

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY PUBLIC TEACHERS IN THE PRACTICE AS GUIDANCE ADVOCATES

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of teachers designated as advocates for guidance in educational settings. With a focus on understanding how these educators delivered counseling services in practice, the research uncovered their needs, challenges, coping mechanisms, and perspectives on advocacy for guidance. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, the study provided insights into the daily realities, emotional landscapes, and professional aspirations of counseling advocates. The findings aimed to contribute significantly to the enhancement of guidance and counseling services nationwide by establishing a robust foundation of knowledge. Recommendations for policy and program development were proposed based on the identified needs and experiences of the participants, aiming to foster a supportive environment for effective guidance practices. Ultimately, this research endeavored to enrich the understanding of advocacy for guidance among educators and informed initiatives that promoted comprehensive student support within educational institutions.

Keyword: - Challenges, Coping Mechanism, Guidance Advocates, Insights Gained, Lived Experiences, and Views

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, the practice of Guidance and Counseling has become more necessary due to the problems that the individual experiences in basic spheres of life. The main objective of guidance and counseling services is to help pupils enhance their academic, interpersonal, emotional, and personal growth (Dhami, 2020).

School counseling and guidance play a great part in aiding the students to fit in with their environment, set realistic goals, and enhance the overall educational experience. Such programs are indeed important in many countries but are often dogged by challenges like pastoral counsel trainers, inadequate facilities, and funding constraints. For instance, this deficit is the reason why most secondary schools in Nigeria cannot offer effective guidance and counseling services to students; hence, such programs remain largely unbeneficial. In the United States, for example, many school districts do not meet the recommended counselor-to-student ratios, leaving counselors and psychologists overwhelmed and unable to cater to the needs of all different students.

Despite all this, there are initiatives taken to enhance the guidance and counseling services in schools. In the Philippines, an initiative is taking steps to establish comprehensive mental health and well-being programs in elementary and secondary schools. They address the learners' emotional and developmental needs; they include

preventive support services. Yet, the shortage of licensed Guidance Counselors is a significant obstacle. Many schools currently follow the tendency of taking teachers and appointing them as Guidance Counselors. Although such teachers, often referred to as guidance advocates, play their crucial roles in supporting the student, such support can be of an intra-professional dimension compared to the actual, qualified counselor. To that effect, therefore, any successful guidance and counseling programs would need to have an adequate supply of trained counselors and appropriate facilities and an equally effective collaboration among teachers and counselors.

This will be done by discussing experiences and challenges faced by various countries in the global scenario on guidance and counseling in schools. For example, a study done by Suleiman (2019) assessed the guidance and counseling services delivered in Nigerian secondary schools and the problems associated with them. It established that though the importance of the services is recognized, most schools lacked facilities and trained counselors and insufficient funds, thus affecting the delivery of these programs by withdrawal of the guidance services hence students did not benefit fully from the services.

Additionally, there should be an adequate supply of appropriate and suitable facilities and school counselors. Most guidance and counseling teachers claimed that no guidelines were followed when providing guidance and counseling, while some instructors needed to be made clear if guidelines even existed. In addition, teachers complained about having such heavy workloads that they could not confer with others about program-related matters, which led to the program's failure. The Guidance and Counseling therefore can be rightly oriented as one of the vital programs offered by the Department of Education. It has a unique and critical function in the education system and learners' all-round development. The needs, problems, and issues of the student shall be adequately addressed and solved by the Guidance and Counseling program. Teachers who have been assigned to play this duty make up the bulk of guidance advocates in Davao de Oro's secondary public schools. The researcher was motivated to carry out this study because of the rise in suicidal inclinations and attempts. The researcher therefore intends to carry out this study and explore the actual experiences of these teachers who have been designated as guidance advocates. School guidance counselors play a crucial role in helping students transition in terms of their social, psychological, and academic needs. Teachers who lack the necessary credentials are instead assigned to serve as "guidance advocates" in schools without guidance counselors, helping students with their mental health to provide pupils with the required academic support.

It is in this light that the guidance advocate has a very huge role: giving support and direction to the students in overcoming their academic and personal problems. The guidance advocates meet with the students to advise them on the resources that could be utilized in tackling these individual needs. They assist in college applications, career planning, and even problems of a personal nature to ensure no student remains unfulfilled in the path they have chosen within education. Often referred to as a "guidance teacher, teacher counselor, or designated counselor," school administrators assign teachers to act as guidance counselors when no professional counselors are available. Instructors and counselors must work together for guidance programs to succeed. Guidance and counseling are critical since they are expected to carry out the curriculum at their respective schools. As a counselor, the teacher's ability is limited. In contrast to services offered by a qualified guidance counselor, they do not provide counseling or psychological testing. Instead, they offer informational, consultative, placement, and referral services.

1.1 Research Questions

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the informants in giving guidance services?
2. What are the challenges faced by the informants in facilitating counseling?
3. How did the informants cope with the challenges as guidance advocate?
4. What are the views of the informants on their designation considering the guidance and counseling code of ethics?
5. What insights did the informants gain and what did they reach based on their experiences and challenges?

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a Qualitative Phenomenological Design. Phenomenological research is classified under qualitative methods that depend on the basis that everything in nature is relative and depends on how people

perceive it. Researchers have, in this study, recorded and analyzed attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of their targeted audience regarding the subject of study. Only the opinions of those conversant with the phenomenon were to count, while assumptions or impressions about the phenomenon that the researcher had were not significant.

This involved determining themes or making general conclusions regarding how a particular phenomenon was perceived or felt. The researcher narrated their first-hand encounter with the research topic to identify any personal biases or judgments that would make one influence the analysis process (Creswell, 2013).

2.2 Role of the Researcher

The research process continues with thematizing, where the researcher identifies central themes to explore in the study. This step involves creating research questions that encourage participants to provide detailed and meaningful responses. Designing the research involves selecting appropriate methods for data collection and analysis, such as interviews or focus groups. These methods must be chosen carefully to suit the study's objectives and to ensure that the data collected will provide the insights needed.

Once the data is collected, the researcher transcribes the interviews or other sources into written form. This transcription process must capture the nuances of participants' responses, including emotions and contextual details. Analyzing this data involves looking for patterns and themes, and using techniques like thematic analysis or coding to understand the participants' experiences. Throughout the study, the researcher must uphold ethical standards, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants by coding their names and other personal information. This comprehensive approach helps to uncover deep insights and contributes to developing new theories about the subject under study (Fink, 2000).

2.3 Research Participants

After the selection of appropriate research participants, the researcher interviewed at least five research informants who were specifically secondary public teachers in the practice as guidance advocates. The participants were also determined by the researcher's use of any of the following selection criteria: (a) at least one to three years of service as a teacher designated as a guidance advocate; and (b) non-graduates of psychology or guidance.

This study will also use a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a non-probability way of gathering a sample in which researchers utilize their knowledge to select particular volunteers who will aid the study in achieving its objectives. These individuals have specific qualities that the researchers must consider when analyzing their study question. In other words, individuals are chosen by the researchers "on purpose." (Frost, 2023).

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

In view of this qualitative research, an effective data collection method had to be duly laid out and conducted to realize its objectives. First, the researcher contacted the Public Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd - Davao de Oro Division to identify the exact number of Guidance Advocate teachers assigned. Using such information, the researcher selected the respondents based on a specified criterion for the choice of participants. After the participants were chosen, another letter was written to the school principal by the researcher, through the teachers that comprised the Guidance Advocate, asking for clearance in connection with conducting the study. The research questionnaire was also reviewed and validated by a specialist to prove its effectiveness.

The researcher strictly complied with the procedures and methodologies of collecting information. The purpose of the study was well explained to the informants before the interviews, and they were made available at their convenient times. All the responses that indicated private information about the respondent were kept confidential. Because the pandemic was at its peak, it compelled health and safety measures to be taken on board, entailing wearing of face masks and observing social distancing. Finally, the researcher provided clear and quality audio recordings that facilitated correct, word-for-word transcription.

2.4 Data Analysis

Analyzing qualitative data is one of the explanation, classification, and relationships of phenomena using the researcher's theories.

Initially, the phenomenon being studied must be accurately described. The investigator must be capable of comprehending and understanding the data; as a result, there must be a conceptual framework created and categorized data (Palic, 2023).

The steps that must be followed will be determined by the transcribed data that will be gathered. These data will be analyzed, summarized, and translated. According to Surendran (2023), the study process known as qualitative data analysis seeks to comprehend and explain the individualized experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of people or groups. When you have gathered all the data, it is generally unstructured and somewhat confusing at first glance. As a result, the researcher must transcribe the information gathered. The methodical organization of the data is the initial step in the analysis process. Data organization entails text conversion of all the data. The researcher can manually enter the data, output it into a spreadsheet, or use one of the tools for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis.

Following the transcription of each participant's interview, comments related to the study's topic were divided into key categories reflecting particular ideas. Secondly, thematic analysis was employed to categorize and closely analyze the data analysis procedure. Finally, the comments from the participants were categorized into broad themes reflecting different facets of the event. This process allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of teachers designated as guidance advocates, uncovering rich insights and patterns within the data.

3. FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings to the research questions that explored the lived experiences of Secondary Public Teachers in the Practice as Guidance Advocates in terms of the experiences, challenges, coping, views and insights in giving their guidance services.

3.1 What are the experiences of the informants in giving guidance services?

Experiences in giving guidance services

The responses generated four themes: death by suicide of a student, suffering from psychological harm, expressing self-defeating thoughts, and undergoing emotional struggle.

Death by suicide of a student. A caring, sympathetic, and skilled approach is necessary to address the varied demands of the affected individuals and the society at large in the aftermath of a suicide death. These are the multiple functions of guidance advocates.

Suffering from Psychological Harm. Serious psychological harm can arise when a student experiences significant emotional disturbance or psychological trauma as a result of their parent or caregiver's actions undermining their confidence and sense of self. Being a guidance advocate and witnessing psychological harm from students may be incredibly difficult and unforgettable. It's a normal reaction to the difficulties of helping students get through trying circumstances.

Expressing Self-defeating Thoughts. Negative and self-defeating ideas about oneself, skills, and values are known as self-defeating thoughts. These ideas may impede one's ability to advance personally and professionally, leading to low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. Identifying and resisting these ideas is an essential initial step in developing a more realistic and optimistic view of oneself. While dealing with self-defeating thoughts, a guidance advocate's job is to assist, guide, and provide people with tools to confront and get past self-defeating ideas.

Undergoing Emotional Struggle. A guidance advocate plays a crucial role in supporting students who are going through emotional struggles. Their role extends beyond academic guidance to encompass students' overall well-being and mental health. They serve as a bridge between students, educators, and mental health professionals, playing a pivotal role in creating a school environment that prioritizes the emotional well-being of students.

Learning Gained from Experiences

The responses generated five themes: enhanced listening skills, improved empathy-building abilities, strengthened self-control, developed wider perspectives, more patience and understanding.

Enhanced Listening Skills. Enhanced listening abilities are essential to guidance advocates' success. They facilitate the development of a relationship based on trust and support, assist in discovering underlying problems, and allow them to offer specific guidance that considers every student's unique needs. Thus, a vital component of the guidance advocacy process is active listening. Advocates for guidance can assist students in expressing their difficulties and cooperating to create efficient solutions. This cooperative method empowers students to participate actively in problem-solving.

Improved Empathy-building Abilities. For a guidance advocate, one important learning result is improved empathy-building skills. This ability strengthens the advocate's ability to comprehend, establish rapport, foster trust, customize assistance, and improve the general well-being of individuals needing help.

Strengthened Self-control. A guidance advocate serves as a role model for others, especially students. Demonstrating self-control sets a positive example for those seeking guidance, encouraging them to manage their emotions and actions effectively. Self-control enables the guidance advocate to respond to individuals with empathy and understanding rather than reacting impulsively. It is an integral quality for guidance advocates, as it positively influences their interactions, professionalism, and ability to provide adequate support to those in need.

Developed Wider Perspectives. Developing a comprehensive awareness of different topics, empathy for different experiences, and the capacity to provide meaningful guidance is necessary to become a guidance advocate with broader viewpoints. It's important to practice active listening to what people are saying, trying to grasp their particular situation and feelings, and doing so without passing judgment. It involves conversing with people with various opinions, values, and life experiences and connecting with people from multiple backgrounds. This will increase knowledge of diverse viewpoints.

More Patience and Understanding. Increasing patience and understanding as a guidance advocate is vital because it enhances trust, communication, empowerment, problem-solving, stress reduction, relationship-building, and positive outcomes for individuals seeking guidance. Demonstrating patience and understanding helps to build trust between the advocate and the individual seeking guidance. When people feel listened to and understood, they are likelier to openly open up and share their concerns. By patiently listening to individuals and understanding their unique circumstances, guidance advocates can empower them to make informed decisions and take proactive steps toward resolving their challenges. This sense of empowerment can boost confidence and self-esteem.

3.2 What are the challenges faced by the informants in facilitating counseling?

Data for this subject were gathered using two distinct questions that focused on the difficulties guidance designates face and how those difficulties impact their ability to perform as teachers.

Challenges encountered both as a Guidance Advocate and as a Teacher

The themes were: lack of expertise in guidance, time-related conflicts in work and pressure from school heads.

Lack of Expertise in Guidance. It can be difficult when people find themselves in roles requiring more skills, particularly in professions like guidance and counseling, where specific educational backgrounds and credentials are frequently needed. Those without a degree in guidance and counseling could still possess practical abilities from prior positions or experiences. In a guidance advocate status, abilities like empathy, problem-solving, and communication can be beneficial.

Time-related Conflicts in Work. In managing time-related conflicts between roles as a guidance advocate and a teacher, one must engage in careful planning, effective communication, and boundary setting. It is imperative to acknowledge that there may be occasions when one role demands more attention than the other, necessitating flexibility in scheduling and priority management. Regular reflection on time management strategies and adaptation based on personal experiences and feedback from others is essential for maintaining balance and effectiveness in both roles.

Pressure from School Heads. Balancing the roles of a guidance advocate and a teacher proved challenging due to the added pressure from school heads regarding report submissions. The weight of meeting administrative deadlines while fulfilling the responsibilities of both positions created a demanding workload. Juggling these dual

roles necessitated careful time management and prioritization to ensure that teaching duties and guidance advocacy tasks were addressed effectively amidst the pressure from the school administration.

Effects of Challenges as a Teacher

The themes were: felt ineffective, hard to adjust and experiencing burnout.

Felt Ineffective. It was typical to feel ineffective after balancing two roles: guidance advocate and teacher. Having two sets of duties frequently resulted in feelings of overload and made it harder to accomplish goals in each role. There were many obstacles to overcome in balancing the demanding responsibilities of teaching with the complex and emotionally draining nature of guidance, which left them exhausted and possibly unable to fulfill the expectations of either profession completely.

Hard to adjust. It might be difficult for teachers to adjust to having the extra duty of being regarded as guidance advocates. Beyond the obligations of a typical teacher, this move involves negotiating a new set of activities and responsibilities. The transition from teacher to guidance advocate is challenging and demands continual assistance and professional growth to carry out both duties successfully.

Experiencing burnout. Teachers designated as guidance advocates may experience burnout due to factors such as role expectations, emotional pressures, workload, and a lack of resources. They can listen to students' concerns and attempt to solve them all the time, which may put a strain on their mental health. Guidance advocates may have extra duties besides their regular teaching duties, such as parent meetings and student assistance administrative activities. This added workload can lead to burnout if not managed effectively.

3.3 How did the informants cope with the challenges as guidance advocate?

Data for this subject were gathered using two distinct questions that focused on how the informants cope with the challenges as a guidance advocate.

Coping with the Challenges Encountered as Guidance Advocate

The themes were: proper mind-setting, prayers for strength, and sharing without judgment.

Proper Mind-setting. Guidance advocates must approach their work with compassion and comprehension, considering the range of difficulties and situations students may encounter. Adopting an optimistic outlook can establish a stronger connection with students and foster a nurturing atmosphere where they feel appreciated and heard. Guidance advocates must have the right mindset to properly support and empower students in all facets of their lives. Guidance advocates must, in short, have a positive outlook to carry out their duties efficiently, assist students' overall development, and enhance the learning environment.

Prayers for Strength. For teachers fulfilling the challenging duty of guidance advocates, prayers for strength are an essential source of encouragement. They can redirect their anxieties, burdens, and difficulties to a greater power through prayer, which promotes inner calm and resilience. By pursuing spiritual guidance, they strengthen themselves to handle their job's difficult and emotional parts with grace and commitment. Furthermore, prayers provide a time for reflection and fellowship that enables them to refocus their priorities, rekindle their enthusiasm, and find support in the face of difficulty. This practice supports their well-being and improves their capacity to assist and mentor their students efficiently.

Sharing without Judgment. One effective way for guidance advocates to cope with the demands of their role is through peer support and collaboration. By sharing their experiences, challenges, and burdens with colleagues who understand the nature of the work, they can unload some of the emotional weight they carry and gain valuable insights and perspectives from others in similar roles. Engaging in discussions with colleagues can also help them feel less isolated and provide a sense of camaraderie. Knowing that they're not alone in facing the challenges of being a guidance advocate can be comforting and empowering for them.

Coping with the Challenges Encountered in Giving Guidance Services

The themes were: asking consideration from students, time management, and seeking feedback for further improvements.

Asking Consideration from Students. Guidance advocates understand the significance of resolving urgent concerns affecting students' ability to engage in their academic endeavors fully, so they ask that students be excused from class. Giving students the freedom to put their health first while managing emotional distress, mental health concerns, family troubles, or other personal obstacles can be essential to their resilience and overall success. Requesting excuses from students for absences from class is a proactive and compassionate way to support their overall development in the classroom.

Time Management. One must possess strong time management abilities to effectively manage both duties as a teacher and as a guidance advocate. It takes considerable planning and organization to manage these dual tasks successfully so that they can fulfill the various needs of each function. One can balance their roles as guidance advocates and teachers by prioritizing work, establishing clear objectives, and managing their time well. Furthermore, proficient time management enables teachers to allocate sufficient time toward meeting their students' academic, social, and emotional requirements while simultaneously providing high-quality instruction in the classroom. Using this strategy, they may effectively contribute to their student's success and general well-being while making the most impact in both positions.

Seeking Feedback for Further Improvements. As both a guidance advocate and a teacher, they should recognize the importance of continually seeking feedback to improve their services. By actively soliciting input from students, colleagues, and other stakeholders, they can gain valuable insights into the effectiveness of their guidance interventions and teaching methods. This feedback loop allows them to identify areas for enhancement, refine their approaches, and better meet the diverse needs of their students. Seeking feedback also promotes an environment of openness, cooperation, and ongoing education, resulting in more effective and flexible instructional techniques and guidance.

3.4 What are the views of the informants on their designation considering the guidance and counseling code of ethics?

Data for this subject were gathered using two distinct questions that focused on the difficulties guidance designates face and how those difficulties impact their ability to perform as teachers.

Factors that led to Selection as Guidance Advocate over other Educators

The themes were: appointed by the school head, personality factor, and work-related experiences.

Appointed by the School Head. The chosen guidance advocate should possess strong communication skills, empathy, and the ability to build trust with students, parents, and colleagues, creating a supportive environment conducive to student development. Moreover, the school head may consider the candidate's commitment to student well-being and understanding of students' diverse challenges. An individual who demonstrates a genuine dedication to promoting student success, advocating for their needs, and fostering a positive school culture will likely be chosen.

Personality Factor. The selection of an individual as a guidance advocate above other educators is influenced by several factors, including their personality. Although certain personality traits may improve their ability to connect with students and foster a supportive environment, they must also show that they can engage with other stakeholders and attend to students' different needs.

Work-related Experiences. One primary factor in selecting Guidance Advocates over other teachers is their work-related experience. Their accomplishments in prior positions demonstrate their ability to mentor and encourage others and illustrate their enthusiasm for significantly impacting students' lives. Overall, their employment history demonstrates their preparedness, abilities, and aptitude for successfully carrying out the duties of the guidance advocate position.

Approaches of Counseling to Students

The themes were: facilitating skills, creating an inclusive environment, and offering recommendations for development.

Facilitating Skills. Even though guidance advocates are not licensed guidance counselors, they need facilitation skills. Guidance advocates can use their facilitation skills to inspire students, increase self-awareness, and

support positive growth and change, even if they do not have the same formal training or credentials as registered guidance counselors. Even though they might not hold the official qualifications of licensed guidance counselors, they can effectively use their facilitation skills to promote students' overall growth and well-being.

Creating an Inclusive Environment. Addressing equity and social justice concerns within the school community is necessary to create a welcoming environment. Guidance advocates strive to ensure that all students, especially those from marginalized or underrepresented groups, have fairness, equality, and access to opportunity. Guidance advocates foster a friendly and accepting environment where students from all backgrounds feel seen, heard, and represented by recognizing and promoting diversity.

Offering Recommendations for Development. Guidance advocates can still make insightful recommendations based on their knowledge, experience, and comprehension of student needs even though they do not have the same official training or credentials as licensed counselors. Giving guidance on coping mechanisms and problem-solving methods is essential in making recommendations. They can provide helpful suggestions to students on how to handle stress, deal with challenging circumstances, and improve their problem-solving abilities. Guidance advocates enable students to proactively tackle their issues and attain favorable results by providing individual approaches based on their unique challenges and situations.

3.5 What insights did the informants gain and what did they reach based on their experiences and challenges?

Insights Gained after Going through all the Experiences

The themes were: importance of guidance services, need for more trainings and seminars, and plantilla items for guidance counselor/advocate.

Importance of Guidance Services. It became clear how vital guidance services were. It emphasized the significance of guidance services in helping people get through various obstacles and life transitions, whether personal, professional, or academic. This insight highlighted the necessity of providing thorough and readily available guidance to guarantee individual's overall well-being and success in handling their career and educational paths. It also emphasized the important role of guidance advocates in giving people the direction, encouragement, and tools they need to overcome obstacles, make sound choices, and achieve their full potential.

Need for more Trainings and Seminars. It became clear that ongoing professional development is necessary to improve the efficacy of guidance services and remain updated with the constantly developing best practices, techniques, and trends in the field. Guidance advocates acknowledged the value of increasing their knowledge, improving their abilities, and learning about various topics to enhance students' overall growth. They also recognized that continual learning and development are necessary due to the dynamic nature of the educational environment and the constantly evolving demands of students. The goal of guidance advocates' investments in more training and seminars was to increase their ability to deal with new issues, encourage innovation, and provide high-quality guidance services that adapt to the ever-changing needs of students and the larger school community.

Plantilla Items for Guidance Counselor. The recognition of the need for plantilla items for guidance counselors emerged as a critical insight gained from collective experiences. One important lesson was that guidance counselors knew more about their duties and responsibilities in giving their services. This insight came from learning that registered guidance counselors have the knowledge and expertise to assist students' overall growth properly.

Plans for further Professional Development Relating to Guidance and Counseling

The themes were: challenged to enroll in Masters in Guidance and Counseling, pursue professional development relating to guidance and counseling, open to new experiences relating to guidance and counseling.

Challenged to Enroll in Masters in Guidance and Counseling. Guidance advocates are challenged to enroll in Masters in Guidance and Counseling programs as part of their plans for further professional development related to guidance and counseling. This challenge emphasizes the importance of continuous learning and skill enhancement in the field. Advanced education in guidance and counseling equips advocates with more profound theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and ethical frameworks necessary to address students' diverse needs effectively.

Pursue Professional Development relating to Guidance and Counseling. The guidance advocates expressed their desire to pursue professional development opportunities related to guidance and counseling. This aspiration reflects their dedication to enhancing their skills and knowledge in the field, aiming to support better the individuals they serve. Their goal in pursuing professional development is to stay current on the most recent developments, rules of ethics, and standards of excellence in guiding and counseling. Ultimately, this forward-thinking strategy benefits the students and the societies they serve by regularly demonstrating their dedication to enhancing their success as advocates and counselors.

Open to New experiences Relating to Guidance and Counseling. Guidance advocates said they would try anything new related to guidance and counseling. This readiness indicated their genuine strategy for professional development and learning. This willingness to try new things encouraged creativity, innovation, and ongoing practice development, increasing their ability to educate and help those in need effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

The data gathered from teachers designated as guidance advocates provided a comprehensive exploration of their diverse experiences, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of their roles. Through their narratives, a spectrum of challenges, inspirations, coping mechanisms, insights, and plans for professional development were unveiled, offering valuable insights.

Guidance advocates' genuine commitment to helping their clients goes beyond the difficulties they encounter in their position. Their sincere desire to help and mentor their students keeps them going despite various obstacles. Their innate drive helps them get through life-changing events and leads to a greater comprehension and acceptance of their position as guidance advocates. Upon reflection on their journey, they understand the significant influence they can have on their students' lives, which inspires them to continue serving.

The experiences of these informants provided insight into the wide range of challenges they encountered as guidance advocates, such as managing time constraints, ethical dilemmas, and striking a balance between their guidance and teaching obligations. Despite these challenges, their sharing also highlighted sources of inspiration that drove their commitment to serving their students and supporting their well-being. From witnessing students' growth and resilience to experiencing the profound impact of their guidance interventions, these moments of inspiration fueled their dedication to their role.

Moreover, the coping mechanisms employed by guidance advocates highlighted their resilience and resourcefulness in managing the demands of their designation. From seeking emotional support from colleagues to adopting mindfulness practices and a proper mindset, these coping strategies enabled them to support their work needs and maintain their well-being amidst challenges. Additionally, their insights into the importance of continuous professional development and plans for further education in counseling reflected their commitment to enhancing their skills and efficacy in supporting their students effectively.

Guidance advocates experience personal and professional transformations due to their experiences, influencing how they approach their position. Acknowledging the difficult nature of their role, they acquire invaluable knowledge along the process. Their professional and personal development is aided by these experiences, which provide them with resiliency and expertise. By developing a more profound knowledge and connection with their clients, they can better handle the various demands and issues that arise from their interactions with students.

Furthermore, the guidance advocates' unwavering devotion to their job highlights their desire to provide genuine services. Despite obstacles, they offer morally sound and sympathetic guidance and counseling services. Their integrity and dedication to their client's well-being are demonstrated by their capacity to uphold professional limits and engage in good ethical bracketing while providing sincere support. Guidance advocates are essential in making a positive difference in the lives of those they guide and promoting empowerment, growth, and resilience in their communities as long as they serve with trustworthiness and dedication.

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