

Beyond the Call: Lived Realities of Guidance Designates in Tanjay City Division

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15896494

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Abstract

Guidance designates play a crucial role in the implementation of guidance and counseling programs in their respective schools. This study aimed to address the insights and lived experiences of the guidance designates of Tanjay City Division, through Phenomenology. Census sampling was employed by the researchers to provide comprehensive insights from the participants. These insights were analyzed through thematic analysis and revealed six major themes, namely, sense of purpose and fulfillment, lack of professional training, overloaded responsibilities, resources and facility gaps, weak administrative and community support, and proactive student intervention programs. These themes denote that despite their sense of fulfillment and initiated programs; they encountered numerous problems that hinder the successful implementation of guidance and counseling programs in their respective schools. These results underscore the necessity of injecting appropriate training, institutional reform, and stakeholder coordination. Without monitoring and redress by direct and particular action on the part of the Department of Education and school leaders, the emotional, academic, and behavioral support equipment of low-resource students will remain compromised.

Keywords: Guidance designates, perceived roles, challenges in the implementation of guidance and counseling program, Tanjay City Division

Introduction

Guidance and counseling (G&C) programs have long been acknowledged as essential frameworks for addressing students' academic, socio-emotional, and career-readiness requirements in the field of educational development. In Tanjay City Division, which is transitioning from primarily rural educational environments to more dynamic urban-rural hybrid settings, designated guidance counselors are asked to carry out these programs in schools with drastically different administrative support, student demographics, and resource availability. However, teachers encounter a wide range of systemic challenges while also having opportunities for professional development and creative adaptation as they work to integrate G&C into everyday school life.

Although literature affirms the importance of successful counseling programs and identifies typical obstacles, including workload, job ambiguity, and a lack of training, the majority of these studies are conducted in completely rural or highly urbanized settings. As an example, the study of Meador (2021), titled "Experiences of Urban School Counselors: An Interpretive Phenomenological Study", revealed that urban settings, particularly socio-economic diversity and systemic pressures, shaped the counselors' perceptions. Moreover, the study of Grimes et al. (2023) titled "Understanding the Experiences of Rural School Counselors Implementing Trauma-Informed Practices" showed that in the rural context in the United States, emotional experience, support for the implementation, and logistics were found to be the major themes and the need to enhance and address challenges in the implementation is considered.

The mentioned studies corroborate the context of rural and urban areas relevant to the guidance and counseling program. This shows that the limited study on both rural and urban areas, such as Tanjay City, has received little attention. A complicated environment for program implementation is created by the combination of schools with limited resources, diverse student demographics, and changing community expectations. The lived experiences of designated guidance counselors in this area, including their setbacks and little triumphs, are also still not well documented. Understanding how these functions are performed and modified in actual school settings is severely hampered by the absence of localized evidence.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties and successes faced by designated guidance counselors in Tanjay City Division's Guidance and Counseling program implementation. The research aims to shed light on how these professionals deal with systemic limitations while attempting to satisfy the requirements of students by documenting their viewpoints and experiences. The results could help legislators and school administrators better support counseling staff and improve the provision of guidance services in comparable situations. The goal of this research is to help local G&C programs become more impactful, relevant, and accessible.

Literature Review

To support students' academic, social, professional, and personal development, school guidance and counseling programs must be implemented effectively. Schools frequently designate teachers as guidance counselors in systems where there are few licensed guidance counselors, especially in developing nations like the Philippines. These designates are expected to serve in both counseling and teaching capacities, which may have an impact on the caliber and reliability of the services rendered (Specialized Training Program for Guidance Designates | Department of Education, 2024). Consequently, the ability, drive, and support given to these designated staff members become critical to the execution of guidance programs.

Several recent studies have highlighted the role overload and role conflict that guidance designations experience. According to Dulay and Pitonang (2023), guidance designates juggling teaching and counseling responsibilities, which restricts their time and energy for student support services. In addition, most designates lack formal training in counseling theories, strategies, and ethical practices—all of which are essential for addressing students' diverse and often complex needs. This discrepancy between professional preparation and assigned responsibilities results in poor program implementation and lower student outcomes (Pasco & Fabella, 2023).

For guidance designates, there are still few opportunities for professional growth and training. Teachers assigned to counseling roles expressed a willingness to serve, but they frequently felt underprepared and unqualified. To address this concern, there are trainings in some divisions, like in DepED SDO Dasmariñas that aims to intensify the program (*DM NO. 116, S. 2024 | INTENSIFYING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS | DepED SDO Dasmariñas City, 2024*). Many did not have access to peer collaboration, supervision, or even up-to-date resources. As a result, instead of offering structured, developmental, and preventive counseling programs in line with national standards and frameworks, like those described by the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd, 2018), they frequently rely on intuition or take reactive approaches.

In spite of the difficulties encountered by guidance designates, they still aim to attend and strive to innovate strategies in addressing students' needs. In underprivileged or rural schools, many of them launch programs like peer mentorship, career planning, and mental health awareness campaigns, as well as classroom advice sessions (Medalla & Musni, 2025). However, the viability and extent of these efforts are often determined by human initiative rather than institutional planning. Because of this, pupils' access to high-quality guidance services becomes erratic and mostly dependent on the personality and availability of the designee, rather than following a predetermined curriculum.

Policy implementation, administrative recognition, and institutional support all have a significant impact on how well guidance designates can fulfill their duties. According to a recent qualitative study by Devanadera and Ching (2023) School programs and performance have a significant relationship with school heads' managerial roles. Outcomes can be positively impacted by school heads' support, time allotted for counseling responsibilities, material provision, and participation in decision-making. When given specific regions, clear expectations, and regular supervisory support, designates carry out responsibilities connected to guidance with increased confidence and efficacy. Moreover, the study of Tumanggor (2020) revealed that principals' leadership has a significant relationship with the students' self-development as part of the guidance and counseling implementation program. However, when mentoring is seen as a secondary or optional duty, implementation suffers, and students' psychosocial needs are often ignored.

Research indicates that while guidance designates are crucial to the implementation of school-based guidance and counseling programs, they face numerous challenges, including a lack of training, time constraints, and insufficient institutional support. Even if many of them are adaptable and compassionate, their impact is restricted in the absence of targeted interventions and structural changes. Going ahead, professionalizing their positions will necessitate

continuous capacity training, the development of counseling-specific resources, and the establishment of clear policy frameworks that recognize and account for the complexities of their dual duties.

Statement of the problem

In the absence of guidance counselors in many public schools in the Philippines, teachers are designated to perform tasks that are parallel to the job of a licensed guidance counselor; however, these tasks have certain limitations since some cases need to be handled by a licensed one. This practice is evident in Tanjay City Division to address students' academic, social, professional, and personal issues. However, how well this secondary guidance designates perform their duties despite challenges in the implementation. In this regard, the study aims to answer the following questions.

1. How do guidance designates perceive their roles and impact on student development?
2. What are the common challenges faced by guidance designates in implementing the guidance and counseling program in their respective schools?
3. What successful practices or strategies have they employed in overcoming challenges?
4. What recommendations can be made to strengthen the guidance and counseling program in the Tanjay City Division?

Methodology

This section provides information about the research design, participants, tools, data gathering methods, and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive qualitative, particularly phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of secondary guidance designates in Tanjay City Division, school year 2024-2025. It enables researchers to engage in flexible activities that can characterize and aid in understanding complicated phenomena, such as many facets of human social experience. The qualitative approach of phenomenology offers a theoretical instrument for educational research (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). Therefore, phenomenology was used in this study to comprehend the significance and core of participants' experiences—specifically, the difficulties they encounter and the accomplishments they make while performing their roles—it is a suitable approach for this study.

Research Locale

Selecting an appropriate study location is crucial for every investigation since it significantly affects the findings. Furthermore, the research site may affect data accessibility, resource availability, and the generalizability of the results. Consequently, it is essential to carefully consider the research when organizing a project. Different aspects are considered in choosing the research locale. (Admin, 2024). In this sense, the study is conducted in Tanjay City Division, targeting both rural and urban secondary schools.

Research Participants

Using a census sample technique, all 32 secondary school guidance designates in the Tanjay City Division participated in this survey. Using a non-probability sampling technique called census sampling, all members of the population who fit the inclusion requirements are chosen to take part in the research. The entire population is examined rather than just a subset or sample. When the population is manageable and small enough to accommodate everyone, this approach is usually employed (*Census and Sample*, n.d). This approach was taken to guarantee that all designated guidance personnel who were actively serving during the current academic year—each with a minimum of one year of experience in the position—were represented. By including all qualified participants, the study sought to gain a thorough grasp of their opinions and experiences with the guidance and counseling program's execution. The whole spectrum of insights from the population of interest was gathered via census sampling, which reduced the possibility of sampling bias and increased the validity of the results.

Research Instrument

This study employed a semi-structured guide with open-ended questions for the in-depth interview. The questions were checked and validated by English language teachers for grammar and clarity. Moreover, 6 guidance designates validated the content of the item questions, which resulted in 0.84 as the average Scale-Level Content Validity Index (S-CVI/Ave), which means that the questions were acceptable.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researchers developed selection criteria for the participants during the pre-phase of the data collection. To further prevent prejudice, the participants were interviewed by a qualified teacher. Following that, the researchers wrote a letter of authorization to the Tanjay City Division superintendent of the school. Following approval, the participants received a letter from the researchers along with their informed consent. The purpose and importance of the investigation were explained in the letter. The skilled interviewer requested consent to record the participants' verbatim responses during the actual data collection process. The interviewer performed a member check to ensure that the participants' answers were reliable and trustworthy. This was required to confirm the answers provided by their participants and determine whether any other concepts were overlooked. In terms of data saturation, it happened with the 18th participant. Follow-up interviews with up to the 30th participant confirmed the credibility of the themes. As a result, the researchers started a comprehensive analysis of the data and handled it with the highest care and discretion.

Data Analysis

This study used Thematic Analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), to evaluate the qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews. In qualitative research, this analytical technique is frequently employed to find, examine, and present patterns (themes) in data. It is ideal for the phenomenological character of this study because it is flexible and especially good at analyzing lived experiences and insights of guidance designates in the implementation of guidance and counseling programs in their respective schools.

Ethical Considerations

To safeguard the rights, safety, and dignity of all the participants, ethical research standards were followed in this study. All participants provided informed consent before the collection of data following full information about the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary involvement, and right to withdraw from participation at any point without penalty or loss of benefits. None was coerced; everything was voluntary. Pseudonyms were applied to transcripts and reports for anonymity and confidentiality, and the data were kept securely to be used by the researcher only. Audio tapes were destroyed after analysis. By establishing a respectful interview environment and allowing the participants the option of skipping questions or the option of terminating the interview if uncomfortable, the researcher also guaranteed minimum psychological risk.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study using in-depth interviews with 32 secondary school guidance designates from the Tanjay City Division. Using thematic analysis, some overriding themes surfaced that emphasized the participants' attitudes toward their roles, the issues they face, the coping strategies they employ, and their suggestions on enhancing the implementation of the guidance and counseling program. All themes are complemented with quotes of illustrations of the participants to add richness and depth to their lived experience. The same findings and the literature introduce the discussion to provide an integrative overview of the realities of guidance designates in schools.

Thematic map of the guidance designates' insights and experiences in guidance and counseling program implementation in Tanjay City Division, school year 2024-2025.

Codes	Themes
Making a positive impact on students Gratitude from students as motivation Role expansion as meaningful Confidence despite a lack of credentials Student progress as personal validation Viewing guidance work as a vocation Feeling valued through student trust Sense of pride	Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment
Inability to handle complex student issues Insufficient pre-service preparation Overreliance on experience	Lack of Professional Training
Excessive caseload Multiple tasks and loads Administrative burden Lack of teachers' support Emotional exhaustion due to heavy workload	Overloaded Responsibilities
No guidance office or guidance corner	

Limited resources for program Implementation	Resources and Facility Gap
Lack of time for professional development	
Inefficient task distribution	
Lack of administrative advocacy for guidance programs	Weak Administrative and Community Support
Lack of community collaboration	
Minimal parental involvement in guidance programs	
Inadequate training for administrators on guidance issues	
Lack of recognition for guidance designates' efforts	
Disconnected school culture regarding mental health	Proactive Student Intervention Programs
Early identification and screening	
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs	

Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment

This theme emphasizes how guidance designates feel a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment. This feeling is anchored when they realize that their role helps students' personal, academic, and emotional aspects. Many guidance designates motivate themselves by the gratitude they get from students who are benefiting from their service and use it as an encouragement. The sense of purpose is even more fueled by considering their roles as a vocation and by naturally helping students as their mission. Although sometimes they feel insecure because they do not have the professional qualifications but their service and positive feedback from students and parents are enough to consider themselves as one. All of the gains students make, working through challenges, personal development, become personal validation for guidance designates, serving to further enhance their dedication to the profession. They see what they do as a calling, they take pride in being entrusted by students and consequently feel valued and have a great sense of fulfillment! In the end, the work offers both a professional vocation as well as pride and satisfaction in contributing to the larger academic community.

Participant 1 said,

"It's really fulfilling, Ma'am, to see that you have helped students. When you see that they have changed for good, and especially when they show gratitude to me. It adds to my confidence. I am happy to give this service to students. I feel like it's my call. I feel like I am not just a teacher who teaches inside the classroom. I'm more than that."

Participant 8 added,

"Although I am not a registered guidance counselor but as a designated one, I feel like I am more than just a teacher. I offer my service to our students because I feel good when I extend this to them, especially when they show gratitude to me, and when they even share their problems that they cannot share with their family. It feels so great when you establish trust towards them".

Participant 13 emphasized,

I know my job is not just purely teaching, but I love what I am doing. I feel better when students go to the office and ask for my help or advice. They show how grateful they are to me, and when I see that, they change for good. It's fulfilling. I am proud of myself knowing that I could help people, especially our learners".

The participants displayed a strong emotional sense of satisfaction and pride in being officially sanctioned guidance professionals, emphasizing the emotional dividend of seeing students develop and change. They emphasized how appreciation from students and perceptible positive changes provide strong motivating factors that enhance their self-worth and reaffirm their purpose. Even though they are not officially licensed therapists, they feel their job is more than just teaching—seeing what they do as a vocation that enables them to establish trust, provide support, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of their students.

Lack of Professional Training

This is the case of the difficulties encountered by guidance designates without training or formal education in guidance and counseling. They all mention an inability to address complex student cases, mostly mental health, family issues, or trauma-related, as they do not have specialist information and skills. Their pre-service training was frequently

inadequate, many of them having a general education rather than counseling backgrounds, and thus less well prepared to handle the emotional and psychological needs of the work. They will thus have recourse to personal experience, intuition, or an error-and-correct approach more than evidence-based practice. This over-reliance on experience, while useful at times, tends to result in hesitation and apprehension, particularly in sensitive cases where professional competence is called for. The absence of formal training also increases their levels of inadequacy and self-doubt, especially when handling risk cases. In the long run, this training deficit reduces their efficiency and underscores the necessity for systematic capacity building and formal certification channels.

Participant 18 answered,

"This job for me means a lot since we deal with a lot of students' cases. However, there are times that I cannot handle situations because I am not trained to deal with some specialized or serious cases."

Participant 7 added,

"I am very willing to help our learners, but because of limited sources of knowledge, I sometimes ask my co-guidance designates from other schools. Sometimes, I just depend on my practice".

Participant 11 emphasized,

"When dealing with cases of our students' issues, sometimes I just rely on my experience. Guidance designates have limited training. In this regard, guidance designates resort to consulting one another or depending on old practices."

The verbatim guidance designates reflect a general unease regarding the absence of professional training in dealing with complex cases involving students. While showing commitment to working with learners, they acknowledge not having the proper preparation when dealing with serious or special cases because they lack formal training. Therefore, they deeply refer to personal experience, seek advice from other guidance designates, or refer to standard procedure. This is a direct result of having insufficient training and development for guidance designates, which needs immediate attention since they are constantly dealing with students' cases in their respective schools.

Overloaded Responsibilities

This theme shows that due to multiple tasks assigned to teachers, their role as guidance designates is affected. Other than being a guidance designate, they also have administrative tasks, not limited to preparing reports, attending meetings, and doing documentation requirements, which hinder them from performing the tasks intended as guidance designates. The lack of assistance from the teaching staff, who may not value or acknowledge the guidance assignments' efforts, and hence leave them to handle student concerns alone, adds to the workload. Due to the demands of the institution and the needs of the students are constantly shifting, these diverse tasks lead to emotional weariness. In addition to endangering their health, the excessive workload also lowers the standard and usefulness of the guiding services they can provide. Finally, the cause of excessive workloads highlights the need for position definition, sufficient staffing, and institutional support to do long-lasting and meaningful guidance work.

Participant 3 answered,

"I really love what I am doing as a guidance designate. Only sometimes I felt tired dealing with many students' cases in school. Moreover, I also have existing tasks other than being a guidance designate. These tasks affect my emotional aspect as a guidance designate."

Participant 5 added,

"Sometimes I feel tired knowing that I do not feel the help of my co-teachers. They refuse to do some tasks that they are supposed to do as advisers. We all have other tasks, and that is the problem sometimes, because they prioritize other tasks over the tasks anchored in the guidance and counseling program."

Participant 9 agreed,

"Due to voluminous workloads, I just felt so tired. Worst, I do not find my co-teachers acknowledging tasks embedded as an implementor in career guidance. Also, there were times that I felt so tired since I also needed to perform other tasks as a teacher, though not part of my job description."

The guiding designates experience a sensation of physical and emotional exhaustion due to workload overload, which is captured in the verbatim. Even while they express a strong enthusiasm for their work, the frequent juggling of numerous student situations and other non-guidance responsibilities drains their emotional reserves. They constantly complain about their co-teachers' lack of assistance, as they prioritize other activities over their duties in the guiding program. The guidance designates become overworked and unsupported because of this lack of cooperation and double duty burdens, which eventually affect their efficacy and well-being.

Resources and Facility Gap

The theme of Resources and Facility Gap refers to the logistical and structural challenges that counseling designations face when performing their duties. Since most schools lack a specialized advice office, much alone a simple guidance corner, it is challenging to ensure that learners receive competent counseling and anonymity. Inadequate resources for implementing required programs are another factor contributing to this physical lack of availability, which hinders a thorough response to students' requirements. Additionally, with their already hectic schedules and heavy load, the guidance staff members themselves rarely have time for professional development. Their ability is further weakened by inefficient delegation, as most of them are assigned non-guidance tasks that undermine their primary job. Together, these issues reduce the guidance program's efficacy and are signs of broader institutional negligence that must be stopped to enhance student support services.

Participant 6 answered,

"One of the challenges I encountered is that there is no guidance office or corner provided in the program in our school. We lack resources, especially financial resources, to implement the program effectively."

Participant 12 added,

"As much as I am open to professional development, I cannot attend training and seminars since we have different tasks and work to do aside from being a guidance designate."

Participant 17 added,

"One of the problems that is evident in my case is that the school does not have a designated office or corner for the implementation of a guidance and counseling program. It is really hard for me to have a one-on-one session with learners due to the absence of a facility. Moreover, sometimes, I cannot attend them in an instant since I have a lot of things to do too."

The lack of a corner or an office in their respective schools normally causes issues to the guidance designates, hindering confidential and effective counseling. They are also beset by a shortage of money, which destroys the effectiveness of the guiding program. Most cannot attend training and seminars due to their numerous chores and obligations, even if they desire to improve professionally. It is difficult for them to focus solely on their guiding duties and provide students immediate support due to these competing duties.

Weak Administrative and Community Support

Weak Administrative and Community Support refers to inadequate support from institutions and external sources for school guidance programs. Of special concern is the lack of administrative advocacy, where administrators fail to advocate or publicize the guidance and counseling program, in addition to the lack of administrators' training in issues related to guidance, which lowers their perception of its significance in student growth. Further, there is less collaboration in the community and less parental participation, which inhibits the program from being able to serve additional students and has a greater effect on student concerns. Guidance designates also feel that they are not appreciated, and their work is not appreciated either, which lowers their motivation and morale. Additionally, care systems are weakened by the lack of cohesive school culture in mental health, which deters children from getting the proper care. Guidance programs are underappreciated and underutilized in the absence of strong administrative leadership and engaged community members. To provide a more comprehensive and adaptable support system for students, these deficiencies must be addressed.

Participant 10 answered,

"Sometimes my effort as a guidance designate is not appreciated. In my case, there were times when I did not feel the support of our school head. It's really hard to implement a program when your direct supervisor does not have an appreciation for this job."

Participant 5 added,

"One of the challenges I encountered as a guidance designate is that, sometimes, parents do not have an appreciation for mental health. They lack knowledge. They rarely give time to attend meetings about guidance and counseling. When I even invited the community, they refused to give time since they are not interested."

Participant 14 said,

"It's hard when your direct supervisor doesn't know enough about guidance work. You have to keep explaining how important your job is to get help." You feel their words, but they lack action."

Proactive Student Intervention Programs

The term Proactive Student Intervention Programs refers to deliberate and proactive measures implemented inside the educational system to address learners' emotional, behavioral, and academic problems before they worsen and reach more serious levels. Activities like early identification and screening, which involve monitoring and evaluating learners to detect behavioral issues, emotional issues, or learning deficits early enough, help to achieve this theme. Early detection reduces the possibility of long-term negative consequences and allows interventions to be implemented on time. The incorporation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs is very crucial since it helps children learn how to identify themselves, control their emotions, show empathy, and make wise decisions. SEL initiatives give schools a place where students' development and mental health are prioritized. Schools can create a more inviting and responsive structure that allows children to flourish by attending to their needs before a crisis arises. This theme—going beyond reactive approaches to long-term, intentional proactive involvement that leads to student success—occurs in practically every instance.

Participant 14 answered,

"Every opening of classes, I always make a point to gather information about our learners. I do profiling of each learner, with the help of my co-teachers. This is to provide data that will be the basis for assessment and action."

Participant 15 added,

"One of the best practices here in our school is that we integrate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities in our respective classes. We always make a point to make our learners feel ready emotionally to start the class. We also provide them with activities to establish trust, confidence among peers."

Participant 9 emphasized,

"For me, being proactive is important. I know that our learners have different backgrounds and sources of problems. In this case, I do profiling. This enables me to monitor and check their needs. Moreover, our teachers integrate activities that can boost the confidence and emotional well-being of our learners. We do "kumustahan," where students and teachers feel free to express how they feel on a certain day."

The participants highlighted that through learner profiling and the incorporation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities, the students placed a strong emphasis on anticipatory intervention. Guidance designates gathering information about learners at the beginning of the school year to pinpoint needs and create appropriate responses. Incorporating SEL exercises into lessons helps learners become psychologically ready, build trust, and boost their self-esteem. "Kumustahan"-style activities allow for the free expression of emotions, and consistent observation guarantees the pupils' welfare. These methods demonstrate a readiness to address children's varied backgrounds and emotional needs right away.

Discussion

The research generated six broad and consolidated themes that represent both the passion and the load that direction dictates in schools: Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment, Shortage of Professional Training, Overburdened Duties, Gaps in Resources and Facilities, Fragmented Administrative and Community Support, and Inactive Student Intervention Programs. These themes are a representation of the changing realities of school-based guidance in Philippine education and are derived from existing studies and institutional documents.

One of the most prevalent themes is the Sense of Purpose and Satisfaction of appointees of guidance, who reported a strong emotional satisfaction in assisting students in overcoming personal, academic, and emotional challenges. They see the bulk of their task as a calling above and beyond the limits of professional teaching. While they are not officially licensed counselors, the appreciation that they get from students and the well-being that they see transforming students' lives drive their passion. This accords with Park et al. (2019), who note that the professionals will achieve professional identity and moral purpose by emotionally connecting with students and the continued support of the organization. This intrinsic motivation plays a central role in maintaining teachers, particularly when there is no external incentive.

However, their strong commitment is nonetheless frequently interrupted by a Lack of Professional Training. Members acknowledged doing the job based on individual experience, colleague recommendation, or error-and-check measures in dealing with intricate learners' challenges, such as mental illnesses or family-oriented trauma. Gragasin (2024) substantiated that a lack of professional development relevant to guidance and counseling will hinder the designates from performing their role in their respective schools.

Added thereto is the overloaded responsibilities case. Most of the guidance designates are regular teachers who have multiple administrative and instructional activities. Multitasking limits their focus on guidance work and lends itself to emotional exhaustion. According to Subong IV (2024), guidance designations consider their work to be challenging because they manage several job positions; thus, they are typically compelled to implement a variety of strategies and techniques to accommodate all of their obligations and responsibilities. This lack of work-life balance can occasionally even lead to burnout and tiredness. The difficulties a guidance designate faces impact not just their role as a guidance designate but also their responsibilities as a teacher and a person. in a family, and students are particularly impacted.

Anent, workload challenges are resource and facility gaps, which are linked to one another. Participants reported the lack of a designated office or confidential space to conduct counseling, limited access to materials, and minimal funding for program implementation. These logistical barriers compromise not only student privacy but also the credibility and reach of the guidance program. According to the study of Ishak et al. (2024), titled, Exploring the Need for Guidance and Counseling Services in Primary Schools: Perspectives from Counselling Students, lack of facilities and guidance counseling room or office affects the students' opportunities. They are denied the chance to grow intellectually and psychologically. Activities for PBK based on the 2015 Guidance and Counseling Services Manual cannot be conducted without a suitable facility and the necessary equipment, such as tables, information boards, counseling materials, and reference shelves. In schools, the absence of adequate facilities and resources has a significant impact on the professional delivery of counseling services. Moreover, the provision of facilities and resources in the implementation of the guidance and counseling program can maximize the potential services of the program toward the students (Gragasin, 2024).

In addition, a lack of community and administrative support exacerbates the issue. The participants cited inadequate levels of parental or local stakeholder participation as well as a lack of gratitude and support from school administration. In the overall school culture, this has led to the devaluation and deprioritization of guidance work. According to the study of Mabus (2025), titled Challenges Faced by the Teachers for Implementation of Guidance and Counselling in Eswatini High Schools, little administrative support and low parental involvement pose serious problems for guidance and counseling teachers in Eswatini high schools. Parents' low involvement and school administrators' frequent failure to devote enough time, funds, and recognition to the program hinder the effectiveness of guidance services. Moreover, a lack of parental and teachers' support adversely affected the implementation of the program (Githaiga et al., 2016).

Even with all these difficulties, most of the guidance designates have implemented Proactive Student Intervention Programs like learner profiling, classroom check-ins or "kumustahan", and incorporating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities.

Learner profiling is the method of collecting and evaluating specific information regarding the strengths and weaknesses, learning abilities, interests, behaviour, academic performance, and other similar personal data of a student. It generates a complete profile that enables educators to become sensitized to how a learner best learns and processes information (Emily, 2024). Moreover, the purpose of the "Kumustahan" check-in session is to promote connection and provide a secure environment for participants to express their ideas, emotions, and experiences. Based on the Filipino phrase "kumusta," which translates to "how are you?" the exercise promotes candor and understanding among participants. It usually starts with an introduction, during which participants are asked to provide updates or answer straightforward questions such as "How are you feeling today?" or "What have you been thinking about lately?" ("KUMUSTAHAN": *Group Routine Interview for Students*, n.d.). Lastly, the guidance designates mentioned on social and emotional learning. Social emotional learning (SEL) assists students of all ages in better understanding their emotions, experiencing them completely, and exhibiting empathy for others. These acquired behaviors are then applied to assist students in developing constructive, accountable decision-making skills,

goal-achieving frameworks, and constructive interpersonal interactions (National University & NU Editorial Contributors, 2025). All of these interventions range from reactive to problem-solving, which only react to attending to preventive care, building tighter emotional relationships, and trust between students and adults.

Conclusion

The study uncovered six major themes reflecting both the dedication and challenges of guidance designates in Philippine schools, including a strong sense of purpose, but also highlighting the lack of professional training, excessive workloads, inadequate resources, fragmented administrative and parental support, and limited student intervention structures. Despite these hurdles, many teachers persist through proactive measures like learner profiling and SEL, driven by intrinsic motivation.

To facilitate and build up guidance services, there exists a definite need for rational professional development, institutional support, special financing, and enhanced school-community relations so that guidance work becomes both passion-motivated and professionally possible.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the Department of Education should implement regular, targeted training programs for guidance designates and allocate dedicated time, funding, and facilities for guidance services, especially to the guidance designates of Tanjay City Division. Additionally, schools must strengthen collaboration with parents and community stakeholders through orientation sessions and active involvement in guidance initiatives to enhance support and program impact. Moreover, the role of the Local Government Unit (LGU) is also crucial in helping schools to establish facilities and provide resources such as School-community-based training modules.

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