

The Role of the School Psychologist Nowadays

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Abstract

The school psychologist fills multiple roles. Changes have been made in the field of public perceptions about the roles of a school psychologist. The main purpose of the paper is to get information about the perception of the students of master's degree in psychology at the University of Shkoder regarding the school psychologist's profession. The paper is quantitative research and it is based on the survey research, descriptive and correlational research. The questionnaire consists of several parts. The first part contains demographic data, such as gender, age, study course, and study program. The second part contains data related to the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession and the third part contains information about the general perception and students' perception about the roles of a school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions and intervention. There are given the conclusions and recommendations. The students' opinion and general perception about the school psychologist profession is good, but it is necessary to improve the perception of students in the following aspects: a) Improving the general perception of students regarding the profession of school psychologist, especially at older ages, at the students of second year Master and at the students of the Master of Sciences study program in Organizational Psychology; b) improving students' perception of the role of information that the psychologist performs in school; c) improving the perception of second year students about the role of identification and the role of assessment; d) improving the perception of first year students about the role of participation in various commissions and the intervention role. It is also recommended to conduct other studies, to identify the factors that affect students' perception of the profession of school psychologist, and it is recommended the curricula and the syllabuses review of these study programs.

Keywords: school psychologist, students' perceptions, job satisfaction

Introduction

School psychologists are noted for responding and adapting to the needs of clients (Bradley-Johnson & Dean, 2000; Bramlett, Murphy, Johnson, Wallingsford, & Hall, 2002; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006) (cited by Bell & McKenzie, 2013).

Initially, the role of the school psychologist varied. Some school psychologists were generally viewed as psychometrists who solely interpreted the statistical outcomes of tests and scales used in the school environment in order to assess student's cognitive abilities and emotional well being (Davis, McIntosh, Kehle, & Phelps, 2004). Later, school psychologists were typically charged with the primary role of determining special education eligibility through the examination of the results of a standardized test of cognitive ability and academic achievement (Fagan et al., 2000) (cited by Krupp, 2010).

Traditionally, school psychology has been limited to a gate-keeping role; that is, school psychologists have been predominantly committed to the referral, testing, and placement of students for special education services (Corkum et al., 2007; Fagan, 2002; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). Given their extensive training and expertise in cognitive and academic testing, as well as identification of learning difficulties and disabilities, the school psychologist provides an essential service to the school and the student (Cole & Siegel, 2003; Weiss, Saklofske, Prifitera, & Holdnack, 2006) and psycho-educational assessment is an important tool to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations for services and follow-up (cited by Reader, 2014).

Today school psychologists fill multiple roles and typically work with teachers, educational support personnel, and district administrators to identify the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and academic needs of the students they serve (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). Furthermore, school psychologists collaborate with educators, parents of students, and other helping professionals to promote healthy, safe, supportive schools, that provide the least restrictive environment (LRE) for all students (NASP, 2009). School psychologists also work to bridge the gap between the school and community settings to help promote mental health and academic achievement among students in the educational environment (Krupp, 2010).

In Albania, the psychologist's profession is relatively new and dates back to the last two decades. Concerning the Order of Psychologist, on 31 May 2019, its full membership in the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP) was finalized.

On 06.07.2019, the General Assembly of EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations), unanimously voted for the membership of the Order of Psychologists of Albania, as the 38th full member in this organization.

Law No.10 171, dated 22.10.2009 "On professions regulated in the Republic of Albania" considered the profession of a psychologist as a profession regulated by law.

This law also sets out the conditions and criteria for practicing the regulated profession.

Law n^o.40/2016 “On the order of the psychologist in the Republic of Albania” aims at determining the rules of organization and activity of the Order of Psychologist, as well as the legal and ethical-professional relations of psychologists. This law determines who can practice the psychologist’s profession, in the public or private system in the Republic of Albania, and which criteria must be met. One of the criteria is that individuals must have had a degree of “Bachelor” and “Master of Science” or “Professional Master” studies in psychology or equivalent, according to the legislation in force for higher education, issued by the institution of higher education, inside or outside the country, recognized by the Ministry of Education.

According to Abdurrahmani (2014), “On 11.10.2004, MASH (The Ministry of Education and Science) announced the Decision n^o. 321 “Experimenting psychological service in the pre-university education system in the following school years 2004-2005-2006” (MASH, 2004). The decision specifies the qualities of the psychological service employee, his/her specific education, the main role of the school psychologist as a psychological service specialist who cooperates with the three main actors: students, teachers, parents, realizes the assessment of student’s achievements, carries out school and professional orientation of students, their psycho-social, emotional development, personality development, etc”.

Law on the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania, in Article 20 states “1. Local educational Directories provide psycho-social service to students and employees of educational institutions. 2. The psycho-social service provides support through psychologists or social workers to address the issues of various cases, to assess cases of children with special psycho-social needs, to design preventive programs, according to the needs of the school community”(LAW n^o. 69/2012).

Likewise, the normative dispositions of the pre-university education system (Tirana, 2013), in Article 46 defined the main tasks of the psychologist/social worker at the educational institution. Now, the Regulation about the functioning of pre-university educational institutions in the Republic of Albania (2020), in Article 31 defined the main tasks of the psychologist/social worker at the educational institution.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Science proclaimed the Order (Order N^o.334, dated 19.08.2013) “On the establishment of psychosocial service unit” and defined the role of this unit, the psychologist and social worker/students’ ratio, the level of education that psychologists and social workers must fill, the mode of functioning of this unit, etc.

Given the fact that the school psychologist’s profession is relatively new in Albania, it has been considered necessary to examine the perception of students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs about this profession, about the roles of the school psychologist.

Methodology

Research Design

The paper is quantitative research and it is based on the survey research, descriptive and correlational research.

The main purpose of the paper is to get information about the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs at the University of Shkoder regarding the school psychologist's profession.

The research questions of the paper are:

1. What is the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession?
2. What is the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs regarding the profession of the school psychologist?
3. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their age?
4. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their course of study?
5. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their study program?

According to the study done by Rich Gilman and Michael L. Handwerk (2001) with 622 students (psychology majors, education majors, and "other" majors) to assess their understanding of various psychology disciplines, it was concluded that "although undergraduate students rated their perceived knowledge of school psychology significantly higher than clinical psychology, the mean ratings for both disciplines were low. Undergraduates utilized different sources of information to learn of clinical and school psychology. Both psychology and education majors assigned low priority to school psychology as a graduate school choice. Further, psychology majors rated clinical psychologists as being more involved in individual therapy, assessment, consultation, and research than school psychologists".

Poulou (2003) examined the reflections of school psychology students on the role of school psychologists. The results indicated that the majority of students attributed the role of leader to the school psychologist in relation to school personnel. It was also found that the school psychologists were expected to work on providing prevention, implementing treatment for children's problems, and facilitating teachers' tasks. Furthermore, Trice (2007) found that advanced psychology students viewed assessment as the chief role of school psychologists to the exclusion of other roles, i.e., consultation, counseling, and research (cited by Tangdhanakanond K., 2009, p.72).

According to the study made by Yaakov Weiner (2018) with 182 newly enrolled graduate students in NASP approved and/or APA accredited school psychology specialist, Master's and doctoral programs, it was resulted that participants underestimated the percentage of time school psychologists spend conducting special education evaluations by nearly 20 percentage points when compared to results from the 2010 NASP survey. They overestimated the time school psychologists spend

providing individual counseling and group counseling by approximately 2 percentage points, in comparison to results from the 2010 NASP survey. After presenting data about the actual time school psychologists spend engaged in special education evaluation and direct service, over 25% of participants indicated regret for pursuing training in school psychology.

In her study Jessica D.Crislip (2011) done with undergraduate students in general psychology courses at colleges and universities located in various regions of West Virginia in order to determine the relationship between knowledge of undergraduate students regarding school psychology and the selection of school psychology as a major, the results indicated a significant difference in school psychology knowledge between those students who choose school psychology as a career and those who do not. Results also indicated a significant difference in school psychology knowledge due to the student's year in school. No significant differences were found for race or gender.

Trice (2007) found that advanced psychology students view assessment as the chief role of school psychologists to the exclusion of other roles; consultation, counseling, and research. Farrell, Jimerson, and Oakland (2007) synthesized the studies of school psychology in 43 countries around the world. It was indicated that the core services of school psychologists generally included direct services (e.g., counseling, assessment, and assistance with academic work) and indirect services (e.g., consultation with teachers, consultation with parents, implementing interventions). They also indicated that the relative amount of time invested in school psychologists' various services varied considerably between countries (cited by Akem & Ukeli, 2014).

Methods

A questionnaire has been designed, based on several sources: a) the Dissertation "Dynamic School Psychology: Perceptions Between School Psychologists, Teachers, and Administrators on School Psychology Services and Paradigm Shift Theory" by Homero Flores, presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Education at Seattle Pacific University In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree; b) the Dissertation "Teacher Perceptions of the Role of School Psychologists: Needs and Expectations" by Anita Reader, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in School Psychology. Mount Saint Vincent University Halifax, Nova Scotia; c) the Dissertation "Examining Aspects of Role and Practice Changes for School Psychologists in Georgia: A Mixed Methods Analysis" by Bruce A. Rogers; d) the Dissertation "Bermudian Educators' Perceptions of the Roles and Functions of School Psychologists" by Lana V. Talbot; e) Regulation about the functioning of pre-university educational institutions in the Republic of Albania (2020), Article 31.

The questionnaire consists of several parts. The first part contains demographic data, such as gender, age, study course, and study program. The second part contains data

related to the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession and the third part contains information about the general perception and contains information regarding students' perception about the roles of a school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions and intervention.

Participants

The sampling consists of students of the Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs (Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology study program and Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology study program) during the academic year 2021-2022 at the University of Shkoder, Faculty of Educational Sciences.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. The data analysis has included descriptive and inferential statistics. The analysis of data through the relative and absolute frequencies, through the mean, the median, the mode, the standard deviation served for measuring the general perception of the students regarding the profession of the school psychologists and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention.

It was used correlation analysis to measure the extent to which two variables (students' age and their general perception regarding this profession and students' age and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention) are related.

It was used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the relationship between students' course of study and their general perception regarding this profession and to examine the relationships between students' course of study and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention.

It was used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the relationship between students' study program and their general perception and to examine the relationships between students' residence and their perception regarding the roles of the school psychologist, such as information, identification, assessment, participation in various commissions, intervention.

The dependent variable is *students' perception* and the independent variables are *students' age*, *students' course of study* and *students' study program*.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic data of the participants in the study

60 students are enrolled in the “Master of Sciences in Psychology” study programs during the academic year 2021-2022 (30 students are in the “Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology” study program, respectively 11 students are in the first year and 19 students are in the second year; 30 students are in the “Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology” study program, respectively 12 students are in the first year and 18 students are in the second year).

Table 1. Data about the participants course of study

Course	MS in Clinical	Psychology	MS in Organizational	Psychology
	Enrolled	Participants	Enrolled	Participants
First year	11	8	12	7
Second year	19	13	18	9
Total	30	21	30	16

37 students participated in the study. 21 students (56.8%) participating in the study are in the Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology, 16 students (43.2%) participating in the study are in the Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology. The representation rate is 70% for the students of Master of Sciences in Clinical Psychology, whereas the representation rate is 53% for the students of Master of Sciences in Organizational Psychology.

The age of the participants in the study ranged from 22 years (12 students or 32%) to 43 years (1 student or 2.7%). The average age of the students that participated in the study is 25.45 years. The majority of students participating in the study are females. 2 students (5.4%) of the participants are males, 35 students (94.6%) are females. 24 students (64.9%) live in the city, 11 students (29.7%) live in the village, while 2 students (5.4%) did not provide information regarding their place of residence.

II. Data related to the students'opinion regarding the school psychologist' profession

Participants think that school psychology has significantly evolved for the past 15 years (item 1). 26 students (70.3%) think that there is Moderate change or Significant change, whereas 11 students (29.7%) think that there is a slight change.

Most of the students participating in the study think that there is a paradigm shift in school psychology services (item 2). 23 students (62.2%) agree, 2 students (5.4%) disagree, whereas 12 students (32.4%) don't know.

Participants have the right perception of the level of education needed to be a school psychologist (item 3). 2 students (5.4%) think that a Bachelor's degree is needed; 28 students (75.7%) think that a Master's degree is needed and 7 students (18.9%) think that a Doctoral degree is needed.

They consider helpful the school psychological services to teachers, administrators, and student support personnel (item 4). 32 students (86.5%) have such a perception.

They consider the school psychological services helpful to children (item 5). 32 students (86.5%) have such a perception.

In general, participants think that a student’s problem should not be serious before involving school psychological services, but not all students think so (item 6). 13 students (35.1%) think that the problem should be serious, 4 students (10.9%) think that the problem should be moderate, 10 students (27%) think that it should be less serious, but noticeable, whereas 9 students (24.3%) think that the problem should be mild. 1 student (2.7%) didn’t give any response.

Students’ perception of job satisfaction as a school psychologist is good (item 7). 1 student (2.7%) should be very unsatisfied, 2 students (5.4%) should be somewhat unsatisfied, 21 students (56.8%) should be somewhat satisfied, whereas 13 students (35.1%) should be very satisfied.

33 students (89.2%) think that the teachers are well-informed about the services that can be provided by school psychologists, whereas 4 students (10.8%) think that the teachers are not informed (item 8).

III. Data about the students’ perception about the roles of a school psychologist

There are 32 items for measuring general students’ perception of the roles of a school psychologist. The students were asked to rate these items on a six-point Likert scale (with 1 equalling “No involvement“, with 2 equalling “Very little“, with 3 equalling “Little“, with 4 equalling “Some“, with 5 equalling “Much“, and with 6 equalling “Total involvement“. So, the students’ answers were based on a nominal 6-point rating scale (1=No involvement, 2=Very little involvement, 3=Little involvement, 4=Some involvement, 5=Much involvement, and 6=Total involvement).

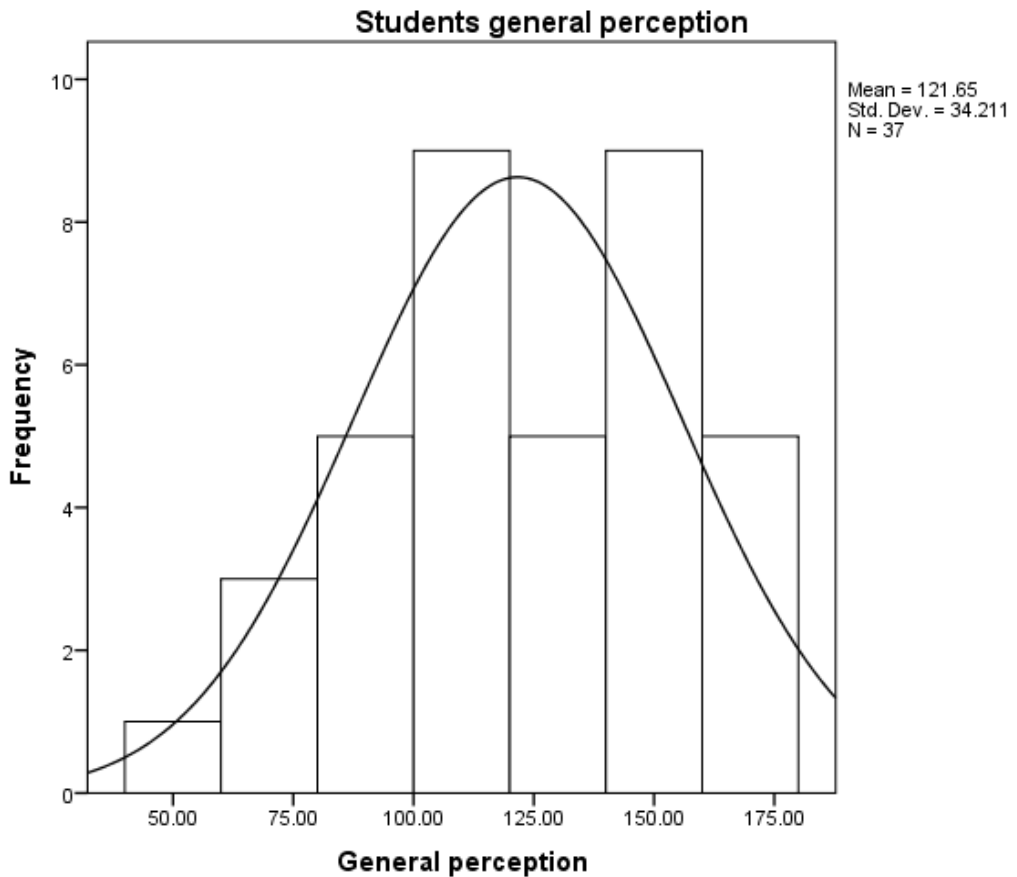
It has been judged that students' perceptions regarding the role of a school psychologist should be classified in 5 (five) categories. These categories are: a) Information (items: 5, 27); b) Identification (items: 23, 24, 25, 26, 32); c) Assessment (items: 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 30, 31); d) Participation in various commissions (items: 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17); e) Intervention (items: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29).

Table 2. Data related to the students’ perception of the roles of a school psychologist

	General perception	Information role	Identification role	Assessment role	Participation role	Intervention role
Mean	121.64	7.13	20.35	33.37	32.83	27.94
Median	122	7	23	33	34	28

Mode	143.00 ^a	7	14.00 ^a	29.00 ^a	27.00 ^a	25.00 ^a
Std. Deviation	34.21	2.52	6.39	9.80	9.87	7.785
Minimum	43	2	5	14	11	9
Maximum	173	11	30	50	50	40
Valid	37	37	37	37	37	37
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0

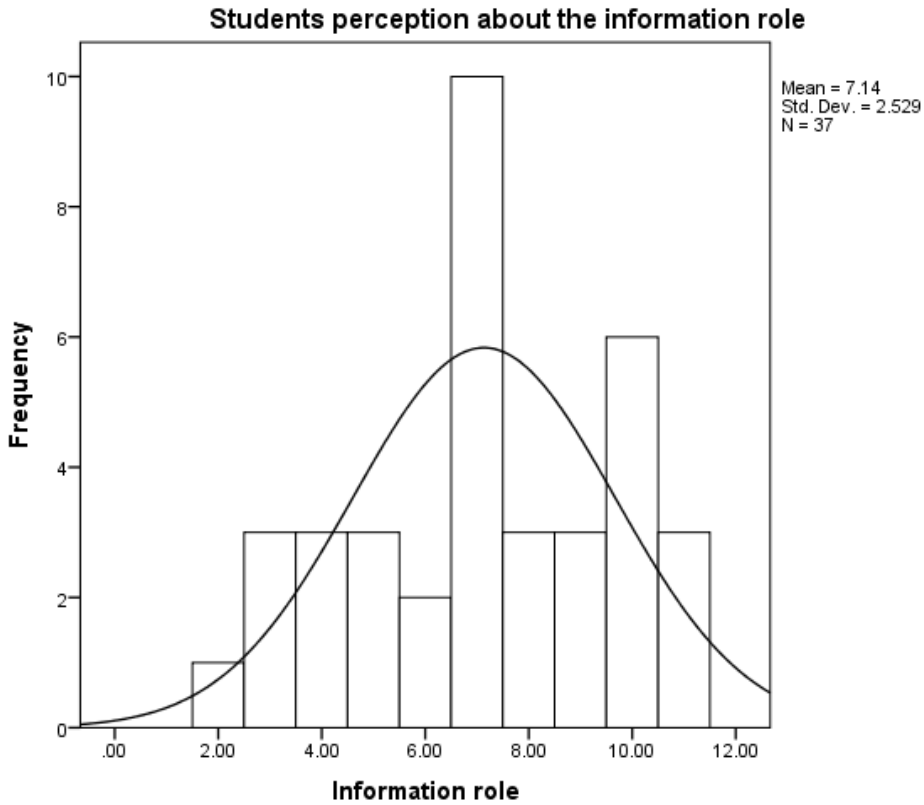
Graph 1. Data related to the student 'general perception of a school psychologist



As we can see, students' general perception about the roles of a school psychologist is good. The values range from 43 to 173, the mean is 121.64 and the mode is 143.

The students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist is not so good. The mean is 7.13 and the mode is 7, the values range from 2 to 11.

Graph 2. Data related to the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist

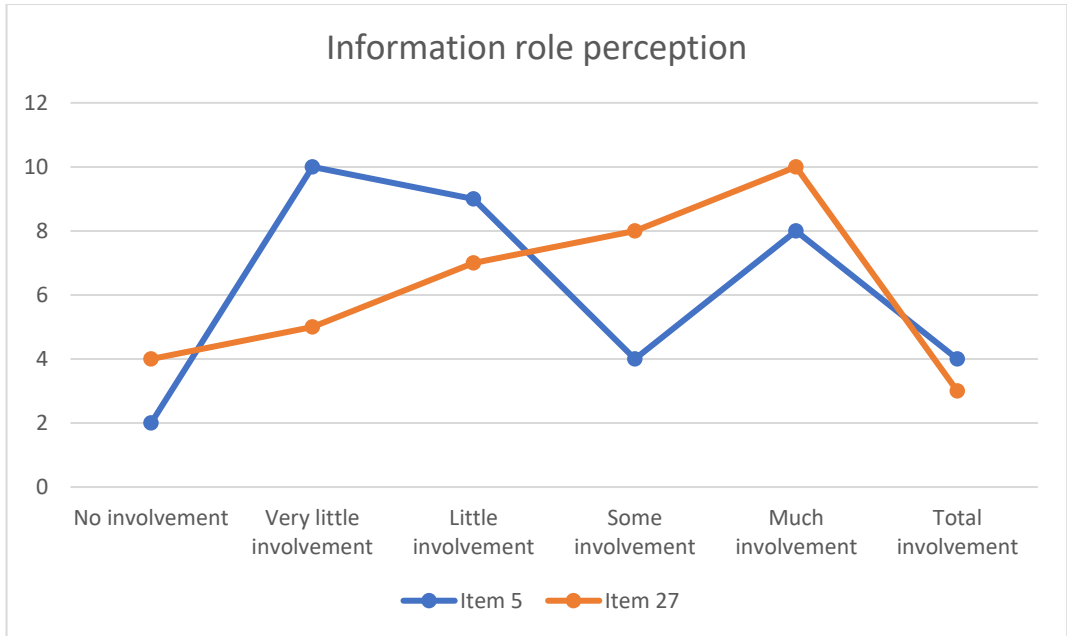


There are 2 items for measuring students' perception regarding the information role of a school psychologist.

Table 3 - Data related to the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist (item 5, 27)

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
5	2	10	9	4	8	4
27	4	5	7	8	10	3

Graph 3. Data related to the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist (item 5,27)

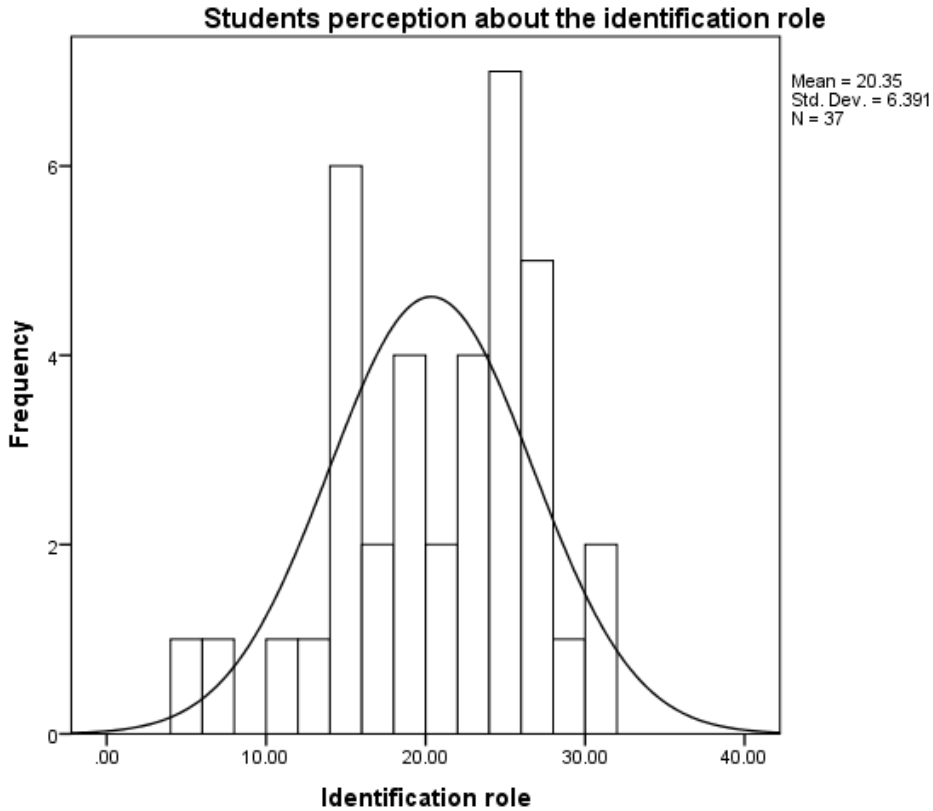


Participants think that school psychologists provide not to much in-service presentations to school staff, parents, and community members (item 5).

Regarding the item 27 “School psychologists inform through conversations and lectures the educational institutions' staff about the typical age development of pupils and informs also about the typical problems that pupils face in the teaching and learning process“, the participants think that school psychologists do not perform this role very well. So, the perception of students is that the school psychologists fill well the information role, but there is still work to be done in this regard.

There are 5 items for measuring students' perception regarding the identification role of a school psychologist.

Graph 4. Data related to the students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist



The students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist is good. The mean is 20.35 and the mode is 14. The values range from 5 to 30.

Table 4. Data related to the students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist (items 23, 24, 25, 26, 32)

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
23	1	4	7	7	8	10
24	4	4	5	10	9	5

25	3	5	6	6	12	5
26	2	4	11	6	8	6
32	2	4	2	10	5	14

Participants think that the school psychologist identifies as early as possible pupils with behavioral or learning difficulties (item 23).

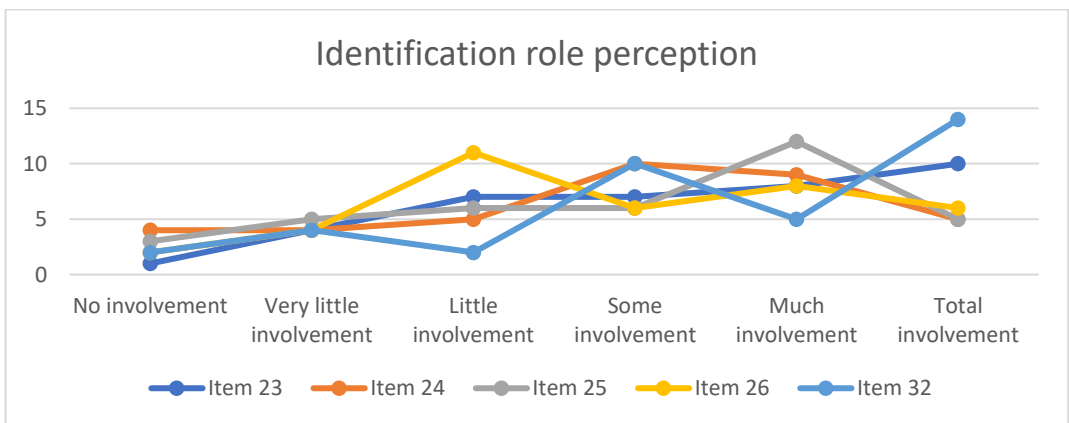
Participants think that the school psychologist assists the educational institutions' staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating the educational institutions' staff abuses against pupils (item 24).

Participants think that the school psychologist assists educational staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating pupils' abuses of each-other (item 25).

Participants think that the school psychologist helps educators, parents, and pupils prevent or eliminate pupils' abuses of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc. (item 26).

Participants think that the school psychologist reports in writing to the head of the psychosocial service unit any facts of pupils' abuse by educational staff or by pupils' parents (item 32). So, the participants think that the school psychologists perform well their role of identification in their work.

Graph 5. Data related to the students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist (items 23,24, 25,26, 32)



There are 9 items for measuring students' perception regarding the assessment role of a school psychologist. The students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist is good. The mean is 33.37 and the mode is 29. The values range from 14 to 50.

Graph 6. Data related to the students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist

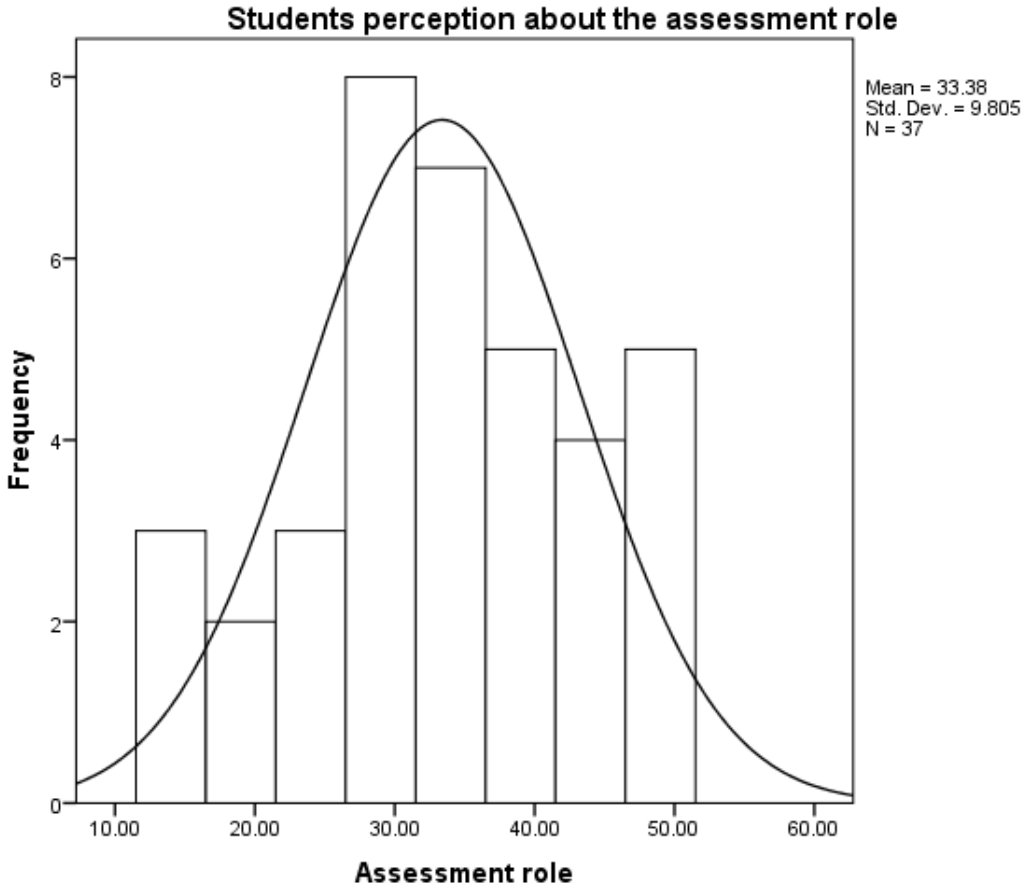
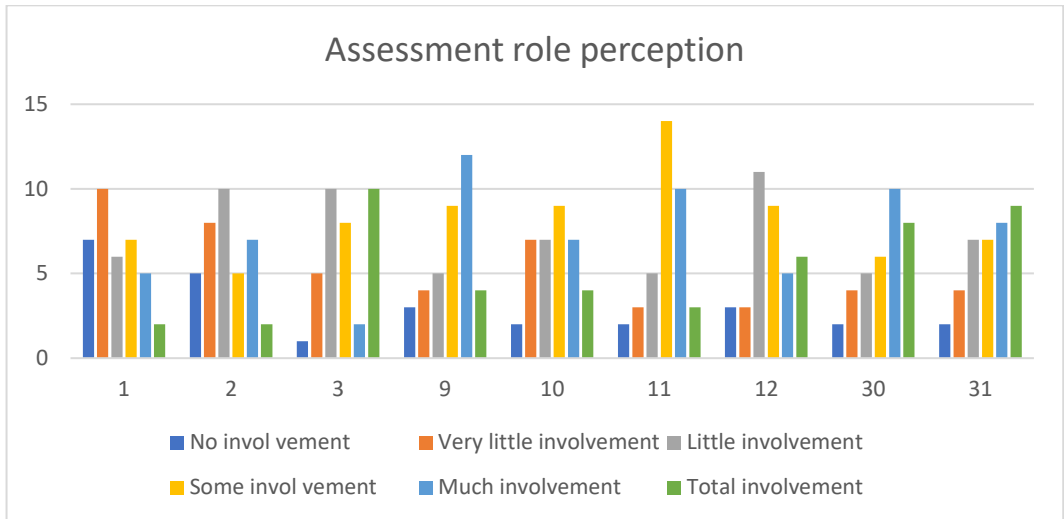


Table 5. Data related to the students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist (items 1,2,3,9,10,11,12,30,31)

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
1	7	10	6	7	5	2
2	5	8	10	5	7	2
3	1	5	10	8	2	10
9	3	4	5	9	12	4

10	2	7	7	9	7	4
11	2	3	5	14	10	3
12	3	3	11	9	5	6
30	2	4	5	6	10	8
31	2	4	7	7	8	9

Graph 7. Data related to the students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist (items 1,2,3,9,10,11,12,30,31)



Participants think that the school psychologist provides written assessment feedback to school personnel (item 1).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides verbal assessment feedback to school staff and/ or parents (item 2).

Participants think that the school psychologist assesses individual students in need of prescriptive remediation (item 3).

Participants think that the school psychologist evaluates progress towards goals on students' Individualized Education Programs (item 9).

Participants think that the school psychologist evaluates the effectiveness of instructional methods, materials, or programs (item 10).

Participants think that the school psychologist evaluates the effectiveness of academic/ behavioral interventions/ programs/ positive supports towards student success (item 11).

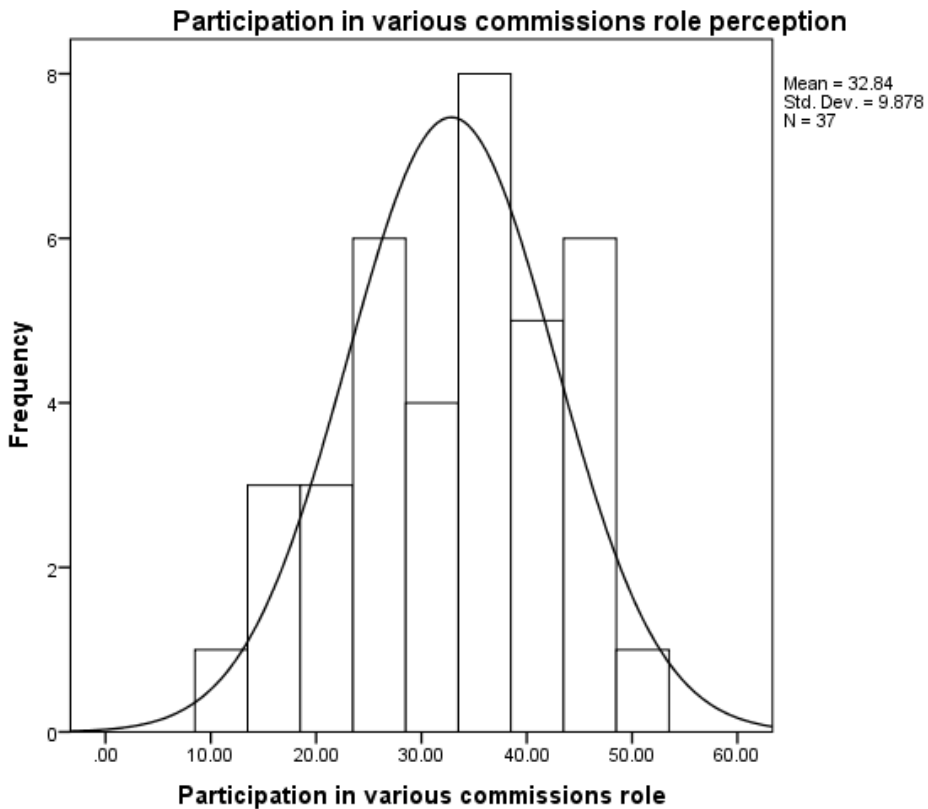
The students think that the school psychologist evaluates the efficacy of crisis intervention plans, procedures, and protocols at the county and/ or the school level (item 12).

The students think that the school psychologist administers and interprets psychological tests (item 30).

The students think that the school psychologist fulfills an individual portfolio of students who have benefited from psychosocial services (item 31). So, the students have the right perception of the assessing role of the school psychologist.

There are 9 items for measuring students' perception regarding the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist.

Graph 8. Data related to the students' perception about the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist

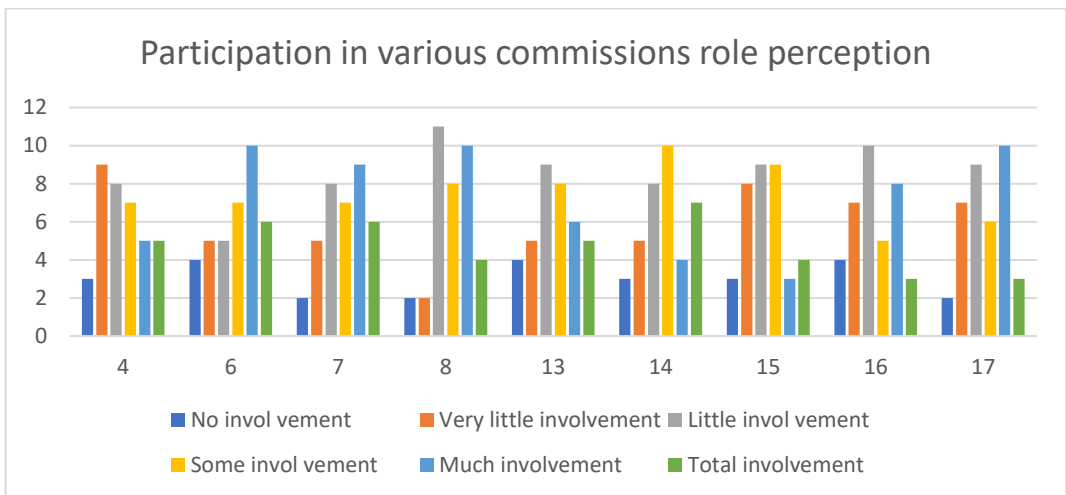


The students' perception about participation in various commissions is good. The mean is 32.83 and the mode is 27. The values range from 11 to 50.

Table 6. Data related to the students' perception about the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist (items 4,6,7,8,13,14,15,16,17)

Item	No involvement	Very little involvement	Little involvement	Some involvement	Much involvement	Total involvement
4	3	9	8	7	5	5
6	4	5	5	7	10	6
7	2	5	8	7	9	6
8	2	2	11	8	10	4
13	4	5	9	8	6	5
14	3	5	8	10	4	7
15	3	8	9	9	3	4
16	4	7	10	5	8	3
17	2	7	9	6	10	3

Graph 9. Data related to the students' perception about the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist (items 4,6,7,8,13,14,15,16,17)



Participants think that the school psychologist consults with teachers and/ or student support teams to develop pre-evaluation strategies to address students' needs (item 4).

Participants think that the school psychologist serves as a link to external agencies (Mental Health, physicians, private counselors, etc.) (item 6).

Participants think that the school psychologist consults with intervention teams regarding progress monitoring data (item 7).

Participants think that the school psychologist serves on committees making educational decisions (curriculum development, staff development, reorganization, etc.) (item 8).

Participants think that the school psychologist conducts research to establish general education knowledge (item 13).

Participants think that the school psychologist conducts research to help solve local school-related problems (item 14).

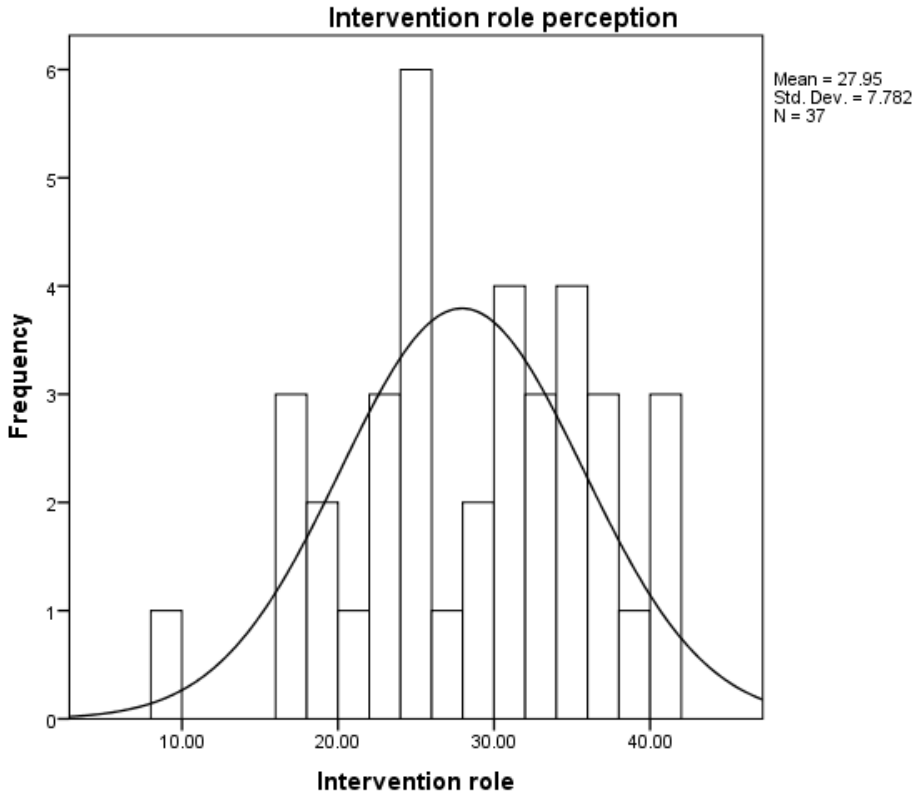
Participants think that the school psychologist disseminates research results for local practical applications (item 15).

Participants think that the school psychologist develops and collects local normative data for academic/ behavioral applications (item 16).

Participants think that the school psychologist conducts an analysis of disciplinary data on the county and/ or school level for practical applications (item 17). So, the participants have a good perception of the role that school psychologists fill to participate in various commissions.

There are 7 items for measuring students' perception regarding the intervention role of a school psychologist.

Graph 10. Data related to the students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist



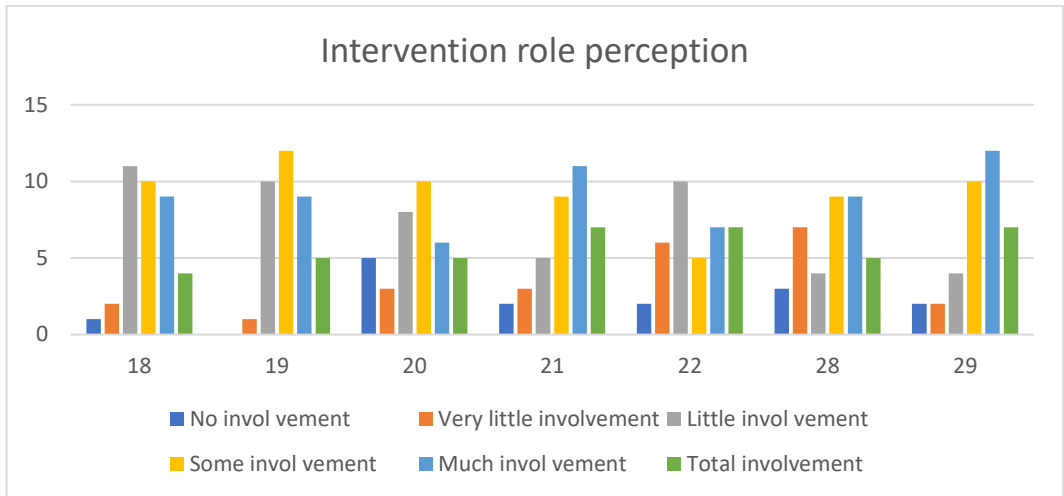
The students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist is good. The mean is 27.94 and the mode is 25. The values range from 9 to 40.

Table 7. Data related to the students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist (items 18,19,20,21,22,28,29)

Item	No invol vement	Very little involvement	Little invol vement	Some invol vement	Much invol vement	Total invol vement
18	1	2	11	10	9	4
19		1	10	12	9	5
20	5	3	8	10	6	5
21	2	3	5	9	11	7

22	2	6	10	5	7	7
28	3	7	4	9	9	5
29	2	2	4	10	12	7

Graph 11. Data related to the students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist (items 18,19,20,21,22,28,29)



Participants think that the school psychologist provides counseling services to students and/ or families as needed (item 18).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides crisis intervention services for students (student or staff death, natural disaster, etc.) (item 19).

Participants think that the school psychologist mediates conflicts between and among teachers and parents concerning students' needs (item 20).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides mentoring/ implementation of positive behavior supports for students as needed (item 21).

Participants think that the school psychologist provides classroom modeling of intervention/ technique for students as needed (item 22).

Participants think that the school psychologist assists foster teachers and subject teachers to integrate children with disabilities into the classroom of mainstream educational institutions (item 28).

Participants think that the school psychologist advises students on their careers (item 29). So, the students have a good perception of the intervention role of a school psychologist.

IV. Data about the relationship between students'age and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist

There is a negative correlation between students age and their general perception (Pearson Correlation= -.083).

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the information role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= -.064).

There is a positive correlation between students age and their perception about the identification role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= 0.033). This relationship is statistically significant.

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the assessment role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= -.119).

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the participation in various commissions role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= -.124).

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the intervention role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation=-.065).

V. Data about the relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist

V.a. Data about the relationship between students'course of study and their general perception of the school psychologist profession

Table 8. *Data about the relationship between students'course of study and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist profession*

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Variance
General perception						
Course of study						
First year	122.0667	15	32.58936	67.00	164.00	1062.067
Second year	121.3636	22	36.02981	43.00	173.00	1298.147
Total	121.6486	37	34.21112	43	173	1170.401
Information role perception						

First year	6.8667	15	2.74816	3.00	11.00	7.552
Second year	7.3182	22	2.41792	2.00	11.00	5.846
Total	7.1351	37	2.52941	2.00	11.00	6.398
Identification role perception						
First year	20.8667	15	5.85377	12.00	30.00	34.267
Second year	20.0000	22	6.84523	5.00	30.00	46.857
Total	20.3514	37	6.39104	5.00	30.00	40.845
Assessment role perception						
First year	34.2000	15	9.45818	16.00	47.00	89.457
Second year	32.8182	22	10.21500	14.00	50.00	104.346
Total	33.3784	37	9.80462	14.00	50.00	96.131
Participation role perception						
First year	32.6667	15	9.72968	17.00	46.00	94.667
Second year	32.9545	22	10.20493	11.00	50.00	104.141
Total	32.8378	37	9.87847	11.00	50.00	97.584
Intervention role perception						
First year	27.4667	15	7.43416	16.00	40.00	55.267
Second year	28.2727	22	8.16603	9.00	40.00	66.684
Total	27.9459	37	7.78155	9.00	40.00	60.553

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the school psychologist profession ($\text{Sig}=0.952$). The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the information role of a school psychologist (Sig=0.601). The perception of students of the second year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the identification role of a school psychologist (Sig=0.691). The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the assessment role of a school psychologist (Sig=0.680). The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist (Sig=0.932). The perception of students of the second year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the intervention role of a school psychologist (Sig=0.762). The perception of students of the second year is more positive.

VI. Data about the relationship between students' study program and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist

Table 9. Data about the relationship between students' study program and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist profession

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Variance
General perception						
MS in Clinical Psychology	121.9524	21	37.24040	61.00	173.00	1386.848
MS in Org. Psychology	121.2500	16	30.97634	43.00	164.00	959.533
Total	121.6486	37	34.21112	43.00	173.00	1170.401
Information role perception						
MS in Clinical Psychology	6.8571	21	2.74382	3.00	11.00	7.529
MS in Org. Psychology	7.5000	16	2.25093	2.00	11.00	5.067

Total	7.1351	37	2.52941	2.00	11.00	6.398
Identification role perception						
MS in Clinical Psychology	19.9524	21	6.72664	7.00	30.00	45.248
MS in Org. Psychology	20.8750	16	6.09781	5.00	30.00	37.183
Total	20.3514	37	6.39104	5.00	30.00	40.845
Assessment role perception						
MS in Clinical Psychology	33.9524	21	11.34229	14.00	50.00	128.648
MS in Org. Psychology	32.6250	16	7.62343	16.00	47.00	58.117
Total	33.3784	37	9.80462	14.00	50.00	96.131
Participation role perception						
MS in Clinical Psychology	33.3333	21	10.28267	16.00	48.00	105.733
MS in Org. Psychology	32.1875	16	9.61401	11.00	50.00	92.429
Total	32.8378	37	9.87847	11.00	50.00	97.584
Intervention role perception						
MS in Clinical Psychology	27.8571	21	8.36233	16.00	40.00	69.929
MS in Org. Psychology	28.0625	16	7.21543	9.00	37.00	52.063
Total	27.9459	37	7.78155	9.00	40.00	60.553

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their general perception of a school psychologist (Sig=0.95), but it is not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the information role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant (Sig=0.45). The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the identification role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant (Sig=0.67). The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the assessment role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant (Sig=0.68). The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the participation role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant (Sig=0.73). The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the intervention role of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant (Sig=0.93). The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to get information about the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs at the University of Shkoder regarding the school psychologist's profession.

The research question N.1. What is the opinion of students regarding the school psychologist's profession?

Participants embrace the evolution of school psychology in recent years and they think that there is a paradigm shift in school psychology services.

Participants have the right perception of the level of education needed to be a school psychologist. They consider helpful the school psychological services to children, teachers, administrators, and student support personnel.

In general, participants think that a student's problem should not be serious before involving school psychological services.

Students' perception of job satisfaction as a school psychologist is good.

Most of the students that participated in the study think that the teachers are well-informed about the services that can be provided by school psychologists.

So, we can say that the opinion of students of Master Sciences in Psychology regarding the school psychologist's profession is good.

The research question N.2. What is the perception of the students of Master of Sciences in Psychology study programs regarding the profession of the school psychologist?

The students' general perception about the general school psychologist profession is good.

Their perception about the information role of a school psychologist is not so good. Participants think that school psychologists provide not to much in-service presentations to school staff, parents, and community members. They also think that school psychologists do not perform very well the role of informing through conversations and lectures the educational institutions' staff about the typical age development of pupils and about the typical problems that pupils face in the teaching and learning process.

The students' perception about the identification role of a school psychologist is good. Participants think that the school psychologist identifies as early as possible pupils with behavioral or learning difficulties, assists the educational institutions' staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating the educational institutions' staff abuses against pupils, assists educational staff, parents, and pupils in preventing or eliminating pupils' abuses of each-other, helps educators, parents, and pupils prevent or eliminate pupils' abuses of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc., reports in writing to the head of the psychosocial service unit any facts of pupils' abuse by educational staff or by pupils' parents.

The students' perception about the assessment role of a school psychologist is good. Participants think that the school psychologist provides written assessment feedback to school personnel, provides verbal assessment feedback to school staff and/ or parents, assesses individual students in need of prescriptive remediation, evaluates progress towards goals on students' Individualized Education Programs, evaluates the effectiveness of instructional methods, materials, or programs, evaluates the effectiveness of academic/ behavioral interventions/ programs/ positive supports towards student success, evaluates the efficacy of crisis intervention plans, procedures, and protocols at the county and/ or the school level, administers and interprets psychological tests and fulfills an individual portfolio of students who have benefited from psychosocial services.

The students' perception about participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist is good. Participants think that the school psychologist consults with teachers and/ or student support teams to develop pre-evaluation strategies to

address students" needs, that the the school psychologist serves as a link to external agencies. They think that the school psychologist consults with intervention teams regarding progress monitoring data, serves on committees making educational decisions (curriculum development, staff development, reorganization, etc.), conducts research to establish general education knowledge, to help solve local school-related problems, disseminates research results for local practical applications and develops and collects local normative data for academic/ behavioral applications. They also think that the school psychologist conducts an analysis of disciplinary data on the county and/ or school level for practical applications.

The students' perception about the intervention role of a school psychologist is good. They think that the school psychologist provides counseling services to students and/ or families as needed, provides crisis intervention services for students (student or staff death, natural disaster, etc.), mediates conflicts between and among teachers and parents concerning students" needs, provides mentoring/ implementation of positive behavior supports for students as needed, provides classroom modeling of intervention/ technique for students as needed, assists foster teachers and subject teachers to integrate children with disabilities into the classroom of mainstream educational institutions and advises students on their careers.

So, we can say that students' perception about school psychologist profession is coherent with what the contemporary literature affirms, which points out the many roles that a school psychologist performs today. The findings of the paper agree to a significant extent with the findings of similar studies of other authors, such as, for example, the studies made by Poulou (2003), Trice (2007) and Oakland (2007).

The research questions N.3. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their age?

There is a negative correlation between students age and their general perception and between students age and their perception about the information role of the school psychologist. There is also a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the assessment role, between students age and their perception about the participation in various commissions role, and between students age and their perception about the intervention role of the school psychologist. There is a positive correlation between students age and their perception about the identification role of the school psychologist (Pearson Correlation= 0.033). This relationship is statistically significant.

Such changes in the perceptions of students of different ages probably have their source in the fact that in Albania the psychologist's profession is relatively new and older people probably find it more difficult to adapt to a new reality.

The research question N.4. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their course of study?

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the school psychologist profession. This relationship is not statistically significant. The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the roles of school psychologist. These relationships are not statistically significant. The perception of students of the second year is more positive regarding the information role, regarding the participation in various commissions role and regarding the intervention role.

The research question N.5. Is there a relationship between students' perception and their study program?

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their general perception of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the roles of a school psychologist, but these relationships are not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive regarding the assessment role and regarding the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist.

Conclusions and recommendations

Participants think that school psychology has significantly evolved for the past 15 years and that there is a paradigm shift in school psychology services. They have the right perception of the level of education needed to be a school psychologist. They consider helpful the school psychological services to children, to teachers, administrators, and student's support personnel. In general, participants think that a student's problem should not be serious before involving school psychological services, but not all students think so. Students' perception of job satisfaction as a school psychologist is good. Most of them think that the teachers are well-informed about the services that can be provided by school psychologists.

The students' general perception about the school psychologist profession is good. Their perception about the different roles of a school psychologist is good, too, but the students' perception about the information role of a school psychologist is not so good.

There is a negative correlation between students age and their general perception, between students age and their perception about the information role of the school psychologist.

There is a positive correlation between students age and their perception about the identification role of the school psychologist. This relationship is statistically significant.

There is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the assessment role of the school psychologist, between students age and their perception about the participation in various commissions role of the school psychologist and there is a negative correlation between students age and their perception about the intervention role of the school psychologist.

There is a relationship between students' course of study and their perception of the school psychologist profession. The perception of students of the first year is more positive.

The perception of students of the first year is more positive also regarding the identification role and regarding the assessment role of a school psychologist.

The perception of students of the second year is more positive regarding the information role, regarding the participation in various commissions role and regarding the intervention role of a school psychologist.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their general perception of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant. The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive.

There is a relationship between study program of the students and their perception of the different roles of a school psychologist, but it is not statistically significant.

The perception of students that study in MS in Clinical Psychology is more positive regarding the assessment role and regarding the participation in various commissions role of a school psychologist.

The perception of students of the MS in Organizational Psychology is more positive regarding the information role, the identification role and regarding the intervention role of a school psychologist.

It is necessary to improve the perception of students in the following aspects: a) Improving the general perception of students regarding the profession of school psychologist, especially at older ages, second year Master students and students of the Master of Sciences study program in Organizational Psychology; b) improving students' perception of the role of information that the psychologist performs in school; c) improving the perception of second year students about the role of identification and the role of assessment; d) improving the perception of first year students about the role of participation in various commissions and the intervention role.

It is also recommended to conduct other studies, in order to identify the factors that affect students' perception of the profession of school psychologist, and it is recommended the curricula review of these study programs and the syllabuses review of subjects in these study programs.

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