

**Need assessment result of senior high school in the district of Bulacan:
A basis for Guidance and Counseling program**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the academic, career, social, and family needs of District V Senior High School students at the Schools Division of Bulacan, to aid in creating an effective guidance program. Data were collected from 167 students using a descriptive-survey method with a needs assessment instrument based on the framework developed by Dr. Imelda V.G. Villar. According to the results, students believed that appropriate learning resources, constructive criticism, and clear classroom instruction were crucial for their academic achievement. Findings revealed that goal-setting, self-awareness, and ongoing education were considered to be extremely important for career development, whereas outside factors like cultural expectations were thought to have

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little impact. Social and emotional challenges were highlighted as significant problems, particularly to those students experiencing interpersonal relationships and self-identity crises. Family relationships, including interactions between siblings and parental issues, were revealed to have an impact on students' wellbeing. The significance of guidance counselors in addressing these diverse requirements is shown by this study. To enhance academic support, career readiness, mental health, and family-based interventions, a thorough, research-based program is advised.

Keywords: need assessment, guidance program

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INTRODUCTION

A guidance program is the collective resources of staff, services, and techniques that schools employ to support students in resolving both scholastic and social difficulties. Such programs often integrate the expertise of professional counselors, social workers, and test administrators, each of whom carries specific functions that contribute to the overall framework of student support. Guidance is thus understood as a developmental process intended to cultivate individuals into happy, secure, and socially responsible citizens, achieved through consistent assistance and mentoring (Akdemir, 2023). It has been described as a systematic, objective, logical, and sustainable endeavor led by school counselors to promote student independence (Komalasari et al., 2020). In this sense, guidance and counseling are integral parts of the educational system, aiming to facilitate student autonomy and ensure their holistic development (Kurniawan et al., 2021).

In the Philippine context, the Department of Education (DepEd) institutionalizes programs that highlight the role of guidance and counseling in student development. The Career Guidance Program (CGP), for instance, is designed to provide secondary school students with structured opportunities to make informed career decisions aligned with Republic Act (RA) 10533 or the Basic Education Act of 2013. Similarly, RA 11206, also known as the Secondary Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 2019, mandates the institutionalization of career guidance in both public and private secondary schools nationwide. Its goals include equipping students to make sound educational and career choices, exposing them to labor market realities, and aligning graduate competencies with industry and national economic needs (Llego, 2021). Complementing this is the Homeroom Guidance Program, a structured but non-formal component wherein teachers act as advisers, supporting learners in academic, career, and socio-emotional development. This program is proactive, covering all grade levels and focusing on cultivating higher-order thinking and lifelong learning competencies while adhering to structured learning experiences (DepEd Homeroom Guidance Program, 2024).

Internationally, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model provides a widely adopted framework for developing effective school counseling programs. The model underscores advocacy, leadership, and collaboration as essential in ensuring equitable

student outcomes. Its four key components—Define, Manage, Deliver, and Assess—emphasize a cyclical process of program implementation and evaluation guided by student needs. Central to this model is the role of data, which informs the design, monitoring, and evaluation of counseling programs. Data from needs assessments, surveys, and student interviews ensure that the interventions are evidence-based and responsive to student realities (American School Counselor Association, 2019).

A comprehensive school counseling program is indispensable for achieving a holistic approach that covers academic development, career preparation, and personal-social growth. Academically, such programs support students in overcoming barriers to learning and developing skills for sustained performance. In career development, students gain exposure to the world of work, acquire decision-making skills, and understand the link between education and employment. On the personal-social level, counseling nurtures interpersonal competence, self-awareness, and informed goal-setting, preparing students to be both work-ready and life-ready. Crucially, inclusivity must be embedded in these programs to ensure that socio-economic background, race, ethnicity, or special needs do not hinder access. Preventive approaches, regular counseling sessions, and collaborative engagement among counselors, teachers, and administrators enhance the responsiveness and sustainability of these initiatives.

The increasing complexity of modern life has heightened the need for guidance and counseling services. Beyond academic and career support, these programs are critical for fostering resilience, promoting mental health, and cultivating adaptive social behaviors. Guidance helps students harness strengths, overcome negative tendencies, and navigate rapid social changes (Dhami, 2020). In the Philippines, where suicide remains a pressing concern among the youth, school-based prevention and wellness programs form part of the Key Result Areas (KRAs) of Registered Guidance Counselors. Suicide ranks as the fourth leading cause of death among individuals aged 15–29 globally, with the Philippines recording a rate of 2.5 per 100,000 in 2019 (Department of Health, 2019). International organizations such as the World Health Organization (2021) and UNICEF (2022) advocate early identification and intervention as vital strategies to address suicide risks. Thus, the integration of guidance programs into the education system directly supports national and global efforts toward youth well-being.

Ultimately, guidance and counseling are vital elements of the Philippine education system, ensuring that students' needs are addressed comprehensively and systematically. By fostering academic success, socio-emotional well-being, and informed career choices, these programs not only contribute to individual growth but also strengthen the broader educational mission of preparing learners to be productive, resilient, and responsible members of society (Aguilar-Ramat, 2022).

Statement of the problem

The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of the school Guidance and Counseling Program in addressing the academic, career, and personal-social needs of students. Despite existing policies and frameworks, such as the DepEd Career Guidance Program, the Homeroom Guidance Program, and Republic Act 11206 or the Secondary Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 2019, gaps remain in the consistency, accessibility, and

responsiveness of guidance services in schools. Moreover, international models such as the ASCA National Model highlight the importance of data-driven, inclusive, and comprehensive counseling programs, yet the practical application of these standards in local contexts is often limited. Issues such as insufficient needs assessments, lack of preventive approaches, mental health concerns, and disparities in access continue to affect the delivery of guidance services.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design, which is appropriate as it allows for a systematic description of the characteristics, opinions, and needs of students without manipulating variables or establishing cause-and-effect relationships. The focus of the research was to gather numerical data from a defined population to accurately summarize and describe the current situation. In particular, this design addressed questions such as the perceptions of Senior High School students regarding the importance of different needs. The central tool used in data collection was a survey questionnaire, designed to provide quantifiable insights into the students' perspectives.

The survey instrument was structured into two parts. The first section gathered demographic information about the respondents, while the second section consisted of 38 statements across four domains: Student Academics, Social Responsibility and Social Development, Family Relations, and Career Choices. These components were adapted from the framework of Dr. Imelda V. G. Villa of the Psychological Association of the Philippines. Responses were rated using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "High Importance" to "Not Important," to evaluate perceived needs across the specified domains. The instruments were subjected to validation procedures to ensure reliability and appropriateness for the population under study. To safeguard student welfare, professional support was made available through the school's guidance counselor while the questionnaires were being completed.

The respondents of this study included 167 Senior High School students enrolled in the Division of Bulacan Integrated School, District V. The sample was obtained through convenience sampling, which was considered suitable due to the constraints of a school setting and the need for efficient data collection. Coordination was undertaken with the advisers of the Senior High School classes, who were briefed on the objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations of the study. These advisers then disseminated the digital survey links to their respective classes. Participation was voluntary, and students were included based on availability and willingness. This method allowed for the acquisition of a sufficient sample size while ensuring practicality in implementation.

The demographic profile of respondents reflected diversity in age, grade level, and academic strand. A large proportion of the participants, 72.5 percent, were between 16 and 17 years old, while 24 percent were between 18 and 20, and only 3.5 percent were older. With respect to grade level, Grade 11 students represented the majority of the sample at 70 percent, while Grade 12 students comprised the remaining 30 percent. Distribution across strands indicated a relatively balanced representation, although the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood strand had a slightly higher share at 55 percent compared to 45 percent for the Academic strand. Respondents were drawn from three schools: Bunsuran National High School with 95

participants, Guiguinto Vocational National High School with 36, and Lolomboy National High School with 36, resulting in a total of 167 students.

The procedure for data collection was carefully structured to ensure reliability and ethical compliance. The survey was distributed digitally, and students completed it at their convenience under the supervision of their advisers. The structured nature of the survey enabled the systematic collection of comparable responses, while ethical considerations were emphasized by ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the presence of professional guidance during the process. This approach safeguarded the rights and well-being of the respondents throughout the study.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistics were employed. Frequency and percentage distribution were used to summarize responses for each item, showing the proportion of students who selected each level of importance. Mean scores were calculated to determine the average perception for each statement, providing a measure of central tendency that reflected overall trends. Weighted means, interpreted according to a clearly defined five-point scale, allowed for the classification of results into qualitative descriptions such as “Very High Importance” or “High Importance.” This method ensured that the data were presented in both numerical and interpretable forms, offering a comprehensive overview of the respondents’ perspectives. The integration of these analytical approaches facilitated an accurate and accessible interpretation of the findings, thereby ensuring that the research questions were effectively addressed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 167 Senior High School students from the Division of Bulacan District V participated in this study. These respondents were distributed among Bunsuran National High School with 95 participants, Guiguinto Vocational National High School with 36, and Lolomboy National High School with 36. The demographic profile revealed that the majority of respondents were between 16 and 17 years old (121 students or 72.5%), followed by 40 students aged 18 to 20 years old (24%), and only six students who were older (3.5%). By grade level, the population consisted of 117 Grade 11 students (70%) and 50 Grade 12 students (30%). In terms of academic strands, 92 students (55%) were enrolled in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood strand while 75 (45%) came from the Academic strand. The survey, administered digitally, measured students’ needs across four domains: Social Responsibility–Social Development, Family Relationships, Academics, and Career Choices, using a four-point Likert scale. The results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, with frequency, percentage, mean, weighted mean, and standard deviation employed to summarize and interpret the findings.

In the domain of Social Responsibility–Social Development (SR-SD), the respondents consistently identified maintaining friendships and self-awareness as priorities. The item “My Life, My Choice—Maintaining Friendship Goals” achieved a mean of 3.29 with a standard deviation of 0.83, interpreted as highly important, suggesting that students valued sustaining their social connections as part of their development. Similarly, the item “Know myself or Who am I?” produced the highest mean in this domain at 3.49 with a standard deviation of 0.84, again interpreted as highly important. This underscores the strong emphasis students place on identity development and self-understanding, which are crucial for decision-making and personal growth.

Other indicators such as “Managing conflicts or settling quarrels with or among friendships” (mean = 3.08, SD = 0.81), “Getting rid of fear of social expectations” (mean = 3.01, SD = 0.84), “Impact and responsible use of social media platforms” (mean = 3.01, SD = 0.84), “Unlock my potential and showcase my skills” (mean = 3.43, SD = 0.82), “Get rid of personal vices and uncontrolled habits” (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.84), “Getting intimate—Why waiting is important” (mean = 2.92, SD = 0.78), and “Why are values important to build character?” (mean = 3.36, SD = 0.76) were all rated as important. The variability across these responses indicates differing levels of confidence and awareness among students regarding social expectations, personal discipline, and moral development. Collectively, the overall mean for this domain was 3.14, suggesting that while all indicators were acknowledged, students prioritized self-awareness and sustaining friendships most strongly.

For Family Relationships, results showed that most indicators were viewed as important by the respondents, with the greatest emphasis on sibling relations and parental support. The items “Improve my relationship with my siblings” (mean = 3.26, SD = 0.91) and “Help parents manage stress and marital problems” (mean = 3.26, SD = 0.89) both received the highest mean scores, indicating that students recognized the significance of strengthening sibling bonds and supporting their parents in managing household stressors. Other indicators such as “Manage siblings in a parentless home” (mean = 3.19, SD = 0.88), “Develop the ability to discuss problems with parents” (mean = 3.17, SD = 1.02), “Balance between warring or separated parents” (mean = 3.02, SD = 0.93), “Live with relatives” (mean = 2.87, SD = 0.97), and “Cope with the expectations and demands of parents” (mean = 3.02, SD = 0.85) also reflected important needs, though with greater variability due to diverse family circumstances. Interestingly, “Teach parents how to handle their children effectively” (mean = 2.56, SD = 0.92) and “Relate to a stepparent or stepsibling” (mean = 2.55, SD = 1.03) were rated only as slightly important, likely reflecting fewer students’ direct experiences with these issues. Overall, the domain of Family Relationships had a mean score of 3.12, indicating that while family issues are valued by students, there is greater variability in how these concerns are prioritized depending on their household context.

The academic domain yielded the highest overall scores, with clear emphasis placed on teacher effectiveness and the quality of instruction. The item “My teacher explains things in a way I understand” emerged as the highest-rated indicator across all domains, with a mean of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 0.64, interpreted as highly important. This indicates a strong consensus among respondents that clarity of instruction is essential to their academic success. Similarly, “My teachers give feedback that helps me learn from my work” received a mean of 3.53 with a standard deviation of 0.67, also indicating strong agreement on the value of constructive feedback. Additional academic needs included “Having a good school library with helpful books and resources” (mean = 3.41, SD = 0.77), “Getting chances to ask questions and talk in class” (mean = 3.37, SD = 0.74), and “Knowing who to talk to at school if I am struggling with my classes” (mean = 3.26, SD = 0.85), all rated as important. Items such as “Having a classroom that is comfortable and not too noisy” (mean = 3.23, SD = 0.88), “Getting all the books and online tools I need for my subject” (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.82), “Having an amount of schoolwork that I can handle” (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.82), and “My schoolwork helps me get ready for what I want to do later in life” (mean = 3.20, SD = 0.85) were also considered

important, though with slightly lower means. The overall mean score for the academic domain was 3.34, the highest among all areas, reflecting that students placed the greatest importance on teaching practices, access to resources, and supportive academic structures.

For Career Choices, students strongly emphasized self-awareness, lifelong learning, and future goal-setting. The item “Set goals for my future” obtained the highest mean score of 3.61 with a standard deviation of 0.73, interpreted as highly important, showing that future planning is a key priority for students. This was closely followed by “Continuous learning and development” (mean = 3.57, SD = 0.73) and “Be aware of my skills and abilities” (mean = 3.56, SD = 0.69), also interpreted as highly important. Other indicators included “Know what career to pursue in the future” (mean = 3.44, SD = 0.81), “Work in an organization that is aligned with my core values” (mean = 3.39, SD = 0.79), “Work in a stable company” (mean = 3.34, SD = 0.77), “Believe that I am capable of achieving whatever I set my mind to” (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.78), and “A career with a high salary” (mean = 3.23, SD = 0.87), all rated as important. In contrast, “Opinions of other people” (mean = 2.56, SD = 0.92) was rated significantly lower, and “Societal expectations and cultural norms in choosing a career” received the lowest mean of 1.24 with a standard deviation of 0.43, interpreted as not important. These results reveal that students prioritize autonomy, personal growth, and intrinsic motivation over external pressures when making career choices. The overall mean score for this domain was 3.12, reflecting moderate importance with strong emphasis on self-driven goals.

Taken together, the findings highlight the central role of academics in students’ lives, with an overall mean of 3.34 compared to 3.14 for Social Responsibility–Social Development, 3.12 for Family Relationships, and 3.12 for Career Choices. This indicates that while students value balanced development, their greatest focus lies in academic achievement supported by clear instruction, helpful feedback, and accessible resources. At the same time, self-awareness, family support, and career planning are also vital aspects of their holistic growth, pointing to the interconnectedness of personal, social, academic, and career development.

The implications of these results are significant. Students’ strong appreciation for effective teaching and feedback demonstrates the need to sustain and strengthen instructional practices while addressing classroom comfort, resource accessibility, and workload management. Career guidance programs should focus on fostering self-reflection, lifelong learning, and goal-setting, providing mentorship and structured career planning resources that respect students’ autonomy. In the area of social responsibility, guidance interventions should emphasize conflict management, self-awareness, and responsible digital citizenship, while family-focused counseling should promote sibling bonds, communication with parents, and coping strategies for diverse household dynamics. Mental health support and social-emotional learning initiatives should also be expanded to help students develop resilience, healthy boundaries, and interpersonal confidence.

Overall, the findings affirm the crucial role of guidance counselors in addressing the interconnected needs of students. By implementing comprehensive programs that integrate academic, career, personal, and social development, counselors can foster environments where learners are not only academically successful but also emotionally resilient, socially responsible, and future-ready.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the needs of 167 Senior High School students from the Division of Bulacan District V across four domains: Social Responsibility–Social Development, Family Relationships, Academics, and Career Choices. Using a quantitative descriptive design and a validated survey instrument, the findings revealed that while students recognize the importance of balanced development across all areas, they place the greatest emphasis on academics. The highest overall mean was recorded in the academic domain (3.34), underscoring the centrality of effective teaching practices, clear explanations, helpful feedback, and supportive learning environments in shaping student success.

In terms of social responsibility and development, self-awareness and identity formation emerged as top priorities, with students strongly valuing the ability to understand themselves and maintain meaningful friendships. The findings highlight the significance of guidance programs that nurture self-reflection, character building, and social skills essential for personal growth and resilience. For family relationships, the results revealed that students prioritized strengthening sibling ties and supporting parents in managing stress and marital challenges, reflecting the vital influence of family dynamics on students' emotional well-being and academic performance.

With regard to career choices, the students expressed strong motivation toward self-awareness, continuous learning, and future goal-setting, emphasizing autonomy and intrinsic values over external pressures such as societal expectations or others' opinions. This indicates that students are increasingly career-focused yet wish to make decisions based on their personal strengths, interests, and aspirations rather than cultural or societal dictates.

Taken together, the results affirm that a comprehensive guidance and counseling program must address students' academic, social, familial, and career-related needs in an integrated and holistic manner. The role of the guidance counselor is therefore critical in developing structured interventions that not only respond to students' immediate concerns but also prepare them to navigate future challenges. Programs that reinforce effective instruction, career planning, interpersonal development, and family communication will help create environments where students are supported to achieve both academic excellence and personal well-being.

Ultimately, this study concludes that guidance programs must be preventive, inclusive, and responsive, ensuring that no student is left behind regardless of background or circumstance. By addressing the diverse developmental needs of learners, schools can help cultivate well-rounded individuals who are academically prepared, socially responsible, emotionally resilient, and career-ready, thereby fulfilling the holistic mission of education.

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