



ASSESSING THE LINK BETWEEN GUIDANCE NEEDS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract:

The present study investigates the guidance needs of secondary school students in relation to their academic performance, with particular emphasis on gender and place of residence. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, social and cognitive changes, making effective guidance and counselling essential for students' educational and personal development. The study adopted a descriptive survey method, and stratified random sampling was used to select 200 Class IX students from four secondary schools in Ranchi district of Jharkhand. The sample comprised 74 male and 126 female students, including 114 urban and 86 rural students. Data were collected using the standardized Guidance Need Inventory developed by Dr. J. S. Grewal (2019). The data were analyzed using percentages, means, standard deviations, and independent-samples t-tests. The findings revealed that 35% of students had high guidance needs, 21.5% had very high needs, and 27% had extreme guidance needs, indicating that a large majority of students require substantial guidance support. A significant difference was found between male and female students' guidance needs, with male students showing a higher mean score than female students ($t = 5.34$, $p < .05$). However, no significant difference was found between urban and rural students ($t = 0.96$, $p > .05$). The study highlights the need for systematic and comprehensive guidance and counselling services in secondary schools to address students' educational, vocational, psychological, social, and personal needs and to support their academic and overall development.

Keywords: guidance needs, academic performance, secondary school students, adolescence, guidance and counselling

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1. Introduction

Secondary education coincides with adolescence, a phase marked by rapid physical, emotional and cognitive changes, making structured guidance essential for bridging primary schooling with higher education or entry into the workforce. Guidance is an expert-led, continuous process rooted in the principle of individual differences, recognizing that no two students share identical aptitudes, maturity levels or backgrounds. Rather than merely solving immediate problems, guidance helps adolescents cultivate self-awareness, understand their unique potential, and develop self-direction to navigate personal and academic challenges wisely. To address the multi-faceted needs of adolescents, guidance operates across six primary domains. Personal and psychological guidance focuses on emotional regulation, mental health and self-esteem, helping students manage stress, anxiety and personal conflicts. Educational guidance assists learners in navigating course selection, developing effective study habits and adjusting to demanding academic workloads. Vocational guidance aligns individual talents with career goals and contemporary workforce standards, such as India's NEP 2020 and National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF). Finally, social guidance fosters empathy, communication and interpersonal skills among diverse student populations, while physical guidance builds motor skills, health, and confidence through sports and physical activities. Ultimately, comprehensive guidance enhances academic achievement, the primary indicator of knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and goal fulfilment that unlocks future educational and career opportunities. A student's academic performance is shaped by an interplay of internal and external factors. Internally, a growth mindset and clear goal orientation motivate students to view setbacks as learning opportunities. Externally, socio-economic conditions like household income, family size, and parental education levels dictate access to learning resources, while active parental encouragement and positive peer dynamics create a supportive environment that inspires academic excellence.

2. Review Literature

Adolescence represents a critical developmental stage marked by profound physical, cognitive and emotional transformations, during which secondary school students frequently face heightened stress driven by academic pressure, career choices and social transitions.

Synthesizing research on guidance needs reveals that structured counselling and guidance services play a vital role in addressing these developmental challenges and supporting overall academic performance (Hussain, 2006; Ndirangu, 2007; Kumar, 2017). Across existing literature, researchers consistently emphasize that identifying specific guidance requirements enables educators to refine support systems, avoid duplication of efforts, improve study attitudes and foster healthy emotional adjustment among high school learners (Kaur, 1991; Dogar *et al.*, 2011; Gatua, 2012). Demographic and

institutional factors significantly shape the intensity and nature of guidance needs among adolescents. While several studies indicate no significant overall variance in guidance needs between male and female students (Kumar & Muchhal, 2012; Parhar *et al.*, 2013; Rao, 2017), domain-specific differences frequently surface. Female adolescents routinely report greater guidance needs in physical, social, and vocational domains (Sawhney & Bansal, 2015; Valentina & Singh, 2017b), whereas male students demonstrate higher psychological guidance needs in certain regional contexts (Valentina & Singh, 2017b). Institutional variables further differentiate student requirements, as adolescents enrolled in government secondary schools and those pursuing science streams exhibit substantially higher guidance needs than their peers in private institutions or arts programs (Kalhotra, 2012; Khare, 2015). Furthermore, geographic location plays a decisive role, with rural students demonstrating more pronounced educational and vocational guidance needs than urban students (Barwal, 2016), alongside variations influenced by family structure (Valentina & Singh, 2017a).

Psychological variables are inextricably linked to adolescents' need for guidance and their ultimate academic performance. Studies consistently demonstrate that psychological stressors such as academic anxiety, shyness and compromised mental health directly correlate with elevated guidance needs (D'Souza *et al.*, 2008; Sharma, 2014; Das, 2015). When students receive targeted psychological and educational counselling, there is a marked improvement in study habits, general adjustment and overall academic achievement (Hussain, 2006; Sahaya Saila & Chamundeswari, 2013). Structured guidance interventions effectively mitigate academic anxiety and enhance essential life skills, establishing a positive feedback loop between psychological well-being and scholastic success (Prasannakumar, 2011; Sharma, 2014).

Empirical evidence confirms that structured intervention programs, including career maturity counselling and social-emotional adjustment frameworks, significantly improve students' career readiness and life skills compared to standard classroom environments (Bhaduri, 1998; Gatua, 2012). However, program efficacy varies considerably based on school leadership, infrastructure and administrative implementation (Kaur, 1991; Marbaniang, 2014; Ng'eno & Magut, 2014). For instance, specialized groups, such as learners with special educational needs, often require more tailored frameworks than standard guidance programs provide (Mulemwa, 2015). Additionally, grade-specific research indicates that critical transition years, such as 10th and 12th grades, demand increased focus on social and vocational guidance (Tripathi, 2014).

3. Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To find out the overall guidance needs among secondary school students.
- To examine significant differences in Guidance Needs and Academic Performance among secondary school students based on gender (Male and Female).

- To examine significant differences in Guidance Needs and Academic Performance among secondary school students based on place of residence (Urban and Rural).

3.1 Hypotheses of the Study

The following are the hypotheses of the study:

- There is no significant difference between Guidance Needs among male and female secondary school students.
- There is no significant difference between Guidance Needs among urban and rural secondary school students.

3.2 Delimitations of the Study

The study is confined to the following delimitations:

- The study will be confined to only Ranchi district of Jharkhand.
- The study will be limited only to 9th-class school students.

4. Methodology

The descriptive survey method was chosen as the most appropriate method for the present study. To study the guidance needs among secondary school students in relation to their academic achievement, the researcher adopted a stratified random sampling technique. For the present study, four secondary schools from Ranchi district of Jharkhand were selected for data collection. The sample for the present study is 200 students studying in class IX in secondary schools in Ranchi district of Jharkhand. Out of the total sample, 74 male and 126 female students were selected from the selected schools. And 114 urban and 86 rural students of each category were collected in this study. In this study researcher has used the standardized tool 'Guidance Need Inventory' by Dr, J.S. Grewal (2019).

Objective 1: To find out the overall guidance needs among secondary school students.

Table 1: Showing the Overall Level-Wise Guidance Needs

Variable	Levels	N	Percentage (%)
Guidance Needs	Extreme Need	54	27%
	Very High Need	43	21.5%
	High Need	70	35%
	Average Need	28	14%
	Low Need	5	2.5%
	Total	200	100%

In the above Table 1, 27% of students have extreme needs of guidance, 21.5% of students have very high needs of guidance, 35% of students have high needs of guidance, 14% of students have average needs, and 2.5% of students have low needs of guidance. Based on the percentages in Table 1, it can be inferred that a significant proportion of students have

different guidance needs. Students with high and very high needs for guidance may face challenges that could potentially impact their academic performance, while students with average needs may perform adequately. Students who require less guidance are more likely to perform well in academics.

5. Discussion and Interpretation

These empirical results reflect the acute developmental, academic and socio-emotional challenges that characterize the secondary school stage. During this transitional period, students routinely experience heightened anxiety regarding stream selection, career path choices, board examination performance, and peer pressures. Educational literature consistently establishes that unaddressed guidance requirements act as a significant constraint on scholastic performance. As documented in foundational literature on student guidance (Grewal, 1982), students experiencing high levels of academic or personal-social confusion suffer from diminished self-efficacy and fragmented study habits, which directly impair classroom engagement and test scores. Empirical evaluations (Shaheena *et al.*, 2023) similarly demonstrate that systematic guidance and counseling services are critical predictors of student academic, moral, and social development, showing that unmanaged vocational and psychological distress leads to compromised academic outcomes. When cognitive bandwidth is consumed by unresolved personal or career distress, academic performance inevitably declines (Salami, 2010).

Conversely, the minimal proportion of students demonstrating low guidance needs (2.5%) aligns with self-regulated learning theory (Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 2002), which asserts that learners equipped with strong emotional resilience, goal clarity, and autonomous study skills require fewer external interventions to succeed academically. However, given that over four-fifths of the respondents report high-to-extreme guidance requirements, a trend mirrored across secondary school research (Gunasekaran, 2020; Rajesh, 2020), these findings strongly indicate that baseline or informal school support mechanisms are currently insufficient. As emphasized by Kochhar (2000) and reinforced by recent empirical literature (Ahmad & Zadha, 2022), when a vast majority of students report elevated guidance needs, formal institutional guidance programs encompassing systematic educational counseling, vocational orientation, and personal-social support become indispensable prerequisites for protecting and enhancing student academic achievement.

Objective 2: To examine significant differences in Guidance Needs and Academic Performance among secondary school students based on gender (Male and Female).

Table 2: t-test of guidance needs of male and female students

Variables	Students	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	t-critical value	Remarks
Guidance needs	Male	74	101.46	12.40	198	5.34	1.97	Significant
	Female	126	89.25	20.33	198			

**At the 0.05 level of significance.

**t-critical value: 1.97.

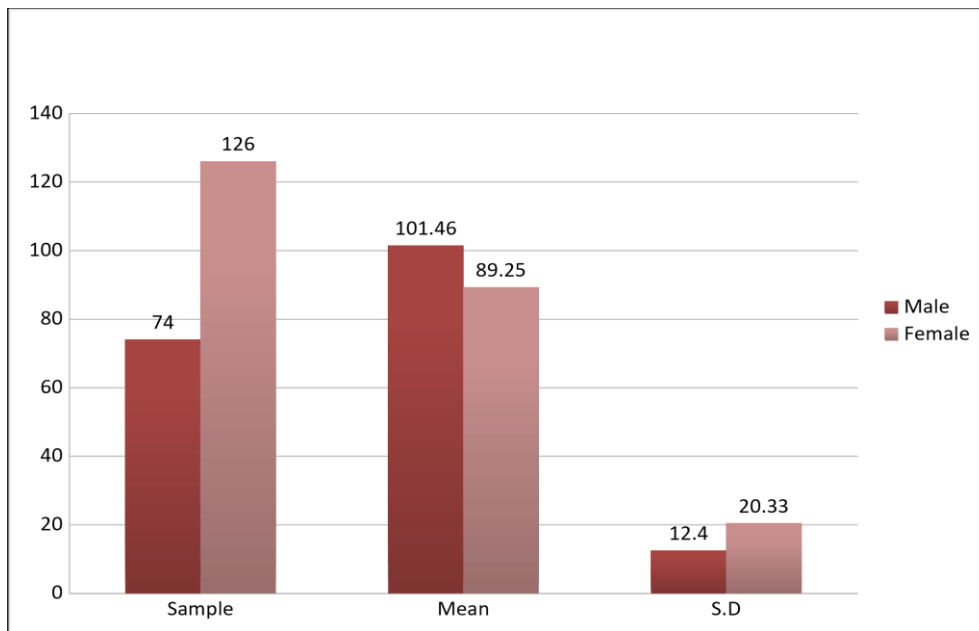


Figure 2: Graph of Guidance Needs of the Total Sample (N), Mean and S.D of Males and Females among Secondary School Students

Figure 2 above shows the calculated values of Mean = 101.46 and SD = 12.40, where N = 74 students are male and Mean = 89.25 and SD = 20.33, where N = 126 female students need guidance. Degrees of freedom (df) = 198 and t' values = 5.34. Comparing the need for guidance showed that the calculated value of the 't' test between male and female students and the level of need for guidance was significant at the 0.05 level for two tailed test degree of freedom (DF) = 198, because the calculated value ($t'=5.34$) is greater than the table value = 1.97 at the 0.05 level of significance. From the above evidence, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the need for guidance in terms of academic achievement of male and female students. Therefore, the null hypothesis "there is no significant difference between male and female students' guidance needs" is rejected.

6. Discussion and Interpretation

These empirical distributions reflect the acute developmental, academic and socio-emotional stressors that characterize the secondary school phase. During this transitional period, students routinely navigate heightened anxiety surrounding stream selection, subject specialization, board examination performance, career trajectory planning and

complex peer relationships. The finding that over four-fifths of students experience high-to-extreme guidance requirements directly corroborates foundational research by Grewal (1982) and Kochhar (2000), which established that adolescent students naturally experience heightened educational, vocational, and personal-social friction as academic demands escalate.

From an academic achievement perspective, the high concentration of students reporting extreme guidance needs underscores a critical psychological dynamic: unaddressed guidance requirements function as a significant cognitive constraint on scholastic performance. As documented in psychological and educational literature, students experiencing unmanaged personal-social confusion or educational disorientation suffer from compromised self-efficacy, fragmented study habits, and elevated test anxiety (Salami, 2010; Sharma & Sharma, 2017). When cognitive bandwidth is consumed by vocational uncertainty or psychological distress, active classroom engagement and processing capacity inevitably decline. Empirical evaluations by Shaheena *et al.* (2023) and Ahmad and Zadha (2022) similarly confirm that structured guidance services act as direct predictors of academic success, demonstrating that unmanaged psychological and educational distress leads to compromised academic outcomes. Conversely, the minimal proportion of students demonstrating low guidance needs (2.5%) aligns with Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory and Zimmerman's (2002) model of self-regulated learning. These frameworks assert that learners equipped with high emotional resilience, clear goal orientations, and autonomous study strategies require fewer external interventions to succeed academically. However, given that only a small fraction of the student population operates with this level of self-sufficiency—a pattern mirrored across contemporary secondary school research (Gunasekaran, 2020; Rajesh, 2020)—these findings demonstrate that informal or family-based guidance alone is insufficient for most learners. Ultimately, when a vast majority of students express elevated guidance needs, formal school-based guidance and counseling programs—encompassing systematic educational orientation, vocational planning, and socio-emotional counseling—become indispensable prerequisites for safeguarding and optimizing student academic achievement.

Objective No. 3: To examine significant differences in Guidance Needs and Academic Performance among secondary school students based on place of residence (Urban and Rural).

Table 3: T-test of Guidance Needs among Urban and Rural Area Students

Variable	Students	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	t-critical value	Remarks
Guidance needs	Urban	114	93.82	18.014	198	0.96	1.97	Not significant
	Rural	86	93.70	19.99	198			

**At the 0.05 level of significance.

**t-critical value: 1.97.

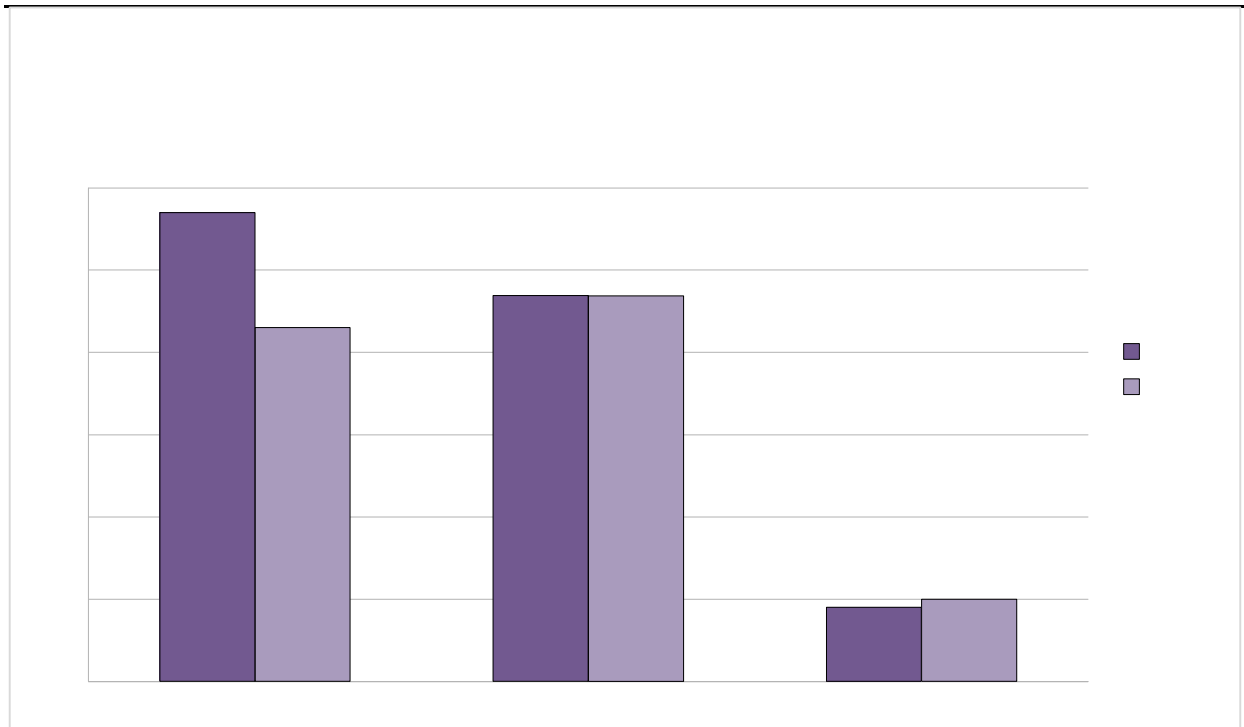


Figure 3: Guidance Needs of Urban and Rural among Secondary Students

Figure 3 above shows the calculated values of mean = 93.82 and S.D = 18.014, where N = 114 students are from urban areas and mean = 93.70 and S.D = 19.99, where N = 86 students are from rural areas, and the degrees of freedom are (df) =198, 't'-value= 0.96. By comparing the level of guidance needs it is found that the calculated value of 't'-test 0.96 between urban and rural area students of guidance needs which are significant at 0.05 level of significance for two tailed test degree of freedom (df) =198, because the calculated value ('t'= 0.96) is lower than the table value 1.97, which is 0.96 at the 0.05 level of significance. From the above evidence, it may be concluded that there is no significance difference between the guidance needs of urban and rural area secondary students. Hence, the Null hypothesis "There is no significant difference between guidance needs of Urban and Rural area secondary school students" is accepted.

7. Discussion and Interpretation

This statistical outcome indicates that geographical location does not serve as a primary differentiating factor in determining student guidance requirements. Instead, it demonstrates that adolescent students face core educational, vocational, and socio-emotional challenges at equivalent levels of intensity regardless of their residential background. During secondary education, both urban and rural students navigate identical academic milestones, including high-stakes board examinations, stream selection choices, peer group dynamics, and career planning. Furthermore, the widespread expansion of digital connectivity and standardized curricula has minimized traditional information gaps, aligning the aspirations and academic pressures of rural

students with those of their urban peers. These findings corroborate empirical studies by Kumar (2018), Rajesh (2020), and Gunasekaran (2020), which similarly observed that guidance needs are driven by universal developmental stage pressures rather than regional disparities. From an educational policy perspective, these results highlight the need for uniform, comprehensive guidance programs across both urban and rural schools rather than geographically segmented counseling interventions (Kochhar, 2000).

8. Conclusion

The present study concludes that guidance constitutes an essential component of secondary education, particularly during adolescence, when students encounter substantial academic, psychological, social, emotional, and vocational challenges. The findings indicate that secondary school students require systematic and continuous guidance to facilitate effective adjustment, enhance self-awareness, develop appropriate study habits, make informed educational and career decisions, and cope effectively with the demands of adolescence. The study further indicates the existence of gender-related variation in guidance needs, thereby suggesting the necessity of developing guidance program that are sensitive to the diverse developmental and psycho social requirements of male and female students. However, the similarity in guidance needs across urban and rural students suggests that the challenges associated with adolescence and secondary education are not confined to a particular residential setting. Hence, guidance services should be made accessible and equitable across different school contexts.

The findings emphasize that guidance and counselling should not be regarded merely as a remedial measure for students experiencing difficulties; rather, it should be considered an integral and developmental component of the educational process. Schools need to establish comprehensive guidance program addressing educational, vocational, personal, psychological, social, and developmental concerns. Active collaboration among teachers, counsellors, parents, and school authorities is necessary for the effective identification and management of students' individual needs. Appropriate guidance can facilitate students' self-understanding, decision-making ability, emotional adjustment, academic engagement, and career preparedness. Therefore, the systematic implementation of student-centered guidance and counselling services at the secondary school level is essential for promoting the holistic development of adolescents and supporting their successful educational and future vocational adjustment.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, it is recommended that secondary schools should strengthen systematic guidance and counselling services to address students' educational, vocational, psychological, and social needs. Guidance programmes should be designed according to individual differences, with particular attention to gender-related variations in students' guidance requirements. Schools should provide regular

career counselling, academic support, mentoring, and opportunities for students to develop effective study habits and decision-making skills. Teachers should receive appropriate training in guidance and counselling to enable them to identify students' needs and provide timely support or referrals. Parents should also be actively involved through regular communication, awareness programmes, and counselling-oriented workshops to strengthen home-school collaboration. Since guidance needs are evident among students irrespective of their residential background, equitable guidance services should be provided in both urban and rural schools. Overall, guidance and counselling should be implemented as a continuous developmental process aimed at improving students' academic adjustment, personal development, career preparedness, and overall educational well-being.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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