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Implementing Homeroom Guidance in a Philippine Rural Secondary School: Advisers' Experiences, Instructional Adaptations, and Student Support Needs

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Abstract

Background: Philippine homeroom guidance is intended to support learners' academic, personal-social, and career development, but classroom advisers often deliver the program alongside other teaching responsibilities. Objective: This study examined how junior high school advisers experienced implementation of the Revitalized Homeroom Guidance Program (RHGP) in Tinoc National High School, Ifugao, during School Year 2022–2023. Methods: A qualitative descriptive-phenomenological study used semi-structured, recorded interviews. The data-gathering section reported seven interviewed advisers, although another section identified 12 intended participants; the achieved sample therefore requires confirmation against records. Existing anonymized quotations were interpreted using the six-stage thematic-analysis approach of Braun and Clarke. Results: Five interconnected themes were identifiable in the available manuscript: approachable life-skills competencies; reliance on pre-prepared but incomplete modules; instructional substitutions and workload pressures; advisers' informal student-support role in the absence of specialist provision and confidential space; and demand for training and clear referral pathways. Participants described adapting materials to current situations while sometimes replacing unavailable lessons with unrelated activities. Conclusion: The findings indicated a gap between program accessibility and implementation fidelity, alongside a need for clearer role boundaries, complete materials, protected time, confidential referral arrangements, and professional learning. The qualitative accounts did not establish effects on learner outcomes.

Keywords: homeroom guidance; teacher advisers; thematic analysis; school-based student support; rural education; Philippines

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1. Introduction

Homeroom Guidance in Philippine basic education was designed to address learners' development in academic, personal-social, and career domains. Its aims extend beyond routine class administration: the curriculum provides structured opportunities to examine study habits, decision-making, relationships, and future planning. During the transition out of emergency schooling arrangements, however, classroom advisers became central implementers while still being responsible for subject teaching, classroom management, and administrative duties (Department of Education, 2021, 2022).

A central implementation question concerns the distinction between learning experiences appropriate to a teacher-led homeroom program and individualized counseling requiring trained professional support. The two activities may intersect when a learner reports distress or a safeguarding concern, but they are not identical professional functions. Research on teacher involvement in whole-school guidance has documented the relevance of organizational arrangements, perceived competence, and school support (Lam & Hui, 2010). Philippine research has similarly highlighted the pressures placed on teachers and guidance designates (David, Albert, & Vizmanos, 2019; Viray, 2022).

Tinoc National High School in Ifugao provided a bounded rural-school context for examining these tensions during School Year 2022–2023. Rather than evaluate whether the program improved pupils' academic or psychosocial outcomes, the investigation elicited advisers' firsthand accounts of instruction, materials preparation, informal learner support, and perceived professional readiness. The resulting case contributes practice-based evidence relevant to resource-constrained public secondary schools, while remaining analytically and geographically bounded.

1.1 Research questions

RQ1. How did class advisers describe the teaching of RHGP competencies, lesson preparation, and provision of learning materials? RQ2. How did advisers assess their capacity and readiness to respond to learners' needs, including the availability of private space and relevant training? RQ3. What context-sensitive implementation improvements followed from these accounts? The third question formalizes a recommendation question already present in the original interview guide, while the original statement of the problem explicitly listed the first two.

2. Conceptual orientation

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory informed interpretation of how advisers learned and adapted through repeated implementation, although no cycle of experiential learning was measured directly. An implementation perspective also distinguished curriculum intentions from enacted practices: a competency could be viewed as teachable while sessions were irregular or unaligned because materials or preparation time were insufficient. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was used to organize participants' meaning patterns without asserting a causal relationship between the program and pupil development.

3. Methods

3.1 Design and setting

The source study described itself as qualitative descriptive phenomenology and was conducted at Tinoc National High School, Poblacion, Tinoc, Ifugao, during School Year 2022–2023. Interviews explored advisers' experience of implementation, their ability to prepare and teach competencies, and their perceived capacity to respond to learners' problems. For publication, the inquiry is reported as a bounded qualitative interview study with thematic analysis; this accurately reflects the analytic steps documented in the source and avoids claiming a full phenomenological essence that was not demonstrated.

3.2 Participants, recruitment, and data collection

The source records referred to 13 available class advisers, 12 proposed participants, and seven advisers interviewed. The data collection subsection explicitly states that seven interviews took place over approximately three weeks. This revision therefore identifies seven as the reported interviewed sample but treats that number as subject to verification against attendance records and recordings. The interviews were scheduled at advisers' convenience, conducted in a private office, audio-recorded with reported consent, and transcribed verbatim. The instrument used semi-structured questions about curriculum teaching, preparation, learning-material sourcing, student-support cases, physical setting, and guidance-related training. Participant identifiers already present in the source have been retained; the absence of a quotation from Participant 7 does not prove nonparticipation.

3.3 Analysis and researcher positioning

The source method specified the six phases of thematic analysis: familiarization, initial coding, theme search, theme review, theme definition, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this editorial reconstruction, identifiable quoted statements and descriptions in the supplied manuscript were aligned with the research questions, compared for commonalities and contrasting experiences, and regrouped under interpretive themes. This revision did not independently access audio recordings or full standalone interview transcripts, so coding completeness, participant-checking, negative-case coverage, and saturation/information-power claims cannot be verified. The author should provide an audit trail and describe professional proximity to the school and participants in the submitted version.

3.4 Ethics and confidentiality

The source manuscript stated that participants volunteered, signed consent or agreement forms, and were assigned codes. Because learner-support cases included sensitive concerns, this revision paraphrases or minimally quotes those accounts and omits identifying case descriptions. The final submission should confirm ethics approval or documented exemption, data-retention arrangements, recording consent, and the steps taken to prevent reidentification in a small school. Teacher support or referral should not be conflated with licensed counseling. Procedures recommended under legislation enacted after the fieldwork are discussed only as prospective policy implications.

4. Results

Five analytically linked themes were reconstructed from the quotations and narrative findings in the supplied source. Table 1 maps them to the two primary research questions; the counts of teachers endorsing each theme cannot reliably be determined without the complete transcripts. Quotations are retained from the original manuscript, with minor excerpts rather than rewritten participant testimony.

Theme	Primary question	Core evidence
1. Life-skills competencies were seen as teachable	RQ1	Activities were described as relatable to everyday study habits and decision-making
2. Prepared modules reduced planning burden but were incomplete	RQ1	Downloading, printing, and rewording modules; later-quarter gaps
3. Material shortages and competing workloads changed enactment	RQ1	Internet searching, EsP substitution, unfinished schoolwork in place of guidance
4. Advisers acted as first-line support without suitable privacy	RQ2	Learner welfare discussions in classrooms or shared offices
5. Participants sought training and specialist referral support	RQ2–RQ3	Uncertainty about providing advice, professional learning requests

Theme 1. Accessible life-skills content did not eliminate implementation demands

Advisers generally portrayed the competencies as familiar and teachable. They cited study habits, respect for individual differences, decision-making, and problem-solving as topics easily connected to lived experience. Participant 3 explained: "Sa grade 8 may mga competencies tulad ng study habits, paggawa ng tamang desisyon, at hindi naman mahirap ituro kasi halos personal development o kaya ay life skills ang mga ito." Participant 4 likewise stated that the competencies were "achievable and teachable" and could be related to real life, while adding that the program was "additional load nga lang sa mga advisers." These accounts demonstrate an important distinction: content accessibility and capacity to deliver the program sustainably were separate matters.

The finding aligns with the experiential orientation of homeroom guidance, in which examples from learners' daily lives support participation (Kolb, 1984). It also cautions against using perceived ease of explaining a topic as a proxy for coverage, consistency, or learning outcomes. The available interviews supported advisers' perceptions; they did not test pupil competencies.

Theme 2. Ready-made resources facilitated instruction but left consequential gaps

Prepared materials were a clear enabling condition. Participant 1 stated: "Since the lessons are already ready-made, I just print them and discuss and I also give additional activities." Yet access was inconsistent. Participant 5 described the modules as needing revision because "most of the content is related to the pandemic" and added that "not all modules for the competencies are available." Participant 4 likewise reported searching for or devising related activities when modules were missing. Thus, the same participants could value centralized materials while finding the available package incomplete or no longer sufficiently contextualized.

The 2022 DepEd advisory directed schools to follow relevant implementation procedures from the 2021 guidance memoranda (Department of Education, 2022). The accounts do not establish a system-wide resource failure, but they do provide context-specific evidence of a mismatch between centrally prepared resources and implementation needs at this school. The implication is to supply a complete, updated, and locally adaptable sequence aligned to competency expectations.

Theme 3. Workload and material constraints prompted adaptation and sometimes curriculum displacement

Not all adaptations preserved program intent. Participant 2 said that in the absence of ready lessons, "I let my class do their incomplete [work] in other subjects," while Participant 6 related third- and fourth-quarter activities to Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao because the available modules covered only earlier quarters. Participant 3 reported sometimes not teaching certain competencies when materials were unavailable. These statements show a spectrum extending from reasonable contextual substitution to loss of dedicated homeroom learning time. The finding is therefore not simply "resourcefulness"; it is also a fidelity concern.

This interpretation is consistent with research describing competing responsibilities for public-school teachers (David et al., 2019) and the organizational conditions influencing teacher participation in whole-school guidance (Lam & Hui, 2010). Neither publication establishes that any specific participant's choice was warranted. Rather, the comparison emphasizes that locally observed adaptations should be evaluated for competency alignment, protected instructional time, and adequate administrative support.

Theme 4. Learner-support responsibilities exceeded the setting available to advisers

Respondents described dealing with absenteeism, behavior concerns, and sensitive student welfare issues, often through conversations held in classrooms or shared work spaces. Participant 3 emphasized the need for an office "purposely for counseling" because some cases needed private discussion. Participant 1 similarly reported the absence of a private room for confidential conversations. Participant 4 described the difficulty of meeting students in a library space where others could enter. The resulting concern was not merely lack of a room: the setting could prevent learners from speaking openly and could expose personal matters to bystanders.

These observations should be interpreted as accounts of advisers acting as first-line listeners, mentors, and referral contacts not proof that they provided clinical or licensed counseling. Findings by Lam and Hui (2010) likewise point to institutional conditions affecting teacher involvement in guidance. Confidential access, clear escalation procedures, and safeguarding protections are necessary operational dimensions of school-based learner support.

Theme 5. Uncertainty about specialist practice generated requests for training and role clarity

Teachers explicitly described limits to their counseling-related preparation. Participant 2 stated, "Honestly I don't know how to deal with them," questioned whether her advice was correct, and reported no related training beyond orientation. Participant 4 acknowledged a need to learn "proper steps," including how to avoid responding impatiently when students were reluctant to speak. Participant 6 likewise recognized that well-intentioned advice was not always equivalent to counseling. These accounts indicate reflective awareness of competence boundaries rather than a deficit in commitment to students.

Viray (2022) documented challenges experienced by guidance designates in Philippine schools, providing a locally relevant comparison. The reported needs suggest structured professional development in homeroom facilitation, empathetic listening, recognition of risk indicators, documentation, safeguarding, and timely referral. Training classroom advisers should support not replace the availability of appropriately qualified professionals.

5. Discussion

Taken together, the accounts reveal a central implementation tension: advisers considered the curriculum relevant and its competencies approachable, but successful delivery was constrained by incomplete materials, extra workload, and uncertain division of labor between classroom guidance and specialist support. This explains why positive evaluations of the curriculum coexisted with missing competencies, substituted lessons, and calls for further capacity-building. Any

summary describing only the teachers' willingness to implement the program would miss this contradiction.
The distinction between curriculum delivery and student-support case handling is particularly important. During the original 2022–2023 period, DepEd guidance linked Homeroom Guidance implementation with separate counseling and referral procedures (Department of Education, 2022). The later Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act, Republic Act No. 12080 (2024), provided additional legal architecture for school-based mental health care, counselor positions, Care Centers, and referral arrangements. Because this Act postdated the interviews, it is used here to frame current policy implications, not as an explanation of what participants could access during fieldwork.
The study contributes a bounded, practice-centered account rather than evidence that the RHGP improved student performance or well-being. Its strongest findings are contradictions within implementation: competencies were perceived as easy yet not always taught; materials were standardized yet incomplete; advisers were accessible to learners yet lacked privacy and specialist training. This pattern argues for implementation evaluation that examines not only teacher acceptance but also program fidelity, support capacity, and learner safeguarding.

6. Implications for policy and school practice

First, a competency-to-resource mapping exercise should verify that every quarter has current, locally usable materials and alternative activities aligned to learning outcomes. Second, schools should protect scheduled homeroom time from routine substitution with unrelated academic tasks. Third, professional development should distinguish universal guidance instruction from one-to-one supportive conversations, referrals, and professional counseling. Fourth, a confidential and documented referral pathway should be developed in collaboration with authorized guidance or mental-health personnel. Fifth, future implementation reviews should record both adviser experience and more direct indicators, including competency coverage, session fidelity, referrals, and learner feedback.

7. Limitations and future research

The original manuscript contained inconsistent sample descriptions (12 intended participants versus seven interviews), and this editorial revision had access only to the supplied manuscript rather than the interview audio or complete transcript corpus. There was no demographic table, systematic account of nonparticipants, or established measure of student outcomes. Findings therefore cannot be generalized statistically or used to infer causal impact. The source combined phenomenological terminology with Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis without demonstrating a formal phenomenological synthesis; this revision transparently reports a qualitative thematic interpretation. Research using multi-school samples, adviser observations, student perspectives, and implementation records could evaluate whether resource and role reforms affect program fidelity.

8. Conclusion

The advisers at Tinoc National High School described RHGP competencies as meaningful and readily connected to learners' lives, but their experiences also exposed gaps in materials, protected instructional time, private student-support spaces, and professional preparation. Curriculum content was not the central obstacle by itself; the implementation environment determined whether intended competencies could be taught and whether sensitive student concerns could be handled appropriately. The findings support a coordinated response involving complete materials, clear teacher–specialist role boundaries, training, privacy, and reliable referral pathways. These conclusions describe advisers' reported experiences during School Year 2022–2023 and do not establish effects on learners.

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