

## THE INTEGRATION OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND GUIDANCE COUNSELOR COMPETENCE IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF COUNSELING SERVICES IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Siti Rahayu Lubis<sup>1</sup>, Nuri Maulida<sup>2</sup>, Nazwa Fatalisa<sup>3</sup>

UIN Sumatera Utara dan Jl. William Iskandar Ps. V, Medan Estate, Indonesia<sup>12n</sup>

[sitirahayulubis0104@gmail.com](mailto:sitirahayulubis0104@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [nurimaulida661@mail.com](mailto:nurimaulida661@mail.com)<sup>2</sup>, [nazwafatalisa@gmail.com](mailto:nazwafatalisa@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>

---

### Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between professional ethics and professional competence of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers in Senior High Schools (SMA) through a literature study approach. In this study, the author uses a literature study research method as the main approach in exploring conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Professional ethics is the moral basis for implementing counseling services, while professional competence reflects the technical abilities and professional attitudes that must be possessed by BK teachers. The results of the study indicate that ethics and competence are two pillars that complement each other and cannot be separated. An imbalance between the two can reduce the quality of service and have a negative impact on students and the reputation of the profession. This study also identifies seven dimensions of professional competence of BK teachers, as well as challenges and strategies for developing professionalism and ethics through pre-service education, ongoing training, supervision, and the use of digital ethics. This study provides a conceptual contribution to strengthening the integrity and effectiveness of BK services in schools

**Keywords:** Professional ethics, professional competence, BK teachers, guidance and counseling, education services

(\*) Corresponding Author: [sitirahayulubis](mailto:sitirahayulubis), [sitirahayulubis0104@gmail.com](mailto:sitirahayulubis0104@gmail.com), 085763202835

---

## INTRODUCTION

Education is not only aimed at producing intellectually intelligent individuals, but also at shaping people who are emotionally, socially, and morally mature. In this context, Guidance and Counseling (GC) services have a strategic function in assisting students in facing the dynamics of personal, social, academic, and career-planning challenges. Specifically at the Senior High School (SMA) level, GC services are increasingly urgent as adolescence is a complex psychosocial transition period. At this stage, the role of school counselors becomes crucial in helping students discover their identity, resolve conflicts, and make life decisions. The quality of GC services is inseparable from the personality, integrity, and professionalism of the counselor as the primary agent. Fazria et al. (2024) emphasize that teacher competence is closely related to the success of counseling services. The inability of school counselors to internalize professional values can directly impact the quality of service (Yusri, 2019). Therefore, quality GC services must meet both moral demands and relevant professional skills (Hambali et al., 2021).

Counseling is a professional activity based on interpersonal relationships aimed at helping individuals deal with and overcome their problems. This relationship is not just

ordinary interaction; it must be carried out by upholding humanistic principles and moral ethics. In this context, a code of ethics serves as the operational foundation to protect all parties from violations of values and abuses of relational power. According to Suherman (2007), ethics function as a moral boundary so that the counselor-client relationship does not deviate from its original goal. Counselors are required to understand the client's value system so that the counseling process does not create deeper value conflicts (Faiz et al., 2018). Professional ethics also encompass the social and cultural norms prevailing in the community where the services are delivered (Tumanggor & Jamaris, 2022), making this understanding essential in building the client's trust toward the counselor.

Professionalism is a commitment to carry out work based on expertise, ethical codes, and service to society. As educated professionals, school counselors must demonstrate dedication through practices that reflect expertise and moral responsibility. Rakhmawati (2013) explains that professional characteristics include education-based expertise, understanding of established theories, professional autonomy, and client-oriented service. The professionalism of school counselors is also evident in their ability to develop appropriate instruments and responsive services to meet student needs (Yusri, 2019). In the context of education, school counselors play an important role in shaping a generation that is mentally and socially resilient. Therefore, the development of counselor professionalism must occur systematically and continuously, as highlighted by Rohimah et al. (2024) in their study of school-based counseling services.

Professional ethics serve as a moral compass for school counselors in performing their duties responsibly and humanely. Ethics are not merely written rules but the foundation of attitudes and behaviors in counseling practice that uphold the dignity of students. Suherman (2007) emphasizes that professional ethics serve as behavioral standards that must be adhered to in counseling practice. In its implementation, school counselors must consistently prioritize honesty, fairness, and empathy in building professional relationships with students (Daniati et al., 2025). Competence without ethics can harm clients, while ethics without competence render services ineffective, as shown by Fazria et al. (2024). This study is significant because it does not treat these two aspects separately but highlights the integration of ethics and competence as a conceptual foundation for quality services.

Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on one aspect only, this study explicitly explores the functional relationship between ethics and professional competence of school counselors in improving service quality in SMA. The uniqueness of this research lies in its integrative and applicative approach to the real dynamics of school environments. By combining the theory of professional ethics, competency standards, and practical challenges in the field, this study offers a new contribution to the development of a conceptual framework that is relevant to current educational needs.

The professional competence of school counselors includes not only technical aspects such as assessment skills and program planning, but also integrity in adhering to moral principles and work ethics. According to Haryadi (2019), professional school counselors must be able to conduct assessments objectively and design programs oriented toward student needs. This competence is inseparable from the awareness of the moral responsibility of educators. Sodiq and Herdi (2021) even emphasize that professionalism unsupported by ethics will lead to services devoid of values and easily misdirected. This reinforces the importance of an approach that integrates both skills and ethics within a single framework for developing school counselors.

The development of counselor competence must begin during the pre-service education phase at universities. Fadhila Yusri (2019) states that early counselor education plays a crucial role in shaping a strong work ethic, values, and professional personality.

Materials on the code of ethics, social responsibility, and values-based counseling practice must be thoroughly integrated into the curriculum. Widada (2019) adds that pre-service education is the foundational phase that determines future service quality. Hambali et al. (2021) also highlight the importance of digital ethics training in counselor education in response to the challenges of the technological era. Therefore, integrating academic education, value internalization, and ethical understanding is a primary requirement in preparing excellent school counselors.

Upon entering the field, school counselors must continually engage in self-development through ongoing professional training. Activities such as workshops, seminars, thematic training, and advanced studies can enhance service quality and update ethical understanding in line with evolving times. According to Rakhmawati (2013), the concept of lifelong learning must be internalized in the practice of professional educators. Furthermore, Daniati et al. (2025) emphasize that training with a strong ethical component is essential to prevent violations of foundational principles. This study contributes by offering a synthesis of competency-enhancement strategies that are relevant and practically applicable in schools.

On the other hand, the importance of supervision and professional evaluation should not be overlooked. Haryadi (2019) explains that supervision is not merely a monitoring tool but a reflective medium for enhancing counselor professionalism. With supervision, service practices can be monitored to ensure they remain within ethical and competency guidelines. Widada (2019) adds that effective supervision must be systematic and continuous to prevent stagnation. Rohimah et al. (2024) affirm that professional evaluation provides constructive feedback and strengthens work integrity. Therefore, the supervision and evaluation approach complements the strategic development of counselor competence.

This study identifies that a lack of awareness of the code of ethics, weak oversight, and limited ongoing training are actual obstacles in the practice of GC services. Suyanto (2020) and Wulandari (2021) indicate that many ethical violations occur due to ignorance or negligence. Hambali et al. (2021) also point out that the lack of structural support from educational institutions exacerbates the situation. The uniqueness of this research lies in its in-depth exploration of the systemic causes of ethical violations and its proposal of solution-oriented approaches based on the simultaneous strengthening of competence and ethical awareness. Thus, this study is not merely descriptive but also solution-oriented.

Professional ethics and competence are two sides of the same coin that must be fully integrated within the identity of a school counselor. This study emerges to address the gap in the literature that has historically viewed them separately. By presenting a more comprehensive and practice-based approach, this study is expected to provide both scholarly and practical contributions to improving the quality of GC services in senior high schools. The integration of moral values, knowledge, and skills forms a strong foundation for counselor professionalism in an ever-changing era.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In this study, the author uses the literature review research method as the main approach to explore conceptual and theoretical understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. The initial step in this research method is to identify and select relevant literature sources, including scientific journals, books, theses, and research articles related to the research topic. Analysis and synthesis of the literature sources are conducted to explore findings, concepts, theories, and models relevant to building a solid theoretical and conceptual framework. The development of the theoretical and conceptual framework is

carried out by linking the concepts found in the literature into a logical and coherent structure, as well as integrating appropriate theories. Verification and validation of the theoretical and conceptual framework are conducted to ensure the consistency, validity, and reliability of the concepts contained within the framework. This study provides a concrete example of the application of the literature review research method in the conceptual and theoretical analysis of the phenomenon under study.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The main findings of this study indicate that ethics and professional competence are two fundamental pillars that cannot be separated in ensuring the quality of guidance and counseling (GC) services at the senior high school level. Ethics serves as a moral foundation that governs the behavior and responsibilities of counselors, while professional competence ensures the capacity of GC teachers to deliver services effectively and appropriately. This study emphasizes that the integration of both elements is crucial—a counselor who is skilled in counseling techniques but neglects ethical principles such as confidentiality and objectivity can pose psychological risks to the counselee. Conversely, a GC teacher who is ethical but lacks technical expertise will also be unable to provide optimal services. Therefore, the professionalism of GC teachers should be understood as the integration of moral integrity and technical expertise.

This study also identifies that the professional competence of GC teachers consists of seven main dimensions: assessment skills, mastery of counseling theory and practice, program planning, service implementation, activity evaluation, ethical awareness, and research skills. These seven competencies are essential indicators for building quality counseling services that are relevant to students' needs. Moreover, the study finds several current challenges faced by GC teachers in schools, such as weak professional supervision, low awareness of ethical codes, and role conflicts within the work environment that can diminish the effectiveness of services.

A review of relevant previous studies reinforces these findings. Suherman (2007) highlights the importance of ethical relationships in counselor-counselee interactions and the need for ethical protection governed by professional codes. Rakhmawati (2013) identifies the characteristics of professionalism that counselors must possess, such as expertise from specialized education and a service-oriented mindset. Fadhila Yusri (2019) emphasizes that counselor education in higher education institutions is a critical foundation in shaping competence and professional values. Meanwhile, Suyanto (2020) and Wulandari (2021) describe the real challenges faced by GC teachers, such as weak supervision and low awareness of professional ethics. Sodiq & Herdi (2021) and Widada (2019) underline the importance of continuous professional development to maintain the quality of school counseling services.

Overall, all previous studies show a common emphasis on the urgency of ethics and teacher competence as the foundation of counseling services. However, differences lie in each study's focus, such as interpersonal relationships (Suherman), the definition of professionalism (Rakhmawati), counselor education (Fadhila Yusri), practical challenges (Suyanto & Wulandari), and continuous development (Sodiq & Herdi, Widada). On the other hand, the gap that emerges is the absence of research that integratively examines competence, ethics, and professional development strategies for GC teachers in the context of real challenges in schools.

Thus, this study aims to fill that gap by presenting a comprehensive and applicable analysis of the integration between ethics and professional competence in the development of guidance and counseling services. It not only discusses the theoretical framework but also explores field challenges and offers professional development strategies including pre-service education, ongoing training, participation in professional organizations, supervision, and the integration of digital ethics. The tangible contribution of this study lies in the formulation of a conceptual foundation that can serve as a reference in designing future models of GC teacher professionalism development that are responsive to the needs and dynamics of secondary schools

### **Discussion**

#### **A. Guidance and Counseling**

In English, the term “bimbingan” is known as guidance, which originates from the root word guide. This word carries the meaning of directing, managing, organizing, and advising. The term guidance is also often translated as assistance, direction, or help. Meanwhile, counseling refers to the process of providing information by presenting knowledge that can be used for decision-making, accompanied by giving advice.

Experts have provided various definitions of guidance. According to Crow and Crow in Prayitno, guidance is understood as assistance given by someone, either male or female, who possesses good character and adequate education, to individuals of all ages. The aim is to help these individuals in managing their life activities, developing their own perspectives, and bearing their responsibilities independently. In line with this, Bimo Walgito defines guidance as a form of help or assistance provided to an individual or group of individuals so that they can avoid or overcome the life difficulties they are facing, thus enabling them to achieve life well-being. In this sense, guidance is also known as a form of assistance, emphasizing that a counselor is obliged to provide help and direction to the individual being guided.

Furthermore, guidance is a process of helping individuals to, through their own efforts, discover and develop their potential to gain personal happiness while also providing benefits to society. Based on the various definitions above, it can be concluded that guidance is a continuous and systematic process of providing assistance to individuals in solving the problems they are facing. The purpose is for the individual to understand themselves (self-understanding), accept themselves as they are (self-acceptance), and be able to direct themselves (self-realization) according to their potential or abilities. This process also aims to help the individual achieve adjustment with their surrounding environment, whether in the context of family, school, or community. Naturally, such assistance should be given by individuals who possess special expertise and experience in the field of guidance.

When discussing the purpose of guidance, experts have formulated various objectives which can be classified into several categories, such as fundamental goals, general goals, theoretical goals, and more concrete objectives. The general purpose of guidance includes helping individuals discover their identity and understand their world, supporting their optimal development, and achieving meaningful self-actualization as an individual.

A more detailed explanation of the general purpose of guidance can be found in various definitions that generally state that guidance is given so that individuals are able to understand themselves and their environment. Self-understanding includes recognition of one’s abilities, special talents, interests, aspirations, and life values. Meanwhile, understanding the environment includes knowledge of physical, social, and cultural surroundings. Environmental information can be categorized into three types: educational information, career information, and personal-social information.

Additionally, the goals of guidance also include enabling individuals to make choices, take decisions, and plan their lives wisely in various aspects such as education, employment, and personal-social life. Guidance is also aimed at helping individuals choose their field of study, career, and personal lifestyle. Individuals are expected to develop their capabilities and potentials to the fullest, as well as be able to solve problems wisely. In this context, the assistance provided includes efforts to eliminate bad habits or life attitudes that become sources of emerging problems.

Moreover, guidance also aims to help individuals manage their life activities, develop their perspectives, make decisions, and be able to take responsibility for everything

they choose. Individuals are guided to be able to understand and direct themselves in acting and behaving in accordance with the demands and conditions of their environment.

In general, the objectives of guidance and counseling are inseparable from the goals of education itself. This is in line with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2 of 1989 concerning the National Education System, which states that the purpose of education is to develop Indonesian people who are intelligent, faithful, pious, noble in character, knowledgeable and skilled, physically and mentally healthy, and who possess a sense of social and national responsibility.

In a broader scope, guidance programs are also implemented with the aim of helping individuals achieve happiness in their personal lives, attain an effective and productive life in society, and live harmoniously with others. Moreover, guidance helps individuals find harmony between their aspirations and their existing capabilities.

According to Tohirin, guidance and counseling have several specific goals, namely: to help students gain a better understanding of themselves, to direct themselves according to their potentials towards optimal development, and to be able to solve their problems independently. In addition, students are expected to have a more realistic perspective and be able to accept themselves objectively. Guidance is expected to help students adjust more effectively, both to themselves and to their surrounding environment, so that they can achieve life happiness. Ultimately, students are able to reach self-actualization in accordance with their potential and avoid symptoms of anxiety that may hinder their development.

Based on the various opinions above, it can be understood that the objectives of guidance and counseling cover several important aspects. First, guidance and counseling aim to provide assistance to students or individuals in facing various problems they encounter. Second, guidance plays a role in helping students overcome difficulties, especially those related to the learning process. Third, this service also assists students in preventing inappropriate behaviors, such as smoking habits, violating school rules, and other actions that are contrary to the student code of ethics.

#### B. The Essence of Ethics in the Guidance and Counseling Profession

Ethics in guidance and counseling is a fundamental element that forms the basis of professional service delivery to students or clients. Etymologically, the term “ethics” originates from the Greek word *ethos*, meaning “character” or “habit,” and ethics, which refers to the meaning of “propriety” or “decency” (Hambali et al., 2021). Ethics is not merely a set of normative rules, but rather a collection of ideas, principles, and moral ideals that function as a guide in determining what is considered right or wrong in human behavior, including in the context of professional relationships. In the academic field of guidance and counseling, ethics is an essential foundation for carrying out the counseling process, which is therapeutic in nature—that is, a process carried out through scientific, empathetic, and humane approaches.

As a profession, counseling requires its practitioners—namely, counselors—to consistently uphold moral values in every professional action. Counselors are responsible for upholding ethical standards and using humanistic values as a reference in counseling interactions. This is affirmed by Jamil (2022), who stated that every counselor is obliged to maintain moral and ethical integrity as part of the dignified identity of the profession. The essence of ethics in the Guidance and Counseling (GC) profession is essentially a moral guideline that regulates counselor behavior in providing services to clients in a responsible manner. Values such as respect for clients' rights, maintaining confidentiality, fulfilling professional responsibilities, and acting honestly are the main principles that must be upheld by every counselor in carrying out their duties.

One of the most fundamental ethical principles in counseling practice is the principle of confidentiality. This principle requires that all information obtained by the counselor from the client during the counseling process must not be disclosed to other parties without the client's consent. Tri Sukitman (2015) states that confidentiality is a top priority in building a sense of safety and trust in the counseling relationship. When clients feel that their personal information is securely protected, they are more likely to open up about their problems, thus allowing the counselor to provide more effective assistance. In this regard, counselors are required not only to safeguard verbal information, but also to protect all forms of documentation and data related to the client (Tumanggor, 2022). The application of this principle also demonstrates the moral and professional responsibility of a school counselor or teacher in maintaining the dignity and psychological comfort of the client.

Furthermore, John McLeod, as cited by Alfaiz Faiz and colleagues (2018), outlines four important aspects of counseling ethics. First, professional responsibility, which refers to the counselor's responsibility toward the client and themselves. In this regard, the counselor must be able to demonstrate full dedication to the client by giving undivided attention and listening actively. The counselor is also expected to live a balanced life in order to maintain emotional and professional capacity when handling clients. Second, the principle of confidentiality, as previously explained, emphasizes the importance of safeguarding client information as a form of respect for individual privacy rights. Third, conveying relevant information to the person in counselling, in which the counselor is obliged to provide relevant information to the client, including information about the counseling process and the counselor's qualifications, as a form of professional transparency. Fourth, the counselor influence, which highlights that a counselor has significant influence on the client's development. Therefore, counselors must use that influence wisely, without imposing personal values or creating unhealthy dependencies.

Thus, ethics in the GC profession is not an additional element, but the core of the entire service process. Ethics ensures that the counseling practice proceeds within the bounds of humanity, upholds justice, and guarantees the protection of clients' rights. Without a strong ethical foundation, counseling services risk deviating from their primary objectives and may even have a negative impact on the development of the individuals being served. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the essence of ethics in this profession is a primary prerequisite for every school counselor and professional counselor.

### C. The Concept and Characteristics of Professionalism in School Counselors (BK Teachers)

The professionalism of guidance and counseling (GC) teachers is a fundamental aspect in the implementation of quality education. A professional GC teacher is not merely someone who carries out administrative tasks or provides counseling services procedurally, but also bears moral and academic responsibility in helping students achieve optimal development. In this context, professionalism reflects the GC teacher's sincerity in understanding students' potential, characteristics, and needs comprehensively, as well as the ability to guide them toward a better life psychologically healthy and socially mature.

One of the main characteristics of a professional GC teacher is the ability to build empathetic relationships and understand students in depth. This understanding is based on a positive and dynamic view of humans as spiritual, moral, individual, and social beings. GC teachers do not only focus on the academic aspects of students but also pay attention to their personality dimensions, emotions, and social environment which can influence their

development. The attitude of respecting every individual as a unique person becomes the foundation in providing inclusive and equitable services.

Furthermore, professional GC teachers are required to have technical abilities in designing and applying various non-test instruments, such as interview guidelines, questionnaires, or observation tools for guidance services. These instruments are used to gather actual information about the condition of students in the context of the school environment and their daily lives. This ability is a crucial indicator in the assessment process, which serves as the basis for designing targeted guidance services. According to Syakur et al. (2021), this ability reflects the level of professional maturity of GC teachers in understanding the complexity of students' problems and developing appropriate interventions.

In addition to technical competence, the professionalism of GC teachers is also reflected in their public image and attitude. As professional educators, GC teachers are expected to be role models in behavior, interaction, and appearance. Society pays attention to how teachers carry out their roles, update their knowledge, and build harmonious relationships with students, colleagues, and their social environment. This positive image not only builds public trust in the counseling profession but also strengthens the position of GC teachers as important figures in shaping mentally and socially healthy generations.

Within the professional framework, counseling as a profession has fulfilled various criteria of professional work as outlined by Yasin Taher et al. (2021). Some of these distinctive characteristics include: having a clearly defined role; providing unique services that cannot be replaced by other professions; possessing specialized knowledge and skills obtained through formal education; upholding a structured code of ethics; having the right to offer services to the public according to the description of their profession; and having the ability to monitor and evaluate their professional practice. With all these characteristics fulfilled, counseling is not only recognized as a form of educational service but also as a field of profession that carries high social and academic responsibilities.

Therefore, the development of professionalism among GC teachers must be carried out continuously through education, training, supervision, and coaching. This is important to ensure that the services provided truly have a positive impact on students and are aligned with the demands of the times. GC teachers are not only required to be facilitators but also reflectors, moral guides, and guardians of human integrity in the educational world.

#### D. Standards of Professional Competence for Guidance and Counseling Teachers (BK Teachers)

Competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are reflected in habits of thinking and acting. In the education system, competence is used to describe professional ability, which is the ability to demonstrate knowledge and conceptualization at a higher level. This competence can be acquired through education, training, and other experiences appropriate to the level of competence. Endro Sumardjo in Hazrullah (2018) states that competence can simply be interpreted as certain abilities and skills to complete a task. In this context, teaching competence means having the minimum required skills and proficiency to carry out teaching duties professionally.

Professional competence is a set of knowledge that must be possessed by a teacher so that they can carry out their teaching duties successfully. Professional competence is very important because it serves as the basis for the performance displayed by teachers in completing their teaching tasks. In the field of guidance and counseling, the professional competence of a counselor is the ability that must be possessed by a counselor to provide effective services. This competence includes three main aspects: knowledge, skills, and



professional attitudes relevant to counseling tasks in schools. According to Gibson and Mitchell in Tila Rohimah et al. (2024), professional competence includes a deep understanding of counseling theories and practices, skills in performing interventions, and the ability to conduct evaluations.

Competency standards themselves are measures of minimum ability that include dimensions of capability, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that must be known, achieved, and mastered by a counselor. Counselor education is one of the strategic ways to develop the competence of prospective counselors. In this context, higher education institutions offering guidance and counseling programs play an important role. During their studies, prospective counselors are equipped with insights, knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that they must master as a foundation to become professional counselors. Fadhillah Yusri (2019) emphasizes that this education period is a crucial formation phase for the development of professional competence in future counselors. Professional competence itself is one of the four competency standards that must be possessed by counselors, alongside pedagogical competence, personality competence, and social competence, as stated in the Ministry of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) Number 27 of 2008.

Pedagogical competence is the ability of counselors to design and implement educational programs, especially in the context of guidance and counseling services in schools. In its implementation, counselors must be able to develop guidance service tools, deliver material systematically, and evaluate the effectiveness of services that have been provided. Good planning will determine the quality and accuracy of services in meeting students' needs.

Personality competence is a competence related to the character, attitude, and personality of the counselor as an individual who can be a role model in the school environment. A good counselor must have high moral integrity, emotional stability, empathy, and openness to individual diversity. This competence also demands that counselors be able to avoid conflicts of interest and demonstrate professional behavior in every interaction.

Social competence includes the counselor's ability to build social relationships effectively and ethically with various parties, such as clients, colleagues, subject teachers, parents, and the wider community. Counselors must have good interpersonal communication skills and be able to build positive and harmonious relationships in the school social context. This is very important because counselors often act as a bridge between students and their social environment.

Professional competence is the core of all counselor competencies, namely the ability to master the basic knowledge and skills in the field of guidance and counseling. This competence includes mastery of counseling theories, application of counseling techniques, understanding of professional ethics, and the ability to perform psychological assessments relevant to the client's needs.

According to EKO, the professional competence of counselors encompasses broad and structured dimensions. First, counselors must master the concepts and practices of assessment to understand the conditions, needs, and counseling problems. This includes the ability to understand the nature of assessment, choose assessment techniques appropriate to the needs of guidance and counseling services, develop assessment instruments, and administer assessments to identify clients' problems. Counselors must also be able to select and administer assessment techniques to identify clients' basic abilities and personal tendencies, as well as instruments to identify the client's actual conditions in relation to their surrounding environment. In addition, mastery of accessing client documentation data and the appropriate use of assessment results in counseling

services is highly necessary, accompanied by the demonstration of professional responsibility in assessment practice.

Second, counselors must master the theoretical and practical framework of guidance and counseling. This includes the ability to apply the essence of guidance and counseling services, understand the direction of the profession, the basics of services, and adapt approaches, models, types of services, and supporting activities according to the needs of their work area. Counselors must also be able to apply guidance and counseling service formats in real school practice.

Third, professional competence includes the ability to design guidance and counseling programs. In this regard, counselors are expected to be able to comprehensively analyze the needs of clients, design sustainable guidance programs based on developmental approaches, and plan program implementation while considering the necessary facilities and budget.

Fourth, counselors must be able to implement comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. This competence includes program implementation, the application of collaborative approaches in services, facilitating clients' development in academic, career, personal, and social aspects, and managing program facilities and budgeting.

Fifth, professional competence includes the ability to assess the processes and outcomes of guidance and counseling activities. Counselors must be able to evaluate the results, processes, and the entire program being carried out. This ability also includes adjusting services based on evaluation results, communicating evaluation outcomes to relevant parties, and using the results for program improvement.

Sixth, this competence requires counselors to have awareness and commitment to professional ethics. Counselors need to understand and manage their personal and professional strengths and limitations, provide services in accordance with authority and professional codes of ethics, maintain objectivity, avoid becoming emotionally involved in clients' problems, and conduct referrals when necessary. Furthermore, counselors must maintain professional identity, prioritize the client's interests, and consistently protect the confidentiality of the counseling process.

Seventh, counselors must master the concepts and practices of research in guidance and counseling. This includes understanding various types and methods of research, the ability to design and conduct research, as well as the skills to utilize research results as a foundation for service development, including through access to educational and counseling journals.

Thus, the professional competence of counselors is not only about technical mastery in providing services but also reflects the overall capacity of counselors as educators who are academically, socially, and ethically responsible in accompanying students' holistic development.

#### E. Ethics and Competence as Pillars of Quality Guidance and Counseling Services

The dynamic between ethics and counselor competence in guidance and counseling (GC) services is essential to ensuring the quality of the services provided. As previously discussed, ethics serves as a guideline in practicing the counseling profession, while competence ensures that counselors are able to implement services in an effective and professional manner. This dynamic demonstrates that ethics and competence are interrelated and inseparable. For example, a counselor who is competent in using appropriate counseling techniques but does not comply with the professional code of ethics—such as failing to maintain client confidentiality—can damage the relationship with the client and reduce the effectiveness of the counseling services provided. Ethics provides

clear boundaries regarding actions that can and cannot be taken by counselors, thereby ensuring that the services provided are not only effective but also in line with the moral standards accepted in the counseling profession.

According to Marjo in (Nurul Fazria, 2024), the dynamic between ethics and competence is often tested in complex situations, such as when clients are experiencing issues that require prompt and precise action. In such situations, the counselor's competence in responding correctly is very important, but it must also be accompanied by mature ethical considerations. For instance, when dealing with a client experiencing domestic violence, the counselor must have the skills to provide effective intervention, while at the same time maintaining client confidentiality—unless there is a threat to the safety of the client or others.

In this context, competence also includes the ability to recognize and manage potential ethical conflicts that may arise during the counseling process. For example, in a situation where a client requests the counselor to give advice that may conflict with professional ethical values, the counselor must be able to assess the situation wisely and make the best decision for the client without compromising ethical standards. This dynamic of ethics and competence illustrates that a counselor must not only be skilled in counseling techniques but also possess moral acuity when facing the various problems encountered by clients.

It can be concluded that the dynamic between ethics and competence in GC services shows that both complement one another and cannot be separated. Strong ethics provide a foundation for counselors to perform their duties with integrity, while competence enables counselors to deliver services effectively and according to client needs. Together, they work to create a counseling environment that is safe, professional, and beneficial for individual development. Therefore, it is important for counselors to continuously improve their competence through ongoing education and training, as well as maintain an understanding of ethics that is relevant to current developments and technologies. In this way, GC services will continue to play a role in helping individuals overcome life's challenges and achieve their goals optimally.

In counseling activities, educational institutions, principals, and ABKIN (Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Association) enforce a code of ethics for guidance and counseling teachers. According to Harahap in (Nur Hisna Daniati, 2025), it is stated that the leadership has the right to reprimand a counselor or guidance and counseling teacher in case of any wrongdoing. Moreover, guidance and counseling teachers are responsible for the actions they take regarding students who violate school rules or cause disruptions. However, poor understanding, situational pressure, and other factors are common reasons for ethical violations. Certainly, this can have negative impacts on the client, the counselor, and the educational institution.

Ethical violations and weak competence in counseling practices carry serious implications for the client, the counselor, and the development of the profession itself. For clients, ethical violations such as breaches of confidentiality, dual relationships, or the use of inappropriate approaches can lead to deep psychological harm. Clients may feel betrayed, lose their sense of safety, and even experience new trauma that worsens their existing condition. On the other hand, a counselor's low level of competence can result in misjudgments and inappropriate interventions. For instance, failure to identify serious disorders or offering advice that lacks scientific basis may endanger the client's mental health.

For counselors, ethical violations can lead to sanctions from professional organizations such as warnings, revocation of practice licenses, or legal action. The counselor's credibility and reputation may also be damaged, affecting future client trust.

Poor competence also reflects a lack of professional readiness and can limit career development opportunities. The broader implication is a tarnished public image of the counseling profession. Public trust in counseling services may decline if many cases of violations or professional incompetence are revealed. Therefore, ethics and competence are two main pillars that must be maintained to ensure the quality and sustainability of responsible counseling services.

#### F. Strategies for Developing the Professionalism and Ethics of Guidance and Counseling Teachers

Guidance and Counseling (GC) teachers at the senior high school (SMA) level play a strategic role in fostering the holistic development of students, covering academic, social, personal, and career dimensions. This great responsibility demands the consistent and directed development of the professionalism and work ethics of GC teachers. The quality of services provided highly depends on the extent to which GC teachers understand and apply professional ethics in counseling practices in a professional and responsible manner (Suherman, 2007). In this context, development strategies cannot be partial, but must be designed in a comprehensive, sustainable, and systematic manner.

The initial step in building the professionalism and ethics of GC teachers begins at the stage of pre-service academic education. At this stage, counselor education institutions are responsible for equipping future GC teachers with the theoretical foundations of counseling, assessment skills, counseling techniques, and a deep understanding of professional ethics. As mandated in Permendiknas No. 27 of 2008, this education includes four main competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. According to Yusri (2019), this stage is crucial because it is the moment of forming professional attitudes and internalizing ethical values that will serve as guidance for counselors in carrying out their duties in the future. Value education and moral training from an early stage are expected to shape counselors who are not only intellectually capable but also emotionally and ethically mature.

After entering the workforce, the professional development of GC teachers must be continuously pursued through various forms of training and capacity-building activities. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs such as workshops, seminars, academic conferences, and advanced studies are real implementations of the lifelong learning principle that characterizes a professional (Rakhmawati, 2013). Widada (2019) adds that the ever-changing dynamics of society require GC teachers to constantly update their understanding and skills, especially in responding to shifting social values and emerging moral challenges within the educational context. Without sustainable development, GC teachers risk experiencing competence stagnation, which can directly impact the quality of services provided to students (Sodiq & Herdi, 2021).

Active participation in professional organizations is also an important strategy in supporting the professionalism and work ethics of GC teachers. Participation in organizations such as ABKIN (Asosiasi Bimbingan dan Konseling Indonesia) or IPKIN (Ikatan Profesi Konselor Indonesia) provides GC teachers with access to updated codes of ethics, sharing of best practices, and developments in national education policy. Abdillah and Kurniawati (2021) state that professional organizations serve as guardians of professional quality, provide advocacy and supervision mechanisms for deviant practices, and promote a culture of community-based learning. These forums also strengthen solidarity among professionals in upholding the integrity of counseling services.

Supervision and professional evaluation by internal and external parties of educational institutions are equally important follow-up strategies. Through regular supervision conducted by principals, supervisors, or senior counselors, the quality of GC services can be maintained in accordance with the ethical and professional standards that have been established. Haryadi (2019) explains that the function of supervision is not merely an administrative control tool, but also a coaching and reflection instrument that encourages GC teachers to continuously improve the quality of their services. Feedback from the supervision process can be a significant source of learning, especially in refining counseling approaches that are more empathetic and humane.

In line with the demands of the times, the development of GC teachers' professionalism must also be directed toward mastery of technology and understanding of digital ethics. In the era of digital communication, counseling services are no longer limited to physical spaces. GC teachers are required to be able to use various online platforms to deliver services, while also understanding the potential ethical risks involved, such as misuse of personal data, breaches of privacy, and conflicts of interest on social media. Fadhila Yusri (2013) emphasizes that information technology competence must go hand in hand with the strengthening of ethical awareness in the digital context. Therefore, training on digital ethics becomes a necessity, not an option.

By implementing these five strategies in an integrated and sustainable manner namely through pre-service education, continuous professional development, participation in professional organizations, professional supervision, and strengthening of digital competencies it is expected that GC teachers will not only be competent in technical aspects but also steadfast in upholding professional ethics. Professionalism without ethics will lose direction and meaning, while ethics without competence will render services ineffective. Therefore, both must be developed together in the spirit of responsibility, integrity, and care for the humanity of students.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of various relevant literature sources, this study concludes that ethics and professional competence are two main elements that complement each other in supporting the quality of guidance and counseling (GC) services at the senior high school level. The main findings indicate that the competence of GC teachers not only includes technical mastery in assessment, program implementation, and service evaluation but must also be balanced with a commitment to professional ethical principles such as confidentiality, responsibility, objectivity, and honesty. These two aspects cannot be separated because professional strength can only be realized when supported by moral integrity.

These findings are in line with the research objective, which is to comprehensively examine the relationship between ethics and professional competence of GC teachers, as well as the urgency of their development in facing current challenges in the school environment. The study also identifies several practical issues that serve as obstacles, such as weak awareness of the code of ethics, lack of supervision and professional monitoring, and the absence of systematic and sustainable competency development strategies.

Theoretically, the results of this study reinforce the integrative position between ethics and competence as an essential foundation in the development of the counseling profession. Practically, these findings provide strategic recommendations for the implementation of counselor education, capacity building through continuous training, and the importance of structural support from professional organizations and educational institutions. This research contributes to the development of a more contextual and

responsive professional development model for GC teachers in relation to social, cultural, and technological dynamics in the field of education.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

This study provides several recommendations that can be directly implemented by practitioners, academics, and stakeholders in the field of education, particularly those involved in organizing Guidance and Counseling (BK) services in secondary schools. For practitioners, especially BK teachers, the findings emphasize the importance of continuous professional development. This can be achieved through active participation in trainings, workshops, and seminars that focus not only on technical skills but also on deepening professional ethics. BK teachers are encouraged to consciously integrate moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy into every counseling practice, while also strengthening their competencies in assessment, program planning, and service evaluation.

At the institutional level, schools and principals are expected to provide adequate space for the professional development of BK teachers. This includes the provision of regular supervision that is reflective and constructive in nature, not merely administrative. Such supervision can serve as both an evaluative and developmental medium, strengthening the ethical commitment and technical capacity of BK teachers. Furthermore, higher education institutions that offer Guidance and Counseling programs are also expected to improve their curricula by systematically integrating value education and professional ethics, as well as facilitating case-based learning. Ethical training during the pre-service period is crucial to shape the character and professional identity of future counselors.

Professional organizations such as ABKIN and IPKIN also play a vital role in supporting the implementation of these research findings. These organizations are advised to be more proactive in fostering their members through recertification programs, case-based ethics training, and the establishment of effective and fair systems for reporting and monitoring the code of ethics. Active engagement in professional communities also enables BK teachers to exchange experiences and update their understanding of emerging ethical challenges in the digital era.

From a scientific development perspective, this study opens opportunities for more in-depth future research. Since this study employed a literature review approach, future studies should adopt more empirical, field-based approaches. Qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or case studies with BK teachers in schools, can illustrate how ethics and competence are truly integrated in practice. In addition, mixed methods combining qualitative and quantitative data are also recommended to provide a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of professional development strategies for BK teachers.

Further areas of exploration include examining students' perceptions of BK teachers' professionalism and ethics based on their direct experiences. This approach will enrich perspectives by highlighting service quality from the beneficiary's point of view. Moreover, comparative studies across regions or schools with different socio-cultural characteristics are also necessary to understand how cultural and environmental contexts influence the understanding and application of professional ethics among BK teachers.

To overcome the limitations of this study, particularly the lack of empirical data, future research should involve more respondents from diverse backgrounds, including principals, parents, and students. Studies should also aim to develop valid and reliable measurement instruments to assess the integration of ethics and competence in BK teacher practices. Longitudinal approaches are further recommended to observe the development of BK teacher professionalism over time in a more holistic manner.

By implementing these recommendations, it is expected that the findings of this study will not merely serve as academic discourse but will be effectively translated into educational policy and practice. The integration of ethics and professional competence is not an option but a necessity for BK teachers to maintain the quality of services that are dignified, effective, and aligned with the developmental needs of students in an ever-changing era.

## REFERENCES

- Abdillah, A., & Kurniawati, F. (2021). The Role of Professional Organizations in Upholding Ethics of Guidance and Counseling Teachers. *Journal of Educational Counseling*, 9(1), 45–56.
- Daniati, I., Rahmawati, R., & Safitri, A. (2025). Strengthening Professional Ethics of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in the Era of Digital Transformation. *Journal of Applied Guidance and Counseling*, 13(2), 55–65.
- Daniati, N. H., et al. (2025). Prevention of Code of Ethics Violations in Guidance and Counseling Practice. *Journal of Innovative Education*, 7(1).
- Ministry of National Education. (2008). Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 27 of 2008 on Academic Standards and Counselor Competence.
- Fadhila Yusri. (2013). *Counselor Competence in the Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Services in Schools*. Padang: State University of Padang.
- Fadhila Yusri. (2019). School Counselor Professionalism in the Perspective of Education. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 25(2).
- Faiz, A., Dharmayanti, A., & Nofrita, N. (2018). Ethics of Guidance and Counseling in the Approach of Philosophy of Science. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Counseling*, 2(1).
- Faiz, M. A., Surya, H., & Hidayat, D. (2018). The Urgency of the Code of Ethics in School Counseling Practice. *Indonesian Scientific Journal of Counseling*, 4(1), 1–10.
- Fazria, F., Muspita, R., & Syarifuddin, S. (2024). Professionalism of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Improving Counseling Services in Schools. *Journal of Psychology and Counseling*, 12(1), 10–22.
- Fazria, N., et al. (2024). The Dynamics of Ethics and Counselor Competence in Guidance and Counseling Services: A Literature Study Analysis. *Tambusai Education Journal*, 8(3).
- Hambali, M. R., Da, M., Ilmiyah, N., Kurniawati, N., Cahyaningrum, V. D., Fatoni, M., ... & Rohmah, R. (2021). *Professional Ethics*. Agrapana Media.
- Hambali, M. R., Fauziyah, N., & Wijayanti, L. (2021). *Counseling Professional Ethics and Its Implications in Guidance Services*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish.
- Haryadi, D. (2019). Professional Competence of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in the 2013 Curriculum Era. *Journal of Guidance and Counseling Studies*, 4(1).
- Haryadi, H. (2019). Supervision of Guidance and Counseling Services in Improving the Professional Performance of Guidance and Counseling Teachers. *Journal of Education and Culture*, 25(3), 255–267.
- Hazrullah. (2018). Professional Competence of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Solving Students' Learning Problems at MAN Rukoh Banda Aceh. *Didaktika Scientific Journal*, 18(2).
- Jamil, J. (2022). *Ethics in Guidance and Counseling: A Professional Perspective*. Jakarta: Pustaka Ilmu.
- Jamil, J. (2022). *Teacher Professional Ethics*. CV. Azka Pustaka.

- Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 27 of 2008 on Academic Qualifications and Counselor Competencies.
- Prakoso, E. T. (2008). Counselor Professional Relationships. *Inspirational Journal of Education*, 1(3).
- Rakhmawati, D. (2013). Teacher Professionalism and Its Implications in Improving the Quality of Education. *Journal of Education and Culture*, 19(3).
- Rakhmawati, S. (2013). Lifelong Learning and Professional Development of Guidance and Counseling Teachers. *Journal of Education*, 19(2), 112–122.
- Rohimah, R., Wulandari, S., & Alimuddin, M. (2024). Evaluation of Guidance and Counseling Teacher Competence in Secondary School Counseling Services. *Nusantara Counseling Journal*, 7(1), 34–46.
- Rohimah, T., et al. (2024). Development of Counselor Professional Competence in School Guidance and Counseling Services. *Generasi Tarbiyah Journal: Journal of Islamic Education*, 3(2).
- Sodiq, H., & Herdi, H. (2021). Competency Stagnation and Its Implications for the Quality of Counseling Services. *Journal of Psychopedagogy*, 8(1), 15–27.
- Suherman, A. (2007). *School Counselor Ethics and Professionalism*. Bandung: UPI Press.
- Sukitman, T. (2015). *Complete and Practical Guide to Character Education-Based Guidance and Counseling*. Jakarta: Diva Press.
- Suyanto, D. (2020). Ethics Violations in Counseling: A Critical Review. *Modern Counseling Journal*, 6(2), 78–88.
- Syakur, M., & Budianto, A. A. (2021). Professionalism of Guidance and Counseling Teachers during the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Maddah: Journal of Islamic Communication and Counseling*, 3(2).
- Taher, Y., Aditama, M. H. R., Syam, S., & Mansur, D. (2021). Professionalism of Guidance and Counseling Teachers. *Educouns Journal: Journal of Education and Counseling*, 2(2).
- Tumanggor, A. A. A., & Jamaris, M. (2022). Confidentiality and Ethics in School Guidance and Counseling Services. *Journal of Professional Ethics in Education*, 5(3), 91–100.
- Widada, S. (2019). Development of Guidance and Counseling Teacher Professionalism through Continuing Education. *Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 6(2), 80–89.
- Wulandari, R. (2021). Digital Ethics in School Guidance and Counseling Services. *Journal of Education and Technology*, 10(4), 73–84.
- Yusri, F. (2019). Formation of Counselor Professionalism in Pre-Service Education. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 17(2), 134–143.