

## COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF COUNSELOR PROFESSION EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** This paper describes professional identity of counselor educators teaching in a counselor profession education in Indonesia. The counselor identity was explored using a self-reported semi-open questionnaire and a focus-group discussion. Using the questionnaire, the counselors self-assessed their competency level of 75 competence-statement based on government's regulation. Their self-assessed level of competencies was compared to factors like age, teaching experiences, professional development as well as their self-efficacy toward the counselor competencies mandated by government. To confirm the survey findings, a focus-group discussion was held and revealed culture-specific competencies that were not explicated in the regulation but deemed an important characteristic of the counselors' identity. The study found that the counselors described themselves having average level of the mandated competencies and developing culture-specific competency related to technology literacy. The findings provide recommendation to set up context-suited professional development training that prepare the counselors for teaching in the profession training.

**Keywords:** *counselor, counselor profession education, identity*

## IDENTITAS PROFESIONALITAS PENDIDIK PENDIDIKAN PROFESI KONSELOR

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini mendeskripsikan identitas pendidik pada pendidikan profesional konselor di Indonesia. Identitas konselor dalam artikel ini dieksplorasi menggunakan angket semi-terbuka (*self-reported*) dan diskusi kelompok terfokus. Pendidik pada pendidikan profesional konselor di Indonesia yang diteliti mengukur tingkat kompetensinya sendiri berdasarkan daftar kompetensi yang ditetapkan oleh pemerintah. Hasil pengukuran yang terbagi menjadi rendah, sedang dan tinggi, kemudian di analisa dengan memperhatikan faktor-faktor seperti usia, pengalaman mengajar, pengembangan karir dan tingkat efikasi masing-masing dibandingkan dengan tuntutan kompetensi dari pemerintah. Untuk mengkonfirmasi hasil survei, diskusi kelompok terfokus diselenggarakan dan menemukan kompetensi yang dipengaruhi oleh budaya atau nilai lokal tetapi tidak dijelaskan pada peraturan pemerintah. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para pendidik konselor pada umumnya merasa memiliki tingkat kemampuan yang sedang dan memiliki kompetensi terkait literasi teknologi yang dipengaruhi oleh budaya lokal. Hasil temuan ini bermanfaat dalam pengambilan kebijakan terkait desain pelatihan dalam menyiapkan pendidik pada pendidikan profesional konselor di Indonesia

**Kata Kunci:** *konselor, pendidikan profesi konselor, identitas*

### INTRODUCTION

Counseling-related professionals have often shared a similar story of having to struggle to be acknowledged as a

distinct professional specialty (Calley & Hawley, 2008) and of lacking communal awareness of counseling role (Woo, Henfield, & Choi, 2014). School

counselors are among those who suffered the absence of legal recognition the most in Indonesia despite the fact that their roles have been found to have significant support to students in reaching their psychological maturity, including personality, social and academic skills, as well as their awareness of career options available to them (Aluede, Imonikhe, & Afen-Akpaída, 2007; Rahman, 2010; Kartadinata, 2011). Despite being a compulsory student development program, counseling services are often taken lightly at Indonesian schools in that they are seen as secondary or optional. As a result, counseling roles are taken for granted and counselor roles are considered unimportant. School counselors in Indonesia have long struggled with this stigma of low-status. This is made worse as many schools assigned counseling tasks to teachers without degree in Guidance and Counseling in spite of the fact that 'counselors appear to be an effective way of improving academic achievement' (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2014, p:68). If a school had no counselor, any teacher would take over the job. In many schools in Indonesia's remote or underprivileged areas, it has also been a common practice to label subject teachers a school counselor, simply to meet administrative demand.

The poor recognition of school counselors slightly began to change though not until 2008 has Indonesian government made the status of school counselors equal to professional teachers (the regulation of Minister of National Education and Culture, number 27 Year 2008 on Standards of Academic Qualifications and Counsellors Competences). This act has brought two changes at least: that school counselors must have a degree in Guidance and Counseling and that school counselors have to be 'certified' as professional educators by means of attending a counselor profession education program.

The law therefore refutes long-held view of counseling as a secondary and add-on job, usually assigned to religion and civics subject teachers, or home-teacher. It legitimizes professional trainings for pre-service and in-service school counselors and gives them status 'professional' as well as image of being 'primary'. Demanding counselors to provide research-based and structured counseling services, the regulation also requires every counselor to attend profession education program to improve their professionalism and quality of services that they provide. According to Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture 2009 No. 8 on Profession Education Program (article 2), The objectives of the program is to generate professional teachers/counselors who have competences in a) planning, b) implementing, and c) assessing learning and d) following up the assessment results, e) guiding and f) training the students, g) conducting research, and h) developing continuous professionalism.

In particular, a decree regulating management of profession education program for counselors (Ministerial Decree of National Education and Culture No. 9/2010, article 2) specifies its two-fold goal. First, the program aims to equip pre- and in-service counselors with field and practical experiences and skills like surveying client's need for counseling, planning and executing counseling services with different methods and assessing the effectiveness of the given services at various levels of education. Secondly, it seeks to produce counselors, graduating from Guidance and Counseling Department, who are able to perform independent guidance and counselling services using the four components, of which are basic services, responsive services, individual planning and supporting systems. This means universities that provide profession education for school counselors are responsible for yielding professionally

competent counselors. This starts undoubtedly with a competent group of counselor educators who teach in counselor profession education program.

With the birth of the laws, school counselors in Indonesia started to develop a sense of belonging to the newly legally-recognized profession. It distinguishes their roles from other subject teachers at school and underscores their distinct and specific qualification of guidance and counseling background. Most importantly it makes the required profession training to become a school counselor a national agenda. Such agenda necessitates not only state-owned curriculum but also the preparedness of counselor educators to comply with the curriculum while performing their teaching responsibilities in the training. In the meantime, the disappearance of the low-status stigma and add-on role of school counselors has also triggered the development of identity as a 'professional' profession experienced by both school counselors and counselor educators. As counselor educators are responsible in producing professional school counselors, it is important that the educators develop professional identity in the first place. This later will affect the development of their students, who are future school counselors. In addition, a strong professional identity will help the members of the profession to not only survive but also grow stronger and have an impact in shaping the direction of national educational agenda (Calley & Hawley, 2008).

Given these, depicting their professional identity in term of their level of preparedness as counselor educators in the program is necessary to produce professional counselors ready to provide excellent services at schools. Brott & Myers (Woo, et al., 2014) define professional identity as "a cognitive frame of reference from which counselors carry out professional responsibilities". While this reference is changing throughout counselors' professional journey, Brott &

Myers emphasize its role in shaping how counselors perceive about their academic tasks, their performance level, and philosophical rationales behind their professional acts. When counselors are well aware of the required or expected competencies they must have to serve well in the program, they not only can self-measure their preparedness level to do their professional responsibilities but also seek ways to help them improve professionally.

The main goal of the practice of guidance and counselling in Indonesian schools is to foster students to develop independence necessary for their growth, self-actualization and capacity development, in attaining graduate competence (Regulation of Minister of National Education and Culture No. 23/2006; Dikti, 2008; Kartadinata, 2011). Hence, counseling services focus on coping with psychological problems that might possibly appear in the students' life and growth throughout their education (Ivey & Goncalves, 1987; Donohue, Goodman-Scott, & Betters-Bubon, 2015).

In Indonesia, a undergraduate student taking a bachelor degree in Guidance and Counseling do not have license to provide counseling. Though graduated of bachelor degree in Guidance and Counseling, graduates are deemed not sufficiently equipped with practical and field skills in providing counseling services in various educational levels. By law, they need to attend counselor profession education that completes the theoretical understanding of the graduates with the required practical competences. One critical stage in the counseling profession education program implementation is counseling practicum (Aman & Ahmad, 2010), whose success relies much on the quality of counselor educators who serve as supervisors and help bridge the gap between academic preparation and reality of counseling jobs at schools (Donohue, et al., 2015). It is thus critical to describe their professional

identity by means of measuring their perceived competence level against the required set of competencies as a counselor educator.

The competences of counselor educators are outlined in the Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture No. 27/2008 (ibid). They include a) in depth understanding of the learners, b) mastery of guidance and counselling theories, c) skills in performing guidance and counselling learning program and services, d) skills in supervising the participants in the counseling profession education program, e) willingness to do research and community service, and f) continuous professional development. While the research counselor educators in the study have been well-aware of the competences, whether they feel that they have actually acquired them and how much competent they feel they are need further investigation for few reasons. First, given the developing recognition of school counselors from 'non-certified' into 'certified and professional' staff, professional identity of counselor educators are likely to change. This necessitates further exploration especially how counselor educators react to this transformation task. Next, the development of counselor educators in Indonesia is culturally-specific in that the required competencies of counselor educators are set by the government. Exploring the development of their professional identity informs the design of professional development program for counselor educators.

Surveying their realized professional identity will portray that of larger group of counselor educators especially in Asian contexts where regulation plays considerable role in their professional growth. This study thus addressed the following problems: (1) what competences do the counselor educator believe as required for those teaching in the counselor profession education program? (2) how do the counselor educators self-

perceive their competence levels against the set of competences outlined by the regulation and how does their perception shape their professional identity? and, (3) what are the recommendations to prepare the counselor educators teaching in the program? It is hoped that this survey result provides direction in providing training for sustaining professional development of counselor educators.

While school counselors taking Master's and Doctorate degrees have been widely researched in term of their competencies, changing professional identity and development (Perusse, Poynton, Parzych, & Goodnough, 2015; Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2013), research on counselor educators' competencies has however not been widely done, especially in higher education in Indonesia. It is due possibly to that while counselor profession training has been a common practice in other countries, it is relatively a new agenda in Indonesia. Adding to this is that taking profession training of counselors is different from doing a Master's or Doctorate degree in counseling. The training is non-degree and lasts only a year or two semesters. If a counselor has a Master's degree but has not attended profession training, s/he has not been considered as 'professional' or 'certified'. Unfortunately, many school counselors in Indonesia have not attended counselor profession education and are thus not yet considered 'professional' school counselors. Added to this is the fact that only selected universities are permitted by the government to provide counselor profession education including the university where this research was undertaken (Ministerial Decree of National Education and Culture No. 126P/P, 2010). This makes research on the management and supervision of the program thus a new area which needs further investigation.

Higgins, Veach, MacFarlane, Borders, LeRoy, & Callanan (2013) focusing on genetic counseling supervisors

surveying their perception of required competencies, against a set of competencies drawn from a supervising body in genetic counseling and different literatures in the area. A two-round Delphi study was carried out in addition to content analysis on the data. Similar to Higgins', this reported study aimed at exploring the consensus among counselor educators in term of required competencies for them to be able to teach in the program or to carry out supervising job. A measure was also used in the study to ensure the reliability of data, by administering Cronbach alpha-test to the questionnaire. While Higgins arranged a stratified sampling technique and content-analysis for meeting the validity of data and interpretation, this study did focus group discussion to clarify research subject's responses. Focus group was used given the small number of respondents which returned the questionnaire.

In educational context, competencies of counselors practicing at schools have been widely investigated. Ooi, Marzuki, Wan, & Baba (2017) for example, have surveyed a large group of 541 counselors in Malaysian schools and described their self-efficacy level in providing counseling services as well as the sources of the reported self-efficacy levels. Given a questionnaire, the teachers responded to four identified sources of self-efficacy including mastery experience, social persuasion, and physiological and affective state. The findings further informed schools in providing assistance and supports to teacher counselors in order to increase their self-efficacy level so as to maintain their excellent counseling services at school. Similar to the study in Malaysian context (Ooi, et al., 2017), this research reported here reveals what made the counselor educators perceived their levels of competences as reported, as to what professional experiences and trainings they have and have not received. This later suggests a plan to provide

training and refine their competencies in the future.

## **METHOD**

This study is a descriptive survey describing the professional identity of a group of counselor educators in a university in Yogyakarta. The group was selected purposively for having been teaching in the same department as the researcher's. Twenty five academic staff who were also counselor educators received the questionnaire but 17 (or 68%) out of 25 completed and returned it. The quantitative data were gained from a self-reported semi-open questionnaire. Checked with Cronbach alpha-technique, its reliability was 0.972, which is high. Thus, it was considered reliable to reveal to what extent the counselor educators in the university met 75 competency indicator statements, detailed from eight required competences (Dikti, 2007).

The 75 statements in the questionnaire was based on 7 standard competences outlined by the government (Ministrial Regulation of Education and Culture No. 27/2008). The respondents were first asked to write the indicators and descriptors of the 7 competences, based on their interpretation. The indicators and descriptors were then checked for repetition or ambiguity. It is the descriptors amounting 75 descriptor statements that were later used to explore the counselors' self-perceived level of the 7 competences. In completing the questionnaire, the respondents were to do three steps. First, the respondents were asked to mention their professional experiences and background as a counselor educator. They were then asked to rate themselves against the 75 statements of counselor educator competences into low, middle and high level of mastery. In addition, they wrote a plan and supports they think they need to develop their competences (professional development agenda). From those three components, it is the self-report component that can only

be processed and analyzed properly. In addition, a focus group was held, where some respondents were invited and engaged in a discussion. The focus group was to generate ideas on additional competencies the counselor educators thought to be necessary and important to teach in a counselor profession education program run by the Department.

The data were later analyzed through the combination of two approaches; quantitative-descriptive for the mapping of competences using questionnaires and qualitative-descriptive for data derived from the focus group discussion. The quantitative data were analyzed descriptively based on the score competence achievement compared with the group norm as a whole. Meanwhile the qualitative data were analyzed using flow and interactive methods developed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014). The focus group data were first transcribed and decoded based on their similarities in term of idea or topic raised. They were decoded to ease the researcher classify each different topic. The transcripts were then reduced based on similar occurrences of data where the same topics were raised by some respondents. The reduced data were then analyzed by comparing them with the responses given by the respondents.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Findings**

The following discusses the findings derived from the questionnaire and focus group in reference to the questions of the research. The first research question is to describe required competences the counselor educators considered important. The question aimed at exploring competencies the respondents think counselor educators ought to have. Though the Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture No. 27/2008 has outlined seven competencies as described previously, it is deemed important to identify counselor educators' perception of them and to see if they have different sets of competencies in

mind. The understanding about what counselors must be able to do is believed to impact their identity related to their capacity and roles which reflect what is valued in becoming a professional counselor (Calley & Hawley, 2008).

This data in response to the first question were derived from the results of focus group discussion. The focus group was attended by 8 out of 17 staff who responded to the questionnaire. Each attendee then was asked to which extent they are well aware of the required counselor educator's competencies and whether they think that the listed competencies are sufficient and appropriate pertaining to the localities and characteristics of their home university.

First, all respondents shared the same view that counselor educators must have the competencies required by the government, categorized into three aspects of professional, pedagogical and interpersonal/social skills. The professional aspects deal with a) their understanding of learners' characteristics and profiles, and b) their mastery of guidance and counseling theories. The pedagogical aspects concern competences required for teaching, guiding and supervising in any academic programs set by the university. These involve skills in teaching various theories and skills in guidance and counseling discipline, providing guidance and counselling services while performing teaching responsibilities, supervising counseling practicum, and conducting research and community. The interpersonal/social aspects denote commitment in carrying out continuous professional development as well as establishing networking and partnership by interacting well with peers and external partners.

While the respondents agreed that the competencies are relevant and comprehensive, three additional competencies were considered important to shape their professional identity as counselor educators. They are cross-

cultural skills, instructional technology competencies, and skills in providing localized guidance and counseling. The following illustrated some of the respondents' opinion regarding the addition of required competencies.

“[We] need to know our students or client, mm, like who they are, where they are from. This has to do with their personality and knowing it helps in dealing with them better.”

*Subject 3*

“Yes, it (ability to know our students or client) should be made explicit with clear indicators. I think, ee, it should be part of the first competence.”

*Subject 5*

Both respondents expressed the importance to include cross-cultural skills into the required set of counselor educator's competencies by adding specific indicators into the first competence depicted in the regulation i.e. understanding clients. They further explained that the knowledge of different cultural values rooted from different ethnicities in Indonesia can help them understand the characteristics of their clients.

In addition, technology literacy is seen as increasingly essential in instructional practices including counseling practices. Counselor educators thus need to equip their students – future school counselors to have necessary ICT skills in order that they can provide better counseling services with the assistance of technology. In so doing, the counselor educators need first to have the related technological skills as described by some of the respondents below.

“I think we need to have good IT skills, you know, like working with computers, Internet or else, especially when making counseling media using computer or Internet.”

*Subject 1*

“Right, or we can communicate with client and student through the Internet”.

*Subject 8*

“We also do statistics with computer or a software so IT is clearly needed.”

*Subject 6*

The respondents above mentioned some of the roles of IT in performing their counseling responsibilities and thus think that IT skills should be added to the list of required competencies of counselor educators. It is interesting though that none mentioned the necessity to include it under a different competence, making it a subset of competence. Instead, further clarified, most respondents thought that IT should be an independent competence that needs to be acquired and developed among the counselor educators.

The last additional competence the respondents thought they need to possess is the ability to provide local-specific or culture-based counseling service. One of the respondents articulated that Yogyakarta, where the university is homebased, is a very culturally rich and geographically specific region. This affects the characteristics of its people and they way they live which may be reflected in the way they interact with each other. Thus, one respondents felt the need to specify the competence of providing localized guiding and counseling services as part of the required competences of counselor educators. This was however debated by most of the attendees which resulted in the consensus that the proposed skill is too specific and too local making it ungeneralizable. Since their students are likely coming from different ethnicities and regions across Indonesia, it is difficult to specify which unique way of counseling which represents the characteristics of the program. Besides, the students will later go home or possibly work in different town so that the ability to provide

Yogyakarta-flavored counseling services will not be suitable when performed in different province.

The next research question is the level of competencies, self-rated by the subjects or the counselor educators themselves, participating in this study. In general, their self-rated levels are in high category, few of whom reported themselves having very high and surprisingly low levels of competencies. The following table describes statistical description of counselor educator competence. In general, the comparison between the expected and the empirical mean score shows a tendency that overall empirical competence average is higher than the hypothetical average. It can be concluded that the competence level of counselor educator is relatively high.

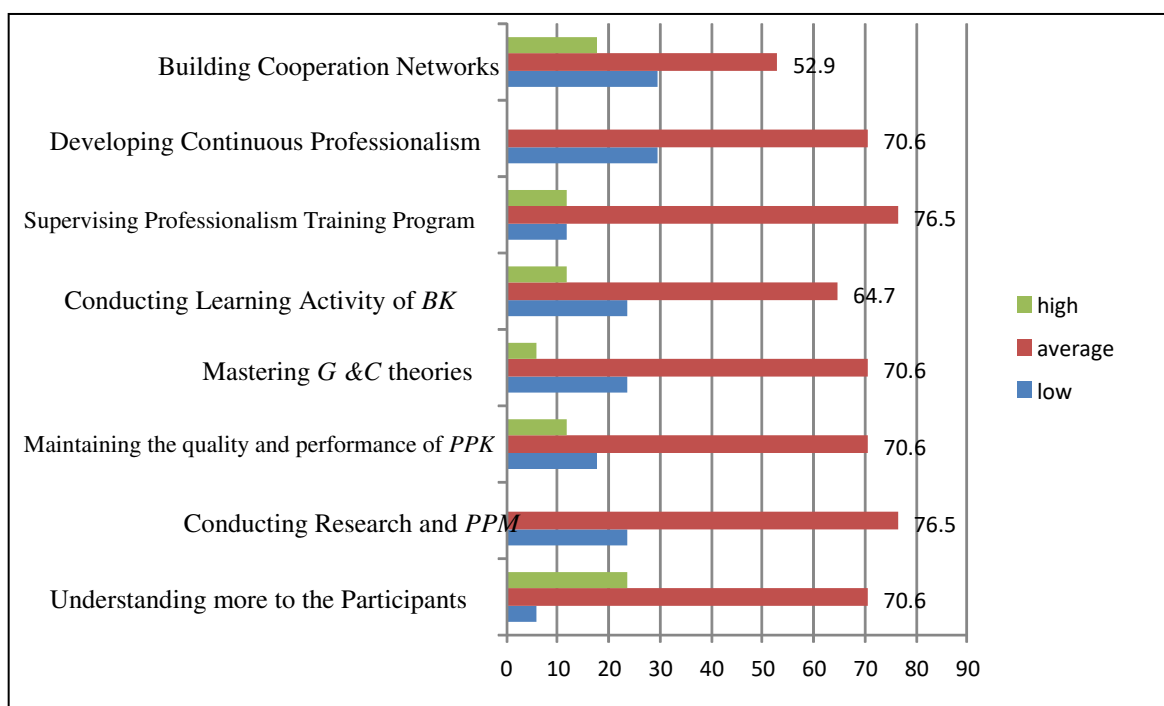
Table 1 shows that the majority of counselor educators in counselor profession education program of Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia reached mean score between 53% and

70.6% while the rest sit in the low and high categories. In the aspect of continuous professionalism development competence, the lowest number reaches 30%. This is in contrast to the expected mean score as counselor educators are expected to be in the high level because of the variety of organization profession experiences they have. The instrument shows that the indicator of profession-based organizational experiences might be narrowly interpreted to having been involved merely in professional association of guidance and counselling. Therefore, to give clear overview of counselor educators' abilities, the data were grouped into three-level categories that rank the counselor educator competence from the lowest to the highest level. The rank system yields a more-solid conclusion because it not only includes hypothetical and ideal mean but also considers the standard deviation from each component score. The results of the calculation are detailed in Figure 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Counselor Educator Competence**

Counselor Educator Competence	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Hypothetic	Mean Empiric	Std. Deviation
Understanding the participants	17	16.00	25.00	15	20.8235	2.35147
Conducting research and community service	17	21.00	35.00	21	30.5882	4.51468
Maintaining the quality performance	17	53.00	90.00	60	75.0588	9.24980
Mastering <i>guidance and counseling</i> theories	17	24.00	40.00	24	31.1765	4.08098
Conducting learning activity	17	28.00	49.00	30	39.6471	6.26440
Supervising professionalism training program	17	22.00	50.00	30	35.8824	6.22377
Developing continuous professionalism	17	25.00	35.00	21	31.7059	4.22440
Building cooperation networks	17	25.00	40.00	25	32.2353	5.34473





**Figure 1. Graph of Counselor Educator Competence Level**

The graph quickly shows that in majority, or 82.4% of the counselor educators self-reported to have average level of competencies, while 11.8% of them reported to belong to low category, and 5.9% felt to belong to high category. These results implied that the counselor educators have high self-efficacy in their skills and mastery of various aspects of guidance and counseling discipline as well as in providing effective instruction in the program. Such positive level of self-belief is also found in the study of Bjornestad, Veronica, Jo, & Kristine (2014) which shows site supervising counselors' self-efficacy in performing supervising roles and responsibilities at schools. Bjornestad, et al. (2014) argued that the positive level of confidence in their ability came from the fact that the supervising counselors have gone through a large number of hours of supervising making them to regard themselves as practicing counselors themselves, not simply a supervisor watching over their students doing or providing counseling. This might explain the case with the counselor educators participating in the study. Their

experiences and years of service may have a say in growing their confidence of self-ability in tackling counseling roles as well as instructional responsibilities in the program.

### Discussion

Professional teachers are teachers who are able to perform their educational academic competence in implementing the educational profession tasks (Law No. 20/2003 on National Education System; Ministerial Regulation of Education and Culture No. 27/2008, *ibid*). To become ones, all teachers, including guidance and counseling teachers, later known as school counselors are required to attend profession training or education after the completion of their undergraduate degree. In the meantime, the teachers teaching in a profession education program run by appointed universities later called as counselor educators have to undergo some changes in their professional identity. Their identity has developed along with added responsibilities and tasks they have to cope, from generating non-certified

school counselors to transforming them into professionally-certified ones.

While producing graduates in Guidance and Counseling is part of their job as university lecturers, generating professional counselors has influenced their self-portrait as 'professional counselors'. It is the notion that their students should become a professional school counselor who counsel the students, conduct research, and develop continuous professionalism that they embrace as too their professional identity. As Calley & Hawley (2008, p: 6) argue, 'implied in the professional identity related to counselor educators are the primary activities that contribute to one's role as an academician: teaching, scholarship, and service'.

This self-perceived identity might explain why two indicators, becoming a supervisor in the training program and in carrying out research in the field, are the two-most highly rated, with 76.5 % of the respondents self-rated themselves for having 'average' level of competencies. Only around 10% of them thought they are highly skilled and lacking in supervisory roles. This is in contrast to research performance where none of them said having high ability in conducting research, with the number of subjects lacking in research skills is twice as much as that in supervisory abilities.

Being a teacher who does not only teach, supervise but also provide counseling to their trainees during the training, the counselor educators may have embraced professional identity in term of teaching and service. Meanwhile, being an active researcher is part of them becoming professional in term of scholarship capacity as academicians. This way, the professional identity of those counselor educators should have highly reflected that described by Calley & Hawley (2008). The graph however shows that the majority of the subjects were not so confident with their capacities in doing supervision and research or having only average level of competencies. One thing that may explain

this finding is the influence of local culture and familiarity with school's contexts as seen in the excerpt of focus group discussion below.

"I think I need to learn about supervision from other colleagues. Supervising them (school counselors) is a lot different from *PPL* (supervision undergraduates in school-based teaching practicum). Since the curriculum has changed we need to know what services the school counselors need to do and what kind of supervision they need from us. I think I don't know a lot about it yet. We need a workshop (on the topic)."

*Subject 1*

"I just recently got assigned to be a supervisor in *PPL* so I don't know much what it's like to supervise in-service counseling teachers in their practicum."

*Subject 2*

As seen above, Subject 1 talks about his need to learn from his peers as well as to have workshop on supervision and school curriculum. While this may show lack of self-confidence, this reflects more about the culture for not boasting about your strengths. Needs for learning from colleagues shows that Subject 1 felt that there are other people who have been more experienced than him, despite the fact that he has 23 years of teaching. On the other hand, with less than 10 years of teaching, Subject 2 might have little experience of school's life and curriculum. This may make him less confident about supervising school counselors.

The culture of being modest seems to have been shared among the respondents and may have triggered the suggestion to add the competence of providing culture-based or localized counseling as mentioned earlier. The necessity to address different cultures and values they hold is reflected in the

multicultural approach of guidance and counseling (Bunu, 2016). Bunu attempted to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counseling services at senior high school using multicultural approach. He in particular aimed at addressing students' multicultural differences by providing counseling services that were made to match with students' values, ethnic-based behavioral characteristics and interactional patterns.

Bunu (2016) further found that his endeavour came to see many challenges due to two main reasons. First, school counselors are generally not trained in applying multicultural approach and secondly schools at large are not prepared to implement multicultural approach as their counseling programs do not orient to multicultural paradigm. The second reason may have been caused by the first as it is the school counselor who decides the design and running of counseling programs in their context. It implies that for multicultural approach to be implemented at school, school counselors need to be first introduced to and trained about it during their pre-service or profession training. With this in mind, the respondents' view about the importance of having the competence to understand their client's cultural orientation is in line with multicultural approach to counseling. Such reflection to some extent reflects the respondents' value about counseling in that counselors should understand their clients first and 'serve' them with counseling programs that meet their clients' norms that are delivered in ways that conform with their commonly accepted behaviour. Such value of putting clients first over themselves may be considered as a professional value the group of counselor educators under researched possesses. Not only being modest or humble, the respondents can be described of having the attitude of putting clients over themselves, which shows a quality professional counselor.

In term of research, in majority, the subjects of this research identified themselves as having moderate level of competencies with almost 25% felt lacking the skill. Interestingly, despite years of teaching, the two subjects below both shared the same concern of low opportunities for getting research grants from the government of the university.

"[...] rather difficult because there are not many grants offered. If there is, the competition is pretty high as track record is also taken into account. So, those who've done research or got grants are likely to get them again while newbies have to be 'a research team member' first or 'assistant' to their seniors in research project."

*Subject 3*

"Research fund is limited, both from the government and the university and requires a lot of paper work. This is discouraging actually and thus needs to change so we become more motivated to conduct research in spite of our busy schedules."

*Subject 4*

The two subjects, each of whom with 23 and 17 years of teaching, show that research seems a luxury for limited research grants and complicated and discouraging administrative procedure. This may result in them feeling having a somewhat moderate and low competencies in research because they were simply not experienced in the area. Research experience might not be a common aspect of professional identity examination (Calley & Hawley, 2008) given that the difficulty in data collection. In this study, research is integral to the counselor educators' main academic responsibilities and thus to their professional identity. As the curriculum in the profession training requires trainees to do research project as part of their program completion, every

counselor educator will be responsible in supervising their project.

Next, commitment in sustaining professional development as well as maintaining their quality and performance in teaching in the program is perceived moderate or average by 70.6 % respondents. The subjects under investigation are all busy teachers with heavy load of teaching responsibilities. Some also had structural roles like being a vice dean or department head. Given this, commitment to ensuring high quality teaching in the program may become their last priority. In addition, none stated having high initiatives for professional growth and almost 30% of them reported lacking in professional development measures. The indicators of professional development are often reflected through involvement in seminars or trainings. This has also been reported through discussion with the subjects in the focus group, as shown below.

“I usually attend seminars or trainings offered by the university but not very often because the seminar grant is also limited and competitive. We’ve been very busy teaching too so sometimes it’s (attending seminars) hard to do.”

*Subject 5*

The aspect of competence, doing sustainable professional development efforts, is similar to the aspect of ‘engagement behaviors’ described by Healey & Hays (2011 in Woo, et al. 2014) as endeavors taken to be considered a member of counseling profession. This includes attending seminars, joining professional association and publishing in counseling-related publications and the like. Involvement in profession-related activities is often associated with positive development of professional identity. Simalry, Woo, Cassandra, & Eric (2016) described opportunity and motivation to have ‘professional engagement and contribution’ helps counselor educator’s

professional identity to grow and influence each other’s development of identity. Woo, et. al. (2016) further stated that having professional association membership is a vital way of developing professional identity.

Another competency, substantive knowledge of related theories in Guidance and Counseling and of learner individual differences, is equally rated, with 70.6% stated they had ‘average’ level of theoretical understanding and almost 25% perceived themselves low in substantive knowledge related to guidance and counseling. Only around 7% stated that they had high level of theoretical background. While this is surprising, this may be caused by the fact that 7 out of 17 counselor educators who will teach in the profession education program and completed the questionnaire majored in Psychology, not Guidance and Counseling. This might be the reason why they felt they were lacking theoretical foundation related to school counseling and learner’s individual differences.

The in-congruence between training background and teaching responsibilities seems to have affected the research subjects’ perception on their experience and involvement in professional networking. Only 52.9 % of respondents stated to be highly involved in profession organization in Guidance and Counseling namely *ABKIN* (Indonesia association of guidance and counseling) and *HSBKI* (Indonesia union of scholars of guidance and counseling). Meanwhile, 30% reported low participation in events held by the two organizations and only an estimate of 10% are an active member of the two professional association. With psychology as background, the respondents thought they do not belong to those organizations. Indeed, the attempt of separating counseling from other mental health profession like psychologist seems to have caused such feeling among the respondents, as also found in Calley &

Hawley (2008), Higgins et al. (2013) and Woo, et al. (2016).

The mismatch between educational background and teaching responsibilities seems to have impacted their self-perception on teaching competencies. While counseling and teaching should be inseparable roles of counselor educators, few (11%) of the respondents in this study reported having very high teaching competences despite their working history. Most of them (64.7 %) felt they only had moderate level of teaching competences. Most surprisingly is that 24.3 % of the subjects confessed lacking or having low-level pedagogical skills as seen in the following excerpts.

“Some subjects in the training are not familiar to me since I major in psychology. Though I’ve been teaching for almost 20 years I feel they are new areas to me especially as the topics relate to school curriculum very much and I don’t have education background.”

*Subject 6*

“I am fine with topics related to learner’s psychological development, learner’s growth and development because they are part of my major. But I’m mostly at lost if I were to teach types and techniques of counseling, counseling assessment and counseling action research. I definitely need training on them.”

*Subject 7*

According to the Law No. 20/2003 on National Education System, professional training is higher education program acquired after accomplishing the undergraduate program that prepares the students obtain a job with specific skill requirements. *Teacher Profession Education* program is educational program organized for Bachelor holders (*S-1*) in both educational and non-educational background, who have skills and interest

in becoming a teacherso that they become professional teachers who meet the requirements of national education standards and acquire a teaching certificate. Accordingly, the output of the counseling profession education can adapt and perform profession educator tasks that are excellent, dignified, and proudly accepted by the educational institutions, communities, and Indonesian people (Dikti, 2011).

The guidance and counselling teachers or counselors in the national education system is recognized to have similar qualifications that equal to the teacher, lecturers, learning tutors, trainers, facilitators and instructors qualifications (the Law No. 20/2003 of article 1 number 6). However, the explicit and equal recognition between the educator qualifications and the others might not exclude the fact that each educator including counselor has to perform tasks or jobs, and services specific and unique to others. Therefore, the context and expected services of guidance and counselling teachers or counselors in this study are understood as to clarify the concept and practice of guidance and counselling services in appropriate manner. According to the Government Regulation No. 74 year 2008 on teachers, educators of guidance and counselling services in the future are called as guidance and counselling teachers or counselors (Dikti, 2010).

Because of the specific contexts and expected tasks, the goal of counselor profession education is to teachers or counselors who are able to perform independent guidance and counselling program using the four components. These components are basic services, responsive services, individual planning and supporting systems. However, the commitment from guidance and counselling teachers should consider the five stages which are constructing awareness, personalization, management, impact and collaboration (Poynton, Schumacher, & Wilczenski; 2008).

The existence of guidance and counselling teachers or counselors in the national education system is categorized as one of the educator qualifications that equals to the teachers, lecturers, learning tutors, trainers, facilitators and instructors qualifications (the Law No. 20/2003 of article 1 number 6). However, the explicit and equal recognition between the educator qualifications and the others might not exclude the fact that each educator including counselor has the context tasks, the expected performance, and the specific services to others which contain the uniqueness and differences. Therefore, the context and expected services of guidance and counselling teachers or counselors in this study emphasizes to clarify the concept and practice of guidance and counselling in appropriate manner. According to the Government Regulation No. 74 year 2008 on teachers, educators of guidance and counselling services in the future are called as guidance and counselling teachers or counselors (Dikti, 2010). However, it is conceptually that counselor education model should be in line with the philosophy of humanism, education, scientific, purpose and framework of guidance and counselling services (Kartadinata, 2011).

With regard to those concepts, the counselor profession education providers should prepare good-quality of human resources in supporting the success of the program. The essential services of the in-service counselor profession education implementation occur in a good-quality of study program. This implies that there are several activities that need to be designed and performed by the program provider. First, there needs to be coordinations on the curriculum implementation in the form of descriptions, syllabi, lesson plan, and evaluation instruments that are comprehensive and synergy. Secondly, the provider of the program should evaluate and develop integrated curriculum for the education program of bachelor, master's and doctorate programs as well as

profession education program. Next, the provider needs to carry out studies, research and development related to the quality and innovation improvement of teacher professionalism training program in each study program. Finally, the program director needs to design training that aims at fine-tuning and developing human resources or the staff, which help standardize and enhance implementation of counselor profession education program.

## CONCLUSION

The profile of the counselor educators participating in the study is described as having three aspects of competences. These include professional, pedagogical and interpersonal/social aspects of competence. The three aspects break down into 8 sub-competencies that involves understanding to the participants of the services, mastering the guidance and counseling theories, conducting educated guidance and counseling learning program, maintaining the quality of guidance and counseling performance, supervising the implementation of professionalism training program, conducting research and community services as the form of problem-solving ability, developing continuous professionalism, and being able to build cooperation and partnership networks. The counselor educators admitted themselves for generally having average level of the competencies. In addition, the respondents expressed the importance to have IT and cross-cultural competences as counselor educators.

The fine-tuning program becomes a strategic option in improving some competence aspects that are considered low and developing other adequate competence aspects. The analysis results of competence mapping might be used as a starting point to determine the compatibility between the subject course and the dominant competence owned by counselor educators. However, the

analysis results show that the level of educator counselor competence is generally equivalent with the others. In several competence aspects, some educator counselors show the ability in the low level. To overcome the condition, the implementation of fine-tuning program should properly organize in order to improve particular competences.

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