
Perceived Roles and Challenges of Guidance Designates in the Implementation of Homeroom Guidance



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ABSTRACT: This study purposively investigated the perception of Guidance Designates on their primary role in the implementation of Homeroom Guidance in their respective school. The respondents of the study were Elementary Guidance Designates within Schools Division Office I Pangasinan identified through the snowball sampling technique. The responses of were gathered through an interview that delved into the perceived roles, challenges encountered, and coping mechanisms of Guidance Designates in terms of academic, personal-social, and career development domains of Homeroom Guidance. The researcher made use of the qualitative research method (allows researcher to examine people's experiences in detail, by using a set of research methods, like interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, life histories, and biographies, Torunoğlu & Gençtanırım, 2015). For this study, the data were collected via interview. Interview is a good way to get a description of another's perspective on events (Maxwell, 2013).

The study revealed that Guidance Designate served as program manager, catering to the needs of teachers for possible technical assistance, conducting orientations, quarterly meetings with teachers, and validating the content and pedagogy of the Homeroom Guidance modules distributed. He/She may be handpicked by School Heads but must undergo proper orientation to ensure the proper implementation of Homeroom Guidance. Lack of awareness hinders the full implementation of every program, increasing awareness of teachers about Homeroom Guidance opens the way for acceptance and continuity of implementation. Work tenure results in familiarity with the job role and the ability to perform better on task. Homeroom Guidance proved to be more effective in developing learners' academic, personal-social and career development. Correct time management/scheduling of classes lessens problems with teachers' inadequacy to implement Homeroom Guidance. Self-awareness helps managers find situations in which they'll be most effective, assists with intuitive decision making, aids stress management and motivation of oneself and others.

KEYWORDS: Academic Development, Career Development, Guidance Designates, Homeroom Guidance and Personal-Social Development

INTRODUCTION

The world was stirred by the pandemic's devastating effect and every component of society has been tested to subdue its difficulty. In an instant, COVID-19 affected daily lives, enterprises, global commerce and travel patterns^[1].

The education sector was confronted with the need to shift gears to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic's consequences. This has led to the discontinuation of face-to-face instruction in schools, colleges, and institutions^[2]. There is no doubt that the current situation of the educational system in the Philippines will have an impact on the fields of development of our students. Although the Department of Education has been responsive with its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan, it is essential to support students' development of life skills that will enable them to overcome obstacles and adjust to the "new normal" brought about by the current worldwide crisis^[3].

In the Philippines, a more robust program of homeroom guidance in public schools was put in place by the Department of Education^[4]. The Homeroom Guidance Program provides guided opportunities for learners during Homeroom Guidance to supplement their educational activities. Academic Development, Personal-Social Development, and Career Development are the three aspects of Homeroom Guidance. Academic Development Domain involves all of a learner's academic demands and concerns. The Personal-Social Development Domain is concerned with concerns or issues relating to learners' uniqueness (self), relationships with others, and interaction with the community. The Career Development Domain encompasses all occupational and work-

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related difficulties and issues encountered by learners. This entails the learning of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that will help students to successfully transition from school to the workplace and from job to job throughout their lives.

Homeroom Guidance shall complement the Department's objective, which is to develop holistically developed Filipinos who can understand themselves, have problem-solving skills, make wise judgments, succeed academically, plan for the future, and appreciate individual diversity. Homeroom guidance will support this effort. It envisions learners who can defend their rights and obligations as citizens of the world while working for the common good of society and their love of their nation.

Though the plan was to have the complete implementation of the Homeroom Guidance for the school year 2021-2022 accounting for the need to prepare by doing awareness campaign/orientation, capacity/team building, development of learning materials, and may more, the Department deemed it necessary to offer the new program to learners from Kindergarten to Senior High School with selected competencies that are included from Homeroom Guidance Curriculum. However, from the start of the school year 2022–2023, its full implementation, which includes the entire curriculum, policy, and learning materials, will be made available. The Homeroom Guidance is suggested to be implemented by all private schools.

In the implementation process, Class Advisers shall be assigned to implement the program with the technical assistance of the Guidance Counselor. The School Head may have a power to assign a Guidance Designate if the school lacks one, provided that he/she must be given proper training necessary for implementing Homeroom Guidance. A Guidance Counselor or Guidance Designate has the role of a program manager, ensuring the correct application of the right content and pedagogy of Homeroom Guidance in the school. He/she must conduct orientation on Homeroom Guidance at the beginning of the school year and hold quarterly meetings with Section Advisers before the implementation of the modules. As the need arises, the Guidance Counselor or Guidance Designate must be able to provide other guidance services or interventions without violating the provisions stipulated in RA 9258 The Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004^[3].

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study purposively investigated the perceived roles, challenges encountered, and coping mechanisms of Guidance Designates in terms of academic, personal-social, and career development domains of Homeroom Guidance in their respective schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study purposively investigated the perception of Guidance Designates on their primary role in the implementation of Homeroom Guidance in their respective school. The researcher made use of the qualitative research method in this study. ^[5]A qualitative research method allows the researcher to examine people's experiences in detail, by using a set of research methods, such as interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods, life histories, and biographies. For this purpose, the data was collected via interview. ^[6]An interview is a good way to get a description of another's perspective on events.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study came from the Elementary Guidance Designates of Schools Division Office I Pangasinan, identified through the snowball sampling technique. The Snowball sampling technique is one of the most popular qualitative research sampling techniques, with networking and referral qualities at its core. Typically, researchers begin with a small number of initial contacts (seeds) who meet the research criteria and are invited to participate in the study. The willing participants are then asked to propose other contacts who meet the research criteria and may be willing participants, who in turn refer other possible respondents, and so on. As a result, researchers leverage their social networks to form initial connections, with sampling momentum rising as a result, catching an increasing chain of participants. ^[7]Sampling normally ends when a target sample size or saturation point is reached.

Research Instrument

Data pertinent to this study were gathered through the use of semi-structured interview questions of the researcher. The interview questionnaire was designed to investigate how Guidance Designates perform their role in the implementation of Homeroom Guidance and the challenges they encounter in the performance of their role as Guidance Designates in terms of the academic, personal-social, and career development domain, as well as their coping mechanism in connection to the three, mentioned domains of Homeroom Guidance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher, to have an accurate discussion of the data gathered about how Guidance Designates perform their roles in the implementation of the Homeroom Guidance and the challenges in the performance of their roles, and how they cope with these challenges in terms of: academic; personal-social; and career development., had consolidated the responses of the respondents

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from the written interviews and follow-up interview. Fictitious names were used to withhold the identity of the respondents. The shared roles and challenges of the Guidance Designates/respondents were categorized into three themes, further analysis of the transcribed interviews in each theme led the researcher to classify their responses into sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes of the perceived roles, challenges encountered and coping mechanisms (on academic, personal-social and career development) of the Guidance Designates were presented below.

The themes generated from the shared experiences of the Guidance Designates were as follows: the first theme circled on “The Role I’m Playing”, with the sub-theme, “What is my role as a Guidance Designate?”. The second theme is “My Role, My Strategies”, with the sub-theme “Am I doing what is Expected?”. The third theme goes with “My Challenges, My Actions” with sub-themes, “Academic Domain”, “Personal-Social Domain” and “Career Domain”.

Theme 1: The Role I’m Playing

Sub-Theme: What are my roles as a Guidance Designate?

The transcription and interpretation of the shared experiences of the Guidance Designate led to the formulation of the first theme and its corresponding sub-theme. The theme described how the respondents perceived their roles as Guidance Designates in the implementation of Homeroom Guidance at their respective school.

Pina Anio and Lars Larios both see themselves in the character of a content verifier and a Homeroom Guidance implementation evaluator. Whilst Happy Moya and Jem Ferrer added that as Guidance Designate it is their role to conduct a series of seminars expanding the awareness and understanding of teachers and parents on the essence of Homeroom Guidance. Conforming with the roles of a Guidance Designate^[3] that they serve as program managers, ensuring the correct application of the right content and pedagogy of Homeroom Guidance in the school and must conduct orientation on Homeroom Guidance at the beginning of the school year and hold quarterly meetings with Section Advisers before the implementation of the modules. The roles of the Guidance Designates must be properly introduced to them so they can function as effectively as possible and effectively implement Homeroom Guidance in their schools. Contrary to the effortful roles of the abovementioned guidance designates Ela Cruz expressed that her role starts and ends with instructing teachers to teach homeroom guidance and monitor their distribution of printed Homeroom Guidance modules. Although Ela Cruz’s role manifests as a part of Homeroom Guidance Implementation it is deemed inconsistent and lacking. The finding of the study has verified^[8] that school counselors, perceived their roles to involve counseling students on various aspects of their school life, collaborating with teachers to present guidance curriculum lessons, assisting the school principal with identification and resolving students’ issues, needs, and problems, and working with a student at a time in a therapeutic clinical mode.

Theme 2: My Roles, My Strategies

Sub-Theme: Am I Doing what is Expected?

Considering the inconsistency of role performance of the respondents, the researcher included the second theme to crystalize the responses of the respondents and understand the inconsistency despite the clear guidelines cited in the Revised Implementation of Homeroom Guidance (HG) during Crisis Situation for S.Y. 2021-2022^[3]. Written below was the transcription of their responses when asked about the strategies and/or roles they perform as a Guidance Designate in the implementation of Homeroom Guidance at their respective school.

In order for every program implementation to be successful, implementers or role-makers, in this case the Guidance Designates, must put their efforts, time and knowledge in the implementation. Going back to the responses of the respondents, although they are positive of the roles they are serving in the implementation, Ela Cruz expresses her thoughts and said *“kasi hindi lng Guidance (Homeroom Guidance) ang hawak ko, teacher din ako, ang dami ko pang ginagawa bukod sa HG kaya paano ako makafocused diba? So, hanggang instructing lang ako at monitoring talaga ng modules na binibigay nila, kasi may report din naman so talagang need naming imonitor. Pero sa dami talaga ng work namin hanggang doon lang kaya kong gawin, actually di naman graded ang Homeroom Guidance so need not put more effort. Tama na muna ang instruction and monitoring.”* (because I’m not only a Guidance Designate (Homeroom Guidance), I’m also a teacher, I do a lot work other than HG so how can I focus right? So, I’m just instructing and really monitoring the modules they provide, because there is also a report so we really need to monitor. But with the amount of work we do, that’s all I can do, Homeroom Guidance isn’t actually graded so there’s no need to put more effort. Instruction and monitoring are enough.)^[9] Conflict on a school counselor’s (Guidance Designate) role results to difficulty in complying with the tasks expected to be carried out. To give more emphasis on the dilemma of the Guidance Designates, Jem Ferrer voiced out that although she carried out the roles of a Guidance Designate like monitoring, conducting quarterly processing of their implementation, she is hesitant as to the fact that she does not have any orientation on Homeroom

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Guidance and to put more pressure she is only a half-baked Guidance Designate since she was just assigned to be one this current school year. Same scenario of being new to the league of Guidance Designate, Happy Moya confided that she was also selected for a fact that she is a Born Again Christian and a relative of her higher up. Yes, she is positive that she does well in the performance of her roles as she coins it *“nasunod ko naman lahat ng andun na roles ng isang Guidance Designate, nakapag orientation naman ako and properly managed naman ang implementation namin kahit paano, well versed din ang mga co-teachers ko sa kanilang pagtuturo since naigaguide ko naman sila kahit medyo kulang ang knowledge ko since wala akong proper training.”* (I was able to follow all the existing roles of a Guidance Designate, I was able to orient my colleague and properly managed our implementation somehow, my co-teachers are also well versed in their teaching since I was able to guide them even though my knowledge was a bit lacking since I lack proper training). Negating to what is stated in DM-OUCI-2021-346, for schools with no Guidance Counselor, the School Head may assign a Guidance Designate but he/she should be provided with proper training specific to the implementation of Homeroom Guidance. To properly carry out her role as a Guidance designate and be kept away from role ambiguity, role ambiguity is “an incomplete sort of role sending, where the information necessary to carry out one’s job is not available or incomplete”^[9], Happy Moya and Jem Ferrer must have to undergo proper orientation on Homeroom Guidance and its implementation. Larz Larios and Pia Anio claim to have no problem in the performance of their role as Guidance Designate and they find no discrepancies in their implementation. It must have been because of the length of service they have in the public education system and as a Guidance Designate at their school. Notably speaking that work tenure (length of service) results to familiarity of job role and ability to perform better on the task^[10]

Theme 3: My Challenges, My Action

Sub-Theme 1: Academic Development Domain

Testimonies of the Guidance Designates who participated in this study revealed that they had encountered some challenges. The following were the transcriptions of their responses when asked about the challenges they encounter in the performance of their role in terms of the academic development domain of Homeroom Guidance and their coping mechanism.

It may seem uncritical for Pina Anio and Larz Larios to perform their role as Guidance Designates, but they still complain about their colleagues’ way of implementation. Accordingly, some of their co-teachers do not value the importance of Homeroom Guidance, especially in the academic development of their learners (*ang mahirap lang kasi minsan walang cooperation ang ibang mga teachers, pag di nila coor walang interes*). Homeroom Guidance can boost learners’ motivation to excel in their academics and improve their shortcomings as learners. The construction of Homeroom Guidance modules also improves learners’ creative and critical thinking, communication skills, and problem-solving skills^[3], since it is in a form of question application. Learners are tasked to answer each learning task with clarity and well-thought application of life skills. With this dilemma, Anio and Larz provide orientation whenever possible through the help of their school heads, they also show up in some of the online sessions of learners along with the class advisers to monitor the continuous delivery of Homeroom Guidance (*ang ginagawa ko talaga nagpapaorientation ako kasama ang School Head namin, minsan during meetings naguupdate kami ng mga nagawa na nila. We also seek any important updates on our learners’ improvement in terms of the mastery of skills from subjects to HG activities. Tapos there are times na sumasama kami ng School Head namin sa online class ng every grade level*). This strategy goes well with Ela Cruz’, she saw to it that she indulges in a problem-focused approach in dealing with her colleagues’ inadequate implementation and added that proper time management can help ensure self and others’ productivity in every endeavor. Helping class advisers arrange their schedules to inject Homeroom Guidance during online classes lessens her problems with teachers’ incapacity to implement Homeroom Guidance.^[11] Proper time management and scheduling of Homeroom Guidance classes improve learners learning experiences in distance learning set-up and helped the learners foster a positive attitude, good behavior, and exceptional moral values towards their teacher. Meanwhile, Jem Ferrer and Happy Moya reported not having any problems in this domain of Homeroom Guidance. This may have a direct relation to their quarterly orientation with class advisers that their implementation is never put into hiatus and learners improved in their learning level. Jerome Bruner’s Scaffolding theory seems to work in the schools of Happy and Jem, for they added that learner develops independence in thinking, understanding, and skill acquisition, and parental and instructor support was reduced.

Theme 3: My Challenges, My Action

Sub-Theme 2: Personal-Social Development Domain

Continuing to probe in the encountered challenges of the participants, Guidance Designates. The following were the transcriptions of their responses when asked about the challenges they encounter in the performance of their role in terms of the personal-social development domain of Homeroom Guidance and their coping mechanism.

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The domain of Personal-Social development is concerned with problems or matters impacting learners' sense of self, interactions with others, and participation in society. As students advance through school and into life, it provides a solid basis for their Personal-Social development. This encompasses, but is not limited to, self-awareness, coping mechanisms for emotions and stress, and intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities^[3]. Since Homeroom Guidance was perceived to be more aligned with personal-social development rather than academics among the Guidance Designates interviewed, they were so positive that they do not find impending challenges for teachers do not report any unruly behaviors of their learners. Consensually responded by the respondents that, Certainly I find no problem in this domain of HG since we are all concerned with how our learners carry out themselves in terms of attitudes and moral values. Validated with the result of their Learners' Development Assessment Tool, they reported having a majority of learners under developing to sufficiently developed. This just further strengthens the claim ^[12] that students are likely to succeed academically and behaviorally if they have access to comprehensive guidance services and school counselors.

Theme 3: My Challenges, My Action

Sub-Theme 3: Career Development Domain

Still, on the encountered challenges of the participants, Guidance Designates. The following were the transcriptions of their responses when asked about the challenges they encounter in the performance of their role in terms of the career development domain of Homeroom Guidance and their coping mechanism.

The Professional Development domain of the program reflects Ginzberg's view of career development as a lifelong process that includes early development. Homeroom Guidance promotes the early integration of career themes into students' life and assists them in determining their desired route. Contrary to Ginzberg's view, the respondents emphasize that their problem with the career development domain of Homeroom Guidance is that their learners are far from deciding on careers for themselves given that they are still young (Elementary pupils are far from choosing their careers). Although elementary learners are far from pursuing a career path, Homeroom Guidance extends their awareness involving the acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that enable them to make a successful transition from school to the world of work, and from job to job across the life span. This includes but is not limited to learners' discovery of their interests, talents, and skills, decision-making, problem-solving, planning, and exploring their career options and opportunities ^[3]. Aware of the construction of Homeroom Guidance and its modules, respondents encourage their colleagues to put any effort into extending the value of career development to their learners resulting in referrals to various career and Homeroom Guidance Webinars they let their colleagues' dwell on (With the availability of various webinars on HG we saw to it that our co-teachers can join and of course in return apply their take always in teaching the value of choosing careers and the early career activities which we can apply to Elementary pupils). ^[13] Self-awareness also helps managers find situations in which they will be most effective, assists with intuitive decision making, and aids stress management and motivation of oneself and others.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the shared experiences of the Guidance Designates, the following conclusions were arrived at;

1. A Guidance Designate served as program manager, catering to the needs of teachers for possible technical assistance, conducting orientations and quarterly meetings with teachers, and validating the content and pedagogy of the Homeroom Guidance modules distributed to learners. He/She may be handpicked by School Heads but they must be given proper orientation to ensure the proper implementation of Homeroom Guidance. Lack of awareness hinders the full implementation of every program, increasing awareness of teachers about Homeroom Guidance opens the way for acceptance and continuity of implementation. And work tenure (length of service) results in familiarity with the job role and the ability to perform better on the task.
2. Homeroom Guidance proved to be more effective in developing learners' academic, personal-social and career development.
3. Correct time management or scheduling of classes lessens problems with teachers' inadequacy to implement Homeroom Guidance. Self-awareness also helps managers find situations in which they will be most effective, assists with intuitive decision making, and aids stress management and motivation of oneself and others.

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