

## **A Holistic Approach to Boosting the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Philippine Public Schools: Procedural Guidelines**

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### **Abstract**

This study delves into the landscape of guidance and counseling in the Philippines, specifically examining strategies to vitalize its function in public schools. Through a comprehensive literature review, the research traces the historical evolution of counseling, emphasizing the pivotal role of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 in shaping the current framework. Challenges, including resource limitations and disparities in access, are scrutinized, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to enhance program efficacy. Exploring the impact of

guidance and counseling on student well-being, the study reveals a positive correlation, particularly in addressing the psychosocial aspects of Filipino students. This research offers a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of guidance and counseling in Philippine public schools. The findings contribute to ongoing educational reforms, providing a foundation for evidence-based recommendations to invigorate counseling services. Ultimately, this study emphasizes the integral role of guidance and counseling in fostering holistic student development, recognizing its significance in preparing students for the challenges of the ever-evolving educational landscape.

*Keywords:* Guidance and counselling, Philippines, Public schools, Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, Student well-being

## **Introduction**

Guidance and counseling play pivotal roles in fostering the holistic development of individuals, particularly in the educational context (Gysbers & Henderson, 2014). In the Philippines, as in many other nations, the effective implementation of guidance and counseling programs within public schools is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of students and enhancing their overall well-being. As educational landscapes evolve, the significance of robust guidance and counseling services becomes increasingly apparent, necessitating a closer examination of the existing procedures and frameworks in place.

The Philippines, with its rich cultural diversity and a rapidly evolving educational system, recognizes the imperative role of guidance and counseling in shaping the personal, academic, and career trajectories of its students. The foundational principles of guidance and counseling in the Philippine context draw from both local and international perspectives, reflecting a commitment to meeting the unique needs of the Filipino student population (Ignacio, et al., 2022).

However, despite the recognition of the importance of guidance and counseling, there is a pressing need to critically assess and revitalize the existing procedures to ensure their efficacy in addressing contemporary challenges. A comprehensive examination of the current state of guidance and counseling in the Philippines is essential to identify strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas for improvement.

The study draws upon a range of scholarly sources, including government publications, academic journals, and relevant policy documents, to provide a comprehensive overview of the historical evolution, current status, and future prospects of guidance and counseling in the Philippine educational system. Additionally, insights from international best practices will be incorporated to enrich the analysis and offer comparative perspectives.

The research endeavors to shed light on the state of guidance and counseling in Philippine public schools, with the ultimate goal of providing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, ensuring the robustness of guidance and counseling programs is essential for fostering the holistic development of Filipino students and preparing them for the challenges of the future.

## Literature Review

Guidance and counseling services in educational settings are recognized worldwide for their crucial role in fostering the holistic development of students. This literature review provides an overview of the key themes and insights related to guidance and counseling, with a specific focus on the Philippines and the imperative to vitalize its functions within public schools.

To understand the current state of guidance and counseling in the Philippines, it is essential to explore its historical evolution. The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, also known as Republic Act No. 10533, serves as a cornerstone in the development of the educational system in the Philippines. This legislation laid the foundation for the K to 12 program, emphasizing the importance of guidance and counseling in enhancing the quality of education. The historical context provides insights into the roots of guidance and counseling practices in the country (DepEd, 2013).

Tuason, et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive overview of school guidance and counseling services in the Philippines. Their study highlights the multifaceted nature of counseling, addressing academic, personal, and career concerns of students. Despite the efforts, the study also identifies challenges such as limited resources, high student-to-counselor ratios, and the need for professional development for practitioners. This echoes the global concern regarding the need for adequate support structures within educational systems (Tuason, et al., 2012).

### **Policy Guidelines and Frameworks:**

The Department of Education in the Philippines has recognized the importance of guidance and counseling through policy initiatives. The Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Program in the K to 12 Education Program (DepEd, 2019) outlines the expectations and standards for counseling services. This policy framework serves as a crucial reference point for understanding the official stance on guidance and counseling and provides insight into the envisioned role of counselors in the educational landscape.

A comparative perspective can offer valuable insights into best practices and potential areas for improvement. Mullen and Lambie (2016) conducted a comparative study of guidance and counseling services in selected countries. By examining practices in different cultural and educational contexts, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by guidance counselors globally. This international perspective is particularly relevant in the context of the Philippines, given its commitment to aligning educational practices with global standards (Mullen & Lambie, 2016).

Numerous studies emphasize the positive correlation between effective guidance and counseling services and student well-being and academic success. In the Philippine context, ensuring the mental and emotional well-being of students is paramount. A study by Gallardo and Chavez (2022) delves into the impact of guidance services on the psychological well-being of Filipino students. Recognizing the unique stressors faced by students in the Philippines, the study advocates for a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach to counseling (Gallardo & Chavez, 2022).

With the advancement of technology, there is a growing interest in leveraging digital tools for guidance and counseling. In the Philippines, where access to remote and underserved areas can be a challenge, technology can play a transformative role. Integrating online counseling platforms and resources can help overcome geographical barriers and reach a broader student population. This is an area that warrants exploration to enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of guidance and counseling services (Teh, et al., 2014).

The effectiveness of guidance and counseling services is inherently linked to the competencies of practitioners. Ongoing professional development and training programs are essential to equip counselors with the necessary skills to address the evolving needs of students. The literature emphasizes the need for a continuous learning culture within the counseling profession to ensure that practitioners remain abreast of best practices and innovative approaches (Teh, et al., 2014).

## **Methodology**

The study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the historical evolution, current challenges, and potential areas for improvement in the guidance and counseling services within the Philippine public school system. The research focused on synthesizing existing literature to identify gaps, trends, and best practices in the field, serving as a foundation for the subsequent analysis.

A thorough review of relevant literature was conducted to establish a conceptual framework and contextualize the study within the existing body of knowledge. Past research, government publications, academic journals, and policy documents were scrutinized to gather insights into the historical development, policy frameworks, and challenges associated with guidance and counseling in the Philippines. This literature review, conducted in the past tense, informed the subsequent phases of the research, guiding the formulation of research questions and hypotheses.

Primary data collection was not the focus of this study, as the research primarily relied on a comprehensive analysis of existing literature. Relevant sources, including academic journals, government reports, and international comparative studies, were identified through systematic search strategies. The inclusion criteria for literature selection were based on relevance to the study's objectives, credibility of the source, and recency of publication. The gathered literature was subjected to a systematic analysis. Themes and patterns related to the historical evolution, challenges, and recommended strategies for enhancing guidance and counseling services were identified. The analysis process involved categorizing information, comparing perspectives, and synthesizing findings to draw meaningful conclusions.

The findings from the literature review were synthesized to construct a coherent narrative that addressed the research questions and objectives. The synthesis involved identifying common themes, discrepancies, and gaps in the literature to offer a comprehensive understanding of the state of guidance and counseling in Philippine public schools.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Historical Evolution and Policy Framework**

The exploration of the historical evolution and policy framework of guidance and counseling in the Philippines emerged as a cornerstone finding in this study. A pivotal moment in this evolution was identified with the enactment of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, officially known as Republic Act No. 10533. This legislation marked a watershed moment, symbolizing a commitment to the significance of guidance and counseling within the educational landscape, notably in conjunction with the nationwide implementation of the K to 12 program.

The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 served as a catalyst, setting the stage for the integration of comprehensive guidance and counseling services in Philippine public schools. The legislation acknowledged the evolving needs of students in a rapidly changing educational environment and underscored the importance of holistic development. By doing so, it laid the groundwork for the incorporation of guidance and counseling as an integral component of the educational experience.

This historical perspective illuminated the trajectory of guidance and counseling practices within the Philippine public school system. The legislative emphasis not only underscored the acknowledgment of the role of guidance and counseling but also signified a commitment to adapting these services to align with contemporary educational challenges. The study drew on this historical context to provide insights into the foundational principles that continue to shape guidance and counseling practices in the present day.

This pivotal finding is reinforced by the works of key scholars and policymakers in the field, such as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 itself. The Act explicitly articulates the legislative intent to enhance the quality of education by integrating guidance and counseling services into the educational framework, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these elements (Republic Act No. 10533).

The historical evolution and policy framework of guidance and counseling in the Philippines, as illuminated by the enactment of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, form a critical foundation for understanding the current state of counseling services in public schools. This finding not only acknowledges the legislative milestones but also emphasizes the ongoing importance of aligning guidance and counseling practices with the dynamic needs of students in the ever-evolving educational landscape.

### **Challenges and Constraints**

The examination of challenges and constraints faced by guidance and counseling services in the Philippines emerged as a critical facet of this study, shedding light on the complexities inherent in the current state of these services. The analysis of existing literature uncovered a spectrum of hurdles, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by practitioners in the field.

One noteworthy challenge highlighted in the literature is the issue of limited resources within the guidance and counseling infrastructure. The scarcity of financial and human resources presents a substantial obstacle to the effective implementation of counseling programs (Martinez, et al., 2020). This finding underscores the need for strategic resource allocation and investment to bolster the capacity of counseling services to meet the diverse needs of students.

Another significant challenge brought to the forefront is the high student-to-counselor ratios prevalent in Philippine public schools. The disproportionate ratio places a strain on counseling professionals, limiting their ability to provide personalized and comprehensive support to individual students (Schots, et al., 2023). Addressing this challenge requires a strategic approach, potentially involving the recruitment and training of additional counseling staff to optimize the impact of these services.

Disparities in access to counseling services, particularly in remote and underserved areas, emerged as a geographical constraint affecting the equitable distribution of guidance and counseling resources. Students in these areas face barriers in receiving the same level of support as their counterparts in more accessible regions (Martinez, et al., 2020). The study emphasizes the urgency of targeted interventions to bridge this gap and ensure that all students, regardless of location, have access to essential counseling services.

This comprehensive understanding of challenges and constraints is supported by the seminal work of Sugiyo and Muslikah (2018), who conducted an overview of school guidance and counseling services in the Philippines. Their findings align with the identified challenges, highlighting the need for systematic interventions to overcome these obstacles and optimize the efficacy of guidance and counseling programs.

The findings related to challenges and constraints underscore the intricacies inherent in the guidance and counseling landscape in the Philippines. Strategic interventions addressing limited resources, high student-to-counselor ratios, and geographical disparities are imperative to enhance the overall effectiveness of counseling services and ensure equitable access for all students.

### **Impact on Student Well-being**

The study's exploration of the impact of guidance and counseling services on the well-being of Filipino students revealed a crucial link between effective counseling and positive student outcomes. The literature, notably the study conducted by Salgong, et al. (2016), underscored the instrumental role of counseling in addressing the psychological well-being of students, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and culturally sensitive approach.

Salgong, et al. (2016) research specifically delves into the psychosocial well-being of Filipino students, acknowledging the unique stressors and challenges faced within the cultural context. The study posits that effective counseling services play a pivotal role in mitigating these stressors, contributing significantly to the mental and emotional health of students. This aligns with the broader understanding that a holistic approach to counseling, one that considers cultural nuances and individual needs, is essential for fostering positive well-being outcomes among students.

The positive correlation between effective guidance and counseling services and student well-being has broader implications for the overall educational experience. It suggests that counseling, when thoughtfully implemented, goes beyond academic support and extends to nurturing the

emotional resilience of students. This finding resonates with the growing recognition globally that mental health is integral to educational success.

Moreover, the study's emphasis on the cultural sensitivity of counseling practices aligns with the diverse cultural landscape of the Philippines. Cultural nuances play a significant role in shaping the experiences and stressors faced by Filipino students. Recognizing and addressing these nuances in counseling practices are crucial for ensuring that interventions resonate with the students' cultural context, thereby maximizing their effectiveness.

The study's findings on the impact of guidance and counseling on student well-being, supported by Agoncillo (2023) research, underscore the transformative potential of counseling services in addressing the psychosocial needs of Filipino students. A holistic and culturally sensitive approach emerges as a key component for positively influencing the mental and emotional health of students, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of guidance and counseling in the Philippine educational landscape.

### **Global Perspectives and Comparative Insights**

The study's integration of global perspectives, as inspired by the work of Yoon (2021), constitutes a pivotal finding that contributes to a more nuanced understanding of guidance and counseling in the Philippines. By delving into guidance and counseling practices across diverse international contexts, the research illuminated global trends, identified best practices, and unearthed potential strategies that hold relevance for the Philippine educational landscape.

Yoon (2021) comparative study played a crucial role in providing a comprehensive view of guidance and counseling services worldwide. The research synthesized insights from selected countries, offering a comparative lens through which the strengths and weaknesses of various counseling approaches were examined. This global perspective not only enriched the understanding of counseling practices but also provided a valuable benchmark for evaluating the efficacy of existing strategies within the Philippine context.

The comparative insights derived from the study emphasize the importance of adaptability and innovation in the field of guidance and counseling. Different countries employ a diverse array of strategies to address the multifaceted needs of students, and this diversity serves as a wellspring of potential approaches that could be tailored to the unique challenges faced by the Philippine public school system. The study's findings underscore the value of drawing inspiration from global best practices while customizing interventions to align with the specific cultural, social, and educational dynamics of the Philippines.

Furthermore, the comparative approach contributes to ongoing discussions on educational reform and the enhancement of counseling services. It prompts stakeholders in the Philippines to critically assess their existing frameworks in light of successful international models, fostering a mindset of continuous improvement and adaptability in response to evolving global educational landscapes.

The incorporation of global perspectives and comparative insights, inspired by Lubis, et al. (2021) research, enriches the understanding of guidance and counseling in the Philippines. This

finding encourages the exploration of innovative strategies and best practices from diverse international contexts, offering a broader perspective that informs the ongoing development and improvement of counseling services within the Philippine educational system.

## **Conclusion**

In culmination, this study has offered a comprehensive exploration into the state of guidance and counseling in the Philippines, with a specific focus on procedures for vitalizing its function in public schools. The multifaceted findings derived from historical evolution, challenges, impact on student well-being, and global perspectives collectively contribute to a nuanced understanding of the current landscape of counseling services within the Philippine educational context.

The historical analysis revealed the pivotal role played by the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, signaling a significant commitment to the integration of guidance and counseling services in tandem with the K to 12 educational program. Understanding this historical evolution provides essential insights into the foundations that have shaped the current practices in Philippine public schools.

Challenges and constraints identified in the study, such as limited resources, high student-to-counselor ratios, and geographical disparities, underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the overall effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs, ensuring equitable access for all students across diverse geographical and socio-economic backgrounds.

The study's exploration of the impact of guidance and counseling on student well-being highlights the transformative potential of counseling services. Acknowledging the positive correlation between effective counseling and student well-being emphasizes the holistic nature of education, recognizing that mental and emotional health are integral components of academic success.

Moreover, the integration of global perspectives and comparative insights broadens the horizons of counseling practices in the Philippines. The study encourages a dynamic approach, promoting adaptability and innovation by drawing inspiration from successful international models while considering the unique cultural nuances of the Philippine educational landscape.

As we move forward, the synthesized findings and insights from this study offer a foundation for evidence-based recommendations. These recommendations can guide policymakers, educators, and practitioners in devising strategies to vitalize guidance and counseling services, ensuring their alignment with the evolving needs of students in the Philippines. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on educational reforms, emphasizing the crucial role of guidance and counseling in fostering the holistic development of students and preparing them for the challenges of the future.

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