



**ASSESSMENT OF GUIDANCE SERVICES IMPLEMENTED  
BY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY,  
PHILIPPINES: BASIS FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

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**Abstract:**

This study assessed the implementation of guidance services in secondary schools within General Santos City, focusing on fundamental functions performed by guidance offices, including individual inventory/cumulative records, educational and occupational information, counseling, testing, research and evaluation, follow-up and referral, and extension services. The research employed a descriptive-evaluative design, emphasizing judgment in the evaluation process. Participants in the study included 60 guidance advocates and principals or school heads from secondary schools in the DepEd Division of General Santos City. A meticulously validated survey questionnaire served as the primary tool for evaluating the services, with data analysis conducted through weighted means. The findings indicated areas in counseling and research and evaluation services that require intervention for improved implementation. Specifically, the study highlighted the inadequacy of guidance counselors for effective counseling and the limited capacity of guidance offices to conduct research and evaluation. To address these gaps, an intervention program was proposed, aiming to enhance the overall implementation of guidance services in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** guidance and counseling, education, guidance services, secondary schools, guidance and counseling program, Philippines

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## 1. Introduction

Republic Act 9258 defines Guidance and Counseling as a profession that employs an integrated approach to develop well-functioning individuals, primarily assisting them in maximizing their potential and planning their future based on their abilities, interests, and needs. Despite having a broad scope of responsibilities, including vital services like counseling, individual inventory, information and orientation, testing, follow-up and referral, and conducting research and evaluation, the office encounters difficulties in adequately performing these functions. The challenges include insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructural facilities and guidance materials, and a scarcity of trained guidance counselors (Chin, 2021; European Commission, 2021; Owobamigbe et al., 2021).

Guidance and counseling constitute a vital component of the educational framework, addressing students' physical, emotional, social, vocational, and academic challenges. The inclusion of guidance services in the program is crucial for overall student services, aiming to assist individuals in developing self-understanding, and problem-solving skills, and making appropriate adjustments to their environment. Therefore, continuous efforts to enhance the implementation of guidance services are essential, given their undeniable importance in schools (Ehigbor & Akinlosotu, 2018; Harrison et al., 2023; Tuason et al., 2021).

Despite the acknowledgment of their crucial role, the shortage of guidance counselors in the Philippine public education system remains a concerning reality. In the DepEd Division of General Santos City, available guidance counselor positions exist, but only seven are currently filled, with only four holding Registered Guidance Counselor (RGC) qualifications. The remaining positions are occupied by teaching personnel designated to the guidance office, serving as guidance facilitators. This scarcity of qualified guidance professionals, coupled with the significant number of students in public secondary schools, poses challenges in effectively implementing guidance services, especially in schools without full-time guidance counselors (Cervantes, 2019; Magsambol, 2020).

Hence, it became crucial to evaluate the execution of the current guidance and counseling services provided by public secondary schools in the division of General Santos City. This initial assessment aims to gauge the state of the guidance and counseling program within these schools. The scrutinized guidance services include Individual Inventory/Cumulative Records, Educational and Occupational Information Services, Counseling Services, Testing Services, Research and Evaluation Services, Follow-up and Referral Services, and Extension Services. Based on the findings, a proposed intervention program is being suggested to enhance the capabilities of guidance counselors in delivering improved services to students, the school, and the community.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Client-Centered Theory, which delineates the conditions essential for achieving self-actualization, the primary objective of guidance and counseling services within educational institutions. The theoretical foundation is further reinforced by humanistic psychology, existentialism, and self-determination theory.

Client-Centered Theory, also known as the Person-Centered Theory, crafted by Carl Rogers, is a humanistic psychological framework that places the individual at its core. This approach underscores three core conditions for fostering personal growth: genuineness (congruence), unconditional positive regard, and empathy. Genuineness involves the therapist's authentic and open communication, and being transparent about their thoughts and feelings. Unconditional positive regard ensures that the client is accepted without judgment, regardless of their actions or expressions. Empathy, a deep and compassionate understanding, is crucial for establishing a meaningful therapeutic connection. The ultimate goal of this theory is self-actualization, wherein individuals realize their full potential and pursue personal growth. The therapeutic process is non-directive, emphasizing the client's capacity for self-directed growth within a safe and supportive environment. Rogers' holistic view sees individuals as inherently capable of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-healing. This theory has significantly influenced counseling and education, emphasizing the creation of empathetic and supportive environments for individuals to thrive. In educational settings, it underscores the importance of recognizing students' unique needs and fostering an atmosphere conducive to learning and personal development. Overall, the Client-Centered Theory is optimistic, trusting in individuals' ability to achieve self-actualization when provided with the right conditions for growth and self-exploration (Cherry, 2023; Mcleod, 2023; Nystul, 2020).

Rogers' theory is rooted in the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow, who introduced a model of human growth and development based on inherent self-actualizing tendencies. Maslow's Hierarchy Theory of Motivation presents a five-tier model of human needs depicted hierarchically within a pyramid. These needs include biological and physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs in their respective order. The theory posits that individuals are motivated to fulfill specific needs, with some taking precedence over others. While the order of needs is not fixed and can be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences, Maslow later expanded the model to include cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and transcendence needs, creating an eight-stage framework. This influential theory has had a significant impact on teaching, classroom management, and related fields such as guidance and counseling (Leppanen, 2018; Mcleod, 2023; Nystul, 2020).

Existentialism serves as another theoretical foundation supporting the Client-Centered Theory. This philosophical perspective revolves around the exploration of self and the meaning of life through concepts of free will, choice, and personal responsibility.

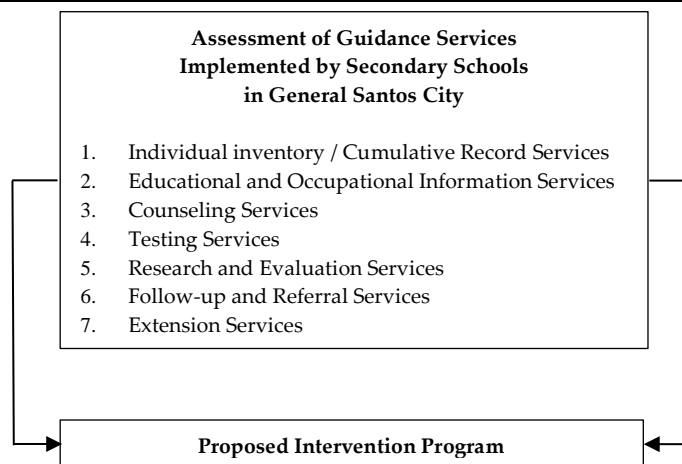
It represents a quest and journey for genuine self-discovery and authentic personal meaning in life. In the context of guidance and counseling, existentialism is viewed as a humanistic approach to assistance, wherein the counselor aids the counselee in uncovering meaning in their life through actions, the experience of values, or even through periods of suffering. The existential viewpoint emphasizes the importance of emphasizing an individual's growth and self-actualization (Arslan & Wong, 2022; Lazzaro & Lucas, 2021; Rogers, 2019).

Finally, the principles of the Client-Centered Theory are substantiated by the Self-Determination Theory, an approach to human motivation that underscores the significance of evolved inner resources in personality development and behavioral self-regulation. This theory delves into individuals' inherent growth tendencies and intrinsic psychological needs as fundamental aspects of self-motivation, personality integration, and the conditions fostering positive processes. Proponents of the Self-Determination Theory have identified three essential needs—competence, relatedness, and autonomy—as crucial for facilitating the optimal functioning of innate propensities for growth and integration. These needs also contribute to constructive social development and personal well-being (Cherry, 2022; Ryan et al., 2021; Thanomton et al., 2018).

### 3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual paradigm of the study, featuring two boxes. The upper box represents the focal issue under investigation, namely the guidance services implemented by secondary schools in the Division of General Santos City. These services encompass individual inventory/cumulative records, educational and occupational information, counseling, testing, research and evaluation, follow-up and referral, and extension services. The lower box outlines the proposed intervention derived from the study's findings. This intervention program is designed to address the identified gap or problem in the implementation of the specified guidance services.

As depicted in the conceptual paradigm, the guidance services under evaluation encompass the responsibilities and roles of a school's guidance counselor/advocate. These services are articulated in the school's guidance and counseling program, providing a blueprint for both implementation and assessment. The outcomes of this assessment will serve as the foundation for the development of an intervention program aimed at refining the execution of guidance services across schools.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study

#### 4. Statement of the Problem

- 1) To determine the status of the guidance services implementation of the secondary schools in the Division of General Santos City in terms of:
  - 1.1 Individual Inventory/Cumulative Record Services,
  - 1.2 Educational and Occupational Information Services,
  - 1.3 Counseling Services,
  - 1.4 Testing Services,
  - 1.5 Research and Evaluation Services,
  - 1.6 Follow-up and Referral Services, and
  - 1.7 Extension Services.
- 2) To propose an intervention program based on the findings of the study.

#### 5. Method

This study specifically employed a descriptive-evaluative research design to assess the guidance services implemented by secondary schools in the Division of General Santos City. This research design aims to illustrate participants' evaluations or judgments on specific areas of concern. It represents a research method primarily focused on gathering information about existing conditions or situations for descriptive and interpretative purposes. It involves the analysis and interpretation of data, the identification of trends and relationships, and the formulation of generalizations and predictions. Additionally, in active learning, this design aids in selecting unlabeled data points to address the labeled data deficiency problem. Generally, it furnishes researchers with practical information, allowing them to describe, interpret, and assess various phenomena and conditions (Aquino, 2022; Dharmayana & Herawati, 2021; Dio, 2020).

The researcher conducted the study in General Santos City, a highly urbanized city in the SOCCKSSARGEN region of the Philippines. The regional acronym represents the cities and provinces of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos in South Central Mindanao. Classified as Region XII, General Santos City serves as the economic and industrial center and is the most populous city in the region.

The DepEd Division of General Santos City is part of the city schools under the jurisdiction of DepEd Regional Office 12. It oversees more than 30 public secondary schools, including newly created annexes. The Schools Division Office (SDO) loosely categorizes these schools into three groups: big schools, with a total student population ranging from 2,500 to approximately 13,000; medium schools, having a total student population ranging from 1,000 to 2,499; and small schools, with a student population of less than 999. Most schools situated in urban areas fall into the big and medium categories. General Santos City National High School, the largest high school, accommodates a student population of more or less 13,000. The majority of these secondary schools provide both junior high school, some of which include special program offerings, and senior high school programs.

The participants in this study were comprised of 30 Guidance Advocates responsible for performing guidance services and 30 School Heads or Principals, totaling 60 respondents. They served in public secondary schools that offered both Junior High School and Senior High School Programs. In each school, there is a Guidance Advocate, whether occupying an item position or appointed to the office by the School Head or Principal. In larger and medium-sized schools, there may be more than one Guidance Advocate implementing the guidance services, with a designated leader who spearheads and represents the school in activities outside the school premises. The total population for this study consisted of the primary guidance personnel and the school heads. Additionally, among the guidance respondents, five were Registered Guidance Counselors, three were non-RGCs occupying specific item positions, and the remaining were Guidance Advocates with teacher positions ranging from Teacher I to Master Teacher I. The School Heads held positions ranging from Teacher in Charge (TIC) to Principal IV.

Nevertheless, excluding those in designated item positions, the other Guidance Advocates were replaceable, contingent on the school's situation and at the discretion of the School Head or Principal. Even the School Heads or Principals were subject to reassignment as determined by the Schools Division Superintendent. Hence, the respondents for this study were those currently holding the position at the time of the survey, irrespective of their length of service as guidance personnel or school head.

## **6. Research Instrument**

The researcher developed a self-designed questionnaire as a survey tool for this purpose. The final survey questionnaire underwent validation by three proficient experts in the field, evaluating its content, clarity, and utility. The survey questionnaire evaluated the

seven areas of guidance services: individual inventory/cumulative record services, educational and occupational information services, counseling services, testing services, research and evaluation services, follow-up and referral services, and extension services.

The survey employed a 5-point Likert Scale of Agreement to evaluate the guidance services implemented by the secondary schools in the Division of General Santos City. The scale included the following descriptions: Strongly Agree, Agree, Moderately Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Respondents rated the implementation of guidance services in their respective schools based on the extent of their agreement with each area of assessment.

### **6.1 Data Gathering Procedure**

In this study, the researcher employed a validated survey questionnaire to collect the necessary data. After validating the research instrument, the researcher requested and secured permission from the school division superintendent to conduct the study, as indicated in a letter addressed to the superintendent's office. Once approval was secured, the researcher proceeded with the study.

Due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited face-to-face interactions, the researcher created a digital version of the survey questionnaire using Google Forms. It was then distributed individually to respondents through emails, messenger, and other suitable online platforms. For nearby respondents who opted for in-person participation, hard copies of the survey were printed and distributed, with strict adherence to health protocols.

Throughout the study, the researcher personally communicated with respondents, clearly explaining the study's purpose. The process of gathering, consolidating, and analyzing data adhered to strict confidentiality measures. The evaluation encompassed seven distinct areas, each defined by five indicators that comprehensively covered the pertinent functions and services of the guidance office. Subsequently, responses were meticulously consolidated and tabulated for thorough data analysis.

The Mean served as a central statistical tool for analyzing the gathered data. Using the 5-point Likert Scale of agreement, the calculated means for each variable provided a concise measure of central tendency, offering a clear understanding of the average response within the surveyed population. By employing the Mean, the researcher could identify trends and patterns in participants' perceptions, enabling a nuanced interpretation of the data. This statistical measure was pivotal in distilling complex datasets into meaningful and easily interpretable insights, facilitating a more in-depth comprehension of the research outcomes (Bhandari, 2023; Grimmer et al., 2022; Mbanaso et al., 2023).

### **6.2 Data Analysis and Statistical Tools**

For this study, the researcher employed the Weighted Mean for analyzing and interpreting the data. The Mean, commonly known as the average, is the most frequently used measurement of central tendency, calculated by summing all values and dividing

by the total number of values. Conversely, calculating the Weighted Mean involves multiplying the assigned weight to a specific event or outcome by its corresponding quantitative result and then summing all the products together.

Given the total population of 60 in the study, the researcher defined ranges for the verbal interpretation as follows: Strongly Agree (4.20 - 5.00), Agree (3.40 - 4.19), Moderately Agree (2.60 - 3.39), Disagree (1.80 - 2.59), and Strongly Disagree (1.00 - 1.79). The verbal interpretation, along with its Weighted Mean, was explicitly employed to briefly summarize and identify patterns that would aid in addressing the research questions in this study.

## **7. Results and Discussion**

This study centers on the evaluation of guidance services implemented by secondary schools in the Division of General Santos City. The specific guidance services under scrutiny encompass individual inventory/cumulative record services, educational and occupational information services, counseling services, testing services, research and evaluation services, follow-up and referral services, and extension services.

As stated, with the data given by the total population of 60 in the study, the researcher established ranges for the verbal interpretation, described as Strongly Agree (4.20 -5.00), Agree (3.40 - 4.19), Moderately Agree (2.60 - 3.39), Disagree (1.80 - 2.59), and Strongly Disagree (1.00 - 1.79). The researcher specifically used the verbal interpretation and its Weighted Mean to summarize and identify patterns that would aid in addressing the research questions in this study.

### **7.1 Individual Inventory/Cumulative Record Service**

The individual inventory/cumulative record service involves the collection of essential information regarding the individual profiles of each student. This study specifically evaluated the collective perspectives of both Guidance Advocates and School Heads regarding the acquisition of crucial information about the individual profiles of students. This information serves as the foundational basis for various other services.

The findings reveal a consensus among the majority, who agreed with all five presented indicators, resulting in a grand mean of 4.08. It suggests a strong alignment in viewpoints regarding the importance and effectiveness of the individual inventory/cumulative record service in acquiring pertinent student information.

According to Okumu (2018), appraisal services entail systematically collecting, processing, storing, and utilizing information. This process aids learners in understanding themselves and their educational pursuits while also helping teachers and staff comprehend the needs of the students. In this study, participants unanimously believe and agree, considering the five indicators, that maintaining and utilizing individual inventory/cumulative records is crucial for scientifically and objectively assessing students' performance, leading to a better understanding of their developmental needs.



**Table 1:** Summary of Weighted Means on Individual Inventory/ Cumulative Record Service

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The information is recorded in a meaningful, organized, and developmental manner.	4.00	Agree
The individual inventory contains relevant information that describes the total person.	4.15	Agree
The individual inventory record provides clues to the interests, health habits, attitudes, and family patterns that characterize the students which serve as a basis for student and parent conferences.	4.13	Agree
The individual inventory form provides information for teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and parents which is used for planning purposes.	4.15	Agree
The individual inventory record provides a continuous record of the development of the students from Grade 7 to Grade 12.	3.97	Agree
Grand Mean	4.08	Agree

## 7.2 Educational and Occupational Information/Orientation Services

Educational and occupational information/ orientation services encompass vital components aimed at keeping students informed about current trends in occupations, educational opportunities, and critical factors for personal and social adjustment. In this domain, all 60 participants unanimously express strong agreement across the five indicators assessing the components of educational and occupational information/ orientation services integral to implementing the guidance services. This grand weighted mean of 4.33 reflects the unanimous consensus.

The results in this field coincided with the execution of the K to 12 Program in Philippine education, leading to an increased demand for educational and occupational information services. It was evident in laws like Republic Act No. 11206, the Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 2019. The primary goal of this law is to establish a career guidance and counseling program in all public and private secondary schools nationwide, ensuring students receive proper direction in pursuing subsequent tertiary education (Chan Robles Virtual Law Library, 2019; Orbeta Jr. et al., 2019).

**Table 2:** Summary of Weighted Means on Educational and Occupational Information/ Orientation Services

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The office has a bulletin of information accessible to students, parents, and other members of the school.	4.33	Strongly Agree
The information service includes dissemination of special information that the students will need to expedite their learning experiences.	4.33	Strongly Agree
The information service helps students develop good work habits and attitudes, assess their strengths and interests, and explore job fields where their abilities and skills most fit.	4.28	Strongly Agree
The information service acquaints students with curricular and non-curricular activities related to education/career planning and decision-making.	4.42	Strongly Agree
The information service is well-disseminated and includes programs for, teachers and parents, and other stakeholders in the community to capacitate them in assisting the students.	4.30	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.33	Strongly Agree

### 7.3 Counseling Services

In this study, counseling service aims to aid students in making a realistic appraisal of their interests, abilities, and aptitudes, employing approaches that can be directive, non-directive, or a combination of both. Counseling services, at their core, provide a supportive and confidential environment where individuals can explore and navigate personal challenges, emotional concerns, and interpersonal difficulties. By fostering self-awareness and promoting positive coping mechanisms, counseling empowers individuals to make informed decisions and enhance their overall well-being. The five indicators employed to gauge this specific domain yielded a grand mean of 4.13, signifying agreement with the presented criteria.

Nevertheless, in indicator two, the prevailing sentiment among participants was moderate agreement, as evidenced by the weighted mean of 3.30. It suggested that they moderately agreed with the statement asserting the adequacy of Guidance Counselors to address students' needs and concerns.

Aligned with the result, the Department of Education (DepEd) reported that, as of May 2020, there are 1,096 active counselors, with a total of 5,398 approved vacancies for the profession. However, because of insufficient compensation, only 20% of these positions have been occupied. Given the substantial number of over 20 million public school learners, achieving the recommended ratio of one guidance counselor for every 500 students poses a significant challenge. To tackle these issues, legislative measures are underway to raise the entry-level compensation of guidance counselors in the country. (CNN Philippines, 2022; Payscale, 2023).

**Table 3:** Summary of Weighted Means of Counseling Service

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The counseling service contributes to the realization of the objectives of the guidance programs.	4.45	Strongly Agree
There are an adequate number of guidance counselors/ guidance designates to assist and help the students with their needs and problems.	3.30	Moderately Agree
The guidance counselors/ guidance designates work competently to develop a sound relationship with the students.	4.15	Agree
The guidance counselors/guidance designates are capacitated to handle counseling services through training, seminars, and short courses.	4.40	Strongly Agree
The counseling service includes comprehensive programs for career, academic, and personal-social areas intended for both the students and the parents/guardians that adhere to ethical considerations of the profession.	4.35	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.13	Agree

#### 7.4 Testing Service

The testing service primarily focuses on facilitating the administration of national assessments to evaluate students' academic performance and conducting career-related tests designed to assess interests and skills for career guidance and placement. In this study, participants assessed the guidance offices based on their proficiency in facilitating the administration of national assessments and other career-related examinations. They also evaluated the offices' capacity to analyze, interpret, and purposefully utilize test results to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as their interests and skills, to implement interventions. The predominant consensus aligned with agreement on the presented indicators, resulting in a grand mean of 3.90.

Accordingly, Nystul (2020) elaborates on the multifaceted nature of assessment, emphasizing that it involves diverse methods and approaches. The scope of assessment extends beyond standardized psychological testing and includes various techniques such as interviews and observations. Additionally, sociocultural assessment considers the cultural context, while behavioral evaluation examines observable behaviors. Moreover, environmental assessment considers the impact of surroundings on an individual's well-being. Nystul's insights underscore the comprehensive nature of assessment, recognizing the importance of employing various tools and perspectives to gain a holistic understanding of an individual.

**Table 4:** Summary of Weighted Means of Testing Service

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The Guidance Office maintains test confidentiality and follows ethical standards in testing.	4.22	Strongly Agree
There are adequate standardized instruments through which facets of behaviors are evaluated.	3.49	Agree
The Guidance Office facilitates the conduct of other mandated standardized tests/ examinations properly according to instructions.	4.15	Agree
Test results are interpreted and utilized during counseling, assessment, and evaluation.	3.82	Agree
Test results are communicated to the takers, teachers, and parents for guidance purposes.	3.80	Agree
Grand Mean	3.90	Agree

### 7.5 Research and Evaluation Services

This study evaluated the research and evaluation services provided by the Guidance Office. These services encompass the systematic assessment of guidance services and activities to determine the overall impact of guidance and counseling on the student's growth and development, as well as the achievement of educational objectives. The overall mean of 3.49, interpreted as an agreement, encapsulated the comprehensive evaluation of the five indicators employed to measure and assess the domain. It implied a consensus among participants favoring the judicious use of research within reasonable limits.

This observation underscored the discernible perspective shared by Guidance Advocates and School Heads or Principals. Specifically, there was moderate agreement regarding the notion that guidance offices engage in research based on available data, reflected in the weighted mean of 3.25 for indicator one. Moreover, there was a parallel moderate agreement regarding the periodic conduct of studies and surveys by the office, as indicated by the weighted mean of 3.37 for indicator two. It indicated a balanced consensus among participants on the role and frequency of research activities within the guidance office.

Remarkably, even though they recognized that Guidance Offices consider the needs of the school community for assessment, evaluation, and program planning, participants had reservations about utilizing available data for conducting periodic studies and surveys. This hesitation might impede the development of research strategies essential for evaluating students' potential and the overall effectiveness of the guidance and counseling program.

Conversely, students indirectly benefit from the enhancement of Counselors' or School Heads' professional qualities. In particular, research in guidance and counseling contributes to the design of programs addressing students' needs, problems, prevention, and interventions. Geiger and Oehrtman (2020) suggested leveraging a school leadership team to showcase guidance counselors' leadership skills and apply their training in data utilization for evidence-based interventions and subsequent evaluation. However, participants in this study exhibit only partial agreement regarding the implementation of research and evaluation in their respective institutions.

**Table 5:** Summary of Weighted Means on Research and Evaluation Service

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The Guidance Office conducts research based on available data.	3.25	Moderately Agree
Studies and surveys are conducted periodically.	3.37	Moderately Agree
The research takes into consideration the needs of students, teachers, parents, and administrative support.	3.67	Agree
The guidance program and services are periodically improved through assessment and evaluation.	3.58	Agree
Results of the research are used as the basis for program planning.	3.57	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.49</b>	<b>Agree</b>

### 7.6 Follow-up and Referral Services

Follow-up is a service designed to assess the efficacy of counseling procedures or monitor students' progress, as mutually agreed upon during conferences. This service encompasses activities such as home visitations and regularly monitoring students' engagements both within and outside the school. Conversely, referral involves guiding students to access additional assistance or services beyond those provided by the guidance office.

The results of this study revealed a grand mean of 4.31 for the presented indicators related to follow-up and referral services. Participants unanimously strongly agreed about the effective implementation of follow-up and referral services to address the diverse needs and other issues of the students, including mental health concerns.

The participants' strong agreement on the importance of follow-up services for students aligned with the position of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), which emphasizes that individual student planning should incorporate follow-up as a crucial strategy for aiding students and collecting follow-up data for assessment and program development. Recognizing that individual development is an ongoing and sequential progression toward increased effectiveness in managing and mastering the environment to fulfill psychological and social needs, the inclusion of follow-up becomes an essential aspect of the counseling process (ASCA, 2019, Lederman et al., 2021).

The findings also aligned with the principles outlined in Poblete's research, emphasizing that both internal and external referral services aim to cultivate a culture of trust and professionalism among parents, students, teachers, and school administration. This fosters respect, confidence, and professional relationships beyond the classroom, facilitating the resolution of students' concerns and problems. Moreover, the Guidelines on Counseling and Referral System of Learners for the School Year 2020-2021 delineated that referrals encompass a broad spectrum of internal partners, external partners, and individuals from various professions, fields, and interests capable of addressing the learner's current issues, concerns, or problems (Llego, 2021; Poblete, 2020)

**Table 6:** Summary of Weighted Means on Follow-up and Referral Services

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The Guidance Office conducts follow-ups of students who have undergone counseling or other guidance services.	4.42	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Office employs viable strategies to conduct follow-ups such as home visitations, tracking of students, updated directories, and others.	4.30	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Office facilitates the referral of students in need of specialized treatment or services as well as those whose cases are beyond the Guidance Counselors'/ Designates' jurisdiction.	4.32	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Office maintains records of referred and follow-up cases for monitoring purposes.	4.22	Strongly Agree
The parents, teachers, and other stakeholders are involved in the follow-up and referral services.	4.28	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.31	Strongly Agree

### 7.7 Extension Services

Extension services encompass support provided to students, teachers within the school, parents, and the community to foster the holistic development of students and establish a robust support system. These services involve organizing activities for parents, teachers, and community stakeholders, such as parenting seminars and outreach programs.

This study assessed participants based on their viewpoints on these services using five indicators. The results generated a grand mean of 4.40, demonstrating a comprehensive and strong agreement among the participants.

Together, the Guidance Advocates and School Heads or Principals, who were respondents in this study, strongly supported the implementation of extended services based on the applied indicators. It aligned with the perspective of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), which emphasizes that high school counselors operate collaboratively rather than in isolation when addressing students' needs. They actively engage students in a proactive program, collaborating with school staff, administration, family members, and the community to deliver impactful programs and activities. The

principle of consultation and collaboration as indirect student services, emphasized by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), underscored the sharing of strategies and cooperative efforts with educators, parents, and the community to improve student achievement (ASCA, 2019; Rumsey & Milsom, 2019; Strear et al., 2021).

**Table 7:** Summary of Weighted Means on Extension Services

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
The Guidance Office assists the school administration in the implementation of its programs and activities.	4.53	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Office extends the guidance services to the community through the conduct of activities such as, but not limited to, capacitating parents on effective parenting and outreach programs.	4.35	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Office coordinates with the appropriate agencies and offices for program implementation.	4.38	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Office maintains an active partnership and strong linkages with the stakeholders in the community for the benefit of the students.	4.42	Strongly Agree
The Guidance Counselors/ Guidance Designates engage in continuous professional development to serve the Guidance Office better.	4.33	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.40	Strongly Agree

### 7.8 Proposed Intervention Program

The second general objective of this study is to recommend an intervention program derived from the findings. It entails a strategic plan or set of initiatives crafted to bridge the identified gaps in evaluating guidance services in secondary schools within the Division of General Santos City. This program augments and improves the current guidance programs in schools.

In light of the study's discoveries, a recommendation emerged to implement an intervention program addressing deficiencies in how secondary schools in the division of General Santos City execute guidance services. This supplementary program sought to improve the existing guidance and counseling program in secondary schools, ensuring more effective support for students, the school, and the community.

**Program Title:** “Project GUIDES (GUIDance Enhanced Services)”

**Proponent:** Miraflor J. Dionaldo

**Rationale:**

Guidance and counseling constitute a profession employing an integrated approach to foster the optimal development of individuals. It involves assisting individuals in realizing their full potential and planning for their present and future based on their abilities, interests, and needs. The guidance office plays a vital role in every school, serving as the principal executor of the guidance and

counseling program. Its responsibilities encompass fundamental guidance services such as counseling, individual inventory, information and orientation, placement, testing, follow-up, and research and evaluation, among other essential functions (Chan Robles Virtual Law Library, 2019).

**General Objectives:**

To address the identified gaps in the implementation of guidance services, the study suggests an intervention program aimed at enhancing and complementing the current guidance and counseling program in secondary schools within the division of General Santos City.

**Specific Objectives:**

This intervention program specifically aims to:

- 1) Provide viable activities for specific concerns and problems as determined in the findings of the study;
- 2) Encourage guidance counselors/designates to apply for the position and commit to delivering quality guidance services for the best interest of the school and all its stakeholders; and,
- 3) Improve the implementation of the guidance services of the Secondary Schools in the Division of General Santos City.



Miraflor J. Dionaldo, Francisco M. Espinosa  
 ASSESSMENT OF GUIDANCE SERVICES IMPLEMENTED BY SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
 IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY, PHILIPPINES: BASIS FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM

**Program Matrix:**

Area of Concern/ Findings	Objectives	Activities	Expected Output	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Budget
Counseling Service	To encourage professionals to apply for guidance positions in the division	Lobby for support and recommend the proposed intervention of the DepEd to elevate the country's entry-level compensation for guidance counselors	Filled-up vacancies in guidance counselor positions	Guidance Counselors/ Advocates, Guidance Supervisors in the DepEd, Regional and National GC Associations, PGCA	Throughout the Year	N/A
	To ensure the delivery and implementation of guidance services in schools	Organize capacity-building training sessions and workshops for educators and other staff members expressing interest in working within the guidance office.	Increased number of guidance personnel, at least two in every school or five in big schools	Schools Division Superintendent, School Heads/ Principals, Guidance Counselors/ Designates	Beginning of every school year or during In-Service Training	P10,000
		Propose for the de-loading of Guidance Designates, especially in medium and big schools as well as assigning guidance advocates and life coaches by grade level on a long term basis	More personnel to perform the functions and more time spent in the implementation of guidance services	Schools Division Superintendent, School Heads/ Principals, Guidance Counselors/ Designates	At the beginning of each School Year	N/A
		Propose for the establishment and extensive use of hotlines and online platforms in the Division to provide remote counseling services to schools without qualified Guidance Counselors	Availability of phone hotlines and other online platforms for counseling services	Schools Division Superintendent, Division Guidance Supervisor, Qualified Guidance Counselors	Jun-24	P10,000
		Counselors				
Research and Evaluation Services	To determine the needs of students, teachers, parents, and administrative support as the basis for action research	Conduct a needs-based survey among students, teachers, and parents as the basis for a School-Based Action Research	A baseline data on the needs of students, teachers, parents, and the administration	School Head, Guidance Counselor/ Designate, Teachers, Students and Parents	Last quarter of the School Year	P10,000
		Conduct at least one action research in a given school year	A copy of the Action Research duly signed and submitted to the Division Office	School Head, Guidance Counselor/ Designate as proponent and respondents from the number of teachers, students, parents, and administration	Last Quarter of the School Year	P5,000
	To utilize the evaluation findings to improve the Guidance Program, assist in administrative planning and decision-making	Conduct a comprehensive guidance and counseling evaluation covering program evaluation, personnel evaluation, and results evaluation at least once every three (3) years	Availability of data based on the comprehensive evaluation of the Guidance and Counseling Program	The School Head, Guidance Counselor/ Designate, other guidance personnel, teachers, students, and parents	June 2024 and every three (3) years thereafter	P10,000

## 8. Conclusions

The principal aim of this study was to evaluate the execution of guidance services in the Division of General Santos City. Conclusions drawn from the findings included the following:

- 1) The gaps identified in the implementation of guidance services by the secondary schools in the Division of General Santos City include the insufficient number of Guidance Counselors to provide counseling services and the incapacity of the Guidance Office to conduct periodic research based on available data; and,
- 2) to address the identified gaps, an intervention program named Project GUIDES (Guidance Enhanced Services) was proposed. This program aligned with the principles of the person-centered theory by Carl Rogers, emphasizing human growth based on inherent self-actualizing tendencies. Self-actualization considered the pinnacle of development, relies on the holistic and well-rounded development of individuals, with schools and guidance offices playing a crucial role in this developmental stage.

## 9. Recommendations

In light of the results, the recommendation is for secondary schools to reevaluate their respective Guidance and Counseling Programs, incorporating the proposed intervention program to improve their overall effectiveness. Specific recommendations include the following:

Firstly, to encourage the Department of Education to actively support the requests presented by guidance advocates, urging the legislative body to consider increasing the entry-level compensation for Guidance Counselors. This step could attract more potential applicants and contribute to addressing the shortage of guidance counselors.

Secondly, to urge the Schools Division Offices (SDOs) to explore the implementation of programs aimed at maximizing the functions of guidance and counseling. It could involve establishing online platforms or phone hotlines to provide easy access for learners seeking counseling assistance related to their education and mental health.

Thirdly, School Heads should spearhead capacity-building programs and ensure that teachers assigned to the Guidance Office have manageable teaching loads. It would afford them sufficient time to carry out various guidance services and engage in research activities for continuous improvement.

Lastly, future researchers might consider doing further studies that would help improve the implementation and delivery of guidance and counseling services in all public schools in the country.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors whose names are listed below certify that they have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; membership, employment, consultancies, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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