Role Reversals: Guidance Counselors’ Coping Strategies and Professional Help Availment
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ABSTRACT
The research explored the coping strategies used by guidance counselors and their availment of professional help. Using Sequential Explanatory Design, 53 Guidance Counselors from various educational institutions were given the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to assess their burnout risk levels on the three areas: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced personal achievement (PA). Participants with moderate and high scores in one of the areas of the MBI were given the Burnout Factors Checklist to identify the most common challenges that they experience from their work, while those who scored high in one of the areas from the MBI were given the Coping Strategies Questionnaire. For the qualitative study, four counselors who obtained a high score in one of the areas from the MBI were asked to participate in a follow-up interview to assist the results from the quantitative study. Findings suggest that guidance counselors often opt for emotional adaptive strategies (M=3.33) as well as spiritual based strategies (M=3.33). In terms of their availment of professional help, counselors shared that they have not yet availed any help from professional outside their workplace for mostly it was consulting with their co-counselors as well as mentoring.

Keywords: Guidance Counselors, burnout, coping strategies, professional help, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, reduced personal achievement

Counseling, as an organized field, includes a variety of guidance services that help people deal with personal, educational, and vocational problems. The majority of professional counselors work in schools and colleges where they provide a diverse array of services to assist students including advising in academic, social, and behavioral matters as well as developmental issues (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2006). They are known to be great listeners and they also advocate for mental health and resilience in difficult life circumstances (Carandang, Catipon, Dey, Fernandez & Tuason, 2011). The work of a counselor treating individuals with mental health issues can take a toll on their psychological well-being (Malinowski, 2014). One thing that is implied in maintaining a healthy psychological well-being is the ability to use coping strategies (Stevanovic & Rupert, 2004), advices and supervision needed to adapt (Litoiu, 2015) as well as the need for counselors to attune to their own inner dynamics to mitigate the possible deleterious effects from their work (Flanellly,Galek, Greene & Kudler, 2011).

School counselors’ roles had their changes due to the challenges of today’s population. They experiences challenges due to the overwhelming needs of clients, heavy caseloads (Arias, Flores, & Jenaro, 2007) and also to other contributing factors such as competing priorities, role confusion, lack of support and the inability to see students (Ngeno, 2014). While giving services in educational settings, school counselors may also have many different roles as a citizen, where they balance professional and personal obligations (Black, Frick & Thompson, 2014). A high degree of emotional commitment is a requirement in the school and counseling profession, due to the fact that it can be contrasted to other work related attitudes such as job satisfaction, job performance, stress or even burnout.

Counselor Burnout

Burnout among mental health practitioners is a common phenomenon (Arias, Flores & Jenaro, 2007) and counselor burnout has become a concern for the counseling profession (Boy & Pine, 2011). Research indicates that burnout implies a generalized state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in demanding situations (Shin, Lee,
Kim & Lee 2012). Counseling is considered as one of the professions with high levels of emotional engagement (Cho, Kissinger, Lee & Ogle, 2010) and several researches (Briet, Brouwers, & Naring, 2006) have reported that high levels of emotional engagement are directly related to high levels of burnout symptoms. For counselors, burnout means the failure to perform clinical tasks appropriately because of personal discouragement, apathy, and emotional and physical drain (Lee, Baker, Cho, Heckathorn, Holland, Newgent, & Wallace, 2007). It was also discovered that guidance counselors/facilitators experienced emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced personal achievement (PA) respectively, with extent to burnout (Dyquiangco & Magac, 2012).

**Emotional Exhaustion**

Emotional exhaustion is central in burnout syndrome (Kuikka, Nevalainen, Pitkälä, & Torppa, 2015) for it involves depletion of mental energy and resources (Harris, 2015). A study made by Ausserhofer, De Geest, Dhaní, Kunz, Schwendimann, Simon, & Zuñiga (2015) found out that emotional exhaustion (24.2%) were the most frequent self-reported physical and mental health and that it was associated with increased workload, lack of job preparation, conflict with other health professionals and lack of recognition and inversely associated with leadership. Emotional exhaustion is also common among general practitioners and it was associated with longer working history, having committed a medical error, and feelings of isolation at work (Kuikka, Nevalainen, Pitkälä, & Torppa, 2015).

**Depersonalization**

A study by Macdonald, Wang & Wei (2015) found that social cynicism was the primary contributor to depersonalization. Depersonalization transpires when a person attempts to create emotional distance between themselves and others (Cook, 2015). Clinicians with higher levels of depersonalization were more likely to report that burnout affects how staff works with consumers (Firmin, Flanagan, Salyers, & Rollins, 2015). However, with the decrease in the mean of depersonalization, employee's relationship with coworkers and those receiving services were reported to improve (Dogonchi, Lael-monfared, Tehrani, & Vahedian-Shahroodi, 2015).

**Reduced Personal Achievement**

The third component of burnout, which is reduced personal accomplishment, is an erosion of an individual's sense of effectiveness (Cook, 2015) which happens when a person feels that his or her performance is not associated with success (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Studies show that lower decisional authority, lower coworker support, less frequent difficult patient interactions but greater discomfort with difficult patient interactions predicted lower personal accomplishment (Jesse, Abouljoud, Hogan, & Eshelman, 2015). However, a high level of coordination may not only reduce emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but it also may impact the third component of burnout in that it may have a positive impact on the personal accomplishment of the individual (Yashwant Advani, Jagdale, Kumar Garg, & Kumar, 2005).

**Coping Strategies**

Counselors spend most of their time learning how to take care of others, with relatively little attention given to care for the self. Research suggests that self-care strategies including processing with peers, survivor, spirituality, exercise, spending time with the family (Killian, 2008) and recognition for burnout symptoms are said to be necessary for counselors to effectively care for their clients, as well as themselves (Black, Frick, Thompson, 2014). Also addressed specific means of professional and personal sustenance such as maximizing experiences of professional success and balancing wellness through one’s career (Grier, Hanson, & Skovholt, 2001). In tandem with previous studies, research indicates that counselor burnout may be related to two types of resources: internal resources as well as external resources. Regarding internal factors, various types of counselors’ psychological resources can be considered such as self-awareness, stress coping skill, and cognitive emotion regulation can help
prevent counselor burnout (Park & Joo, 2012; Yoon & Chung, 2009) while external factors such as environmental or organizational resources also have relevance in buffering counselors’ burnout. A study by Lee, Lee, Loc & Wallace (2010) indicated that self-distraction and behavior disengagement coping strategies mediated the relationships between 3 job stress variables (workload, role conflict, and job ambiguity) and burnout. Although venting and humor coping strategies positively moderated the relationship between role ambiguity and burnout, active coping strategies negatively moderated the relationship between workload and burnout. Many researchers (Bakker, Demerouti, Janssen, Jonge & Schaufeli, 2001; Agut, Peiró & Salanova, 2005; Feij & Taris, 2004) have contended that external job resources like autonomy, social support, and positive performance feedback may prompt work engagement. Although a study by Altmaier, Ross & Russell (2012) stated that social support from supervisors and colleagues was associated with lower levels of burnout but did not serve a buffering function. Furthermore, these external resources have been proven to buffer burnout (Lee, Lee & Puig, 2012).

Synthesis
Counselor wellness has a direct impact on the quality of services clients receive, but little is known about the overall wellness of counselors (Lawson, 2011). Grier, Hanson & Skovholt (2004) described “high tough” hazards, which are characteristics professionals in the helping field make in order for them to become more susceptible to burnout. These hazards challenges counselors’ personal wellness and highlight the need for supportive environments, an ongoing assessment for their own wellness as well as strategies for resilience (Lawson & Venart, 2005). It is the reason why the researcher would like to focus on the process that counselors go through, particularly school counselors, with regards to burnout. Occupational burnout is something that has been studied by researchers, but there are very few local studies conducted that examined how guidance counselors cope with the challenges that they experience within their workplace and as to where they seek for any professional help, therefore the researcher would like to further examine on such. The present study may be useful for counselors to know what places them at risk of burnout and to equip them with a range of coping strategies to address their own personal needs. It is also beneficial for psychology students who plan to pursue a counseling career in the future. It is for them to be knowledgeable about the responsibilities and to prepare them for any challenges that they may encounter.

The present study explores the following research questions: 1) What are the guidance counselors’ burnout risk levels based on the three areas: emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP), and reduced personal accomplishment (PA)? 2) What are the common challenges that guidance counselors experience from their work? 3) What are the coping strategies utilized by guidance counselors to address their own problems? And 4) what are their experiences in availing professional help?

Method
Research Design
A Mixed Method Design was used, more specifically the Sequential Explanatory Design, where a researcher first collects and analyzes core quantitative data used to explain or predict phenomena. This is followed by collection and analysis of in-depth information through the use of qualitative tradition to explain those statistical results by exploring participants’ views in more depth (Kielhofner, 2006; Creswell, 2005).

Participants
A purposive sampling method was used in obtaining the representative sample of the target population, who are practicing guidance counselors here in the Philippines. A total of 53 guidance counselors, 41 female and 12 male counselors, ages 20 to 55 years old, from various educational institutions who were at 1 to 29 years of practice were given the survey
questionnaires, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data coming from 4
guidance counselors who were also part of the total sample and who had obtained a high score in
one of the areas of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, as a supplement for the quantitative results.

**Instruments**

**Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI).** The MBI by Christina Maslach, Susan Jackson &
Michael Leiter (1986) is the most common assessed tool in order to know whether you are at risk
of burnout. There are 22 statements looking at the participants’ feelings and attitudes which
require a quantitative response on a scale of 7. This questionnaire captures three dimensions of
burnout: Cronbach alpha ratings of 0.90 for emotional exhaustion (EE), 0.76 for
depersonalization (DP), and 0.76 for personal accomplishment (PA) on a 7-point Likert Scale
(0=Never, 6=Everyday). Time periods of a few weeks (.60-.82), 3 months and 1 year (0.54-0.60)
were used for the reliability.

**Burnout Factors Checklist.** The researcher made a fifteen (15) item checklist that was
checked and approved by the thesis adviser, which contains some of the common challenges that
counselors experience from their work.

**Coping Strategies.** The researcher used the Coping Strategies Questionnaire by Sandy
Williams, Pauline K. Arnold & Jennifer N. Mills (2005). There were six subscales in the
questionnaire: spiritual, adaptive physical, non-adaptive physical, adaptive emotional, non-
adaptive emotional and cognitive coping strategies which were rated on a 5-point Likert Scale
(1=Never, 2=Occasionally, 3=Often, 4=Usually, 5= Always). Each subscales contains 3
questions for spiritual, 6 for adaptive physical, 4 for non-adaptive physical, 3 for adaptive
emotional, 4 for non-adaptive emotional and 6 for cognitive.

**Semi-structured Interview Guide.** The researcher had prepared a list of questions which
was checked and approved by the adviser and was covered by 4 guidance counselors who scored
high in one of the areas of the MBI. The instrument focuses on the challenges experienced by the
guidance counselors as well as the ways on how they cope and avail professional help. It
permitted participants to express their views in their own terms and the researcher to explore
particular themes and responses further. In order to assess the effectiveness of the interview, the
researcher had asked permission to record the said interview and transcribed the data gathered
for analysis.

**Procedures**

**Quantitative study**

A formal letter of consent, which includes the purpose of the study and explanation on
what the participation entails, were sent to various educational institutions for the guidance
counselors. The researcher had waited for their confirmation and then went back to distribute the
Maslach Burnout Inventory survey questionnaire. The researcher then waited for the counselors
to finish the survey questionnaires, which was done on their convenience, and went back to
collect the survey questionnaires. A total of one hundred thirty three (N=133) surveys were
distributed to various educational institutions but only 53 survey questionnaires were sent back
to the researcher. After that, the researcher then tallied the scores from the MBI. Those who had
obtained a moderate and high score in one of the areas of the MBI were given the Burnout
Factors questionnaire. When those were done, the researcher went back to gather the surveys and
then tallied the scores for the quantitative results.

**Qualitative study**

After analyzing the results from the quantitative study, a formal letter of consent asking
permission for a follow-up face-to-face interview were sent to ten (N=10) guidance counselors
who had obtained a high score in one of the areas of the Maslach Burnout Inventory. It is for the
researcher to gather in-depth information to further expound the findings from the quantitative
research. The researcher had made a schedule for the interview, which was based on the
availability of the counselors. Unfortunately, 6 of the participants had decided not to participate in the interview due to their busy schedule. The questions asked were based on the semi-structured interview guide that the researcher had prepared. The researcher also asked permission to record the said interview for transcribing and data analysis. After that, the researcher had used the qualitative results to assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of the quantitative study.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the Guidance Counselors’ burnout risk levels based on the three areas: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Reduced Personal Achievement (PA)?

Table 1: Frequency Percentage Distribution of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Low Frequency</th>
<th>Low %</th>
<th>Moderate Frequency</th>
<th>Moderate %</th>
<th>High Frequency</th>
<th>High %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 53

Table 1 shows the frequency percentage of the burnout risk levels of the guidance counselors based on the three areas: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP) and Reduced Personal Achievement (PA). In terms of emotional exhaustion, 87% of the respondents covered the low level while there is only 2% on high. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the total number of respondents fall under the low level of depersonalization and 13% on both moderate and high. Lastly, 70% of the respondents were at low level of reduced personal accomplishment and 11% on high.

Research Question 2: What are the Most Common Challenges that Guidance Counselors Experience from their Work?

Table 2: Frequency Percentage Distribution of the Common Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BURNOUT FACTORS</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being assigned to non-counseling duties</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of paperwork time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large student to counselor ratio</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper resources</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy caseloads</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing priorities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming needs of clients</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate salary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with manager or colleagues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job role ambiguity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of decision making authority</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of administrative and peer support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive workload</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative work environment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=53
Table 2 shows the most common challenges extracted from the guidance counselors who had obtained a moderate and high score in one of the areas from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Being assigned to non-counseling duties (19%), lack of paperwork time (17%), large student to counselor ratio (15%) as well as lack of proper resources (15%) were reported to be the most frequent challenges that they encounter.

**Being assigned to non-counseling duties**

Participant A, C, and D shared their experiences when it comes to handling non-counseling duties within their workplace. Both participant A and D had experienced handling clerical works within their workplace. Quote from participant D “I had to sit sa admin, I mean kapag nandito ako sa baba I need to take phone calls and then admissions. And since hindi siya part ng services ng guidance and counseling, ako yung mga nag-entertain ng mga inquiries ganon.” Since participant D shares the same office at the admissions, she was obliged to entertain phone calls concerning admissions when it is not part of the guidance and counseling services. Another participant said that “Mga clerical works rin marami yon like filing records and answering phone calls as well.” Participant A also experienced answering phone calls from their office during her early days as a counselor. She also mentioned “chaperone during field trips, proctoring during long tests or exams, hindi naman siya guidance related although may advantage din naman kasi para ma-experience mo how to deal with children during examinations so para malaman mo rin ma-observe mo rin sila kung paano sila mag deal during exams.” Participant A used to assist children in field trips and proctor students during exams, however, she mentioned that doing those things had given her an advantage of knowing how to deal with children. “For me kasi kapag nasa school ka kailangan medyo ano flexible ka and parang, alam mo yon infofer mo rin yung service mo even though hindi naman siya guidance related, willing ka pa rin to help.” Moreover, participant A also said that being a counselor means being willing to give your services to people, even if it is not in line with your work. Another participant said that “In the past, na-assign kami to make newsletters for the school, not just for the guidance newsletter but for the school na weekly. Simple lang naman siya for grade school and mga parent orientation program but it’s not supposed to be our work.” The school had been giving them tasks which are not related to guidance and counseling and they had all agreed to voice out that they need to prioritize their work, so only then that those non-guidance related tasks were transferred to other departments.

**Heavy caseloads**

Every year there would always be challenging cases that guidance counselors encounter. Both participant A and D had shared that one of the most challenging case that they had ever handled was the one with suicidal ideation. Quote from participant A “From the very beginning siguro eh yung di pa ako ganon, parang yung knowledge ko and experience ko as a counselor, parang di ganon ka-enough. Yung mga cases na nahandle ko siguro, pero not here in San Beda pero yung mga previous workplace. Yung mga challenging cases like yung isa don, yung suicidal ideation. Tsaka yung cases on clinical setting so parang casi nga sa school yung background ko, yung orientation ko, so pag ganong mga clinical like bipolar, yung mga ganon nakahandle ako so parang it’s really hard to handle those cases.” Another participant said “I think medyo bata pa ako, and medyo difficult yung mga cases na nahandle ko like meron na agad bullying, and there was this student na, ang hirap kasi maglabel pero suicidal kasi siya mga ganon.” Both participant A and D felt that they were not equipped enough to handle such cases considering that participant A’s orientation was more on a school setting rather than clinical while participant D considers herself young, for the fact that it is only her third year practicing as a counselor, and yet she was already faced with heavy cases. Both of them had a hard time addressing the need of their clients with suicidal ideation and cases of bullying because of their lack of knowledge and experience.
Lack of paperwork time

Participant A, B, and D had shared their views when it comes to the time that they give on their paperwork. Quote from participant B “Yung paperworks would come last. I have to prioritize yung mga more important duties like attending to the case. I’m not saying that the paperworks are not important, nagkakaron lang ng backlog doon kasi syempre isset aside mo muna hanggang sa dumami na, nag pile-up na siya so difficult na to update the files and paperworks.” Participant B shared that she prioritizes attending to the case first before doing the paperwork. The only challenge that she encounter in doing so is the increasing number of paperworks that she needs to get through, since she would do them last. She also mentioned that the other non-counseling duties would somehow interfere with her work, thus giving her only a little amount of time to finish her paperwork. Another participant had a similar experience into doing their paperwork; quote from participant D “since marami siyang cases diba, so wala akong kasama na uy you have to handle this, so pagka yung teacher eh pag may issue sa classroom, they would call you kapag di na kaya and I’m doing something so parang naccut ako in the middle of doing my paperwork parang ganon.” The teachers would ask for her help whenever there is a problem regarding a child’s behavior, and since she is the only counselor in her school, she carries all the responsibilities and she would have to attend to the need of the teachers and students by herself.

However, participant A did not had any difficulty finishing their paperwork. Participant A said “hindi naman mahirap kasi minimal lang kapag may mga cases lang kasi gagawa ka ng counseling reports, pero di siya ganon ka-toxic.” She manages to finish the paperworks on time since there would only be paperworks whenever there are cases that she needs to attend to. Participant A also mentioned that the resources in her workplace are sufficient enough, making it easier for her to complete her tasks or paperworks.

Research Question 3: What are the Guidance Counselors’ Coping Strategies?

Table 3: Mean of the Coping Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Coping Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Adaptive</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Non-Adaptive</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Adaptive</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Non-Adaptive</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the analyses for coping strategies employed by guidance counselors who obtained a high score in one of the areas from the MBI. Having a mean of $\bar{x}= 3.33$, the respondents would often use coping strategies that were emotionally adaptive, which are intended to improve the person’s mood or state of mind: spending time with their pets/animals, using humor or comedy, and attending professional counseling or other services; as well as spiritual based strategies such as believing in a power greater than oneself, attending the mass or place of worship and reflecting on life. In addition, the respondents would occasionally opt for an emotional non-adaptive type of coping strategy; taking their frustration out on others, purposefully letting his negative feelings out through emotional outbursts, putting off assignments for university work, and being purposefully late for appointments or lectures as a means of avoiding things.
Relaxing activities
Participant B and C opt for coping strategies that would relax themselves. Quote from participant B “when I would go out to relax myself and that would be it. Just to relax myself. I’ll go out with my friends, I’ll eat out with them, videoke mga ganyan. Day by day, yung coping ko is on a daily basis.” Another participant said “...relaxing, pag nasstress or naffeel mo na, hindi ko pa naman naffeel na burnout ako or sobrang stressful. Manageable naman siya in a sense na hindi ko naffeel, siguro masaya lang din ako sa work ko. Syempre you’re dealing with children so mas nakakabata. And then, yung simp leng mag browse over the net that is one. Yung relaxation, we usually kasi, may husband and I, nagpapamassage kami twice a month so yon.” Both participant B and C are fond of doing activities that relaxes themselves and makes them forget about their problem. Participant B considers going out with her friends and doing fun activities like eating and singing with them as a relaxing activity. It gives her energy and it prepares her for the other challenges that she may encounter once she gets back from her work. On the other hand, participant C shared that the stress that she feels at her workplace is manageable, since she loves dealing with children and it makes her happy. In terms of the coping strategies, browsing over the internet through social media and going for a massage with her husband twice a month are the two things that she opt for as a form of relaxation.

Availment of Professional Help
Any information with regards to their availment of professional help was obtained during the interview. All of the participants (Participant A, B, C and D) who acquired a high score in one of the areas of the MBI shared that they have not gone to the point where they would seek help from a professional from others or outside their workplace. Quote from participant D “Hindi naman ako umabot sa ganong, seeking for professional help. More on nagddistress ako, I go out with my friends, tapos as much as possible, I don’t take my job sa bahay so kailangan dito lang lahat.” Another participant shared the same response. Quote from participant A “Kapag may kailangan ako o i-consult siguro with my co-counselors din or colleagues so kumbaga more on mentoring siya. Di pa naman ako dumating sa time na kinailangan ko mag seek ng professional help, more on mentoring or consultations lang.” Participant A also shared “I ask sa mga colleagues ko na seasoned counselors na and don sa mga nakaexperience ng ganong cases.” Another participant (Participant B) said “consultations with co-counselors lang. Hindi siya session talaga pero parang peer consultation, colleague consultation.” Both counselor A and B would seek help from their co-counselors who had encountered the same case as them. In line with that, participant C said “We would share yung mga cases namin and we talk about it. Then from there we would get help, tips on how to handle and at the same time helping us also to cope don sa stress that we undergo. So, among ourselves lang here in the office. But professional help, usually self-help would be enough.” Participant C would also seek help and tips on how to handle certain cases from their colleagues. She also mentioned that they help each other within their office through discussions. Self-help, according to her, would somehow be enough in coping with certain challenges, which agrees to the study made by Killian (2008) which suggest that self-care strategies including processing with peers, survivor, spirituality, exercise, and spending time with family are said to be necessary for counselors to effectively care for their clients, as well as themselves (Black, Frick & Thompson, 2014). All of the counselors reported that there were no proper counseling sessions or any appointments with other professionals (psychiatrist, psychologist, etc.) that took place. However, consultations with seasoned counselors may already be considered as availing professional help since they are asking for tips and advices from professionals who had experienced the same case as them.
Conclusion and Recommendation

Guidance counselors are an important part of any educational institution, for they are the ones who provide help in academical achievements, personal/social development as well as career development. None of them are immune to problems and challenges that may arise within their workplace, which may have an effect in their role and may also lead to burnout. Majority of the guidance counselors in this study were at low risk level of burnout since most of them enjoy their work as a counselor. Being assigned to non-counseling duties, lack of paperwork time as well as handling heavy cases such as bullying and students with suicidal ideation were said to be the challenging experiences that they have acquired from their work. In order to cope with certain challenges, opting for emotional adaptive and spiritual type of coping strategies like using humor or comedy, playing with their pets, attending professional counseling, believing in a power greater than themselves, attending the mass and reflecting on life were reported to be often used by them. Furthermore, the counselors’ availment of professional help includes undergoing consultations, mentoring, as well as asking for advices or tips from seasoned counselors. None of them reported to have had any formal sessions from professionals outside their workplace.

With that being said, it would be of interest to know a more detailed information as to how each of the guidance counselors make decisions about what coping strategies to use and also to test the effectiveness of each of the coping strategies. Information about the reasons why and under what conditions these counselors initiate a particular coping strategy would also be interesting to explore in future research.

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