

INFLUENCE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING SERVICES ON STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Article History

Submission: 26 May 2025
Revised: May 5, 2026
Accepted: May 25, 2026
Publication: September 3, 2026

Keywords— Guidance and Counselling Services, Mental Health Outcomes, Senior High School, Adolescent Well-being, School-Based Interventions

This study explores the influence of guidance and Counselling services on the mental health outcomes of Senior High School students at the University of Bohol Victoriano D. Tirol Advanced Learning Center (UB VDTALC) for the 2024–2025 academic year. In response to rising mental health concerns among Filipino adolescents, particularly in Central Visayas, where socio-economic challenges and limited mental health resources prevail, school-based interventions play a crucial role.

Using a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 304 Grade 12 students to assess the influence of guidance and Counselling services to students' mental health outcomes. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services and Mental Health Outcomes. However, the study also found that many students rarely access these services due to stigma, lack of awareness, and low visibility. As a result, the study proposes targeted enhancements to existing guidance and Counselling programs to improve accessibility, cultural relevance, and student engagement, ensuring the services are more effective in addressing adolescents' evolving mental health needs.



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INTRODUCTION

With the increasing emotional, psychological, social, and educational stresses on adolescents, mental health has become an important concern in educational institutions. In addition to developmental obstacles in identity construction, emotional regulation, and interpersonal connections, senior high school students face academic demands and vocational preparation. Without management, these pressures can significantly affect psychological well-being, academic achievement, and social functioning. As a result, it has become clear that schools are not only places of academic instruction but also crucial sites for promoting students' mental health and psychosocial development.

Accessible counselling and psychosocial support services play an important role in promoting adolescents' mental health and emotional well-being. These classes give students a chance to talk about their feelings, become more resilient, and improve their decision-making. School counselling programs contribute positively to students' academic adjustment, emotional regulation, and interpersonal functioning.

Hoover and Bostic (2021) say that mental health interventions that are easy to access and help avoid problems should be used in regular school settings. Researchers Worsley et al. (2022) found that psychotherapy, mindfulness, social support, and psychoeducation can help students improve their mental health and stress management. Mental health concerns among Filipino adolescents have become increasingly alarming. Filipino students feel stressed, anxious, hopeless, emotionally worn out, and even hurt themselves because of pressure from school, family, culture, and technology.

Recent research has shown that there has been a rise in the prevalence of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, emotional distress, and psychological load among adolescents and young people. This has highlighted the critical need for easily accessible mental health therapies in educational settings (Cénat et al., 2021). Many educational institutions continue to struggle to build effective mental health support systems, even though the Philippine Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036) was passed into law. This is especially relevant to the availability of counselors, the ease of accessing programs, the reduction in feelings of guilt, and student participation.

According to Carey and Dimmitt (2012), it is important to develop Counselling programs that are both comprehensive and developmentally appropriate to help students do well in school, feel good about themselves, and grow socially and emotionally. As mentioned by Larran and Hein (2024), to increase student involvement, Asian schools should encourage the provision of Counselling services that are both culturally relevant and widely available. In Asian schools, there is a persistent stigma, cultural expectations, and a lack of understanding, all of which underscore the significance of this matter. Rogers' (1951) Person-Centered Theory emphasizes empathic, supportive, and nonjudgmental relationships as essential to psychological growth and

emotional well-being. This theory emphasizes the importance of mutually supportive, unconditionally positive, and empathic relationships to promote mental health and overall growth.

The Developmental Guidance and Counselling Model by Gysbers and Henderson (2012) emphasizes the importance of providing comprehensive, proactive Counselling services to help students grow in their academic, career, personal, and social lives. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) shows that life, school, friends, and family can all affect a student's mental health. Engel's (1977) Biopsychosocial Model shows how biological, psychological, and community factors interact to impact mental health results. This model emphasizes the need for integrated school Counselling services.

There is a lot of research worldwide on how Counselling services can support students' emotional and academic health, but not as much from the Philippines, especially Bohol, on how guidance and Counselling services can support the mental health of senior high school students. There is extensive research on higher education and the effectiveness of general Counselling. However, it does not look at how students' access to, perception of, academic support, and social support within Counselling services affect their ability to deal with stress, anxiety, emotions, and depression. This gap underscores the need for a situation-specific empirical study to improve school Counselling services in your area.

Related Literature and Studies. Educational institutions promote students' academic, emotional, psychological, and social development with guidance and Counselling. These services help students manage stress, improve relationships, and create academic and mental health initiatives. Effective school Counselling services increase students' mental health, resilience, and academic performance, according to a study.

Guidance and Counselling services are important parts of schools because they help students grow academically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially. These services help students address personal issues, manage stressors, improve their relationships with others, and develop strategies important to their mental health and academic success. Research shows that successful school Counselling programs make a big difference in students' mental health, resilience, and overall academic success.

Research from all over the world has shown that Counselling can help children's mental health. Worsley et al. (2022) found that using multiple approaches, such as Counselling, mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral techniques, peer support, and digital mental health tools, can greatly improve mental health and coping. These studies, even though they were done in higher education, show how important it is to have early assistance, easy access, and support systems that work together. These findings likewise have implications for secondary education settings. Digital progress has changed how school advice services work. Digitally supported Counselling interventions make it easier for students to get mental

health help and make them more likely to do so. This is especially true for teens who might not want to use standard Counselling services (Mulawarman et al., 2020; Suryawati, 2024).

Accessibility and cultural responsiveness remain important considerations in the implementation of Counselling services. Larran and Hein (2024) stated that coaching methods used in East and Southeast Asia need to be adapted to local culture, as Western-style models may not align with Asian social norms and values. Reback (2010) emphasized that institutional mental health support systems contribute significantly to students' emotional adjustment and academic functioning. These problems also happen a lot in Philippine schools, where students often do not go to therapy because they are afraid of being judged, they do not understand mental health, or the visibility of Counselling services remains limited.

Studies already conducted show that Counselling services help children perform better in school, manage their emotions, and make friends. According to Sitinjak and Canu (2023), effective therapy programs help students focus better, become more interested in learning, and become more cognitively engaged. Simbolon and Purba (2022) say that regular use of advice services can greatly improve students' mental health, their capacity to handle stress, and their sense of belonging at school.

The Counselling process needs to place equal emphasis on growth and prevention to improve mental health. It was said by Defrianti et al. (2024) that treatment assists adolescents in coping with their emotions, developing greater resilience, and identifying mental health difficulties at an earlier stage. In the same vein, Indreswari et al. (2024) found that effective Counselling interventions improve mental health and reduce academic burnout among students. According to these findings, Counselling and guidance services can help prevent children from getting into trouble by teaching them more effective ways to manage stress.

Also, research shows that Counselling schools should be open to all students and focus on their needs. According to Priestley et al. (2022), tutoring services are more effective when students are involved in planning and implementing the programs. According to research, early interventions in mental health that are sensitive to cultural norms have the potential to promote emotional health and increase the number of teenagers who seek psychological professional assistance. Rickwood et al. (2005) found that accessible and youth-sensitive Counselling services encourage adolescents to seek psychological support.

One of the most important factors in determining the success of therapies is the participation of family and community members. When parents are actively involved in their children's therapy, the children are better able to regulate their emotions and think more clearly, according to research by Nasution et al. (2024).

Sinaga et al. (2022) discussed the importance of school Counselling

programs having administrative support, counselors receiving professional development, strategy planning, and decisions being made based on data. Hoover and Bostic (2021) also made the case for proactive and all-encompassing mental health models that include both educational and psychological support services in schools.

There has been extensive research on the usefulness of Counselling worldwide. However, not many studies have looked at how guidance and Counselling services affect the mental health of senior high school students in the Philippines, especially in Bohol. Most of the studies conducted so far have focused on higher education or general Counselling practices. It has not looked into how Counselling access, perception, academic support, and social support affect students' ability to deal with stress, anxiety, and depression. To address this gap, this study examines how advice and Counselling services affect the mental health of senior high school students in a specific educational setting.

The Advanced Learning Center. This study examines the effects of guidance and therapy services on the mental health of senior high school students. The results are intended to make school Counselling and guidance services more accessible, responsive, inclusive, and effective, thereby improving teens' mental health and helping them grow as whole people. The study's main goals were to answer the following questions:

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the students in terms of:
 - 1.1 sex;
 - 1.2 strand enrolled; and
 - 1.3 frequency of guidance center visits?
2. What is the level of influence of guidance and Counselling services in terms of:
 - 2.1 accessibility and usage;
 - 2.2 perception;
 - 2.3 academic life; and
 - 2.4 social life?
3. What are the mental health outcomes of students in terms of:
 - 3.1 stress reduction;
 - 3.2 anxiety management;
 - 3.3 navigating depression; and
 - 3.4 emotional regulation?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the students' profiles and:
 - 4.1 level of influence of guidance and Counselling services; and
 - 4.2 Level of mental health outcomes?
5. Is there a significant correlation between the level of influence of guidance and Counselling services and students' mental health outcomes?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

During the 2024-2025 school year, a quantitative descriptive-correlational research methodology was used to investigate the mental health status of Senior High School students enrolled at the University of Bohol Victoriano D. Tirol Advanced Learning Center (UB VDTALC). The results of a survey were used to gather students' perspectives and experiences regarding the accessibility, impact, and effectiveness of guidance and Counselling services on their emotional well-being and mental health.

In total, 304 senior high school students enrolled in the specified academic year were included in the study sample. The selection of participants was made to ensure that they represented a wide range of perspectives and experiences about the outcomes of mental health services provided by schools. This study focused on the accessibility and utilization of Counselling services, the perspectives of students regarding the guidance program, the effects of Counselling on academic and social aspects, and the evaluation of mental health outcomes, such as the reduction of stress, the management of anxiety, the regulation of emotions, and the ability to cope with depressive experiences.

Based on findings from prior research on school Counselling and students' mental health, survey questionnaires were developed. Eliamani, Richard, and Peter (2021) provided the basis for the instrument used to evaluate the implications of guidance and Counselling services. On the other hand, the framework developed by Broglia et al. (2021) served as the foundation for the instrument used to evaluate mental health outcomes. Items were modified as required to conform to the requirements of the Senior High School the institution operates.

A preliminary test of the study instrument was conducted with students who were not part of the final group of respondents. This was done ahead of time, before the data collection started. The device's clarity, consistency, and dependability were assessed during the pilot test. A Cronbach's alpha test, which showed a reliability coefficient of 0.82, showed that the device could be used to collect data. This means that there is a good amount of internal consistency.

The study looked into eight things. The effects of guidance and Counselling services were looked at in four areas: how easy they are to get to and how often they are used, how people feel about them, how they do in school, and how they connect with others. In the last four categories, the focus was on mental health outcomes, especially lowering stress, dealing with anxiety and depression, and controlling emotions.

A variety of descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used for data analysis. The characteristics of the respondents were presented as frequency counts and percentages, and the effect of guidance and Counselling services on mental health outcomes was assessed using composite means. To identify important connections among the factors, correlation analyses such

as Spearman’s rho and other suitable nonparametric methods were used. A significance level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests.

Table 1. *Scale and Interpretation of the Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services*

Scale	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Highly Influential
3	Agree	Moderately Influential
2	Slightly Agree	Less Influential
1	Disagree	Not Influential

Table 2. *Scale and Interpretation of Mental Health Outcomes*

Scale	Descriptive Rating	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Very Strong Mental Health Outcomes
3	Agree	Moderately Strong Mental Health Outcomes
2	Slightly Agree	Less Strong Mental Health Outcomes
1	Disagree	Weak Mental Health Outcomes

Note. The four-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents’ perceptions regarding the influence of guidance and Counselling services and their perceived mental health outcomes.

The investigation followed strict ethical rules. Before the data collection began, permission was sought from the University of Bohol Ethics Review Committee. Participants were told about the goal and nature of the study, and their informed consent was obtained before the questionnaire was sent out. People knew they could quit at any time without any consequences, and they chose to participate voluntarily. It was ensured that all answers were kept confidential and that the data was used only for academic and research purposes, thereby protecting privacy and anonymity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents. The results show that even though the institution offers guidance and Counselling services, students still do not use them very much. This trend could mean that barriers like shame, a lack of knowledge, reluctance to get professional help, or wrong ideas about what Counselling programs are for are still there for teens. In many school settings, students connect Counselling services with behavior issues rather than emotional and mental health help, which could explain why so few students use them.

The data also suggest that making guidance services more visible and easier to access might increase students’ likelihood of participating in

Counselling-related activities and mental health interventions. Setting up a more approachable, student-centered Counselling environment may also encourage students facing emotional or academic problems who are still hesitant to seek official help to do so.

Level of Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services. The data show that students view guidance and Counselling services as useful to their academic, emotional, and social experiences at school. Positive assessments across dimensions indicate that the Counselling program improves children's well-being, particularly in emotional support, interpersonal development, and school adjustment.

Students seemed to like the school's Counselling services, suggesting that the guidance office is supportive. Positive views of Counselling services affect students' willingness to seek help, participate in Counselling activities, and express their concerns. Students trust school-based mental health interventions more when counselors are personable and sympathetic. The data also imply that guidance and Counselling services help children manage peer interactions, mental issues, and social pressures during adolescence. During academic expectations and psychosocial adjustments in senior high school, Counselling services can help children cope, feel supported, and reflect.

Students generally liked Counselling services, although the results show room for improvement, notably in accessibility and academic integration. Due to scheduling, awareness, or stigma, some students may still have trouble accessing Counselling services. Strengthening outreach, classroom-based interventions, and proactive Counselling may boost engagement and the benefits of the guidance program. These findings confirm those of Sitinjak and Canu (2023), who reported that school Counselling programs boost academic motivation, mental wellness, and social connectedness. Their study found that integrating counselling services into schools improves focus, relationships, and psychosocial adjustment.

Level of Mental Health Outcomes. The findings suggest that students generally experience positive mental health outcomes associated with the support provided by guidance and Counselling services. The results indicate that Counselling interventions may contribute to students' emotional stability, coping capacity, and ability to manage common adolescent stressors within the academic environment.

Students demonstrated favorable outcomes in areas related to emotional regulation, anxiety management, and coping with depressive experiences, suggesting that Counselling services may help learners process emotional challenges more effectively. During adolescence, students are often exposed to academic pressure, interpersonal conflicts, uncertainty about the future, and personal insecurities that may affect their psychological well-being. The availability of accessible Counselling support may therefore serve as an important protective factor in helping students navigate these developmental

challenges.

The findings further imply that Counselling services may strengthen students' emotional resilience by providing opportunities for self-expression, emotional support, and problem-solving. Guidance programs that promote active listening, empathy, stress management, and psychosocial support may contribute to healthier coping mechanisms among students facing emotional difficulties. The relatively positive outcomes associated with emotional regulation also suggest that students may feel more capable of managing emotional responses and maintaining interpersonal relationships within the school setting.

However, the findings also indicate that stress-related concerns continue to affect students despite the presence of Counselling services. This may reflect the growing academic, personal, and social pressures experienced by senior high school learners. Academic workload, performance expectations, family-related concerns, and social challenges may continue to contribute to students' stress levels, highlighting the need for stronger stress-management interventions and preventive mental health programs within schools.

Summary of the Relationship Between Respondents' Profile, Guidance and Counselling Services, and Mental Health Outcomes. The findings indicate that sex was significantly associated with both the perceived influence of guidance and Counselling services and students' mental health outcomes. This suggests that male and female students may differ in how they experience, access, or respond to Counselling interventions and emotional support systems. The result highlights the importance of culturally responsive and gender-sensitive Counselling approaches that recognize differences in students' emotional expression, coping behaviors, and help-seeking patterns. As emphasized by Erford (2019), effective school Counselling programs should remain responsive to the diverse developmental and psychosocial needs of students.

Table 4. *Summary of the Relationship Between Respondents' Profile, Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services, and Mental Health Outcomes N = 220*

Profile Variables	Guidance and Counselling Services <i>p</i> -value	Decision	Mental Health Outcomes <i>p</i> -value	Decision
Sex	.039	Reject Ho	.016	Reject Ho
Academic Strand	.761	Fail to Reject Ho	.626	Fail to Reject Ho
Frequency of Guidance Center Visits	< .001	Reject Ho	< .001	Reject Ho

Note. Significant at $p < .05$.

In contrast, no significant relationship was found between academic strand and either guidance and Counselling services or mental health outcomes. The result suggests that Counselling support and mental health experiences remain relatively consistent across different academic strands. This may indicate that the institution's guidance services are implemented in a manner that is broadly accessible and inclusive, regardless of students' academic specialization. The finding supports the work of Gysbers and colleagues (2012), who emphasized that comprehensive guidance programs contribute positively to students' academic adjustment and psychosocial development across diverse student groups.

Meanwhile, the frequency of visits to the Guidance Center was notably associated with both the perceived impact of Counselling services and mental health outcomes. Students who utilized Counselling services more often reported better emotional and psychological outcomes. Consistent involvement in guidance-related activities can provide students with enhanced emotional support, effective coping strategies, and opportunities for self-reflection, ultimately bolstering their resilience and psychological well-being. This finding is consistent with research by Simbolon and Purba (2022), which found that regular access to Counselling services significantly enhances students' emotional stability, academic engagement, and overall mental well-being.

Correlation Between the Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services and Mental Health Outcomes. The findings reveal a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the perceived influence of guidance and Counselling services and students' mental health outcomes. This suggests that students who view Counselling services more positively also tend to report healthier emotional and psychological conditions. The result highlights the important role of accessible and responsive Counselling programs in supporting students' emotional regulation, stress management, and overall well-being.

Table 5. *Correlation Between the Influence of Guidance and Counselling Services and Mental Health Outcomes*

Variables	Spearman's rho (ρ)	p -value	Interpretation	Decision
Guidance and Counselling Services and Mental Health Outcomes	.877	< .001	Strong Positive Correlation	Reject Ho

Note. Significant at $p < .05$.

The strong association further implies that guidance and Counselling services may serve as important protective and developmental mechanisms within the school environment. Counseling interventions that provide emotional support, active listening, coping strategies, and psychosocial

guidance may help students manage academic pressures and personal concerns more effectively. The findings are consistent with the study of Simbolon and Purba (2022), which emphasized that effective Counselling services contribute significantly to students' emotional stability and mental wellness. Similarly, Campbell et al. (2022) highlighted that comprehensive student support systems play an important role in promoting positive mental health outcomes among learners.

Although the correlation coefficient indicates a very strong relationship, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the study's descriptive-correlational design, which identifies association rather than direct causation. Nonetheless, the results underscore the potential value of strengthening school-based guidance and Counselling programs as part of broader mental health support initiatives for adolescents.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the important impact of guidance and Counselling services on the mental health outcomes of Senior High School students at UB VDTALC. While numerous students infrequently utilize the Guidance Center, those who engage consistently have indicated a more significant impact and enhanced mental health results, especially in coping with stress, anxiety, and emotions.

The significant correlation between students' sex and their experiences with mental health and Counselling services, but not across academic streams, indicates the program's inclusiveness. Most importantly, the importance of accessible and effective Counselling is highlighted by a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.877$) between the perceived influence of guidance and Counselling services and mental health outcomes. The developmental guiding theory proposed by Gysbers and Henderson (2012), which calls for comprehensive and proactive assistance, and the person-centered theory proposed by Rogers (1951), which emphasizes empathic, student-centered interactions, are both congruent with these findings. Both theories advocate for providing support that is both comprehensive and proactive. In their respective works, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Engel's Biopsychosocial Model (1977) emphasize the importance of providing students with Counselling services that are not only effectively integrated but also tailored to students' intellectual, social, and emotional needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **Strengthen Awareness Campaign.** To enhance students' understanding of the availability and advantages of guidance and Counselling services and to tackle the significant number of students who infrequently utilize the Guidance Center, the school should initiate focused awareness campaigns that emphasize the accessibility and benefits of these services. These initiatives may encompass classroom orientations, student testimonials, posters, digital content, and peer advocacy programs.
2. **Enhance counselor training and professional development.** It is of the utmost importance to provide guidance counselors with regular and specialized training that emphasizes culturally responsive Counselling, mental health first aid, trauma-informed care, and support for children from diverse backgrounds. They can greatly enhance their abilities and flexibility by working alongside mental health professionals and participating in certification programs and seminars, both locally and internationally.
3. **Foster Inclusive School Environments Through Counselling Programs.** Fostering a sense of belonging and improving peer connections can be achieved by incorporating Counselling services that emphasize inclusion. Group Counselling for underrepresented students, campaigns centered on diversity and inclusion, student-led support circles, and mentorship programs that connect students with peers who have had similar experiences are all examples of these activities. To recognize children experiencing isolation and implement measures that promote their more meaningful integration into the school environment, counselors should be equipped with the necessary skills.
4. **Ensure Equal Access Across Academic Strands.** While no significant differences were found across strands, efforts must continue to ensure that all students, regardless of academic strand, are equally aware of and able to access Counselling services. Tailored orientations and communication strategies for each strand can help maintain this equity.
5. **Enhance Program Visibility and Student Awareness.** Although no notable differences were observed among the strands, it is essential to continue efforts to ensure that all students, regardless of their academic strand, are fully informed about and able to use Counselling services. Customized orientations and communication approaches for each strand can help preserve this equity.
6. **Numerous students indicated that they seldom visit the center.** This finding suggests a need to enhance its visibility and perceived significance. This could include activities such as student-led mental health clubs, the

exchange of testimonials, peer Counselling programs, or the incorporation of mental health topics into the curriculum.

7. **Encourage Male Students to Utilize Guidance and Counselling Services.** To tackle the issue of male students being underrepresented in guidance services, it is essential to implement strategies that are sensitive to gender, which will help normalize and encourage male students to seek help. This may encompass initiatives led by peers that highlight male role models. These themed workshops address issues pertinent to male students and promote a positive narrative that positions counselling as a strength instead of a weakness.
8. **Monitor and Evaluate Guidance and Counselling Services.** Explore new Counselling approaches, including peer-led interventions, digital platforms, and family-inclusive strategies. Support action research to collect localized data for evidence-based improvements in guidance and Counselling.
9. **Future Research.** Explore innovative Counselling approaches like peer-led interventions, digital mental health platforms, and family-inclusive Counselling strategies. Encouraging action research among educators and guidance personnel can also help generate localized data to inform responsive and evidence-based improvements in guidance and Counselling services.

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