

Performance Assessment of Guidance Counselors of Secondary Schools in the National Capital Region

Julieta Pia-Catungal
Polytechnic University of the Philippines
piajpc50@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the performance of guidance counselors in selected secondary schools in the National Capital Region and used the results as basis for improving guidance and counseling services. A descriptive-evaluative research design was employed using the researcher-developed Guidance Counselors Performance Assessment Tool (GCPAT). The instrument assessed eight domains: Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior, and Professional Standard. The respondents were 314 participants composed of school heads and guidance counselors from public and private secondary schools. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test, chi-square procedures, and analysis of variance where applicable. Results

showed that the respondents were equally distributed by gender, mostly 31 to 40 years old, mostly married, and mostly from private schools. Guidance counselors rated their performance from above standard to superior/excellent across the eight domains. Their strongest self-assessed domains were Professional Behavior ($M = 4.55$), Coordination ($M = 4.53$), and Counseling ($M = 4.51$), while Program Management and Guidance both obtained $M = 4.46$. School heads rated guidance counselors higher overall, with all eight domains interpreted as superior/excellent work. The highest school-head ratings were Program Management ($M = 4.66$) and Professional Standard ($M = 4.65$). Significant differences were found in several domains when assessments were grouped by age, gender, civil status, length of service, and professional degree. The findings indicate that the GCPAT is a useful tool for evaluating guidance counselor performance and for identifying areas for intervention, policy development, and continuing professional improvement.

Keywords: *guidance counselors, counseling services, GCPAT, performance assessment, secondary schools, National Capital Region*

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling services are integral to secondary education because they support learners' academic, personal-social, and career development. Guidance counselors help students understand themselves, make informed decisions, cope with school-related challenges, and prepare for future academic or vocational choices. In the context of K to 12 implementation and changing educational demands, guidance counselors are expected to perform broader functions involving program planning, counseling, consultation, assessment, coordination, and professional leadership.

The need to evaluate guidance counselor performance is particularly important in the National Capital Region, where schools serve large and diverse student populations. The source manuscript noted that the ideal ratio of one counselor for every 500 students is difficult to achieve in many public secondary schools. Some schools also rely on teacher-designated guidance counselors rather than full-time licensed guidance counselors.

These conditions make it necessary to examine how guidance services are actually performed and how school heads and counselors assess the quality of those services.

This study focused on the Guidance Counselors Performance Assessment Tool (GCPAT), a researcher-developed instrument intended to appraise the performance of guidance counselors in relation to the overall goals of the school. The tool covers eight domains: Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior, and Professional Standard. Through these domains, the study evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of guidance counselor performance and identified areas for intervention and policy improvement.

The study was grounded in guidance and counseling theories that emphasize the role of counselors as facilitators of student growth, self-understanding, decision-making, and behavioral adjustment. Person-centered theory, social learning theory, psychoanalytic perspectives, behavioral theory, rational emotive behavior therapy, trait-factor theory, and humanistic approaches were used in the source manuscript to explain the broad functions of guidance and counseling in schools. These perspectives collectively support the need for systematic assessment of counselor practice.

Literature Review

Guidance and Counseling in Secondary Schools

Guidance and counseling programs are designed to help students manage academic, social, emotional, and career-related concerns. School counselors provide individual counseling, group guidance, career information, student assessment, consultation, and referrals to community resources. Cobia (2007) explained guidance and counseling as an interaction process between the counselee who needs support and the counselor who is trained to provide assistance.

In secondary schools, guidance services support the transition of learners from home to school, from lower to higher grade levels, and eventually from school to further education or work. Kauchak (2011) emphasized that guidance and counseling services prepare learners to assume responsibility for decisions and understand the consequences of choices. Thus, effective counseling services contribute not only to academic development but also to personal maturity and responsible citizenship.

The source study described guidance offices as serving front-door, inner-door, and back-door functions. These include admission and testing, counseling interventions, group dynamics, discipline support, career guidance, placement, follow-up, consultation, and evaluation. Such broad responsibilities require reliable tools for assessing whether guidance services are organized, relevant, and responsive.

Performance Assessment and Program Evaluation

Evaluation is a continuous process of determining whether a program has achieved its intended objectives. In guidance and counseling, evaluation helps uncover strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Ang-Espina (2015) emphasized that careful evaluation should be part of every guidance program because it supports improvement and accountability.

The GCPAT was developed to evaluate guidance counselor performance through eight domains. These domains represent the major areas of guidance work, including program administration, direct guidance, counseling intervention, consultation, coordination, assessment, ethical behavior, and professional standards. A structured assessment tool allows both school heads and counselors to examine performance using common criteria.

Program evaluation is especially important when counseling roles are performed by both licensed counselors and teacher-designated counselors. A formal assessment tool can help clarify expectations, direct professional development, and provide evidence for school-based intervention programs.

Counselor Competence, Professional Behavior, and Standards

Counselor competence involves knowledge, skills, ethical practice, communication, and the ability to respond to student needs. Professional behavior includes advocacy, collaboration, leadership, openness to

professional growth, and active participation in school and community networks. These areas are critical because guidance counselors operate within complex school systems and must coordinate with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners.

Professional standards help ensure that counseling services are legally, ethically, and educationally sound. The source manuscript emphasized that guidance counselors should keep updated with developments in the profession, follow laws and policies, pursue continuing professional development, and uphold confidentiality and ethical practice. These standards strengthen the credibility and effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-evaluative research design. This design was appropriate because the study assessed the performance of guidance counselors using a structured tool and compared assessment results based on respondent profiles and assessment perspectives.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in selected public and private secondary schools in the National Capital Region during Academic Year 2017-2018. The locale was appropriate because the National Capital Region has a large and diverse secondary-school population and includes schools with different guidance service arrangements.

Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents were 314 participants consisting of school heads and guidance counselors from selected secondary schools. The source manuscript described respondents according to gender, age, civil status, length of service, school type, and professional degree. The study included both school-head assessments and guidance counselor self-assessments to provide two perspectives on counselor performance.

Table 1. *Selected Profile of Respondents*

Profile variable	Leading category or distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	157	50.00%
Gender	Female	157	50.00%
Age	31-40 years old	126	40.13%
Civil status	Married	194	61.78%
Length of service	6-10 years	143	45.54%
Type of school	Private	300	95.54%
Professional degree	Masteral	143	45.54%

Research Instrument

The study used the Guidance Counselors Performance Assessment Tool (GCPAT), a researcher-developed instrument that assessed counselor performance in eight domains: Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior, and Professional Standard. The instrument was intended to define, delineate, and direct the functions of guidance counselors in relation to the goals of the school.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher administered the GCPAT questionnaire to guidance counselors and school heads. Respondents rated performance indicators under each domain. The gathered responses were tabulated and organized according to the problem statements, respondent profile variables, and domain areas.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were used to describe respondent profiles. Weighted mean was used to determine the level of performance assessment in each GCPAT domain. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to examine significant differences across profile groups and between school-head and guidance-

counselor perspectives. The source manuscript also identified chi-square and analysis of variance as part of the statistical treatment. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

Ethical Consideration

The study respected respondent anonymity and encouraged honest responses. The final journal submission should include the institutional approval or ethics-review reference number if required by the target journal. Because the study relied on professional assessments rather than direct student data, confidentiality of respondent identity and school-level information should be maintained in the publication version.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Guidance Counselors' Self-Assessment Across GCPAT Domains

Guidance counselors rated their performance as above standard or superior/excellent across all eight domains. Professional Behavior obtained the highest mean ($M = 4.55$), followed by Coordination ($M = 4.53$) and Counseling ($M = 4.51$). The lowest domain means were Program Management and Guidance, both at 4.46, although these were still interpreted as above standard. These findings indicate that guidance counselors perceived their performance positively, particularly in professional conduct, coordination, and direct counseling-related work.

Table 2. *Guidance Counselors' Self-Assessment by GCPAT Domain*

GCPAT domain	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation	Rank
Professional Behavior	4.55	Superior/Excellent work	1
Coordination	4.53	Superior/Excellent work	2
Counseling	4.51	Superior/Excellent work	3
Professional Standard	4.50	Above standard	4
Student Assessment	4.48	Above standard	5
Consultation	4.47	Above standard	6
Program Management	4.46	Above standard	7.5
Guidance	4.46	Above standard	7.5

The high rating in Professional Behavior suggests that guidance counselors viewed themselves as advocates, collaborators, lifelong learners, and responsible professionals. The high Coordination rating indicates perceived strength in working with teachers, parents, school personnel, and community resources. The relatively lower but still strong ratings in Program Management and Guidance suggest that planning, program audit, curriculum-based guidance, and structured guidance activities require sustained support and continuous improvement.

School Heads' Assessment Across GCPAT Domains

School heads rated guidance counselors higher than counselors rated themselves. All eight domains were interpreted as superior/excellent work. Program Management received the highest rating ($M = 4.66$), followed by Professional Standard ($M = 4.65$), Student Assessment ($M = 4.64$), and Guidance, Counseling, and Professional Behavior, each with $M = 4.62$. These ratings indicate that school heads generally perceived guidance counselors as performing effectively in both administrative and student-support functions.

Table 3. *School Heads' Assessment by GCPAT Domain*

GCPAT domain	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation	Rank
Program Management	4.66	Superior/Excellent work	1
Professional Standard	4.65	Superior/Excellent work	2
Student Assessment	4.64	Superior/Excellent work	3
Guidance	4.62	Superior/Excellent work	4.5

Counseling	4.62	Superior/Excellent work	4.5
Professional Behavior	4.62	Superior/Excellent work	4.5
Consultation	4.60	Superior/Excellent work	7
Coordination	4.58	Superior/Excellent work	8

The school-head ratings suggest trust and confidence in guidance counselors' ability to organize programs, follow professional standards, conduct student assessment, and provide direct services. However, the differences between self-assessment and school-head assessment imply that role expectations and evaluation perspectives may vary between administrators and counselors.

Comparison of Self-Assessment and School-Head Assessment

The comparison showed that school heads generally rated guidance counselors higher than counselors rated themselves in all eight domains. The largest differences appeared in Program Management and Guidance. The source manuscript further reported item-level significant differences in selected program-management indicators, particularly needs assessment, program audit review, and development or updating of evaluation tools. This suggests that school heads may have higher expectations regarding systematic planning, evaluation, and visibility of guidance services.

Table 4. Comparison of Overall Domain Means by Assessment Perspective

GCPAT domain	Guidance counselor self-assessment	School-head assessment	Difference	Interpretive note
Program Management	4.46	4.66	+0.20	School heads rated program management higher.
Guidance	4.46	4.62	+0.16	School heads rated guidance activities higher.
Counseling	4.51	4.62	+0.11	Both groups rated counseling strongly.
Consultation	4.47	4.60	+0.13	Both groups reported strong consultation performance.
Coordination	4.53	4.58	+0.05	Smallest difference between groups.
Student Assessment	4.48	4.64	+0.16	School heads rated assessment higher.
Professional Behavior	4.55	4.62	+0.07	Both groups rated professional behavior strongly.
Professional Standard	4.50	4.65	+0.15	School heads rated standards higher.

Significant Differences by Respondent Profile

The inferential findings showed that assessments differed across several profile variables. For guidance counselors' assessments, significant differences were found in selected domains when grouped by age, gender, civil status, length of service, and professional degree. Professional degree produced significant differences across all eight domains. For school-head assessments, significant differences were also found in several domains when grouped by age, gender, civil status, and length of service. These results indicate that background characteristics may influence how counselor performance is perceived and evaluated.

Table 5. Summary of Significant Differences in Guidance Counselors' Self-Assessment

Grouping variable	Domains with significant differences	Domains without significant differences
Age	Program Management, Guidance, Student Assessment, Professional Standard	Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Professional Behavior
Gender	Guidance, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior	Program Management, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Professional Standard

Civil status	Guidance, Coordination, Professional Behavior	Program Management, Counseling, Consultation, Student Assessment, Professional Standard
Length of service	Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior, Professional Standard	Consultation, Coordination
Professional degree	All eight domains	None

The results suggest that professional preparation, years of experience, and demographic background can shape how counselors judge their own performance. Professional degree was the most influential grouping variable in the self-assessment results, indicating that educational preparation and licensure-related background may affect confidence, professional identity, and understanding of guidance work.

Table 6. *Summary of Significant Differences in School Heads' Assessment*

Grouping variable	Domains with significant differences	Domains without significant differences
Age	Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior	Professional Standard
Gender	Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Coordination, Professional Behavior, Professional Standard	Consultation, Student Assessment
Civil status	Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior	Professional Standard
Length of service	All eight domains	None
Professional degree	Program Management, Counseling, Coordination, Professional Behavior, Professional Standard	Guidance, Consultation, Student Assessment

The school-head assessment results show that length of service was a strong differentiating factor because all domains showed significant differences. This may reflect the expectation that guidance counselors with longer experience demonstrate stronger administrative, counseling, coordination, and professional-standard practices.

Implications for Guidance Program Improvement

The findings affirm the usefulness of a structured assessment tool for improving guidance services. Although performance ratings were generally high, the source manuscript emphasized the need to address weaknesses and make guidance services more relevant, timely, and useful. A systematic tool such as the GCPAT can help school leaders and counselors identify strengths, review program implementation, and plan interventions based on evidence.

Table 7. *Proposed Guidance Counselor Performance Enhancement Plan*

Priority area	Basis from findings	Suggested actions	Expected outcome
Program assessment and audit	Significant differences appeared in program-management indicators.	Conduct annual guidance program audit using GCPAT and discuss results with school heads and advisory groups.	More systematic and evidence-based program planning.
Needs assessment	The study recommends comprehensive needs assessment in every school.	Collect data from students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators before planning guidance programs.	Programs become more responsive to actual learner needs.
Professional development	Professional degree and length of service influenced assessment results.	Provide training on counseling techniques, assessment interpretation, program evaluation, and ethical practice.	Stronger professional competence and confidence.

Student assessment services	Both groups rated student assessment highly but still identified profile-based differences.	Strengthen standardized and non-standardized assessment procedures and data-based intervention planning.	More accurate student support and referral decisions.
Coordination and consultation	Guidance work requires collaboration with parents, teachers, administrators, and community resources.	Institutionalize referral systems, consultation schedules, and community-linkage mapping.	Better coordinated support for learners.
Policy support	The study recommends policy advocacy for guidance and counseling needs assessment.	Develop school-level policy requiring regular performance review and guidance needs assessment.	Improved accountability and program sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the GCPAT is a useful assessment tool for evaluating the performance of guidance counselors in secondary schools. It provides a structured way to assess Program Management, Guidance, Counseling, Consultation, Coordination, Student Assessment, Professional Behavior, and Professional Standard. Both guidance counselors and school heads rated guidance counselor performance positively, although school heads generally gave higher ratings across the domains.

Guidance counselors viewed their strongest performance in Professional Behavior, Coordination, and Counseling, while school heads rated Program Management and Professional Standard most highly. These results show that counselors were perceived as effective in direct services, professional conduct, coordination, and program administration. However, significant differences across profile variables suggest that performance perceptions are shaped by age, gender, civil status, length of service, and professional degree.

The study further concludes that formal performance assessment is important for strengthening guidance and counseling services. Regular evaluation can help schools identify weaknesses, improve program relevance, support counselors' professional growth, and ensure that guidance services respond to learners' academic, social, emotional, and career-development needs.

Recommendation

Schools should institutionalize the use of a structured guidance counselor performance assessment tool such as the GCPAT. School heads and guidance counselors may use the tool annually to evaluate program implementation, direct services, student assessment, consultation, coordination, professional behavior, and adherence to professional standards.

The Department of Education, school administrators, and guidance coordinators should develop policies requiring comprehensive guidance and counseling needs assessment in every school. These assessments should include inputs from students, parents, teachers, school heads, and counselors because students are the primary recipients of guidance services.

Guidance counselors should be provided with continuing professional development on counseling techniques, student assessment, program management, consultation, referral systems, ethical standards, data management, and career guidance. Schools with teacher-designated guidance counselors should provide additional training and mentoring to support their guidance functions.

Future researchers may expand the study beyond the National Capital Region, include provincial schools, compare public and private institutions more deeply, and incorporate the perspectives of students and parents regarding guidance counselor competence and service effectiveness.

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