

Teacher's Perceptions of Guidance Counselor's Role in Student Development and Academic Performance in University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School, Catarman, Northern Samar

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Abstract: This study explored the perceptions of teachers regarding the role of guidance counselors in student development and academic performance at University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School, Catarman, Northern Samar. Using a qualitative descriptive-evaluative design, the researchers gathered data from six purposively selected teachers through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and insights aligned with the study's objectives. The findings revealed that teachers perceive guidance counselors as integral to the academic and personal growth of students. Counselors were recognized for their roles in managing behavioral concerns, addressing emotional issues, and supporting academic planning. Teachers particularly valued structured collaboration, including the use of anecdotal records and regular communication, which facilitated effective monitoring and intervention. Despite these strengths, challenges such as limited resources, lack of counseling facilities, and persistent behavioral problems among students were reported as significant barriers to the full implementation of guidance services. The study concludes that teacher-counselor collaboration and positive perceptions are crucial in enhancing the impact of school counseling programs. Strengthening institutional support and fostering a shared understanding of the counselor's role can significantly improve student outcomes in resource-constrained public-school environments.

Keywords: Teacher Perception, Guidance Counselor, Academic Performance, Student Development, Collaboration.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The role of guidance counselors within the educational system has evolved significantly in response to the growing complexity of student needs in the 21st century. Beyond the traditional functions of academic advising and vocational planning, school counselors are now expected to play an integral role in fostering students' personal, social, and emotional well-being. They are tasked with addressing diverse issues, including mental health concerns, behavioral challenges, and peer relationships—factors that profoundly influence academic success. As such, the effectiveness of school counseling programs is largely shaped by how their roles are perceived and supported by other stakeholders, particularly teachers.

In the Philippine education system, guidance services are mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to be implemented in all schools. However, the operationalization of these services varies significantly across institutions, often due to disparities in resources, training, and institutional support. In University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School—a charter primary school in Northern Samar—guidance counselors are actively involved in managing student discipline, responding to emotional crises, and supporting academic interventions. Despite their vital functions, the extent to which these efforts are recognized and integrated into broader teaching and learning strategies remains uncertain.

Research has shown that positive collaboration between teachers and school counselors can lead to improved student

outcomes, including higher academic achievement, better classroom behavior, and enhanced emotional regulation (Gysbers & Henderson, 2015). However, studies also reveal persistent challenges, such as role ambiguity, lack of professional recognition, and minimal teacher involvement in guidance-related programs (Simbolon & Purba, 2022). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2023) underscores the need for comprehensive school counseling programs that are aligned with academic, social/emotional, and career development goals. Yet in many public schools, particularly those in rural or under-resourced areas, these goals are difficult to realize due to inadequate staffing, limited facilities, and fragmented communication among school personnel (Tibon & Reyes, 2019).

Teachers, being the closest to students in the classroom, are in a unique position to observe behavioral patterns, emotional distress, and academic struggles. Their perceptions of the guidance counselor's role—whether as a collaborator, support figure, or ancillary staff—significantly influence their willingness to refer students, participate in interventions, and engage in counseling programs. Hence, understanding teachers' perspectives is critical to assessing the actual reach and effectiveness of guidance counseling services within a school setting.

This study was grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that student development is influenced by multiple interacting systems, including the direct relationships between teachers and counselors. It also drawn on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights the importance of collaborative modeling and support in promoting academic and behavioral success. These frameworks collectively emphasize that the educational environment, shaped by the quality of interpersonal relationships among school personnel, plays a pivotal role in student growth.

Given this context, the present study investigated how teachers at University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School perceive the roles of guidance counselors, particularly in relation to their influence on students' academic performance, social behavior, and emotional development. By exploring these perceptions, the study aims to uncover existing strengths and barriers in teacher-counselor collaboration and provide insights into how guidance programs can be better integrated into the school's overall mission of student development.

In this context, the study sought to examine teachers' perceptions of guidance counselors' roles in student development and academic performance in University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School, Catarman, Northern Samar.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-evaluative research design, which is appropriate for exploring lived experiences, professional insights, and perceptions within a specific institutional context. The approach allowed

for a rich, in-depth understanding of how teachers perceive the roles and contributions of guidance counselors in student development and academic performance. Unlike purely descriptive studies, the evaluative component of the design enabled the researchers to assess both the effectiveness and perceived limitations of counseling services as experienced by teaching personnel.

The participants of the study included 6 teachers from University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School, a charter primary school located in University Town, Catarman, Northern Samar. These participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with direct knowledge and professional engagement with the school's guidance counseling services. The selected teachers came from various subject areas and grade levels, ensuring a diversity of perspectives. This criterion-based sampling approach ensured that those who participated had relevant experiences and could provide meaningful data related to the objectives of the study.

Data collection was conducted using a semi-structured interview guide, which was adapted from the framework developed by Clark and Amatea (2004) on teacher perceptions of school counselor roles. The instrument included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about teacher experiences, expectations, observed counselor interventions, and perceived outcomes. Prior to full implementation, the interview guide was reviewed by a panel of experts in education and guidance counseling for content validity. It was also pilot tested with two teachers from a nearby school to ensure clarity and appropriateness of the questions. Minor revisions were made to enhance the guide's relevance and flow based on feedback.

The data collection procedure involved one-on-one interviews conducted in a quiet and private setting within the school premises to ensure participant comfort and confidentiality. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. The researchers ensured ethical compliance by securing informed consent and maintaining the anonymity of all responses. Upon completion, the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and each transcript was reviewed for accuracy.

For the data analysis, the researchers adopted the widely accepted framework of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This six-phase approach involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for patterns, reviewing and refining themes, defining themes, and producing the final report. Codes were derived inductively from the data and then clustered under major themes that corresponded to the six research objectives. The analysis was iterative and collaborative, with peer debriefing used to enhance trustworthiness and consistency. To ensure credibility, themes were supported with direct quotations from participants and were triangulated with field notes taken during the interviews.

Overall, the materials and methods used in this study were carefully selected and rigorously applied to ensure the collection of rich, valid, and reliable data that would provide deep insights into the role of guidance counselors as perceived by teachers in a charter primary school setting.

III. RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the interview data gathered from 6 teachers of University of Eastern Philippines Laboratory Elementary School. The results are organized according to the six research objectives and are presented thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis. Emerging themes reflect the shared experiences, perceptions, and insights of the participants concerning the role of guidance counselors in student development and academic performance. Direct participant quotations are included to support each theme and enhance the authenticity and credibility of the findings.

➤ Profile of Participants

Teachers who participated in the study reported a wide range of professional experience, with teaching tenures spanning from five to over twenty years. This variation provided a broad perspective on the evolution of guidance services within the school. Most respondents had academic qualifications in education, with several holding or pursuing graduate degrees, such as a Master of Arts in Education. Their education-oriented backgrounds contributed to a well-informed understanding of student behavior, academic performance, and the importance of emotional support systems.

Additionally, the school's relatively small size—239 students and 13 faculty members—was perceived as conducive to more personalized monitoring and support of student needs.

"I've been teaching here for 11 years... We really get to know our students well because the school is not that big." (Participant T-3)

This environment enabled close teacher-student relationships, which positioned teachers to observe behavioral patterns and academic challenges firsthand—critical factors that influence their perceptions of the guidance counselor's role.

➤ Perceptions of Counselor Roles

Participants expressed a clear and consistent recognition of the school counselor's multi-dimensional role in promoting students' academic and personal development. Teachers valued the counselor's proactive engagement in managing emotional, social, and behavioral concerns, which often intersected with academic performance. The counselor was especially praised for her communication skills and ability to build rapport across the school community.

"The school counselor must not only be knowledgeable but also possess strong skills in addressing pupil needs. She has excellent communication skills and is effective in

interacting with pupils, teachers, and parents." (Participant T-2)

The findings indicate that teachers perceive the guidance counselor not as a peripheral staff member, but as a central figure in the school's student support system.

➤ Impact of Guidance Counselors on Students

Teachers reported that the school counselor played a significant role in managing crisis situations and addressing students' emotional and behavioral issues. These interventions were seen as essential in restoring classroom order and enabling effective teaching and learning. The counselor's presence during times of family tragedy, emotional breakdowns, or conflict resolution was considered vital for both the affected students and the broader school environment.

"She supports pupils dealing with emotional distress, family tragedies, or school emergencies. These things affect students' focus in class, and the counselor really helps them cope." (Participant T-5)

The counselor's ability to de-escalate conflicts and provide emotional guidance contributed to a more stable, responsive, and inclusive classroom atmosphere.

➤ Teacher-Counselor Collaboration

Participants highlighted the importance of structured collaboration between teachers and the guidance counselor. One notable practice involved the systematic collection of anecdotal records, which were used to track student behavior and identify those requiring intervention. Teachers appreciated the clarity of this process and the professional support they received in handling complex student concerns.

"The counselor regularly instructs faculty to provide anecdotal records to monitor the behavior of pupils who need closer attention." (Participant T-6)

This structured approach fostered accountability and helped teachers feel involved in the counseling process. It also reinforced the notion that supporting students is a shared responsibility among school staff.

➤ Challenges Affecting Counseling Effectiveness

Despite acknowledging the counselor's efforts, teachers reported that the effectiveness of the guidance program was often hampered by systemic constraints. The school lacked adequate facilities for private counseling sessions and had limited access to educational materials and psychological resources. In addition, behavioral issues such as classroom misconduct, disrespect, and peer conflict were frequently noted, putting further strain on the counselor's capacity.

"The most significant challenges currently facing the school are the lack of facilities and equipment. We also see a lot of behavior problems that need constant monitoring." (Participant T-1)

These limitations point to the need for institutional support and policy-level interventions to ensure that guidance programs are fully functional and responsive to student needs.

➤ *Relationship Between Teacher Perceptions and Engagement*

A recurring observation across the interviews was that teachers' involvement in guidance activities—such as student referrals, case conferences, or program support—was largely influenced by their perception of the counselor's role and effectiveness. Where teachers viewed the counselor as competent, compassionate, and collaborative, their engagement was notably higher. Conversely, where such perceptions were unclear or limited, participation in counseling initiatives was minimal.

“There is a growing appreciation for the broad and significant responsibilities of the school counselor... Supporting their programs helps create a supportive environment for everyone.” (Participant T-3)

This finding highlights the importance of not only clearly defining the counselor's role but also building strong interpersonal relationships among school personnel to foster mutual respect and collaboration.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings validate Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which suggests that student outcomes are shaped by the quality of interaction among school personnel. Similarly, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory explains how collaborative modeling between teachers and counselors improves student self-efficacy.

As shown in Table 1, analysis of themes reveals that several factors influence teachers' interaction with guidance counselors. Teachers with longer service and advanced academic qualifications tend to have a deeper understanding and appreciation for the role of counseling in student development. This suggests that experience and education equip teachers with the insight necessary to recognize the importance of collaborative support systems. Additionally, the size and composition of the school play a significant role; smaller student-teacher ratios facilitate closer monitoring and better communication with guidance personnel. The presence of a diverse student population, including those from professional families and learners with special needs, also necessitates tailored counseling approaches, reinforcing the importance of guidance services.

Table 1 Summary of Themes and Key Findings of Participants' Profile

Themes	Key Findings
Length of Service and Experience	Teachers with more years in service demonstrated greater appreciation for the value of guidance services.
Academic Qualifications	Most teachers held postgraduate degrees in education, positioning them to understand students' developmental needs and value counseling roles.
School Size and Composition	A small student-teacher ratio allowed teachers to closely monitor student issues and foster stronger communication with guidance personnel.
Diverse Student Demographics	The school population included both students from professional families and special needs learners, requiring diverse counseling strategies.
Varied Interaction with Guidance Counselors	The school population included both students from professional families and special needs learners, requiring diverse counseling strategies.

These findings are best contextualized through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that effective student development arises from the interaction between immediate systems—like the teacher-counselor dynamic—and broader systemic factors such as institutional resources.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory also supports this analysis, highlighting the importance of collaborative modeling from both teachers and counselors to enhance student motivation and academic efficacy.

Table 2 Summary of Themes and Key Findings of the Perceptions of Teachers on the Role of Guidance Counselors in Student Development and Academic Performance

Themes	Key Findings
Role Appreciation	Counselors are perceived as essential in handling behavior, emotions, and academic planning.
Emotional and Behavioral Interventions	Counselors impact student performance by responding to emotional crises and behavioral issues.
Structured Collaboration	Teachers are more engaged when collaboration is guided by clear protocols like anecdotal reporting.
Resource Limitations and Behavioral Challenges	Counseling effectiveness is hindered by lack of facilities and persistent behavioral issues.
Engagement Linked to Perception	Teachers' awareness of counselor roles increases their willingness to support and participate in programs.

As shown in Table 2, teachers with longer experience and higher educational attainment showed deeper appreciation of counselors' roles. Counselors' interpersonal skills were pivotal to trust-building and collaboration. Structured processes, such as reporting behavior or attending case conferences, helped reinforce teacher-counselor coordination.

Challenges such as resource constraints and recurring student misbehavior require administrative intervention. However, where teacher perception is positive, engagement with guidance programs increases, suggesting the need for awareness-building.

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that guidance counselors are perceived as critical partners in student development. Their roles extend beyond academic support to include behavioral and emotional intervention. Teachers' positive perceptions are shaped by communication, role clarity, and collaborative processes. However, systemic barriers must be addressed to improve program implementation and effectiveness.

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➤ Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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