

Optimizing Academic Advising to Enhance On-Time Graduation: Effective Strategies in Higher Education Management

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Abstract

This research focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of academic guidance in supporting students' on-time graduation in higher education. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors that affect the success of academic guidance and how the interaction between academic advisors (DPAs) and students can be optimized to improve on-time graduation. This study uses a quantitative method with a descriptive approach, where data is collected through a questionnaire distributed to 31 students of the Education Management Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including Pearson correlation tests and simple regression. The results showed that academic guidance had a significant influence on students' on-time graduation, with factors such as frequency of interaction, personalized guidance, and psychological support from DPA playing an important role. Students who receive quality academic guidance are more likely to graduate on time compared to those who do not receive adequate guidance. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of developing more structured and personalized academic guidance programs in higher education, as part of education management strategies to improve the efficiency and quality of higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and digitalization that is increasingly rapid, the quality of higher education is one of the main indicators of a country's success in preparing competent and competitive human resources (Altbach & de Wit, 2021; Marginson, 2020; Tierney & Lanford, 2020; Rusdi et al., 2022). However, the challenges in the world of higher education are not only limited to improving the quality of teaching and curriculum, but also include how educational institutions can ensure students graduate

on time (Kehm, 2020; Tinto, 2021; Schuetz et al., 2022; Wijaya & Khoir, 2022). Delays in completing studies have become an increasingly worrying phenomenon, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia (Rosser, 2021; Welch & Hao, 2020; Brown, 2021; Chuanchen, 2023). This phenomenon not only affects the educational costs that students and their families have to bear, but also lowers the efficiency of the higher education institution itself (Wilkins & Huisman, 2021; Denson et al., 2020; Zhao & Kuh, 2021; Norman & Paramansyah, 2024). In this context, the role of academic guidance is very important to be researched in depth (Finnie et al., 2021; Kot, 2020; Hart, 2022; Maulidah et al., 2023). Academic advising, which ideally serves as a student's guide in navigating academic and non-academic challenges, is often overlooked or considered a mere formality (Karp & Stacey, 2020; Vander Schee & Boylan, 2021; Brophy, 2021; Hasanah & Hefniy, 2023). In fact, educational management theories emphasize that effective academic guidance can increase learning motivation, academic engagement, and ultimately, accelerate student graduation time (Smith et al., 2020; Campbell & Nutt, 2021; Donaldson et al., 2022; Ansori et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is important to understand the extent to which academic guidance can be optimized as an education management strategy in improving on-time graduation in higher education (Chickering & Gamson, 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Kuh et al., 2022; Hamidah, 2023).

The research problem raised in this study is the high number of students who do not graduate on time, even though they have been given academic guidance by academic advisors (DPA). This problem does not only occur in one institution, but has become a common trend in various universities in Indonesia. Academic guidance that should be a solution for students in facing various academic challenges often does not provide the expected results. Some factors that can affect the effectiveness of academic guidance include the quality of interaction between DPA and students, the frequency of guidance, and the relevance of guidance materials to student needs. This study seeks to identify these factors and how they contribute to the punctuality of student graduation. Thus, the study is focused on answering the main question: "To what extent does academic advising affect students' on-time graduation, and what factors determine the effectiveness of such guidance?"

Previous studies have discussed various aspects related to academic guidance and its influence on student graduation. Smith et al. (2020), found that intensive and personalized academic guidance has a significant influence on increasing student motivation and engagement, which ultimately has an impact on on-time graduation. Meanwhile, Li et al. (2021), highlighted that the quality of academic guidance is often overlooked, with many institutions only providing guidance administratively without paying attention to aspects of personalization and psychological support. Research by Rodriguez and Wang (2020), also emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in academic advising, where emotional support and the development of students' self-management skills should be part of the tutoring program. However, while these studies provide valuable insights, they tend to focus on the context of higher education in developed countries and do not specifically consider the challenges faced by students in developing countries such as Indonesia. This is the gap in this study.

The novelty of this research lies in the approach used to explore the effectiveness of academic guidance in Indonesia, a developing country with various unique challenges in its education system. This research not only focuses on the administrative aspects of academic guidance, but also integrates students' perspectives in assessing the quality of guidance they receive. In addition, this study also develops an evaluation model for the effectiveness of academic guidance that considers factors such as frequency of interaction, personalized guidance, and psychological support, which have not been widely discussed in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Thus, this research is expected to make a new contribution to the literature on education management, especially in terms of strategies to increase on-time graduation through the optimization of academic guidance.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze factors that affect the effectiveness of academic guidance in supporting students' on-time graduation in higher education. The urgency of this research lies in the fact that the on-time graduation rate is one of the key indicators of the success of education management at the university level. By understanding the most influential factors, educational institutions can design more effective and targeted academic guidance programs, thereby not only assisting students in completing their studies faster, but also improving the overall operational efficiency of the university. This research is expected to provide a strong empirical basis for policymakers in higher education institutions to improve the quality of academic guidance as an integral part of the education management strategy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a type of quantitative research with a descriptive approach, which was chosen because this approach allows researchers to measure the relationship between variables systematically and objectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The quantitative method was chosen because it allows for the collection of large amounts of data that can be statistically analyzed to identify patterns and relationships (Groves et al., 2020). A descriptive approach is used to provide a clear picture of the effectiveness of academic guidance on students' on-time graduation. This approach was chosen compared to qualitative methods because the focus of the research is on measuring the degree of influence of certain variables, such as academic guidance, on academic outcomes, and not on in-depth exploration of students' subjective experiences (Bryman, 2021).

The data collection technique in this study involves the use of questionnaires distributed to students of the Education Management Study Program at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, which is located at Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 95, Ciputat, South Tangerang, Banten 15412. This location was chosen because it has a student population that is relevant to the focus of research, namely academic guidance in a higher education environment (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). This study involved a total of 31 respondents, consisting of students who have graduated and have not graduated on time, to obtain a comprehensive perspective on the influence of academic guidance (Fowler, 2021). Respondents were selected by purposive sampling to ensure that those included in this study were those who had been involved in an academic guidance program during their study period (Palinkas et al., 2020).

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques (Field, 2021). Descriptive analysis is used to describe the basic characteristics of the data collected from respondents, including frequency, distribution, and mean (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020). Meanwhile, inferential analysis, such as the Pearson correlation test and a simple regression test, is used to test hypotheses and determine the relationship between independent variables (academic guidance) and dependent variables (on-time graduation) (Hair et al., 2021). This technique was chosen because it is able to provide a clear picture of how strong the relationship between these variables is and whether the relationship is statistically significant (Warner, 2020). With this approach, this study can provide valid and reliable results, which support relevant findings for the development of more effective education policies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2020).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

The Validity Test is the first test that is carried out before making an instrument that will actually be used as a research instrument. From the research title that has been determined and based on the results of the instruments made, each questionnaire is declared valid based on the validity test.

The validity of the instrument's data can be seen from the pearson correlation value which is greater than the r-value of the table (0.355) with a significance level of 5%. The r value of the SPSS results can be seen based on the yellow table as follows:

Table 1. Validity Test

Correlations	Y8	Y9	Y10	TOTAL
X1	.511**	.469**	.480**	.806**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.008	.006	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X2	.437*	.435*	.480**	.761**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.014	.006	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X3	.319	.334	.545**	.724**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.066	.002	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X4	.348	.256	.177	.541**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.164	.341	.002
N	31	31	31	31
X5	.514**	.390*	.327	.707**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.030	.072	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X6	.687**	.651**	.570**	.840**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X7	.771**	.704**	.635**	.935**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X8	.556**	.630**	.635**	.852**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
X9	.692**	.931**	.587**	.855**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000

Correlations	Y8	Y9	Y10	TOTAL
N	31	31	31	31
Y1	.712**	.897**	.632**	.779**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y2	.625**	.736**	.804**	.855**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y3	.654**	.494**	.651**	.835**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y4	.560**	.683**	.575**	.714**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.001	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y5	.495**	.676**	.775**	.823**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y6	.693**	.820**	.668**	.828**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y7	.632**	.742**	.634**	.763**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y8	1	.727**	.428*	.756**
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000	.016	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y9	.727**	1	.577**	.806**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-	.001	.000
N	31	31	31	31
Y10	.428*	.577**	1	.748**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.001	-	.000
N	31	31	31	31
TOTAL	.756**	.806**	.748**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	-
N	31	31	31	31

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The validity test table shows a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables tested. Pearson's recorded correlation values ranged from moderate to very strong, with significance values (Sig. (2-tailed)) mostly below 0.05, indicating that the correlation was statistically significant. For example, variable X1 has a significant positive correlation with Y8 ($r = 0.511$, $p = 0.003$), Y9 ($r = 0.469$, $p = 0.008$), Y10 ($r = 0.480$, $p = 0.006$), and TOTAL ($r = 0.806$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that X1, as one of the independent variables, has a strong influence on these dependent variables, especially when looking at the very strong correlation with TOTAL.

Similarly, other variables such as X2 to X9 showed a consistent relationship with the dependent variables, with some very significant correlations. For example, X6 has a very strong correlation with TOTAL ($r = 0.840$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that this variable greatly affects the overall outcome measured. The high correlation between Y9 and TOTAL ($r = 0.806$, $p < 0.001$) also indicates that Y9 is a strong predictor of overall outcomes.

These results show that most of the variables tested in this study have good validity, with a strong and significant relationship between independent and dependent variables. This indicates that the instruments used in this study can be relied upon to measure the influence of independent variables on the punctuality of student graduation, thus supporting the research hypothesis that academic guidance plays an important role in determining the timely graduation of students.

Reliability Test

Reliability is a test of how reliable the instruments we make are. From the results of the data processed, the reliability of the data can be seen from Cronbach Alpha with a large value of 0.965, so it can be interpreted that the instrument used is very reliable or very consistent because it is close to the number one. The resulting table is as follows:

Table 2. Reliability Test

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.965	.966	19

The results of the reliability test displayed showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.965, with a standardized item-based Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.966 for the 19 items tested. This value is very high and close to 1, which indicates that the research instruments used have an excellent level of internal consistency.

In other words, a Cronbach's Alpha value close to 1 indicates that the items in the questionnaire or instrument are highly reliable, meaning that the instrument provides consistent results when used to measure the same variable on different occasions or in different sample groups. Therefore, the instruments used in this study can be trusted to produce consistent and accurate data in measuring the concept in question, such as the effectiveness of academic guidance on the timeliness of student graduation.

Normality Test

This normality test is used to find out whether the sample taken represents the distribution of the population. If the sample distribution is normal, it can be said that the sample taken is representative of the population. Here the researcher conducted a normality test with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov table. The sum of N= 31 with the value of Sig. in the table is 0.200 which is greater than 0.05 which means that the data is normally distributed as follows:

Table 3. Results of the normality test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	TOTAL
N	31
Normal Parameters	
Mean	56.35
Std. Deviation	17.912
Most Extreme Differences	
Absolute	0.129
Positive	0.061
Negative	-0.129
Test Statistic	0.129
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200 ^{c,d}

The results of the normality test using *the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* showed that the tested data met the assumption of normality. With a sample number of 31, the data has a mean of 56.35 and a standard deviation of 17.912. The statistical value of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test obtained was 0.129, with an asymptotic significance value (Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)) of 0.200.

This significance value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that there is no significant difference between the distribution of the sample data and the expected normal distribution. In other words, these results indicate that the data used in this study are normally distributed, so that statistical tests that assume normality can be appropriately used in further analysis. This provides additional validity to the results of the analysis to be carried out, because the normal distribution of data is one of the important requirements in many statistical tests.

Homogeneity Test

The Homogeneity Test aims to find out whether the population value of the data that has been obtained is homogeneous or not. The way to measure it is by looking at the Sig value. If the value is <0.05 , it is said that the variant of the data population is not homogeneous, and if it >0.05 , then the data is homogeneous. How to find out Sig. can also be seen in the Independent Samples Test table, from the table we can see that the value is 0.376 with a meaning greater than 0.05, meaning that the data obtained is homogeneous. The results of the data obtained are as follows:

Table 4. Homogeneity Test Results from SPSS

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
TOTAL		F		Mr.	
Equal variances assumed		0.808		0.376	
Equal variances not assumed					
t-test for Equality of Means	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
TOTAL				Lower	
Equal variances assumed	0.305	8.030	7.682	-7.683	
Equal variances not assumed	0.258	8.030	6.767	-6.699	

Simple Regression Test

The Simple Regression Test is a test to see whether or not there is an influence of variable X on Y, it can be seen from the Sig. value of 0.000 which means it is less than 0.05 means there is an influence between academic guidance on students on time (H_0 is accepted). Or by looking at the calculated t of 6.401 which is greater than the t of the table 2.045 which also means that variable X has an influence on variable Y.

Table 5. Simple Regression Test Results

Coefficientsa	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Mr.
B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	8.520	3.513		2.425
TotalX	0.800	0.125	0.765	6.401

a. Dependent Variable: totally

The results of a simple regression test show that the independent variable (TotalX) has a significant influence on the dependent variable (TOTAL). An unstandardized regression coefficient (B) of 0.800 indicates that every increase of one unit on TotalX will increase the TOTAL value by 0.800 units. A standardized regression coefficient (Beta) of 0.765 indicates that TotalX has a strong influence on TOTAL, with a t-value of 6.401 and a significance value (Sig.) of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This shows that the influence of TotalX on TOTAL is statistically significant, so this regression model can be used to predict TOTAL based on TotalX values.

The Effectiveness of Academic Guidance for Students Graduating on Time

The results of this study show that the effectiveness of academic guidance has a significant influence on student graduation on time. Of the 31 respondents involved, 11 of them managed to graduate on time. The data analysis conducted revealed that academic guidance by Academic Advisory Lecturers (DPA) played an important role in supporting this achievement. Of the 11 respondents who graduated on time, as many as 8 respondents reported that they received guidance from DPA every semester, which included motivation, academic direction, as well as solutions to problems faced. This is in line with the results of a simple regression test that shows that academic guidance (TotalX) has a strong influence on the punctuality of graduation (TOTAL), with a Beta coefficient value of 0.765 and a significance of $p < 0.001$.

Furthermore, a significant positive correlation between academic guidance variables and on-time graduation outcomes (as shown by the Pearson Correlation value between X1 and TOTAL of 0.806, $p < 0.001$) indicates that students who receive more consistent and structured guidance tend to have a greater chance of graduating on time. A total of 9 out of 11 respondents who graduated on time stated that the DPA provides periodic evaluations of their academic performance, which helps in problem identification and planning for the next semester. This shows that DPA's involvement in academic evaluation and planning has a positive impact on student outcomes. In contrast, 3 out of 11 respondents who graduated on time stated that they never received guidance from the DPA, which shows that while academic guidance is highly influential, there are other factors that also play an important role, such as internal motivation. This is reinforced by the results of the interviews which show that self-motivational factors, such as aspirations and initial intention to learn, are the dominant factors that encourage students to discipline and complete their studies. The results of the homogeneity test also support this finding, where the data obtained show that the variance of the data group is homogeneous, with a Sig. value of 0.376. This means that the variation in academic guidance experience among respondents does not significantly affect the uniformity of the research results, which allows for a more accurate generalization of the results of this study.

These findings underscore the importance of effective academic guidance in helping students achieve on-time graduation. Regular interaction and periodic evaluation by DPAs, as well as structured academic planning, have been shown to have a significant positive correlation with student academic success. However, internal motivation remains an important factor that should not be overlooked, as it plays a crucial role in maintaining students' consistency and enthusiasm to complete their studies on time.

The Effectiveness of Academic Guidance for Ungraduated Students

This study shows that there is a significant correlation between lack of academic guidance and delayed graduation of students. Of the 20 respondents who have not graduated, as many as 13 respondents stated that they have never received guidance from Academic Advisors (DPA) at the beginning of each semester. This creates gaps in the monitoring and evaluation of their academic progress. As a result, 15 out of 20 respondents reported that the DPA had never evaluated the learning outcomes of the previous semester, and only 5 respondents felt that they had received evaluation and direction related to the academic problems they faced.

The lack of structured academic guidance is also reflected in the fact that 16 respondents admitted that they did not receive guidance related to planning for the next semester, which caused them to feel less prepared and less motivated in facing academic challenges. Furthermore, 13 out of 20 respondents reported that the DPA did not validate the Study Plan Card (KRS), indicating a lack of attention to academic planning that is essential for the smooth running of student studies.

In terms of consultation, only 50% of the respondents stated that they had consulted with the DPA regarding academic issues, while the rest had never done consultation. This shows that there is a disconnect in communication between students and DPA, which has an impact on their perception of academic guidance. A total of 13 respondents felt that academic guidance had no effect on the smoothness of their studies, which was in line with the finding that only 7 respondents felt that DPA had a significant influence on their studies.

Despite this, self-motivation remains the dominant factor that encourages students to keep trying to complete their studies, as expressed by most respondents. This motivation comes from a desire to graduate on time, family support, and personal determination. However, without adequate guidance, many students find it difficult to maintain consistency and discipline, which ultimately hinders the smooth running of their studies.

These findings underscore the importance of DPA's active role in providing ongoing academic guidance and support. The results of the interviews showed that students who did not graduate on time generally experienced a lack of guidance, which made them feel less supervised and less enlightened in solving various academic problems. In contrast, students who graduate on time generally get better and structured academic guidance facilities.

From these two cases, it can be concluded that consistent and directed academic guidance greatly affects the academic success of students. Students who do not receive guidance tend to experience obstacles in graduation, both due to a lack of external motivation and due to limitations in overcoming academic challenges independently. Thus, educational institutions need to consider firmer policies in requiring and optimizing academic guidance services to ensure smooth studies and on-time graduation for all students.

The results of this study showed that academic guidance had a significant influence on students' on-time graduation, a finding that is consistent with some previous studies but also shows important differences. For example, research conducted by Smith et al. (2020) in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* found that intensive academic tutoring can increase student learning motivation and engagement, ultimately contributing to better academic achievement.

However, this study also found that the influence of academic guidance can vary depending on the quality of interaction between academic advisors and students. This is in line with research by Li et al. (2021) published in *Higher Education Research & Development*, where it was found that less personal and only administrative interactions tend to be ineffective in motivating students to graduate on time. In contrast, research by Rodriguez and Wang (2020) in the *International Journal of Educational Management* underscores the importance of a holistic approach in academic advising, where emotional and psychological support is also taken into account, rather than just focusing on the academic aspect. In the context of this study, although academic guidance was proven to have a positive effect, the results of the interviews showed that not all students felt that they were getting optimal benefits, especially those who did not actively seek guidance. This difference suggests that the success of academic guidance depends not only on its availability, but also on the quality of interaction and how active students are in utilizing such guidance, which is in line with previous literature but also highlights areas where academic advising practices can be further improved.

This research makes a significant contribution in the field of education management, especially in understanding the role of academic guidance in students' on-time graduation. Through in-depth empirical analysis, this study emphasizes the importance of effective academic guidance as a strategic tool in higher education management. By showing that quality interaction between academic advisors and students has a significant positive impact on academic achievement, this study directs attention to the need to increase the capacity and quality of advisors in providing guidance that is not only administrative, but also holistic and personal. In addition, the study also highlights that the effectiveness of academic guidance depends not only on the policies of educational institutions, but also on the active involvement of students, providing new insights into the importance of developing more proactive and structured tutoring programs. These findings provide a solid basis for the development of a more efficient education management model, where academic guidance can be used as a key component in strategies to improve the quality of education and academic achievement in higher education.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the most important findings that show that effective academic guidance has a significant impact on students' on-time graduation. The lesson learned from this study is the importance of quality interaction between academic advisors and students, which not only focuses on administrative aspects but also involves emotional and psychological support. This confirms that academic advising should be seen as a strategic tool in education management, which can help improve student motivation, engagement, and academic success. This research also strengthens the understanding that active student involvement in the guidance process is the key to success, providing new insights for educational institutions in designing more effective and structured guidance programs.

However, this study has limitations that need to be acknowledged. The study was limited to a single educational institution and did not consider gender, age, or location variations, so the results may not be fully generalisable to a broader context. In addition, the research methods used are quantitative descriptive and do not explore qualitative aspects that may provide deeper insights into the student experience.

Therefore, more comprehensive follow-up research involving various institutions is needed, taking into account gender, age, and more diverse research methods, such as surveys and in-depth interviews. This follow-up research is expected to provide a complete and more accurate picture, which can be used as the basis for a more targeted and effective education policy in supporting students' on-time graduation in various contexts.

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