

Lived Experiences of Guidance Facilitators Who Take the Role of Guidance Counselors in the Philippines

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Abstract

Guidance facilitators in the Philippines usually do not hold the qualifications of a guidance counselor. Yet, due to registered guidance counselor (RGC) shortage, guidance facilitators who graduated in various fields must take RGC's role, thus, the gap remains and literature on this issue is scarce. Hence, this phenomenological research explored the experiences of guidance facilitators with their clients. It answered two research questions: a) How do the guidance facilitators describe their experiences in taking RGC's role? b) What issues and challenges have the guidance facilitators faced? Fifteen guidance facilitators who met the criteria set were the study's participants. To achieve maximum variation, participants were chosen across age, employment type, and location. Data were collected via one-on-one interviews and analyzed using Creswell's model retaining only relevant themes. The themes that emerged on the guidance facilitators' experiences were clients with special needs and boundary issues. Under boundary issues were multiple relationships, multiple roles, and love interest by clients with the guidance facilitators. The feelings of fear, difficulty, confusion, guilt, and sense of achievement were felt by the guidance facilitators as they described their counseling experiences. Issues and challenges faced by guidance facilitators were lack of training, job mismatch, lack of documentation, false accusation, limited technology and skills, and guidance counselors' insufficiency. Based on the findings, a training program for guidance facilitators is necessary. For future research, mixed method studies may be conducted to find out the extent of the problem in terms of the shortage of RGCs and to design intervention to address the RGC shortage.

Keywords: *guidance counselor shortage, counseling in the Philippines, boundary issues*