



Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of Career Development Support Program

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ABSTRACT

Career guidance helps learners make informed educational and occupational decisions. Given this importance, this descriptive study assessed the extent of compliance of 57 Career Guidance Advocates implementing the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in a small-sized division in Negros Island Region during School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for a capability-building plan. Data were gathered using a validated and reliability-tested researcher-made questionnaire. Respondents demonstrated a great extent of compliance across all CDSP areas while encountering a moderate level of implementation difficulties. Compliance did not differ significantly by age or sex. However, significant differences based on the number of related trainings attended emerged in Learner Career Guidance and Support Services; Documentation, Monitoring and Reporting; and Professional Ethics and Continuous Development. Accordingly, a capability-building plan emphasizing competency-based professional development, mentoring, technical assistance, and stronger institutional support is recommended to address identified gaps and further improve the consistent, responsive, and effective delivery of career guidance services to learners across schools.

Keywords: Career Development Support Program, Career Guidance Advocates, Compliance, Implementation

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INTRODUCTION

Career Guidance Advocates play a crucial role in implementing the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) by ensuring that career interventions are responsive to learners' needs and aligned with educational goals. Their compliance with the program encompasses five critical areas: program planning and implementation, learner career guidance and support services, use of career assessment and tools, documentation, monitoring, and reporting, and professional ethics and continuous development. These areas ensure relevant career support, informed learner decisions, program accountability, and competent, ethical practice. Brown and Lent (2020) stressed the need for competent, ethical, and evidence-based career guidance.

Career Guidance Advocates face barriers such as limited support, resources, time, assessment tools, training, and heavy workloads. Hooley et al. (2022) noted that career practitioners across educational institutions continue to experience workload pressures, insufficient institutional support, and limited access to professional development, all of which affect the quality of career guidance services. Likewise, Brown and Lent (2020) argued that sustainable career guidance requires organizational support, adequate resources, and continuous competency enhancement to enable practitioners to effectively respond to the changing needs of learners.

This study supports SDGs 4 and 8 by strengthening career guidance, learner readiness, and school-to-work transitions. As emphasized by Brown and Lent (2020), effective career guidance contributes significantly to career adaptability, employability, and lifelong career development, which are fundamental outcomes consistent with the aspirations of sustainable development.

Few studies examine the CDSP compliance among Career Guidance Advocates in Philippine public secondary schools. This study addresses that gap to inform a targeted capability-building plan. As Officer-in-Charge of the City Public Employment Service Office, where career guidance and counseling are core functions, the researcher undertook this study to identify CDSP implementation gaps and inform targeted support.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the extent of compliance of career guidance advocates in the implementation of the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in a small-sized school division in the Negros Island Region during School Year 2025–2026 as a basis for developing a capability-building plan. Specifically, it sought to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and number of related trainings attended; assess the extent of compliance of career guidance advocates in the implementation of the CDSP in terms of program planning and implementation, learner career guidance and support services, use of career assessment and tools, documentation, monitoring and reporting, and professional ethics and continuous development; and determine whether there is a significant difference in the extent of compliance of career guidance advocates when they are grouped and compared according to their profile variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed emphasizes that compliance in the implementation of the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) involves adherence to established policies, professional standards, ethical practices, and systematic career guidance procedures. Hooley et al. (2024) stressed that effective career guidance requires practitioners to implement interventions consistently with national frameworks and professional standards. Brown and Lent (2020) likewise highlighted the importance of systematic career development services in supporting informed educational and occupational decisions, while Sultana (2023) emphasized equitable, responsive, and socially inclusive career guidance.

Professional competence is also essential to effective career guidance implementation. Dodd et al. (2022) demonstrated that career guidance interventions contribute to students' career readiness, while emphasizing continuing professional development, ethical practice, reflective practice, and professional identity among practitioners. Rice et al. (2022) further noted that quality assurance in school-based career development is associated with practitioner qualifications and professionalism. Plant (2021) also emphasized that career guidance should promote equitable and socially responsive opportunities for learners.

In the Philippine context, compliance is closely associated with adherence to Department of Education policies and prescribed implementation procedures. DepEd (2023) established guidelines for the supervision and implementation of the Career



Guidance Program, including defined responsibilities, activities, documentation, and reporting requirements. DepEd RO III (2023) reinforced the importance of consistent implementation across schools, while DepEd and DOLE (2023–2024) emphasized coordination among schools, PESOs, and other career-development stakeholders. These policies demonstrate that compliance involves not only program delivery but also monitoring, documentation, accountability, and inter-agency coordination.

International studies further demonstrate that professional development, competence, and program evaluation influence career guidance practice. Dack and Merlin-Knoblich (2023) found that professional development helped school counselors improve instructional practices, while Merlin-Knoblich et al. (2023) reported increased counselor self-efficacy after structured professional learning. Goodman-Scott et al. (2022) found that training influenced counselors' perceptions of appropriate professional activities, and Novak et al. (2024) reported that counselors frequently provided career assessment, planning, and resource coordination services. Geesa et al. (2024) also emphasized evaluation systems covering planning, service delivery, professional responsibilities, and assessment.

Philippine studies indicate that although career guidance programs are generally implemented, advocates continue to encounter challenges related to workload, time, resources, training, and monitoring. Gallarin and Olua (2023) reported difficulties in monitoring and evaluation because of limited technical competencies and competing workloads, while Maestrado and Bucar (2024) identified heavy workloads, lack of training, time constraints, and limited resources as barriers to career guidance implementation. Dimal and Reyes (2023) noted limitations in applying assessment and research information to program development, while Harrison et al. (2023) found that role clarity, principal support, and organizational environment influenced counselors' effectiveness. Arenque and Dasco (2026) similarly found generally high implementation but noted challenges involving schedules, personnel, and competing school responsibilities.

Overall, the reviewed literature establishes that compliance with career guidance programs encompasses program planning and implementation, learner support services, career assessment, documentation and monitoring, professional ethics, and continuous professional development. Gernalin, Bautista, and Maguate (2023) found that teachers demonstrated high compliance with the code of conduct and very satisfactory performance, while their findings also revealed significant differences across selected variables and led to the recommendation of a Development Program to strengthen compliance and professional performance. Similarly, Boulden and Goodman-Scott (2023) identified age and professional experience as factors associated with professional practice, while İvecen and Sezer (2025) found differences in professional competency according to field of study and years of service. Darling-Hammond et al. (2022) further emphasized sustained, collaborative, content-focused, and practice-based professional development. These findings support the assessment of Career Guidance Advocates' compliance according to age, sex, and number of related trainings attended and provide a basis for developing an appropriate capability-building plan.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the discussion of the research methodology used, the subjects and respondents of the study, the research instruments used, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the procedure for data gathering, and the statistical tools and procedure for data analysis.

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design to determine the extent of compliance of career guidance advocates in implementing the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) for School Year 2025–2026.

Descriptive research systematically and accurately describes the characteristics, conditions, frequencies, trends, or patterns of a population or phenomenon as they occur naturally. It focuses on observing and measuring variables without manipulating them and is appropriate for answering questions concerning what exists, how often it occurs, and how it is distributed within a defined setting (McCombes, 2023). This design is appropriate because the study sought to describe the existing implementation of the CDSP rather than introduce an intervention or establish cause-and-effect relationships. It enabled the researcher to quantify the career guidance advocates' reported compliance with program requirements across the identified areas. The resulting descriptions provide an evidence-based picture of current practices and constraints that can guide the development of responsive support measures.



Study Respondents

The respondents of the study were the 57 Career Guidance Advocates assigned to the public elementary, integrated, and secondary schools in a small-sized schools division in the Negros Island Region. They were selected because their official roles and direct involvement in implementing the Career Development Support Program enabled them to provide information relevant to the study objectives. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are deliberately selected because they possess characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Specifically, the study employed total population sampling, in which all members of the identified population who met the established criteria were included. Thus, all 57 identified Career Guidance Advocates were invited to participate, ensuring representation across the school categories and providing a comprehensive description of CDSP implementation within the division.

Instruments

The study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of two parts: Part I gathered respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, and number of related training sessions attended, while Part II measured the extent of compliance in Career Development Support Program (CDSP) implementation through 30 items covering program planning and implementation, learner career guidance and support services, use of career assessment and tools, documentation, monitoring and reporting, and professional ethics and continuous development, with six items per area. Responses were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Very High) to 1 (Very Low), which allows perceptions and judgments to be quantified (Koo & Yang, 2025). Content validity was established through expert judgment, with five experts in career guidance, educational management, school administration, instructional leadership, and educational research evaluating the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, appropriateness, and representativeness. The consolidated expert ratings and recommendations were used to revise the instrument, which obtained an overall validity mean of 4.98, interpreted as Excellent based on the criteria attributed to Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates. Following validation, the instrument was pilot tested with 30 Career Guidance Advocates from an adjacent school district who were excluded from the main study. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with 0.70 set as the minimum acceptable coefficient and 0.90 or higher interpreted as excellent (Hair, 2022; Zakariya, 2022). The CDSP compliance subscale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.963, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the items consistently measured respondents' compliance across the identified implementation areas.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before collecting data, the researcher submitted a formal request to the Schools Division Superintendent of the small-sized schools division in Negros Island Region, together with the approved research proposal and validated questionnaire, to secure permission to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researcher coordinated with the concerned school heads to identify the 57 career guidance advocates, explained the purpose and schedule of the data collection, and arranged the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires without disrupting official school duties.

During administration, each prospective respondent received an informed-consent form and was briefed on the study objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the right to decline or withdraw without penalty. Only those who provided consent were given the questionnaire. The researcher provided standardized instructions, clarified procedural questions without influencing the respondents' answers, and allowed sufficient time for independent completion. Each questionnaire was assigned a code rather than a respondent's name to support anonymity.

The researcher personally retrieved the accomplished questionnaires on the agreed schedule through the school heads or designated administrative channels. Upon receipt, each form was checked for completeness; responses containing missing entries were documented and handled consistently without altering the respondent's answers. The completed questionnaires were then coded, encoded in a data file, and verified against the original forms to minimize encoding errors. Electronic files were password-protected, while printed questionnaires and consent forms were stored separately in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. After verification and data cleaning, the final dataset was organized according to the study objectives and submitted for statistical analysis.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

The researcher analyzed the data in accordance with the study's objectives. For Objective No. 1, descriptive analysis using frequency counts and percentage distribution was employed to determine the respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, and



number of related trainings attended. For Objective No. 2, descriptive analysis using the mean was utilized to determine the extent of compliance of career guidance advocates in CDSP implementation across program planning and implementation, learner career guidance and support services, use of career assessment and tools, documentation, monitoring and reporting, and professional ethics and continuous development. And for Objective No. 3, comparative analysis using the Mann–Whitney U test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed in the extent of CDSP implementation compliance when respondents were grouped and compared according to the identified profile variables.

Ethical Consideration

Before data collection, the researcher secured institutional ethics clearance and administrative permission and adhered to the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice to protect the rights, dignity, safety, and welfare of the career guidance advocates. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after providing clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, time commitment, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of participation. Respondents were informed of their right to decline any item or withdraw without penalty or effect on their employment, evaluation, or professional opportunities, and no coercion or undue influence was used, consistent with the *National Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants 2022* (Philippine Health Research Ethics Board [PHREB], 2022). As the study involved only a questionnaire and posed minimal risk, respondents completed the instrument independently and privately, with unique codes used instead of names. Individual responses were kept confidential and reported only in aggregate form. The collection and processing of personal information complied with Republic Act No. 10173, or the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, particularly the principles of transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality (Republic of the Philippines, 2012; National Privacy Commission [NPC], 2016). Physical records were stored in locked files, electronic data were password-protected, access was restricted to authorized personnel, and all research data were retained only for the required period before secure destruction through shredding and permanent deletion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered to carry out the objectives of this study. All these were made possible by following certain appropriate procedures so as to give the exact data and solution to each specific problem.

Profile of the Respondents According to Age, Sex, and Number of Related Trainings Attended

Table 1

Profile of Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Younger (below 43 years old)	26	45.60
	Older (43 years old and above)	31	54.40
	Total	57	100
Sex	Male	13	22.80
	Female	44	77.20
	Total	57	100
Number of Related Trainings Attended	Few (below 3 trainings)	24	42.10
	Many (3 trainings and above)	33	57.90
	Total	57	100



Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents. As shown in the table, the largest proportion of respondents was in the older age group, with 31 Career Guidance Advocates (54.40%) aged 43 years and above. Meanwhile, the smaller proportion belonged to the younger age group, comprising 26 Career Guidance Advocates (45.60%) who were below 43 years old. The findings show that more mature Career Guidance Advocates comprised the majority of the respondents, indicating that many of those carrying out career guidance-related tasks possess substantial professional maturity and accumulated school experience. The present finding is consistent with the study of Harrison et al. (2023), who reported that school counseling and career guidance responsibilities in Philippine schools are commonly performed by experienced teachers designated as guidance advocates rather than by newly hired personnel. Likewise, Larrana and Hein (2024) found that in many schools across East and Southeast Asia, career guidance responsibilities are more commonly assumed by senior teachers because of their longer professional experience and greater familiarity with learners' educational and career development needs.

The data further disclose that 44 respondents, or 77.20%, are female, while only 13 respondents, or 22.80%, are male. This indicates that Career Guidance Advocates are mostly female. This suggests that the implementation of career guidance tasks is generally carried out by female Career Guidance Advocates, reflecting the gender composition of the teaching workforce from which these advocates are commonly designated. The present finding is supported by the study of Larrana and Hein (2024), which found that school counseling and career guidance services are predominantly delivered by female educators because the teaching workforce in the region is largely composed of women.

With respect to professional development, 33 respondents or 57.90% reported having attended 3 or more related trainings, whereas 24 respondents or 42.10% attended fewer than 3 trainings. This indicates that the majority of Career Guidance Advocates have participated in multiple capability-building activities related to career guidance and development. The present finding is supported by Goodman-Scott et al. (2022), who found that many counselors had completed multiple training opportunities beyond their preservice education, reflecting the increasing recognition of continuous professional development as an essential component of effective guidance service delivery. Similarly, Merlin-Knoblich et al. (2023) found that school counselors actively participated in extended professional development programs to enhance their counseling competencies and instructional practices.

Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP According to Program Planning and Implementation, Learner Career Guidance and Support Services, Use of Career Assessment and Tools, Documentation, Monitoring, and Reporting, and Professional Ethics and Continuous Development

Table 2

Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Program Planning and Implementation

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a Career Guidance Advocate, I...</i>		
1. prepare an annual career guidance plan in accordance with DepEd career guidance guidelines	4.35	Great Extent
2. align career guidance activities with DepEd policies and prescribed standards	4.61	Very Great Extent
3. Schedule career guidance activities systematically following the approved implementation plan.	4.23	Great Extent
4. Integrate career guidance into the School Improvement Plan as required by DepEd planning processes.	4.11	Great Extent
5. Involve relevant stakeholders in program planning in accordance with DepEd implementation guidelines.	3.88	Great Extent
6. Conduct periodic review of program implementation as required by DepEd guidelines, and incorporate needed adjustments following standard procedures	3.93	Great Extent



Table 2 presents the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the implementation of the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in the area of Program Planning and Implementation. The results reveal an overall mean of 4.18, interpreted as Great Extent. Among the six (6) indicators, the highest-rated item was aligning career guidance activities with DepEd policies and prescribed standards, with a mean of 4.61, interpreted as Very Great Extent.

On the other hand, involving relevant stakeholders in program planning in accordance with DepEd implementation guidelines obtained the lowest mean of 3.88, although it was still interpreted as Great Extent. This finding indicates that Career Guidance Advocates generally comply with the CDSP requirement for stakeholder participation in program planning; however, this aspect is implemented less consistently than the other program planning and implementation requirements. Strengthening coordination with parents, school personnel, community partners, and other relevant stakeholders may therefore help Career Guidance Advocates achieve more comprehensive compliance with the prescribed CDSP planning processes and ensure that career guidance plans reflect the needs and available resources of the school community.

The finding supports the study of Soliva and Enriquez (2025) that guidance coordinators identified the involvement of parents, community members, and other stakeholders as both a challenge and a critical success factor in implementing career guidance programs.

Table 3

Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Learner Career Guidance and Support Services

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a Career Guidance Advocate, I...</i>		
1. conduct career guidance sessions for learners as prescribed in the CDSP framework.	3.86	Great Extent
2. assist learners in course and career decision-making following DepEd- prescribed guidance procedures.	4.19	Great Extent
3. Conduct career orientation activities in accordance with the approved career guidance plan.	4.19	Great Extent
4. Inform learners about curriculum exits and career pathways in line with DepEd policy guidance.	4.23	Great Extent
5. Facilitate learner–parent conferences or consultations to support learners’ informed career decisions, following standard procedures	3.74	Great Extent
6. Address learners’ individual career needs based on identified guidance needs and prescribed support interventions.	3.81	Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.00	Great Extent

Table 3 presents the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the implementation of the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in the area of Learner Career Guidance and Support Services. The findings reveal an overall mean of 4.00, interpreted as Great Extent.

Among the six indicators, the highest mean, 4.23, was obtained for informing learners about curriculum exits and career pathways in line with DepEd policy guidance, interpreted as Great Extent.



In contrast, the lowest mean of 3.74 was recorded for facilitating learner-parent conferences or consultations to support learners' informed career decisions following standard procedures. However, it remained within the Great Extent category. This implies that, while Career Guidance Advocates generally fulfill this responsibility, learner-parent engagement is the least frequently implemented aspect of learner career guidance and support services. This may show challenges in encouraging active parental participation in career guidance activities due to parents' work obligations, limited availability, communication barriers, scheduling conflicts, or varying levels of awareness regarding their role in supporting their children's career development.

The present finding is supported by Brown et al. (2024), who found that parent engagement remains one of the least consistently implemented components of school counseling services. Their study revealed that many parents reported limited communication with school counselors regarding available guidance services and post-secondary planning. Similarly, Thomas and Joseph (2024) emphasized that parental involvement is a critical factor in learners' career decision-making, but active parent participation is often constrained by family responsibilities, work demands, and differing expectations regarding career choices.

Table 4

Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area: Use of Career Assessment and Tools

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a Career Guidance Advocate, I...</i>		
1. administer career assessment tools appropriately following standard procedures and ethical guidelines.	3.96	Great Extent
2. interpret assessment results to guide learners' career choices as prescribed in the career guidance framework.	3.79	Great Extent
3. Explain career assessment results clearly to learners in accordance with guidance protocols.	3.84	Great Extent
4. Select assessment tools appropriate to learners' level based on approved or recommended instruments.	3.77	Great Extent
5. Utilize assessment data in planning career interventions following prescribed documentation and planning procedures	3.61	Great Extent
6. Keep career assessment tools and references updated and aligned with labor market information following approved DepEd/school procedures.	3.67	Great Extent
Overall Mean	3.78	Great Extent

Table 4 presents the extent of compliance by Career Guidance Advocates in implementing the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in the area of Use of Career Assessment and Tools. The results reveal an overall mean of 3.78, interpreted as Great Extent.

Among the six indicators, the highest mean of 3.96 was obtained for administering career assessment tools appropriately, following standard procedures and ethical guidelines, which was interpreted as Great Extent.

On the other hand, the lowest mean, 3.61, was obtained for the use of assessment data to plan career interventions, following prescribed documentation and planning procedures. However, it was still interpreted as a Great Extent. This suggests that while Career Guidance Advocates administer career assessment tools appropriately, the systematic use of assessment results to plan individualized career interventions is practiced less consistently. The finding may indicate that assessment results are not always translated into evidence-based career intervention plans due to limited time, heavy teaching workloads, insufficient technical training in data interpretation, inadequate documentation systems, or the absence of standardized intervention-planning mechanisms.



The present finding is supported by Dimal and Reyes (2023), who found that although Filipino school counselors possess competencies in collecting and analyzing data, the practical application of research and assessment information to program development and case management is often constrained by time limitations, workload demands, and limited institutional resources.

Similarly, Novak et al. (2024) reported that school counselors regularly provide career assessment and planning services as part of college and career readiness programs, but the frequency and depth of individualized career planning vary depending on available resources, student needs, and counselor workload.

Table 5

Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Documentation, Monitoring, and Reporting

Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a Career Guidance Advocate, I...</i>		
1. document career guidance activities properly based on prescribed documentation standards	4.35	Great Extent
2. submit required reports on time as required by DepEd and school reporting protocols.	4.40	Great Extent
3. Maintain records of learner participation following standard record-keeping procedures.	4.26	Great Extent
4. Apply monitoring results to improve career guidance implementation in accordance with DepEd monitoring requirements.	3.89	Great Extent
5. Reflect accurately the accomplishments of the activities conducted in accomplishment reports following prescribed formats.	4.19	Great Extent
6. Comply with documentation requirements based on prescribed standards	4.18	Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.21	Great Extent

Table 5 presents the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the implementation of the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in the area of Documentation, Monitoring, and Reporting. The results show an overall mean of 4.21, interpreted as Great Extent. Among the six indicators, the highest mean was for submitting required reports on time, as required by DepEd and school reporting protocols, at 4.40, interpreted as Great Extent.

The lowest mean was obtained for applying monitoring results to improve career guidance implementation in accordance with DepEd monitoring requirements at 3.89, although still interpreted as Great Extent. This indicates that while Career Guidance Advocates generally conduct monitoring activities, the use of monitoring results for improving the implementation of the CDSP is the least emphasized among the documentation, monitoring, and reporting indicators. The finding implies that monitoring may be practiced more as a compliance requirement than as a basis for systematic program improvement.

The present finding is supported by Gallarin and Olua (2023), who revealed that although Career Guidance Programs were generally implemented, monitoring and evaluation practices were constrained by limited technical competencies, competing workloads, and implementation challenges experienced by guidance personnel.

Table 6

Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Professional Ethics and Continuous Development



Items	Mean	Interpretation
<i>As a Career Guidance Advocate, I...</i>		
1. observe confidentiality in career guidance activities in accordance with ethical standards and data privacy requirements.	4.46	Great Extent
2. practice ethical standards consistently following professional and DepEd-prescribed standards	4.39	Great Extent
3. Participate in career guidance-related trainings as part of continuous professional development.	4.07	Great Extent
4. Apply, in practice, the skills learned from trainings following prescribed or recommended approaches.	4.16	Great Extent
5. Seek professional consultation when needed following standard referral or consultation procedures	4.02	Great Extent
6. Pursue continuous professional development actively to strengthen guidance service delivery.	3.96	Great Extent
Overall Mean	4.18	Great Extent

Table 6 presents the extent of compliance by Career Guidance Advocates in implementing the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) in the areas of Professional Ethics and Continuous Development. The results reveal an overall mean of 4.18, interpreted as Great Extent. Among the six indicators, the highest mean was observed for confidentiality in career guidance activities in accordance with ethical standards and data privacy requirements, at 4.46, interpreted as a Great Extent.

The lowest mean, 3.96, was obtained for pursuing continuous professional development actively to strengthen guidance service delivery, although it is still interpreted as a Great Extent. This indicates that while Career Guidance Advocates generally value professional growth, active and sustained participation in continuous professional development is the least emphasized among the indicators. The finding implies that opportunities for advanced career guidance training, certification, mentoring, and specialized professional learning may remain limited or difficult to sustain due to heavy teaching workloads, financial constraints, competing school responsibilities, and limited access to career guidance-specific programs.

The present finding is supported by Maestrado and Bucar (2024), who found that although Career Guidance Advocates recognized the importance of career guidance activities, their participation in professional development and effective program implementation was constrained by a lack of training opportunities, limited resources, heavy workloads, and time constraints. However, the present finding differs from the study of Arenque and Dasco (2026), which found that schools with highly implemented Career Guidance Programs demonstrated strong participation in professional learning, utilization of career guidance resources, and structured implementation practices despite challenges such as limited personnel and time constraints.

Comparative Analysis in the Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Areas, Program Planning and Implementation, Learner Career Guidance and Support Services, Use of Career Assessment and Tools, Documentation, Monitoring, and Reporting, and Professional Ethics and Continuous Development when grouped and compared according to Age, Sex, and Number of Related Trainings Attended

Table 7

Difference in the Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area Program Planning and Implementation According to Variables



Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney test	U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	26	27.35	360.00		0.488		Not Significant
	Older	31	30.39					
Sex	Male	13	25.77	244.00		0.421	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	44	29.95					
Number of Related Trainings Attended	Few	24	33.48	288.50		0.080		Not Significant
	Many	33	25.74					

Table 7 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U Test on the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in Program Planning and Implementation of the Career Development Support Program (CDSP) when grouped according to age, sex, and number of related trainings attended. The results showed no significant difference according to age ($U = 360.00$, $p = 0.488$), although the older group had a slightly higher mean rank (30.39) than the younger group (27.54). Similarly, no significant difference was found according to sex ($U = 244.00$, $p = 0.421$), with females obtaining a higher mean rank (29.95) than males (25.77).

Likewise, the number of related training courses attended did not significantly differentiate compliance ($U = 288.50$, $p = 0.080$). Career Guidance Advocates who attended fewer training had a higher mean rank (33.48) than those who attended more training (25.74), but the difference was not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that age, sex, and training participation did not significantly influence compliance in Program Planning and Implementation. Compliance may instead be shaped by common institutional standards, prescribed procedures, supervision, professional responsibilities, and opportunities to apply career guidance competencies.

These findings are consistent with related studies. Um (2025) found that counselors' professional experiences and work-related outcomes were not necessarily determined by demographic characteristics alone. Similarly, İvecen and Sezer (2025) reported no significant differences in school counselors' professional competencies according to gender, while Sofyan et al. (2024) found that professional education and supervision produced only moderate competency development. Overall, the findings suggest that CDSP compliance is relatively consistent across demographic and training groups and may depend more on institutional and professional factors than on individual characteristics.

Table 8

Difference in the Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Learner Career Guidance and Support Services According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney test	U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	26	29.23	397.00		0.923	0.05	Not Significant
	Older	31	28.81					
Sex	Male	13	28.08	274.00		0.819		Not Significant



	Female	44	29.27			
Number of Related Trainings Attended	Few	24	34.50	264.00	0.032	Significant
	Many	33	25.00			

Table 8 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U test on the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in Learner Career Guidance and Support Services when grouped according to age, sex, and number of related trainings attended. The results showed no significant difference according to age ($U = 397.00$, $p = 0.923$), with younger and older advocates obtaining nearly identical mean ranks of 29.23 and 28.81, respectively. Similarly, no significant difference was found according to sex ($p = 0.819$), with males obtaining a mean rank of 28.08 and females 29.27, indicating comparable levels of compliance.

In contrast, a significant difference was found when respondents were grouped according to the number of related trainings attended ($p = 0.032$). Those who attended fewer trainings obtained a higher mean rank (34.50) than those who attended more trainings (25.00). Thus, age and sex did not significantly differentiate compliance, while training exposure did, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for the training variable. The finding suggests that professional development and training exposure may contribute to differences in the implementation of Learner Career Guidance and Support Services.

The findings are supported by İvecen and Sezer (2025), who reported no significant differences in school counselors' competencies according to age and gender, although they contrast with Boulden and Goodman-Scott (2023) and Alkaabi and Obeidat (2023), who found demographic differences in certain counseling practices and competencies. The significant finding on training is consistent with Goodman-Scott et al. (2022), who found that school counselors' participation in multitiered systems of support training was associated with their perceptions and implementation of appropriate counseling activities, including career counseling.

Table 9

Difference in the Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area Use of Career Assessment and Tools According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U test	p -value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	26	29.50	390.00	0.834		Not Significant
	Older	31	28.58				
Sex	Male	13	30.65	264.50	0.681	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	44	28.51				
Number of Related Trainings Attended	Few	24	33.75	282.00	0.064		Not Significant
	Many	33	25.55				

Table 9 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U Test on the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Use of Career Assessment and Tools when grouped according to age, sex, and number of related trainings attended. The results showed no significant difference according to age ($p = 0.834$), with younger and older advocates obtaining similar mean ranks of 29.50 and 28.58, respectively. Likewise, no significant difference was found according to sex ($p = 0.681$), with males obtaining



a mean rank of 30.65 and females 28.51, indicating comparable levels of compliance in administering and utilizing career assessment tools.

Similarly, no significant difference was found according to the number of related trainings attended ($p = 0.064$). Advocates who attended fewer trainings obtained a higher mean rank (33.75) than those who attended more trainings (25.55), but the difference did not reach statistical significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that age, sex, and training frequency did not significantly differentiate compliance in the Use of Career Assessment and Tools. The finding suggests that compliance may depend on factors beyond training frequency, such as the quality and relevance of training, practical experience, availability of assessment tools, institutional support, and opportunities for supervised application and mentoring.

The findings are supported by İvecen and Sezer (2025), who reported no significant differences in professional competencies based on selected demographic characteristics, including gender. However, the finding on sex contrasts with Alkaabi and Obeidat (2023), who found significant gender differences in several school counselors' competencies, favoring female counselors. Regarding training, Sofyan et al. (2024) found that professional education and supervision resulted in only moderate competency development, suggesting that training participation alone does not automatically translate into higher competency or compliance.

Table 10

Difference in the Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Documentation, Monitoring, and Reporting According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney test	U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	26	27.69	369.00		0.582		Not Significant
	Older	31	30.10					
Sex	Male	13	31.50	253.50		0.533	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	44	28.26					
Number of Related Trainings Attended	Few	24	35.25	246.00		0.014		Significant
	Many	33	24.45					

Table 10 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U Test on the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in Documentation, Monitoring, and Reporting when grouped according to age, sex, and number of related trainings attended. The results showed no significant difference according to age ($p = 0.582$), although older advocates obtained a higher mean rank (30.10) than younger advocates (27.69). Likewise, no significant difference was found according to sex ($p = 0.533$), with males obtaining a mean rank of 31.50 and females 28.26, indicating comparable compliance with CDSP documentation, monitoring, and reporting requirements.

In contrast, a significant difference was found according to the number of related trainings attended ($p = 0.014$). Advocates who attended fewer trainings obtained a higher mean rank (35.25) than those who attended more trainings (24.45). Thus, age and sex did not significantly differentiate compliance, whereas training exposure did, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for the training variable. The unexpected direction of the difference suggests that the number of trainings alone may not determine compliance and that other factors, such as actual work experience, institutional practices, administrative expectations, and opportunities to perform documentation and reporting tasks, may contribute to variations.

The finding on age is consistent with Boulden and Goodman-Scott (2023), who indicated that age does not necessarily determine all aspects of school counseling practice. The absence of a significant difference by sex is supported by İvecen and Sezer (2025),



who found comparable professional competencies among male and female school counselors. Meanwhile, the significant difference related to training is generally consistent with Goodman-Scott et al. (2022), who found that professional training was associated with differences in school counselors' perceptions and implementation of their professional responsibilities.

Table 11

Difference in the Extent of Compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in the Implementation of the CDSP in the Area of Professional Ethics and Continuous Development According to Variables

Variable	Category	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney test	U	p-value	Sig. level	Interpretation
Age	Younger	26	31.69	333.00		0.258		Not Significant
	Older	31	26.74					
Sex	Male	13	30.88	261.50		0.638	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	44	28.44					
Number of Related Trainings Attended	Few	24	35.75	234.00		0.008		Significant
	Many	33	24.09					

Table 11 presents the results of the Mann–Whitney U Test on the extent of compliance of Career Guidance Advocates in Professional Ethics and Continuous Development when grouped according to age, sex, and number of related trainings attended. The results showed no significant difference according to age ($p = 0.258$), with younger advocates obtaining a mean rank of 31.69 compared with 26.74 for older advocates. Similarly, no significant difference was found according to sex ($p = 0.638$), with males obtaining a mean rank of 30.88 and females 28.44, indicating comparable compliance with professional ethics and continuous development regardless of age or sex.

In contrast, a significant difference was found according to the number of related trainings attended ($p = 0.008$). Advocates who attended fewer trainings obtained a higher mean rank (35.75) than those who attended more trainings (24.09). Thus, age and sex did not significantly differentiate compliance, whereas training exposure did, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for the training variable. The unexpected direction of the result suggests that training frequency alone may not determine compliance and that other factors, such as professional experience, institutional expectations, organizational culture, and opportunities to apply professional learning, may influence compliance.

The finding on age is partly supported by İvecen and Sezer (2025), who reported no significant differences in professional competency according to age. However, the finding on sex contrasts with Alkaabi and Obeidat (2023), who found significant gender differences in several professional competency dimensions. The significant association with training is generally supported by Dack and Merlin-Knoblich (2023), who emphasized the value of structured professional development, and Darling-Hammond et al. (2022), who found that sustained professional development can enhance professional competence. Overall, the findings suggest that professional ethics and continuous development are relatively consistent across demographic groups but vary according to training exposure.

CONCLUSION

The study found that the Career Guidance Advocates were predominantly older, female educators, with most having attended three or more career guidance-related trainings. They demonstrated a great extent of compliance across all five CDSP implementation areas, namely program planning and implementation, learner career guidance and support services, use of career assessment and tools, documentation, monitoring and reporting, and professional ethics and continuous development. Their compliance remained consistently high regardless of age, sex, and number of trainings attended, with no significant differences



found when grouped according to these variables. The findings further indicate that the advocates effectively implement the CDSP and adhere to established program standards, although they experience moderate challenges related to time and workload management, addressing diverse learner needs, translating assessment results into appropriate interventions, and maintaining organized documentation. Overall, the consistent compliance across demographic groups suggests that effective CDSP implementation is influenced more by adherence to common standards, institutional support, and commitment to responsibilities than by age, sex, or training frequency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the adoption and implementation of the proposed Competency-Based Capability-Building Plan, supported by strengthened organizational and institutional support, to sustain and enhance Career Development Support Program (CDSP) implementation. The Department of Education, through the Schools Division Office and in partnership with the City Public Employment Service Office (CPESO), may provide annual competency-based training and regular technical assistance focusing on career assessment interpretation, learner intervention planning, stakeholder engagement, documentation, records management, and time and workload management, with priority given to newly designated advocates and those with fewer training experiences. School heads may provide protected time, mentoring, adequate resources, collaborative planning, and equitable workload distribution, while competency-based coaching, mentoring, and professional learning communities may be institutionalized to ensure consistent implementation across advocates. The hiring and deployment of qualified school counselors should also be prioritized to provide dedicated career guidance services and reduce the workload of teacher-designated advocates, while local government units may consider establishing a Guidance Coordinator plantilla position under PESO, subject to applicable staffing, budgeting, and civil service requirements. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the capability-building plan are further recommended to assess its effectiveness, address resource constraints or institutional resistance, sustain high compliance, and guide continuous program improvement, with future researchers encouraged to validate its effectiveness in other Schools Division Offices.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare the absence of any conflict of interest that could have influenced the content or conclusions of this paper. They affirm that no financial, personal, or professional relationships with other individuals or organizations have compromised the objectivity, integrity, or impartiality of the research work. As a final point, no external parties influenced the study design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

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