

## **Applicability of the “Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly” to High School Students**

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### **Introduction**

With the fast-paced advancement of technology and the changing value system in the Philippines, teenagers have a hard time dealing with the more practical things in life such as studying, family and peer relationships, and the like. Faced with either simple or complicated problems, they have the tendency to evade the situation and engage in what they feel as “better alternatives” that in the end could give them more complications.

Such concerns must be properly addressed through the support system of significant people around these young people. The family members should ideally provide that support but in reality, teen-agers would rather turn to their friends or peer group to confide their problems. In the school setting, it is the guidance counselor whom the students usually approach whenever they need some guidance and counseling.

How then is counseling defined?

McLeod (2003) defines counseling as “a practice that has evolved in response to social conditions as a result of creativity of practitioners.” It is viewed as a particular type of relationship between people which occurs when one person needs to tell his/her story or resolve a problem with the help of another person. For Corey (2001), counseling is a process whereby clients are challenged to honestly evaluate their values and decide for themselves in what ways they will modify those values and their behavior.

The importance of counseling to all who need it most cannot be understated. It is a skill, and counselors must try their best

to maximize their potentials to address the needs of their counselees. Having this mind, the Counseling Act of 2004, a requirement for counselors to take the licensure examination to limit the practice of profession to those who are qualified, was implemented. Likewise, there is a need for more resources for the counselors to continuously enhance their practice.

The focus of this study is the adolescent who is admittedly in a most vulnerable stage, and thus must be carefully guided and understood. As Rosales (2000) stated, teenagers do need counseling to guide them in the confusing and trying years of their young lives. They need guidance to recognize their important role as individuals in society and to participate in positive wholesome and rewarding activities. As such, they must be encouraged to visit a guidance counselor periodically to talk about themselves and their goals. They are quick to conceal many things “underneath the surface,” but a counselor who is kind, psychologically democratic, firm, helpful and sincerely caring may just become a psychotherapeutic force in the life of these confused adolescents.

For this purpose, an approach which Filipino counselors can apply is the *Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly*. Tanalega (2004) gives a clear description of the six stages of intervention employed in this model of counseling:

Joining (Pakikiisang Daigdig): It is a specific technique developed by family therapist Salvador Minuchin in 1974. In this particular stage, the counselor attunes himself /herself to the way of life of the client’s family system. His/her goal is to be one with the counselee and get his/her full trust. It goes beyond rapport building because it also gets into the gut feelings of acquiring and maintaining a problem, crisis and even trauma, while still being pressured by contemporary society to put a “normal” face and attend to usual demands like exhibiting warm and tender ways of relating with others. The counselor also acquires the clients’ unique use of language, symbols, and even hesitations.

Focusing (Pagtutuan): Focusing in Brief Therapy goes beyond simple rational processing. It is necessary to pick up a significant item, for it may be the central issue where the “centrifugal” force of healing rests. The resolution of the central focus can be the key to mobilize the inner resources of the person to move towards resolving other issues. Focusing is not also a mere function of the analytic mind; clinically it is a product of the listening analyst. It is using the ears and the eyes to validate what one hears and to determine what needs to be focused on.

Probing the Depths (Paghawit at Paghinga): For Filipinos, that inner domain known as “kalooban” may be particularly sensitive and thus, closely guarded and protected, making it more difficult for the counselors to probe. Another difficulty is the indirect use of language to preserve smooth interpersonal relationship which cannot be jeopardized, even at the cost of one’s personal inconvenience and discomfort. Counselors should sensitize themselves to the levels or forms of expressions of Filipinos. Again, the concern for the preservation of acceptance by others filters the manner in which counselees express their feelings, especially the feelings that aim at some ventilation, some release and relief. Those denied or repressed feelings maybe unconsciously selected to be erased from one’s memory; or more damagingly be projected, diverted, and labeled on others.

Exploring the Options (Taas-Tanaw sa mga Sinag sa Dulo ng Yungib): The only way to put things in track with the Filipino client is to explore options by planning and assessing the best alternatives deliberately. Exploring options implies the weighing of each option in terms of relevance to the problem and significance in terms of expected outcome. Weighing involves the use of the value system of the clients which may differ from that of the counselors. Caution should be taken to distinguish between values and what clients find more socially acceptable.

Securing Resources (Pagpulot at Pagbuo): Personal resources are more

important to Filipinos than institutional ones. “Personal” refers not only to inner resources such as faith, life, prayers, but also to materials, persons and groups to which the client has personal connection or access. Thus, what the Filipinos may want to regard as problem solving resources may not be the brilliant mind or rationality but the *barkada* or *ka-chika* (with women), not relying on themselves alone but following the conventional wisdom that “more heads are better than one.” Consulting friends and personal relations, in the long run, may be more precious to Filipinos than all the analytic skill they can muster or the counselors can offer.

Identifying the Opportune Time of When to Start (Pagtaning sa Pag-usod): Filipinos need to achieve awareness that can lead to more speedy resolution of their problems. They have their expression of *bahala na* which denotes and connotes not leaving things to fate but assumes a faithful and continuing relationship with God. Initiating change therefore, may need a preparatory activity of appealing to God’s grace and wisdom to make it all happen. No matter what religious preference the client has, “bahala na” implies that the client is stepping aside to let the Almighty take the initiative and lead the client to the different task of change.

As described by Tanalega, these six stages may be equated with some western approaches, although it can be seen that the whole model has its distinct characteristics which are more applicable to Filipino adolescents.

## Purpose and Methodology

This study specifically aimed to find out (a) how applicable Tanalega’s *Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly* is in improving the academic performance of some sophomore students, and (b) what factors contribute to the applicability of the *constructed model of counseling* in improving academic performance.

The study used the qualitative research approach to determine the applicability of the “Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly” to sophomore

high school students. It involved actual counseling sessions. The case study and the case note formats were used to qualify the counseling process and to evaluate the results.

The study was limited to eight selected second year high school students in a selected private school. These students had academic problems like failure in one or more subjects, not necessarily due to underachievement or poor intelligence quotient, but due to lack of interest to study or poor study habits. Second year students were chosen on the premise that they have adjusted to the high school level since they already had a year experience in the level, and yet they failed to comply with their academic requirements.

#### *Research instruments*

The research instruments used in this study included the following:

A questionnaire, which the researcher developed as pretest and was also used as posttest. It is made up of ten questions asking the respondents' views regarding academic performance, the importance of education to them, things that influence them in their studies, their study habits, factors that cause their failing marks, what they do in case they fail in some subjects, subjects that they find hard, the first person they approach if they encounter academic problems, if they would seek the guidance of their counselor regarding academic problems, and lastly, their feelings towards how counseling helps them. The pretest measures the knowledge of the counselee before the intervention and the posttest to see if there is a difference in their viewpoints pre-intervention and post intervention. A follow-up questionnaire was also administered to determine the feelings of the students before and after each counseling session.

An observation guide, for the counseling to determine the verbal and non-verbal messages of the counselee, as well as to monitor his readiness to undergo the counseling sessions.

A follow-up questionnaire, to validate the results of the counseling session.

#### *Procedures*

The researcher initially requested permission from the school officials for the study to be conducted. The parents of the eight students were also given letters of information that their children would be participants in the study to which their consent was required.

The selected students were referred by their subject teachers and advisers, as they were having academic problems. Behaviors frequently observed are as follows: frequent absenteeism, most of the time tardy, penchant to cut class, seldom attentive during discussions, failure to do their assignment, and bullying tendencies.

The students were given the pretest and posttest at their convenient time.

Below are brief descriptions of the eight participants. They have similarities; in some ways, they are unique.

Student A is a problematic boy because of his present situation at home. They are having financial problems. He has misunderstanding with his parents. Likewise, he seems to have a feeling of rejection from his parents as both of them show favoritism to his older brother and older sister. He turns to friends and usually spends more time with them than with his family. He seemingly neglects his studies. He had five failing marks in the first quarter.

Student B tries to cover his problems with his dad by being jolly and light-hearted in school, but deep inside, there is anger building in his heart. He shares the same sentiment (anger towards the father) with his elder brother. He usually comes to school late, and apparently, he depends on the people around him to wake him up, as he finds it lazy to wake up and go to school. Furthermore, he finds listening to his teachers and concentrating with the lessons boring and because of this, he lacks focus. He had failing marks in English, Mathematics, Science and Filipino in the first quarter.

Student C is still coping with the loss of his dad and the busy schedule of his mom. His mom tries to give her children quality time every weekend. During weekdays, he spends his free time with his friends, usually after classes to play computer games with them. It has been his routine. According to his teachers he is frequently absent/late. He had failing grades in Mathematics and English in the first quarter.

Student D seemingly is a pampered boy. Basically he has a happy family life. His parents are good providers. They see to it that equal treatment is given to both him and his younger sister. With a two-year age gap, he is very close with his sister. He enjoys schooling not only because he learns but he also enjoys the company of his friends. When it comes to his studies, he lacks focus. He was failing in Mathematics in the first quarter.

Student E has a positive regard for his family. His dad is an OFW who works hard to provide for his family. He sees his mom as a loving and caring mother. He has confided that he suffers from insomnia as he cannot sleep until three in the morning. As a result, he cannot wake up early and thus, usually arrives late for his first period in the morning. He values education very much; however he has failing marks in Mathematics and English as he finds these subjects hard to understand.

Student F, likewise, has positive regard for his family as he sees both parents as responsible and caring. They have close family ties as they usually spend time with their relatives in the province every weekend. As a student, he sees to it that he does his assignments and studies for his tests, but he has failing marks in Mathematics. He tries his best to cope with the help of significant people in his life.

Student G is the youngest among four children and he admitted that he is pampered by his mother. His father passed

away when he was one year old. Since he is the only boy, he sometimes feels sad as he cannot relate and bond with his sisters as they have different interests. As a student, he studies his lessons; however, when it comes to Mathematics, he receives failing marks.

Student H grew up with his maternal grandmother. He is still coping with the death of his father in 2006. His relationship with his mother right now is not that fine as she is very busy with her work and seldom has time for him. As a student, he studies his lessons but he finds Mathematics very hard.

There were six counseling sessions with the students using the "Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly". These sessions were held at the high school guidance office, an area conducive to both counselor and counselee, during vacant periods, before or after classes.

The posttest and follow-up questionnaire were given afterwards. Three case studies and five case notes were prepared to support the study.

The proceedings of the six counseling sessions done with the participants every week from the first week of February to second week of March were transcribed. Thirty to forty minutes were allotted for each session. The case studies as well as the case notes were prepared and evaluated. For a consolidated presentation and analysis of each case, the counseling outcomes were presented using tables by stages.

Likewise, the results of the pre-posttest questionnaires as well as the follow-up guide were discussed to have a better understanding of the students' sentiments about education.

## Discussion

### *Results of the pre-post tests*

Table 1a shows the sentiments of the student respondents towards studying and education, as seen in the students' responses in the pretest and posttest.

**Table 1a. Respondents' Perception on Importance of Education**

| Student | Pretest Responses                                                        | Posttest Responses                                     |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| A       | Very important because I need to have a good life when I get older       | Very important                                         |
| B       | Very important                                                           | Very important                                         |
| C       | <i>Mahalaga kasi dito mababase ang pag-</i>                              | <i>Mahalaga kasi kung hindi ka makapag-</i>            |
| D       | <i>Mahalaga dahil dito natututo ng mga basic na kailangan sa buhay</i>   | Important because it will help me in life              |
| E       | Very important                                                           | Important                                              |
| F       | <i>Sobrang importante dahil ito ay ka-kailanganin ko sa habang buhay</i> | It is a lesson that you will carry for your whole life |
| G       | It is important because it can help our future life                      | Very important                                         |
| H       | <i>Napakahalaga sa akin nito dahil dito ako aasenso</i>                  | Mas mahalaga pa sa buhay ko                            |

Based on the responses on both tests, all eight students know that education is indeed an important part of their lives and so they must take it seriously. They all know that to have good education would mean a bright future for them. It is indeed gratifying to know that despite their academic problems, they acknowledge the importance of education.

Table 1b shows the respondents' thoughts on the things that influence their studies. These could either be negative or positive facts depending on how the student perceives the

**Table 1b. Respondents' Perception on Things That Influence Studies**

| Student | Pretest Responses                                       | Posttest Responses                 |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A       | Remarks from my family I want them to see me graduate   | Family, Friends, and Self-interest |
| B       | No answer                                               | <i>Barkada</i>                     |
| C       | <i>Barkada dahil marami din matutunan na ka-lokohan</i> | <i>Barkada</i>                     |
| D       | <i>Naiimpluwensyahan akong gumawa ng tama</i>           | None I just want to learn things   |
| E       | Parents                                                 | Family                             |
| F       | Family problems                                         | Less focus                         |
| G       | None because I don't want to destroy my study habits    | <i>Barkada</i>                     |
| H       | <i>Barkada, bisyo, alak</i>                             | <i>Bad friends</i>                 |

The responses in Table 1b show that significant people have both good and bad influences on the studies of the student respondents. A big factor is attributed to the *barkada*. Researches validate the results. An article regarding peer pressure states that values of the peer group with whom the high school student spends most time are a stronger factor in the student's level of academic success, than the values, attitudes and support provided by the family. (<http://www.faqs.org/health/topics/76/peerpressure.html>.)

Another factor is the parents/families. Quality time with one's children is very important. Knowing how they feel and what their interests are could influence their behavior in school, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships. Earlier studies on parenting show that parents of high achieving students had common characteristics. These were exposing their children to different activities to promote cognitive development, setting of high performance standards, the encouragement of initiative, independence and self-sufficiency within the context of a warm and loving relationship (as cited in *The Philippine Journal of Education*, January, 2005).

Proper guidance from parents and other significant people could help in minimizing the dependence of the student to his peer group when it comes to decision making, especially regarding schooling.

Table 1c below shows the factors that the respondents pointed as causes of failing grades.

**Table 1c. Respondents' Perception on Factors that Cause Failing Grades**

| Student | Pretest Responses                                                    | Posttest Responses               |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A       | <i>Katamaran at Kapabaya</i>                                         | Laziness & Carelessness          |
| B       | <i>Katamaran</i>                                                     | <i>Barkada</i>                   |
| C       | I'm not studying well & I'm not focused to my studies                | <i>Hindi nag fo-focus</i>        |
| D       | <i>Dahil minsan di nakikinig</i>                                     | Because of my laziness sometimes |
| E       | <i>Computer games, barkada</i>                                       | Not studying                     |
| F       | <i>Kulang ako sa focus</i>                                           | Less focus                       |
| G       | <i>I think friends because I forget to study when I'm with them.</i> | Computer                         |
| H       | <i>Kulang sa attention</i>                                           | Friends who are bad influence    |

As shown in the responses, the students admitted that the main factors causing their failing marks are their barkada or peer group, lack of focus in their studies, laziness, addiction to computer games, carelessness, and need for parental attention.

Peer acceptance is common among teenagers especially those who do not get attention at home. However, in the process of getting accepted in a peer group, the person could either be led to the good or bad path. Indeed, peer pressure has a great influence to the adolescent as supported by a study of McCormack (2004) which states that negative peer pressure makes teens ignore a group that is intolerant of their motives or suggests possible consequences of their actions.

Laziness is a term often used by the public to describe someone who has a motivational deficit. Certain variables that can contribute to what is known as laziness or motivational deficit

include procrastination, and more generally, the underachieving personality, negatively affect achievement motivation (as cited in <http://chat.carleton.ca/~jlalonde/majorpaper.htm>).

Students with academic problems in school may be those who have big problems at home. That is the reason why it is important for the counselor to understand the family of origin of the counselee. It is the only way to be able to guide not only the student but also the parents. Likewise, teachers must be aware that failure of students does not only mean that their subject is hard; and that there other factors that affect the students' performance as well. In doing so, the teacher could also coordinate with the parent or other relatives to be able to work hand in hand in assisting the student.

Table 1d shows the student respondents' thoughts on the effectiveness of study habits.

**Table 1d. Respondents' Perception on the Effectiveness of Study Habits**

| <b>Student</b> | <b>Pretest Responses</b>                                                        | <b>Posttest Responses</b>                                                                |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A              | <i>Mag-aral bago mag-exam para sariwa pa sa isip yung ni-review para madali</i> | I study only if there are new given lessons                                              |
| B              | Studying while listening to music                                               | <i>Nag-aaral habang nakikinig sa kanta kung tinatamad</i>                                |
| C              | <i>Nag-aadvance ako sa mga ibang subject para nakakasagot ako sa recitation</i> | <i>Nakikinig ako ng music medyo epektibo nakaka-memorize naman ako</i>                   |
| D              | <i>Epektibo ang pag-aaral kasi sa ibang subject naman pumapasa</i>              | I just read and review sometimes, it is effective because I passed some academic subject |
| E              | Yes it's effective. It helps my grade go high                                   | No                                                                                       |
| F              | <i>Kapag bumagsak bumabawi sa grades</i>                                        | Focus on what you are reading                                                            |
| G              | I don't have study habits but when the teacher is discussing, I am focused.     | No                                                                                       |
| H              | <i>Kapag babasa, dagdag kaalaman</i>                                            | <i>Mag-aral lang, ayos na</i>                                                            |

This table shows that the answers of some students are consistent in the pretest and posttest while the others are not. Overall, it shows that the student respondents value education although they have different study habits. One says he doesn't have study habits but he is focused when the teachers discusses a topic. Two students think music helps soothe the mood while studying. One says advance review of the lesson is good, while another one claims cramming is better.

In her study, Irohi (2004) pointed out that poor study habits not only retard school progress but also develop frustration and destroy initiative and self-confidence, whereas effective methods ensure success, happiness and a sense of accomplishment. The table indicates that all of the respondents also study "somehow" and so they are able to cope with the pressure of having failing marks in some subjects.

Table 1e shows what the students do whenever they get failing marks.

**Table 1e. Respondents' Perception on What the Students Do Whenever They Get Failing Marks**

| Student | Pretest Responses                                                                 | Posttest Responses                         |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| A       | <i>Nag-aaral mabuti para makahabol sa mga grades</i>                              | <i>Nagre-review</i>                        |
| B       | <i>Nag-aaral mabuti</i>                                                           | <i>Iintindihin ko na lang ang lesson</i>   |
| C       | <i>Lalapit ako sa teachers tapos magtatanong kung may pag-asa pa akong pumasa</i> | <i>Mag-aaral</i>                           |
| D       | <i>Humihingi ako ng special project para madagdagan grade ko</i>                  | I study for the next test                  |
| E       | <i>Nagpapasa ng mga projects at assignments</i>                                   | Study hard                                 |
| F       | I will study well for the next quarte                                             | Study in the subjects with failing grades. |
| G       | I study harder                                                                    | Study hard                                 |
| H       | Special project                                                                   | <i>Mag-aaral po</i>                        |

The responses above indicate that the students are optimistic that they can make up for their failing marks. They seem to see their failing marks as a challenge to study harder and show their teachers that they can catch up and pass their subjects. Their pretest and posttest point to the same thing: to get high grades, they have to study hard.

Optimism or thinking positively is important as it could help the students to work harder and earn better grades. Encouraging words from significant people such as parents, siblings, teachers, and friends could likewise motivate the students to improve their grades.

Table 1f shows the opinions of the students on seeking the help of the guidance counselor.

**Table 1f. Respondents' Perception on Seeking the Help of the Guidance Counselor**

| Student | Pretest Responses                                                     | Posttest Responses                       |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| A       | <i>Lumalapit/ pumupunta ako sa kanya kapag may problema sa school</i> | Maybe if she would really help me        |
| B       | <i>Opo para mabigyan ng advice at kung ano ang gagawin</i>            | <i>Oo naman baka sakaling makatulong</i> |
| C       | <i>Oo para malaman ko kung saan ako mahina</i>                        | <i>Siguro kasi medyo mahiyain ako</i>    |
| D       | <i>Hindi</i>                                                          | <i>Hindi</i>                             |
| E       | Maybe                                                                 | <i>Ewan</i>                              |
| F       | No because it's my fault if I failed                                  | <i>Yes, to make it easier</i>            |
| G       | No as I said I don't want to disturb other people                     | <i>Oo</i>                                |
| H       | No response                                                           | <i>Hindi</i>                             |



The table shows that based on the responses in the pretest, three counselees stated that they would seek the help of their counselor while Student D responded "No, I will not" in his pre and post test. Student E was also not sure if he would seek help. In his pretest, Student G said he would not want to disturb other people but in his posttest, he said that he would seek help. Student H had no response in his pretest while in his posttest, he said "no." From these responses, it seems that some students are quite hesitant to approach the counselor especially during the pretest probably because of the school counselor's dual function - as guidance counselor and discipline officer.

In cases like this, it would be best if the guidance counselor explains to the administration that it would be hard for the counselor if he/she holds two opposing posts because in the long run, the effect on the counseling relationship might be negative. It is also best to reassure the student that what is discussed during the sessions would remain confidential.

Table 1g shows what the students think on how counseling could be of help to them.

**Table 1g. Respondents' Perception on How Counseling Could Be of Help**

| <b>Student</b> | <b>Pretest Responses</b>                                                                                        | <b>Posttest Responses</b>                              |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| A              | <i>Baka po magkaroon ako ng guide o patnubay kung ano ang tama kong gagawin para matapos ko aking pag-aaral</i> | It could give me some peace of mind                    |
| B              | Trying to solve my own problem                                                                                  | <i>para ma-solve ang aking problems</i>                |
| C              | <i>Sinasabi kasi yung mga kakulangan ko sa pag-aaral at binibigyan ako ng advice</i>                            | <i>Parang nag-bibigay ng payo</i>                      |
| D              | No response                                                                                                     | They can help us because they can answer our questions |
| E              | Through discipline                                                                                              | I don't know                                           |
| F              | Helps me on my studies                                                                                          | Help me on my studies                                  |
| G              | It opens the will of the students to study harder                                                               | <i>Nagbibigay ng advice</i>                            |
| H              | <i>Wala</i>                                                                                                     | Pag-improve ng aking sarili                            |

The responses are mostly positive although the students have the idea that counseling and advising are the same. However, Students D and H at first had the following respective answers: "no response" and "*wala*". But after the counseling session, there was a positive effect somehow as shown by their responses "they can answer my questions" and "pag-improve ng aking sarili."

It can be seen from the students' responses that they consider the sessions helpful to them. It is important that they could share their sentiments to someone who is not their teacher but is a part of the school community, someone who could be of assistance to them in times of need.

To sum up, the pretest and posttest results showed that the student respondents' seem to value education as it is a life-long process and without it, their future would be bleak. The factors that caused their failing marks are laziness, carelessness, lack of focus, addiction to computer games, and friends who are bad influence. They make up for low grades or failing marks by studying harder and asking for a special project. With regards to their study habits, the common remarks included cramming and studying while the music is turned on.

Some said they do not have study habits although they can be focused. Influencing their studies mostly are their parents and barkada, and their lack of focus due to a preoccupied mind. Seeking the help of the guidance counselor is somehow considered by the students.

### *Counseling outcomes by stages*

For consolidated presentation and analysis of results of the counseling process, Tables 2a to 2f present the counseling outcomes by stages. Out of eight students, three cases are presented.

Table 2a shows the initial stage wherein the rapport between the counselor and the counselee was established.

**Table 2a: Stage 1– *Joining***

| Students | Counseling Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A        | Counselee seemed at ease, he projected a happy mood; however, it was noticeable that he has concerns. During the session, feelings of insecurity towards his siblings came out. "JOINING", was seen in this counseling session as the student was able to relay his sentiments without fear of being judged and ridiculed. He had this feeling that the parents favor more his older brother and sister. He viewed his mom as a kind person but when she is angry, her anger cannot be controlled. Father figure was seen negatively as he seemed to neglect them as he puts his interest first before that of his family. |
| B        | Counselee had the openness and willingness to share about himself. He was the usual jolly person but he seemed sad when the discussion was about his relationship with his dad. "JOINING" was seen as he was able to relate all that he felt at that time. He was not at all hesitant in sharing his feelings of fear towards his father. His father is a good provider, he is a disciplinarian that at the slightest mistake of his children he gets angry with them.                                                                                                                                                     |
| C        | In this session, the counselee seemed ready to share his sentiments. At first he was composed, but when the discussion was about his dad, he became quite teary-eyed as he recalled his dad who passed away two years ago. He was not that talkative when it came to family relationships. Though he answered during the intake interview, he did not elaborate. His mom is a very busy person, attending to their business to make both ends meet.                                                                                                                                                                        |

In *Joining*, the counselees were observed to be either at ease and relaxed or hesitant to share.

This session was actually hard for most of the counselees inasmuch as it was the first time that they had their session with the counselor. Most of them had misconceptions about guidance counselors and counseling in general because in many cases, their teachers use the guidance office as a means of scaring the erring students. Oftentimes some teachers would say, "Those who commit mistakes would be sent to the guidance office for proper disciplinary action." Furthermore, whenever a student receives a notification slip stating that the counselor sets an appointment with him/her, the classmates would tease him/her, "*Lagot, anong kasalanan mo? Bakit ka pinatatawag sa guidance?*"

Knowing the situation of some counselees who were feeling hesitant because of the impressions created about the guidance office, the counselor had set an atmosphere that was relaxing and friendly to build trust and confidence among the students. As the session progressed, the counselees' feelings of hesitation subsided and self disclosure was more evident.

In the above mentioned cases, it was a good thing that the counselees had the willingness to share their feelings. Though varying in intensities, these students have a common goal, they would want to be appreciated and feel loved by their parents. Lack of parental love could lead them to re-channeling of their feelings and would seek belongingness from friends of the same age. However, problems arise when peer pressure sets in.

The second stage is about getting to the core of the situation or problem.

**Table 2b. Stage 2- *FOCUSING***

| <b>Students</b> | <b>Counseling Outcomes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A               | The counselee was quite sad when his failing marks and the factors causing these marks were being discussed. That was the concentration of the session. The primary factors were laziness and family problems. When asked why he was lazy with school work, he said that his tuition fee had not been settled yet. Health reasons also affected him because there were times when he had nose bleeding. Likewise, teacher factor contributed to his poor academic performance. He said that when he was too lazy to attend his class, he frequently went to a place and stayed there to ease the boredom. |
| B               | Student B admitted that he lacked focus in his studies. Other factors that affected his poor academic performance were laziness, the subject that did not interest him, and the bad influence of his barkada. During the counseling session, things which did not surface before came out. He admitted that he lacked self discipline to wake up early in the morning to attend his class and he needed his yaya to do that. In some cases when the yaya failed to wake him up, he either did not go to school anymore or came to class late. From time to time, his parents pushed him to study hard.    |
| C               | Counseling session was geared towards failing marks and it was pointed out that the problems were his tardiness and his peers. Though the student was well provided for by his parent, he wanted to stay with his barkada. Counseling went out well as the student was able to identify the factors leading to his failure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

In *Focusing*, the counselees showed a common concern: their failing mark/s in one or more subjects. They had a common feeling of sadness and to some extent, even frustration with themselves for failing.

In this session, extra effort was exerted by the counselor for the counseling to penetrate the core of the problem. This limitation was felt: the counseling could not be that deep as the counselor must wait for the gradual show of willingness of some counselees to open up.

Influence of the peer group is one big factor that contributes to the decision making of the student. Students A to C had failing marks. They have their own peer groups and as this is where they could get reciprocated, they give in to what the barkada would like to do. Computer games are the next big factor that influences the student. Sometimes in lieu of parental affection, the student engages into other things like playing with computer games.

The next stage dealt with the deeper counseling relationship of the counselor and the counselee. As the counselor tried to unravel the concerns/problems of the counselee, rapport was more established as the counselee became more open and at ease.

**Table 2c. Stage 3- *PROBING THE DEPTHS***

| Students | Stage 3 – “Probing the Depths” Counseling Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A        | During the counseling session, the counselee seemed cooperative. He acknowledged his laziness and would rather enjoy doing what he wanted to do. The student at this point seemed at a lost as to what he should do. Faced with the present situation though, it seemed that he wanted to pass his subjects but did not know how to go about it. He mentioned that his poor academic performance was due to his laziness and because of the time, his parents would quarrel. |
| B        | The session with the counselee seemed nice as it was able to bring out what the counselee was feeling right at the moment. He mentioned that a factor causing his failure was his laziness. Also, as the counseling went on, it turned out that the boy had grudges toward his father easily flares up at his slightest mistake. The counselee was not ready to communicate with his dad because he was afraid of what the outcome of their conversation would be.           |
| C        | During the counseling sessions, the counselee was eager to respond. For him failing marks were caused by his barkada because they were the ones influencing him to play computer games after class until 7pm. Even if there was eagerness on his part, there were things that he did not disclose, especially about his family.                                                                                                                                              |

If the counseling session in *Focusing* was thorough, then *Probing the Depth* would be easier for both the counselor and the counselee.

It was good that in this third stage, all of the student counselees showed willingness to undergo counseling. But despite this willingness, the counselor found it quite hard and most challenging to really go deeper into the problems of the counselees. This could be because of the counselees’ misconception regarding the function of the guidance counselor as discipline officer. The counselor, having a dual function, may be a cause for the counselees’ hesitation to open up.

In this session, Students A and B said that the factors leading to their poor academic performance were laziness which they attributed to boredom or lack of interest in their lessons; and family problems such as frequent quarrels of parents, grudge towards one’s parent, financial crises due to the father’s (A’s) gambling problem, and favoritism of parents which made the student feel inferiority complex.

For student C, failing marks were caused by his barkada because they influence him to play computer games after class until 7pm. But although there was eagerness on the part of the counselee, it could be sensed that there were things that he did not disclose, especially about his family.

At this fourth stage, options as to what the students should do were discussed. In this stage, all counselees had the same goal: to pass the grade level. As such, they were all attentive and cooperative and so the counseling sessions were successful.

**Table 2d. Stage 4- *EXPLORING THE OPTIONS***

| <b>Students</b> | <b>Counseling Outcomes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A               | The session with the counselee seemed okay; the counselee was quite eager to have the session. He was asked what steps he would take knowing his problem. He was the one who thought of alternatives to solve his problems. He displayed optimism.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| B               | The session turned out well. At first, the counselee was asked about the situation with his father and apparently nothing was resolved. When it came to options on how to improve his studies, he said he studies on his own and whenever he does not understand, he asks his teacher. He has resentment in himself, although he says he could resolve this by having self-discipline and focusing on his studies. He still has positive attitude in exploring his problem. |
| C               | In this session, the counselee seemed very attentive. He was asked what he would do with his academic concerns. He said he would study. When asked how would do this, he said he would focus on subjects with failing marks and think positively. Self-control and discipline were also important for him. The counselee appeared optimistic that he would pass the grade level. Counseling session was successful.                                                         |

The next stage shows the coping styles of the counselees, the support system each one has, and how all of these could possibly help the counselee. This stage was just like the previous stage. Counseling was easy for both the counselor and counselees. The responses of the counselees apparently were positive. It was easy for them to identify what keeps them going in times of trouble.

**2e. Stage 5- *SECURING RESOURCES***

| <b>Students</b> | <b>Counseling Outcomes</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A               | During this session, what was discussed was the coping mechanism of the counselee. He said that as much as possible, he tries to analyze what happened and what could be an option or alternative to solve his problem. He values his independence but when he cannot cope on his own, he seeks the help of his friend or his ate, but not his parents because he doesn't want them to pity him. When all else fails, he turns to God. Generally, he has a healthy coping style as he tries his best to help himself first. |
| B               | During this session, the counselee seemed relaxed and cool. When asked about his coping style, he said he would do his best to manage on his own with God's help. He believes his teachers would guide him and his friends, but he does not feel that his parents would help him cope with his problems. His views about life are mostly positive.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| C               | During this session, the counselee seemed very relaxed. He said he could cope with problems when his friends are there to advice him. He does not consider turning to his family for problems but when asked why, he could not give a direct answer. When all else fail, he turns to God for guidance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

**Table 2f. Stage 6: IDENTIFYING the OPPORTUNE TIME OF WHEN to START**

| Students | Counseling Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A        | The counselee mentioned that for him, this was the right moment to start facing concerns especially in his studies as he had a lot of realizations. Generally the counselee seems to have the readiness to be more serious in his concerns. This could be the effect of his realizations. |
| B        | For the counselee the best time to start anew is the soonest time possible and it would be a gradual thing. For him, seeking God's guidance at times of confusion is the best thing to do.                                                                                                |
| C        | For C, he cannot determine yet as to when is the right time to start. For his academics he said "maybe now" meaning he's not sure yet. If in case nothing happens with his efforts to pass, he is willing to take summer class.                                                           |

The last stage was quite a realization for six students who showed willingness to start changing for the better gradually. For them, it was not only changing for self growth, but also changing to make their family, especially their parents, happy. However, two students were found not ready, or not sure, if they wanted to change and a follow up of their case would be essential.

*Results based on the follow-up questionnaire*

Tables 3a to 3c present the data collected through the follow-up questionnaire meant to determine the feelings of the students after the final counseling session.

**Table 3a. What Can You Say About the Counseling Sessions?**

| Student | Responses                                                                                                 |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A       | <i>Yes it made me realize that I should be responsible enough with my studies to make my future good.</i> |
| B       | <i>Oo, nalaman ko kung ano ang gagawin ko</i>                                                             |
| C       | <i>Medyo, dahil may times na nakakatulong sa akin ang counseling</i>                                      |
| D       | <i>Napahusay dahil nakapasa ako sa aking klase</i>                                                        |
| E       | <i>Hindi ko alam</i>                                                                                      |
| F       | <i>Oo, mas ginusto kong tumaas ang grades ko</i>                                                          |
| G       | <i>Oo, kasi masaya</i>                                                                                    |
| H       | <i>Oo, dahil naging masaya ako</i>                                                                        |

Except for one, the students responded positively that somehow, the counseling session helped them. One realized that he should be responsible enough with his studies to have a good future. Others were just happy that some of their failing marks have improved. The passing grade of the students can be attributed to the counseling sessions, but there are other factors that can lead to their better grades.

Based on the positive responses of the counselees, it can be inferred that the counseling process using Tanalega's Constructed Model of Counseling was generally successful, although there were stages - like *Focusing* and *Probing the Depths* - where it was quite difficult for the counselor to extract responses from the counselee.

**Table 3b. Factors that Contributed to the Applicability of the Counseling Sessions**

| Student | Cooperation with my | Willingness to undergo | Motivation/Reasons For Counseling |
|---------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A       | ✓                   | ✓                      | ✓                                 |
| B       | ✓                   |                        | ✓                                 |
| C       | ✓                   |                        | ✓                                 |
| D       |                     |                        | ✓                                 |
| E       |                     |                        | ✓                                 |
| F       | ✓                   |                        | ✓                                 |
| G       | ✓                   |                        |                                   |
| H       |                     |                        | ✓                                 |

Of the eight respondent counselees, five indicated that the factor which contributed to the applicability of the counseling is their cooperation with their counselor. Seven responded that what contributed to the applicability of the Constructed Model of Counseling Briefly is their motivation/reasons for counseling such as their willingness to improve their grades and their wish to make their parents happy if they have high grades. Only one answered willingness to undergo counseling.

**Table 3c . How applicable counseling is to the improvement of academic performance**

| Student | Responses                                                                                                                                 |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A       | <i>It was very effective because it helped me make up my mind that studying is the best way to excel here in school and in my future.</i> |
| B       | <i>Ok lang at least yung iba naipasa ko</i>                                                                                               |
| C       | <i>Maayos naman dahil binigyan ako ng payo</i>                                                                                            |
| D       | <i>Napaka epektibo dahil nakapasa ako sa ibang subjects</i>                                                                               |
| E       | <i>Ok lang pumasa naman ako sa ibang kong subjects</i>                                                                                    |
| F       | <i>Mas naging gusto ko na tumaas ang grades at pumasa ako</i>                                                                             |
| G       | <i>Napaka epektibo, ang saya-saya ko</i>                                                                                                  |
| H       | <i>Nakaapekto ito ng malaki sa aking grado</i>                                                                                            |

The responses in Table 3c are all positive. The eight students said that counseling had helped them pass or improve their grades. Those who had failing subjects then had only one failing mark in the last grading period, and those who failed took summer classes.

In general, the responses in the three above-mentioned tables indicate that the "Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly" is applicable to high school students.

Below are three case studies that further show how the "Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly" helped the three student respondents:

#### Student A

The class adviser and subject teachers recommended Student A because of his failing marks in several subjects during the first grading period, and his habitual tardiness and absenteeism.

Before the counseling session, it was learned that the counselee was a transferee. He stopped studying for one school year after his elementary education in Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City. He came in SY 2006-2007 as a freshman and was having problems in his academics, particularly in English, Math, Science, Filipino, Computer, Social Studies and P.E.

Based on the teacher's comments and the counseling relationship the counselor had with Student A, the boy was perceived to be quite bothered by the way things were at home, and thus his academic performance was very much affected. Some factors that affected his academics were his laziness, lack of focus, frequent tardiness and absences, lack of interest in some subjects, and teacher factor (i.e. not in good terms with the teacher who is "boring").

This student is the youngest child. He has four other siblings and feels that there is favoritism in the family. He thinks that his dad favors his fourth sister, while his mom favors his *kuya*, the eldest child who is

a drug addict and in a rehabilitation center right now. He feels that they seldom bond as a family because they are not usually complete. He views his dad negatively as he feels that he prioritizes his self interest before his children. While he feels much closer with his mom and describes her as kind and thoughtful, he is also aware of the times when she is not in the mood and that she can't be controlled when she's angry. He once confronted his parents regarding the favoritism issue and he was hurt by their response. They said that the fourth sibling was diligent while he was lazy.

As a classmate, he befriends everyone. However, his classmates feel that he bullies them as the oldest in class and so most of his classmates are afraid of him.

During the short durations of the sessions, it could be inferred that this boy is not whom he pretends himself to be, especially if one has known him personally. He is an example of someone who just wants to be understood and accepted for what he is. He exhibited behaviors which were not understood by his classmates and teachers to attract attention. If this concern could not be addressed, chances are he would encounter more problems in the future. It is very important for him to undergo counseling and have follow-up sessions whenever the need arises.

#### Student B

The counselee is the youngest child. He has only one brother whom he's close with as they are always together. However, there are times when he feels that his brother is strict with him and irritable when he does something wrong. His parents treat them equally, one reason why they do not have sibling rivalry. He is closer to his mom than his dad because he thinks she is caring and understanding while his dad is always strict and angry with him and his brother at their slightest mistake. The counselee feels that their parents seldom have time to bond with him and his brother. However, during weekends, he accompanies



his dad to the site where they are building an apartment. Whenever there are concerns, he approaches his brother more than his parents.

Prior to the referral, the counselee had been noticeably late, absent, or at times even cut classes. His problem with his father seems to have bothered him the most. In school, he is seen as the happy guy who makes his classmates smile because of his jokes and antics. However, when he is at home, he is bothered that he might again encounter his dad with that irritable nature that he knows is caused by his father's three-year illness (diabetes). Although he tries his best to explain and reason out when there are arguments, his father thought he is trying to answer back.

It was thought that the negative behavior of the counselee could be the result of this fear of his father.

#### Student C

The class adviser and subject teachers recommended Student C because he had failing marks in several subjects during the first grading period.

The counselee is the youngest child. He has only one sister whom he is close to as they are always together. They are also close to their mom because she is the only living parent they have now; his dad passed away two years ago. His mom supports the family by running a military store. Because of this, she has less time for her children but sees to it that they go to the mall every weekend to relax and bond together.

The counselee feels more comfortable to confide to his sister than to his mom because he knows she is busy with their business most of the time. He is seen by his friends as quiet and shy and if he were to choose, he would want friends who are true and could understand him.

During one of the earlier sessions, the counselee described himself as kind. However, he would like to change some negative characteristics such as his laziness

and being *makulit* which at times irritate other people. He wanted to develop his interests and hobbies like playing musical instruments like drums and guitars. He loves playing basketball. During his spare time, he watches television and plays computer games.

As observed, the counselee needs to be more disciplined when it concerns his academics. First and foremost, he needs to have self-control whenever his *barkada* comes into picture as they were the main factors why he had failing marks. He spends more time with them playing computer games than reviewing his lessons and doing his assignments. Likewise, he boy is somewhat confused of his priorities. It seems that he wants to finish his studies but has little or no motivation at all to make good at it. Factors like frequenting the computer shops with his *barkada* for long periods of time have affected his studies.

Improved study habits can lead to the boy's better academic performance in the future. Moreover, his shyness must be overcome for better self-expression. A better family relationship may be built if he finds himself ready to face whatever differences they have in the family. Also, minimized time with the *barkada* and computer games may lessen his academic problems.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It could be gathered from the results of the study that the counseling process had a positive outcome on the counselees and that some essential factors were given consideration.

Although the "Constructed Model of Counseling Filipinos Briefly" was fielded among a very limited number of respondent counselees, it has been found applicable to the Filipino sophomore students who served as respondents in this study. This can be due to the fact that the model is "very Filipino." It focuses on approaches that are suited to the value system of Filipinos like being family-oriented, consulting friends and

personal relations, strong spiritual orientation, and the like. Counseling techniques like this may really be more effective to Filipino adolescents, who, like other teen-agers, tend to be hesitant to open up and share their feelings with others, including guidance counselors. The study showed the factors which contributed to the applicability of the constructed model in improving the academic performance of the respondent sophomores and these were cooperation with the counselor, willingness to undergo counseling, and motivation for counseling to improve grades and make their parents happy. All these are seen as part of the behavior of Filipinos.

Specifically, the following essential factors were considered in the counseling sessions: (1) the counselor was able to establish rapport with the counselees and the counselees were at ease with the counselor; (2) the atmosphere, or physical dimension as place, time, and comfort, was taken care of and there was physical privacy; and (3) the counselees felt free to talk, confide and tell about their fears without a feeling of hiding a part of the problems they were facing.

Based on the above observations, the following points are recommended:

Counselors, especially those in high school, who find some counseling techniques too tedious and are western in nature, may try to use this technique. They may study the technique further, and perhaps plan to use it among their own students who are facing some problems. The school administrators may also encourage their guidance counselors to use this model of counseling to enhance their services and be more effective to their young clientele.

It may help if the classroom teachers, as second parents to their students, be also familiar with this kind of counseling for them to understand the students better and see beyond the content of their lessons the problems being encountered by their students. In the process, they may fulfill their duties not only as educators but also as para-counselors.

Due to scarcity of studies related to indigenous counseling, researchers should try other related topics using the constructed model of counseling. It could be an alternative strategy to the western approaches because it was developed with the Filipino values and traditions in mind. Moreover, it is suggested that this research be expanded to study the applicability of this model in different levels – elementary and other higher levels.

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