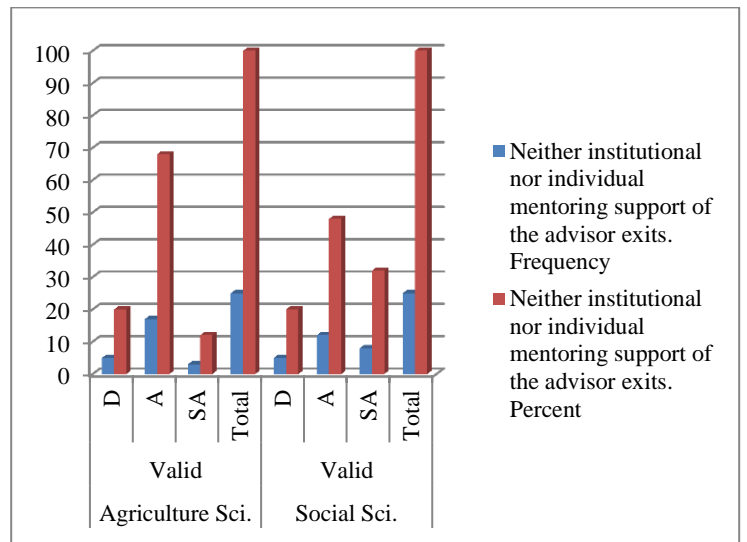


Figure 18: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (68.0%) agree with the mean value (3.72), similarly in social sciences (48.0%) with mean value (3.92) agree with the statement.

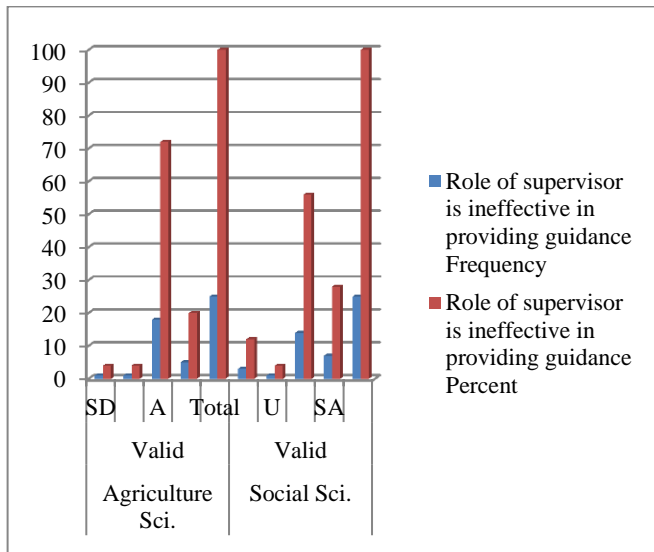


Figure 19: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (72.0%) agree with the mean value (4.00), similarly in social sciences (48.0%) with mean value (3.92) agree with the statement.

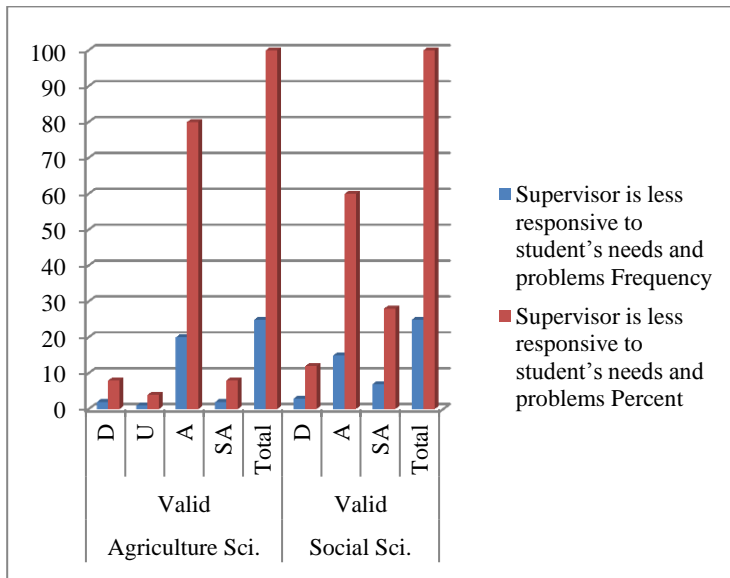


Figure 21: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (80.0%) agree with the mean value (3.88), similarly in social sciences majority (60.0%) with mean value (4.04) agree with the statement.

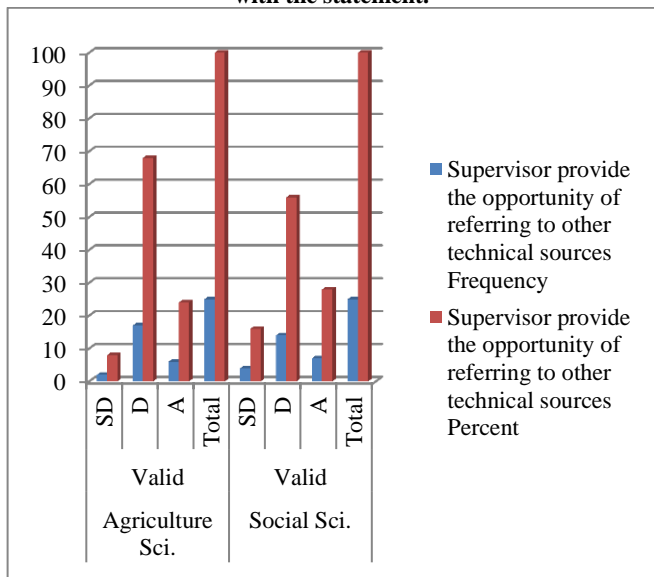


Figure 20: The majority (68.0%) PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences with the mean value (2.40) and social sciences (56.0%) with mean value (2.40) disagree with the statement.

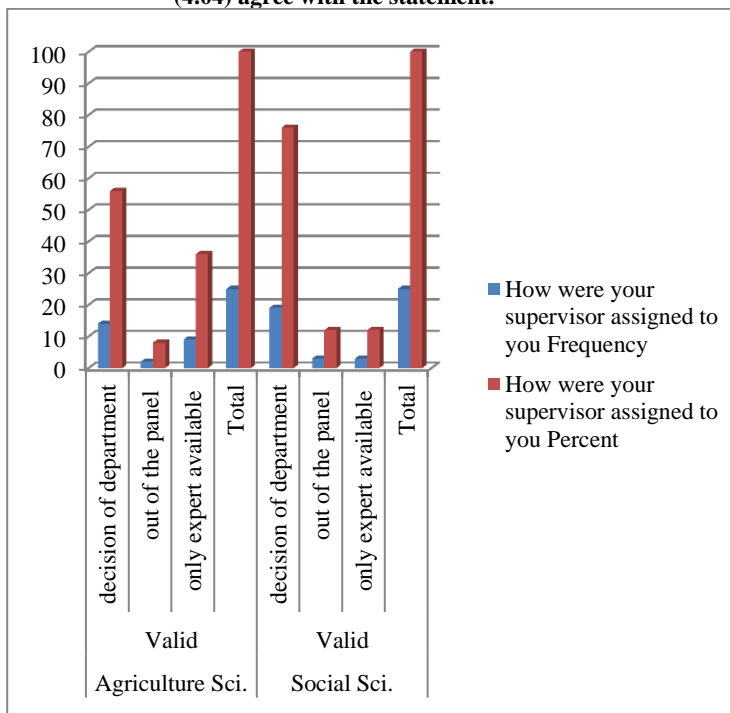


Figure 22: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture sciences majority (56.0%) with the mean value (1.80) reported that supervisor assigned to them by the decision of department. Similarly in social sciences majority (76.0%) with the mean value (1.36) reported that supervisor assigned to them by the decision of department.

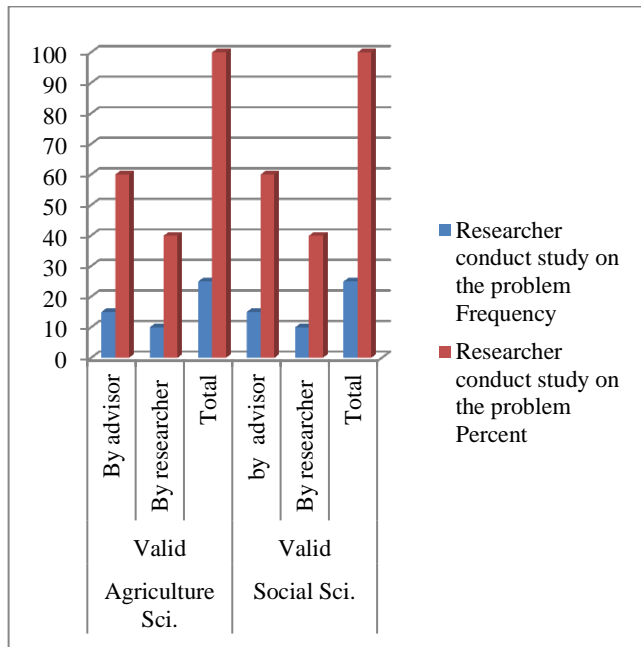


Figure 23: PMAS-AAUR research students of agriculture and social sciences equally, majority (60.0%) reported that they conduct study on the problem provided by the advisor with the mean value (1.80).

DISCUSSION

The effective role of guidance programs or services in higher education especially in the area of research cannot be negligible. Students in higher education needs a guider or mentor, or facilitator and models who transmit professional behavior, a sense of commitment, purposefulness, autonomy and integrity among them. In Pakistan there is no such formal guidance programs institutionalized regarding research activities at the higher level of education in universities which needs to be formalized and institutionalized after its analysis. This study was undertaken to analyze the effectiveness of research guidance services provided to the students by their advisors at the university level. The effectiveness of research guidance services is determined by in-depth and broad range of literature, both at national and international level. This includes [11,12] conducted a growing body of research in higher and suggested that there is an empirical link between student's guidance services and student's retention. Furthermore [13] conducted an experimental study, in which students were divided into two groups; experimental group, who receives guidance services and control group, who did not. The results show that students who receive guidance services evinced higher retention rates than those students who did not receive. Away from these a number of international researches [14,15,16] [17] indicates that students as advisees value most highly academic advisors who serve as mentor, who are accessible, approachable and are helpful in providing guidance that connects their present academic experience with their future life plans, it appears that guidance services or mentoring may be effectively delivered through proper guidance or mentoring programs, advisors are trained, well prepared and adequately rewarded for this role. It appears that guidance

services or mentoring is an essential part of academic advisement.

All these researches and research guidance services and mentoring models support the evidence for this study and these steps towards providing more effective research guidance services by the advisors. In general the major findings of this study reveal that the majority of the students agree with the positive role of advisor in maintaining momentum of research activities i.e. in reviewing literature, in research methodology, in instrument development, formulating analysis plan, interpretation of results, making recommendations and literature cited. Besides these some of major findings of student's responses show that the role of advisor is ineffective in psychological, intellectual, professional and technical competency development of students.

CONCLUSION

On the whole, the analysis of research student's responses concluded that they have no freedom for the selection their advisors on the basis of their mutual understanding and working relationship which they have already developed during their course work.

According to the responses of the research students, it was concluded that once students are assigned to their advisors they have no chance to change the advisor according to his/her mutual understanding, so the majority do not enjoy working on the topic with the advisor, it means students facing lot of problems other than doing research work i.e. there is great contradiction among students and supervisors responses, advisors agree with to spend maximum time to provide guidance services to the students on the other hand majority of the students agree with the statement that advisors gives less time to provide guidance services this is because of the lack of mutual understanding among students and advisors.

In case of supervisor's assistance limited to research activities, in the light of overall responses of students it was concluded that the majority of the students agree with the positive role of advisor in maintaining momentum of research activities i.e. in reviewing literature, in research methodology, in instrument development, formulating analysis plan, interpretation of results, making recommendations and literature cited.

Besides these some of major findings of the study, concluded that the role of advisors is ineffective in the following areas; in maintain the confidentiality of the researcher, in developing appropriate working habits, in providing guidance at risks and critical situations, to provide an atmosphere of openness, caring and concern, open minded and knowledgeable to provide technical support to the students or referring to other technical sources, providing an emotional support and social counseling, assisting students in networking or finding out part time work opportunities, providing institutional transport facilities for data collection, in providing range of sources for keeping up student's motivation.

It is concluded that majority of the students agree with lack of communication among researcher and advisor, advisors unable to systematic listening of students, supervisor is less

responsive to student's needs and problems and the ineffective role of advisor leads to drop out or change of supervisor. Majority of the students agree that neither institutional nor individual mentoring support of the advisor exit, this needs of special training of supervisors in these particular areas of research guidance services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the analysis, interpretation and findings of the data and conclusions direct to the following recommendations of the study for guiding and assisting the research students and advisors at different levels of research. Recommendations are presented at two levels; one technical and other policy based recommendations. Technical recommendations are as follows:

1. The institute or concerned department might consult with the research students as well as with advisors before assigning them to each other. Assignment might depend on the mutual understanding and working relationship of both.
2. The advisors need to make sure that students have adequate interest and capability in the problem they have selected for conducting research.
3. The advisors need to assist the students in data collection through providing the institutional transport facilities.
4. The advisors need to provide technical resources to the students or referring students to other technical sources by providing them alternatives.
5. The advisors need to concentrate on the professional development of the students or providing them the chances of networking, part time job or internship.
6. The advisors need to develop a relationship of mutual understanding with their students, so that they enjoy working on the topic with their advisors.
7. The advisor needs to maintain the confidentiality of the researcher during research work.
8. The advisors need to develop appropriate working habits of research students by providing them the range of sources to keep up their motivation.
9. The advisors need to provide an atmosphere of openness caring and concern to the students for their social and emotional development in order to maintain research momentum effectively.
10. The advisor need to concentrate on the psychological, intellectual and professional development of student's, above mentioned areas rather focusing merely/slowly on the completion of research work, in order to deliver research guidance services effectively.

Policy based recommendations are as follows:

1. Institutions/University's need to develop formal research guidance program.
2. There is need of systems approach or adoption of conceptual and operational models of mentoring or research guidance services.
3. Institutions/University's need to organize research guidance training programs for Advisors
4. Inter Institutional linkages of research guidance or mentoring organizations within the country or overseas.

All these recommendations based on the research students and advisors responses analysis, interpretations, findings and conclusions of this study.

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