



PERCEPTION OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS ON GUIDANCE ADVOCATES' ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

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Abstract

Perception is the way how you think about or understand someone or something. Knowing how Junior High School Teachers perceived the roles and functions of guidance advocates was the aim of this study. A Qualitative-Case study was conducted to determine the perception of junior high school teachers on guidance advocates' roles and functions during the School Year 2019-2020. This study selected the junior high school teachers of Imelda National High School as research participants. The results of the study revealed that the teacher's perception on the guidance advocates are as follows: giving advice and appraisal for academic planning, student consultation, career development, counseling, giving intervention program and discipline implementation. Moreover, school guidance advocates should continue to pay close attention to how others perceive them. They should hold respect for the viewpoints of all staff members, especially teachers, in order to continue to progress in their mission of developing an effective guidance program. The study recommended that teachers should be informed with the actual roles and functions of the guidance advocates. Thus, avoiding and modifying the negative perception and misconceptions towards the guidance advocates' roles and function.

Keywords: *Perceptions, Guidance Advocates, Guidance Counselor, Roles and Functions*

Introduction

Guidance counselor are very low in number due to rigorous process for acquiring the license in the Philippines. The Department of Education requires both the public and private elementary and high school to hire on licensed guidance counselor for every 500 students. However, there were only 3, 220 registered guidance counselors as of July 2017. In the current requirement, the Department of Education were in need of 52,264 guidance counselor nationwide for 26,311,949 students from kindergarten to senior high school for 2017-2018 academic school year. Furthermore due to lack of registered guidance counselor, schools were forced to keep the unlicensed ones in which they were commonly called as guidance teachers or guidance advocates (Senate of the Philippines, 2019). Many schools in the country were practicing the designation of teacher as guidance advocates or employing other professional to fill in the gap for each year the demand for registered guidance counselor increases. It is almost impossible to enforce RA 9258 in the present situation nor in the near future because of the lack of guidance counselors in the country (Valdez, 2018).

Guidance Advocates roles and functions were viewed to be practicing the roles and functions of a licensed Guidance Counselors. People had been informed with the roles and functions of Guidance Advocates through the published roles and functions under the Republic Act 9258 but many people are still confused as to what extent their roles and functions covers. With its history, Guidance and Counseling started to be acknowledged despite the unstable economic, political and social disturbance. Through these circumstances, counseling in the Philippines continue to prosper and even become one of the necessities for support in the community. Guidance Advocates in partnership with the Psychologist have the needs to fill the gap between the Filipino culture and its past. There were issues on how Filipinos view Advocates like people tend to avoid going or seeking for guidance and counseling due to the stigma of being incorporated with the work of a Psychiatrist. In the country, availability of a trained professional Advocates is also a major concern (Logan, 2016).

Guidance and Counseling is a profession regulated and recognized under the Republic Act No. 9258 (2004) in the Philippines. It sets the standard of the Philippine Guidance Advocates in which it describes that one of its important roles is to help build a better nation and promotes the development of guidance and counseling whose skills have been determined by passing the licensure examination. It also determines the values of the professional practice and service that is recognized internationally and globally competitive when it comes to regulatory measures, programs and activities that will help their continuing professional growth. They tend to communicate and inform client the concept of confidentiality and discuss how information may be shared with others (American Counseling Association, 2014). Guidance advocates also helps a student in coping with his/her present and future problems. It also helps in setting a student's short term and long term goals and provides tools that will help deal with their problems and can also help enhance their quality of life (Goel, 2014). They need to provide academic guidance that could help monitor the academic performance, punctuality, and absenteeism of the students. In addition, guidance counselor can conduct seminars or workshops to the students that can help improve the personality development of the students (Elizez, 2018). Though guidance advocates were performing according to their roles and functions were often viewed differently by school administrators, parents, students, other interested group in the community and even themselves (Burnham & Jackson, 2000). They were viewed to caring or compassionate (Skutley, 2006), have a positive impact on the academic, behavioural, and mental health development of their students (Zalaquett, 2005). However, they were sometimes viewed as a disciplinarian and works as one of the administrative staff of the school (Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, & Marshall, 2011).

Research Objectives

This study aimed to answer the following queries:

1. How do teachers perceive the roles and function of Guidance Advocate?
2. Based on the findings of the study what are the implications to be drawn?

Method

This study utilized the qualitative research design. Qualitative Research focused on ways on how to explain social phenomena. It is used to aid understanding things and the environment where people live. Its focuses on experience in which cannot be adequately expressed numerically (Hancock & Ockleford, 2007). It is a design where data are richer and insightful and can be interpreted thematically (Shuttleworth & Wilson, 2008). A case study type of qualitative research design. A case study is an investigation a current phenomenon in its real-life setting and the boundaries amid the phenomenon and setting are not evident. It will reveal an in-depth understanding of an event, activity, process or one or more individuals (VanWhnsberghe & Khan, 2007). This design was used in order to determine the perception of junior high school teachers on guidance advocates roles and functions for it will reveal an in-depth understanding. Where the research participants were purposively chosen to be part of this study.

The researcher is the primary instrument aided by an interview guide. The interview guide was constructed to identify the perception of the junior high teachers on guidance advocates' roles and functions. The researcher beforehand, formally wrote a letter address to the Zamboanga Sibugay Schools Division Superintendent asking permission to conduct a study at Imelda National High School, Imelda Zamboanga Sibugay. Upon approval, the researcher proceed to the concerned school and present the approved letter to the school principal. The researcher sought the assistance of the school principal after selecting the possible participants of the study for their available time in order to conduct the interview. The researcher individually asked the teacher participant's consent to conduct the interview during their vacant time.

To analyze and interpret the date, Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is a process where the collected qualitative data is explained or interpreted into a more meaningful and symbolic content (Taylor & Gibbs, 2010). The gathered data in this study was analyzed through five phases: compiling, disassembling, reassembling and concluding. The first phase is the compiling phase where the researcher will familiarize his/her notes and its objective is to organized data to help the researcher find and access data. The second phase is the disassembling phase in which using of coding process can be done in order to help the researcher assign new labels, phrase or other chunks of data. In this phase coding is used to move methodically and a specific open code is used so that it can stick closely to the original items. The next phase is the reassembling phase where it involves an increasing number of discretionary choices in which it also involves own judgment. In these phase making constant comparisons, watching for negative cases and engaging in rival thinking can help minimize or at least reveal biases. The fourth phase is the interpreting phase which brings the entire analysis together and stand at its pinnacle. Its goal is to develop comprehensive interpretation still encompassing specific data, but whose main themes will become the basis for understanding the entire study. The last phase is the concluding phase where some kind of overarching statement or series of statement that raises the findings of a study to a higher or broader set of ideas (Yin, 2011).

Results and Discussion

Perception of teachers on guidance advocates roles and functions. Results of the in – depth interviews showed different perceptions about guidance advocates roles and functions as perceived by teachers were giving advice and appraisal for academic planning, student consultation, career development, counseling, giving intervention program (i.e. tardiness issues, maladaptive behaviors and absenteeism) and discipline implementation were the themes that emerged based on the responses given by the research participants.

It showed that the guidance advocates provides advices to solve problems in school especially in students' subjects or any other problem in the classroom. Though guidance advocates were concerned with student's academic, emotional and career needs and also encourage them to develop to their maximum (ASCA, 2016). It was stated in the Ethical Standards for School Counselors that Guidance Advocates should not give advice to their students but only to guide them, for even registered guidance counselors were not allowed to give advice with their clients. They facilitate the students through consultation whether it is for their social, emotional or behavioral issues. Where career development was said to be of help to the student in terms of giving guidance on what to choice for their career. Guidance advocates collect information from different institutions that they will classify, reproduce and disseminate in the students in order to help them decide on what career to pursue. However, guidance advocates are not allowed to provide counselling since this service is only for the registered counselors. They only help the student in solve problem and provide intervention to students who have problems in behavior and conflicts. There is now a change for guidance advocate to intercede prior to any incidents and to become a more proactive in developing and endorsing school wide intervention plans. But it does not include discipline implantation where they were viewed as disciplinarians that gives consequences to students who does not perform well or misbehaving in the classroom.

Their perceptions on the roles on the guidance advocates roles and functions were mostly the opposite what was really explained under Republic Act 9258 (2004) and ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016). Thus, they do not have the guidance on how to provide support and assistance to the guidance department. Less support from teachers will lead to little possibility that developmental guidance will work. Teachers represent the first line of defense in identifying special needs. They are the key advisors to the children and represent the best hope of personalization of learning. Coordinated works between teachers and counselors is important for the guidance programs to be implemented well and successfully. Accordingly, guidance advocates needs to edify students, teachers, and others about the activities and services they offer. Seminars and conferences can be scheduled to keep all groups informed of the functions of the counselor. Division wide information, education and communication on the concrete roles and functions of the guidance advocates must be conducted regularly in order to ensure the full implementation and facilitation of the guidance program.

Negative perception on guidance advocates roles and functions of junior high school teacher does hinder the performance of their duty in school. They were viewed differently and expected to produce outcome based on the teacher's perceived roles and functions to which is not necessary. Therefore, the school administrator and guidance advocates should work hand in hand in order to ensure the proper dissemination of information as what really the guidance advocates roles and function. Thus to avoid and stop the long trend of misconceptions on the roles and functions of the guidance advocates.

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