

IMPECCABLE NOTIONS ON GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING: CHALLENGES AND COPING MECHANISM

Katherine Ann F. Tolentino, J.D., LPT
Bulacan State University

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ABSTRACT

The need for guidance counseling among college students has grown profoundly in reaction to the technological modern world, which brings uncertainties. But, despite the indispensability of guidance counseling services, there is inadequate information dissemination on the availability of its services offered, primarily due to their perception of guidance counseling services. To hunt through this issue, this study aimed to single out the components that affect students' perceptions on guidance counseling through qualitative approach. A total ten college students were purposely chosen for individual interviews. It revealed low engagement with the guidance counselor, despite students expressing positive views towards certain factors such as awareness of available services, ease of access, trust in the counselor, and session confidentiality. However, there are components that should be addressed, as they dissuade students from seeking guidance counseling services and contribute to misconceptions about guidance counseling. These elements include the stigma of fear of judgment associated with mental health issues. The qualitative thematic analysis highlighted further issues that require attention, such as negative experiences, limited information on available services, lack of certainty on confidentiality.

Keywords: Guidance Counseling, Perception, Indispensability, Guidance Services.

1. INTRODUCTION

The educational system has undergone significant changes based on our recent generations in which guidance counseling as part of the curriculum has been recognized as an important part of the educational system. Dhami (2020) stressed that guidance counseling is a service that assists individuals in resolving difficult issues related to life, education, and personal relationships. Guidance counseling is an essential element of the educational process. The peers play a crucial role in influencing students' attitudes and behaviors towards seeking help from guidance counselors. If peers perceive guidance counseling positively and share their positive experiences, it may encourage other students to seek help when needed. Conversely, if peers have negative experiences or attitudes towards guidance counseling, it may deter other students from seeking help, even if they need it (Wein, 2021)

This study aimed to identify the factors that affect the perception of students on guidance counseling to produce a students' guidance counseling engagement program using its results.

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do the respondents' perceptions on the factors that affect their views on guidance counseling in terms of;
 - 1.1 Awareness of services offered
 - 1.2 Accessibility of guidance services
 - 1.3 Confidentiality of information

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the factors affecting the perception of college students on guidance counseling services.

2. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For qualitative data, the researchers used the purposive sampling method. According to Dovetail Editorial Team (2023), purposive sampling is a technique used to choose a certain set of people or units for study. Not at random, but "on purpose," respondents are selected.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of the responses from ten college students regarding their perceptions of guidance counseling reveals several key factors influencing their views. One major theme that was emphasized is the varied perception of the guidance office among college students. First and foremost is the negative perception that guidance has something to do with disciplinary actions. This results with the fear of judgment and concerns about confidentiality. Approachability of guidance staff also has a significant role in the experiences and perception of college students about guidance services. Below are the verbatim responses that support this theme:

Respondent 1: “Natatakot po ako dumaa sa guidance office kasi pakiramdam ko kakaiba ako kapag pumunta ako doon..”

Respondent 3: “Ako po ay nahihiya pumunta doon kasi pagtatawanan ako ng mga kaklase ko at kakilala ko..”

Respondent 4: “Iisipin ng iba na may sira ang ulo ko kapag nalaman nila na nagpupunta ako doon sa guidance..”

Respondent 10: “Pakiramdam ko ipagkakalat ng mga taga guidance ang problema ko.”

There are barriers in the recognition of guidance and counseling services, however there were also positive impact that it can contribute amongst college students. However, negative past experiences, such as instances of feeling misunderstood, can leave lasting impacts and deter students from seeking help in the future. Counselors work collaboratively with students to address their unique needs, provide emotional support, offer resources for personal growth, and empower them to make informed decisions about their education, career paths, and overall well-being (Parveen & Akhtar, 2023). In today's challenging and complex world, it is essential for students to have a reliable support system to turn to during difficult times. Adolescents face a lot of pressures, including academic expectations, social dynamics, and personal challenges (Dhami, 2020). Wiedermann et al. (2023) stressed that access to counseling services can empower students to navigate academic and personal challenges, improve their mental well-being, and develop essential life skills.

This is enunciated with the findings of Mwangi and Otanga (2015) in their study; it shows that students value guidance counseling but seldom seek it due to unawareness, poor communication, and negative perceptions, threatening the program's success. Webb's (2017) assertion that guidance counseling should build trusting relationships with students and provide resources and assistance when things deviate from the expected outcome. Increasing awareness of guidance services and their benefits can also help destigmatize seeking help and encourage more proactive engagement. Below are the verbatim responses that support this theme:

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Respondent 7: “Pwede ko din palang maging kaibigan ang guidance counselor, lalo na kapag wala na ako makausap.”

Respondent 9: “Mas naiintindihan ko na ang sarili ko kapag ako ay nagpapa counseling, hindi pala totoo na kakaiba ang tingin ng lahat kapag sumangguni sa guidance office”

Respondent 10: “Kapag pakiramdam ko wala na gusto makinig, nandun ang guidance office at ako ay malaya nakakapag sabi ng mga kuro-kuro ko.”

In the light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Gender-sensitive approaches are also essential since the college students are already adults due to differences in help-seeking behaviors between males and females.
2. The findings indicate low engagement with the guidance counselor across various areas among respondents such as lack of awareness, stigma around seeking help, or perceived barriers to accessing counseling services.
3. The relationships between factors affecting the perception of college students on guidance counseling exhibit interconnected patterns that inform interventions and coping mechanisms. In conclusion, though guidance counseling services are accessible and some factors positively influence how respondents view guidance counseling, there's still a lack of full utilization of the guidance counseling services.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations are made in line with the findings and conclusion of this study: The researcher suggests that upcoming studies should explore different research techniques or include more factors. By using varied research methods or broadening the range of variables.

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