

ABSTRACT

Title of the Research: **ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF COUNSELORS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: BASIS FOR THE PROPOSED COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

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Degree: Master of Arts in Education

Major: Guidance and Counseling

Date of Completion: May 2018

This study aimed to measure the level of awareness and level of competencies of school counselors when handling students with special needs. A self-made instrument was developed and in-depth interviews were conducted to registered guidance counselors.

A total of twenty (20) registered guidance counselors participated in this study. Ten (10) respondents who worked in schools with special education answered the self-made instrument and responded to in-depth interviews were conducted while eight (8) respondents who were not exposed in special education participated in the in-depth interviews to strengthen further the needs program created by this research.

Based on the results of the self-made instrument, it was found that counselors were most aware of the roles pertaining to providing individual/group counseling, communicating and collaborating with staff and families and promoting the welfare of students with special needs while they were least aware of assisting in presenting activities or units for the Individualized Education Program (IEP). It was also found that the counselors were most

competent in advocating for students with special needs while they were least competent in collaborating with other support professionals.

This research revealed that there is a lack of education and training in the field of special education for school counselors. A counselor training program was proposed that will target collaboration skills of counselors and knowledge on the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

