

Professional Identity in Transition: Insights from Indonesian Senior High School Counselors

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Abstrack

This study explores the multidimensional professional identity of senior high school counselors in Bandung City. Using a phenomenological approach and focus group discussions, five indicators of professional identity were identified: professional involvement, knowledge, attitudes, roles and expertise, and professional philosophy. Findings reveal that active engagement in professional organizations enhances competencies and social capital, while knowledge of the profession's history and regulations informs ethical and effective practice. Empathy, objectivity, and relational orientation strengthen professional pride, and counselors' roles in case management and referral highlight their adaptive and accountable function as connectors. The philosophy of guidance and counseling, grounded in preventive, strengths-based, and humanistic principles, supports holistic student development and resilience. Professional identity emerges from integrating experience, competence, ethics, and collaboration, contributing to improved counseling services and student well-being.

Keywords: phenomenology, professional identity, preventive guidance, school counselors, strengths-based approach

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INTRODUCTION

The professional identity of school counselors is increasingly recognized as a dynamic construct shaped by personal, institutional, and cultural contexts, yet research on how counselors negotiate this identity amid dual demands remains limited (Harari Paltiel & Erhard, 2025; Harrison et al., 2024). Prior studies highlight the challenges counselors face in balancing administrative responsibilities, academic expectations, and the comprehensive counseling role, but they often focus on Western or clinical contexts rather than school-based realities in developing countries (Jordan et al., 2023; Lou et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2022). This research gap is critical because understanding how Indonesian counselors construct their professional identity amidst competing demands can serve as a pivotal foundation for strengthening counselor education curricula, ongoing professional training, and school policies that more effectively support the counseling function as a whole (Awalya et al., 2023; Granello & Gunawan, 2023; McCabe, 2024; Sarwono, 2018; Sukmawati & Yusri, 2020). Addressing this gap contributes not only to advancing academic discourse but also to informing practical strategies for the development of the school counseling profession in Indonesia.

Research on the professional identity of counselors has thus far been dominated by studies in Western contexts and higher education settings, while investigations of school counselors in non-Western contexts, including Indonesia, remain very limited. Most existing studies emphasize conceptual and quantitative dimensions, such as measuring professional perceptions or competency standards (Farozin, 2019; Fickling, 2023; Jordan et al., 2023; McGrath & DeDiego, 2023), whereas the subjective experiences of counselors in constructing their professional identity are rarely explored. In fact, professional identity is strongly shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts, including the historical stigma in Indonesia that often reduces guidance and counseling services to mere supervisory or disciplinary functions rather than developmental services for students (Gibson et al., 2023; Woo et al., 2018). This stigma casts counselors as more agents of school discipline than facilitators of student growth, thereby weakening recognition of their professional identity. Such conditions create an urgent need to revisit how counselors construct their professional identity amid dual expectations as facilitators of student development and as agents of school policy (Granello & Gunawan, 2023). Within this context, a phenomenological inquiry becomes particularly relevant, as it enables the exploration of counselors' subjective meanings and lived experiences while addressing the current research gap that remains largely Western-biased.

The exploration of school counselors' professional identity, particularly in non-Western contexts like Indonesia, underscores a significant research gap in the field. While existing literature predominantly reflects Western paradigms with a focus on quantitative assessments of professional competencies and perceptions (Dollarhide et al., 2023; Maor & Hemi, 2021; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021), it largely neglects the subjective experiences and sociocultural factors that shape counselors' identities. This is particularly critical in Indonesia, where the stigma surrounding counseling aligns it more with disciplinary rather than developmental roles, thereby impacting counselors' self-perception and effectiveness (Hatchett, 2024; Pester et al., 2023). The dual expectations placed on counselors navigating both developmental facilitations for students and adherence to school policies signal a complex dynamic that phenomenological inquiries can illuminate (Dollarhide et al., 2023; Maor & Hemi, 2021). The urgency to understand these nuances is amplified by entrenched perceptions of counseling in the region, which often limit its scope to administrative tasks rather than holistic student support (Hamelin et al., 2023b;



Larran & Hein, 2025; Sadana & Kumar, 2023). Therefore, a shift towards qualitative methodologies in these contexts is essential for capturing the lived experiences of counselors and enriching the discourse on professional identity within diverse cultural frameworks.

The high school context in Bandung presents unique socio-cultural and institutional characteristics, with diverse student backgrounds and evolving administrative and local policy demands. The school environment requires active involvement from all stakeholders to meet students' varied needs (Mitcham et al., 2019; Rust, 2019). Counselors often face dual demands: meeting professional standards while responding to situational and contextual needs. Research indicates that counselors must adapt to various situations and challenges arising in schools, including students' family and social dynamics (Fernández Tilve & Malvar Méndez, 2019; Marraccini et al., 2022). Role ambiguity can influence the quality of services provided by school counselors (Brown et al., 2025a; Fox & Butler, 2017).

The evolving role of career guidance in schools reflects a transition from a traditional focus to a broader emphasis on personal, social, and academic aspects. This change creates professional challenges for counselors who must adapt to new demands, requiring the development of both technical competencies and more holistic relational capacities (Aydogan et al., 2024; Çitil Akyol, 2024; Gregorcic-Mrvar & Mazgon, 2017). Counselors need to negotiate their roles in collaboration with subject teachers and school management, which may present challenges but also opportunities to strengthen their contribution to student support (Çitil Akyol, 2024; Messina et al., 2015). Active engagement with various school stakeholders can potentially expand the reach and impact of guidance and counseling services (Gearns et al., 2024; Hubbard et al., 2018). This shift not only creates practical challenges but also encourages a redefinition of professional identity, requiring counselors to better understand and value life experiences in broader contexts (Ford et al., 2023; Mbilinyi, 2025).

In addition to professional pressures, historical stigma has positioned guidance and counseling services as supervisory functions or disciplinary control tools (Connor et al., 2021; González-Falcón et al., 2022; Hamelin et al., 2023a; Karataş & Kaya, 2015; Maizel, 2021). Such stigma may reduce the legitimacy of counselors' roles and influence how students and other teachers perceive counseling services (Mullen & Crowe, 2017; Sadana & Kumar, 2023; Shamsuddin, 2024; Tsega, 2024; Yordy et al., 2022). Therefore, studies examining how counselors respond to stigma through communication strategies, preventive service development, or professional branding can provide important insights into the dynamics of professional identity formation in local contexts (Jortveit, 2023; Toscano-Cruz et al., 2020). Research has shown how counselors can overcome stigma-related challenges while strengthening their role in supporting overall student development in schools (Holland, 2015; Leigh-Osroosh et al., 2023).

A phenomenological approach is selected because it allows access to the subjective meanings and structures of experience that shape how counselors understand themselves as professionals (Brown et al., 2025b). Phenomenological methods enable researchers to trace life narratives, practitioner reflections, and experiential contradictions that are often overlooked by quantitative approaches (Messina et al., 2015). By positioning counselors' experiences as the primary data source, this study aims to explore the essence of professional experiences that underlie practice, ethical decision-making, and service orientation in daily work (Rust, 2019; Schoener & Colbert, 2019). The research focuses on how counselors can share experiences to enhance collective



understanding and foster sustainable changes in guidance and counseling practice (Francis et al., 2020). This study, therefore, offers a novel contribution by providing phenomenological insights into how Indonesian school counselors negotiate and construct their professional identity within complex socio-cultural and institutional demands, an area that has been underrepresented in the global counseling literature (Nkwemu et al., 2019).

METHOD

To explore counselors' professional competencies, focus group discussions were carried out between July and August 2025 in Bandung City, West Java. Focus groups were chosen because this approach enables a more in-depth examination of each experience or idea shared by participants during group discussions, without the need to reach consensus (Mc Menamin et al., 2015). A qualitative approach was preferred over quantitative methods to develop a deeper understanding of indicators of counselors' professional identity (Kitzinger, 1994). A general inductive approach was applied, with interpretations derived directly from the raw data without imposing prior assumptions or theories (Braun & Clarke, 2025). Ethical clearance was granted by the Head of the Education Branch Office of Bandung City.

The trustworthiness of this study was ensured through several strategies. Data reliability was strengthened by maintaining detailed field notes, researcher reflection, and analytic documentation, thereby making the analytic process transparent and auditable (Saldana, 2016). Triangulation was conducted by comparing interview transcripts, field notes, and researcher reflections, while member checking was applied by sharing preliminary interpretations with participants to confirm the accuracy of meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Data collection continued until saturation was reached, as indicated by the absence of new themes in subsequent interviews, confirming that the number of participants was sufficient to capture the diversity of experiences.

Participants were selected to capture varied perspectives on how counselors with a background in guidance and counseling perceive professional identity. Eligible participants were counselors employed in senior high schools in Bandung City, defined as professionals with 1 to 15 years of experience, of both genders, and holding a bachelor's degree in guidance and counseling. These criteria aligned with purposive sampling requirements (Bohanon & Wu, 2020). Participants were asked to sign informed consent forms prior to the study, ensuring voluntary participation and ethical compliance.

Focus group interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom, with each group limited to three participants to allow equal contribution. A research assistant, trained by the first author, facilitated the process with support from a moderator and note-taking assistant. Each discussion lasted no more than one hour, was recorded, and later transcribed. A semi-structured interview guide, based on the research questions and the literature, was used. After introductions and warm-up activities, core questions were asked, and each session concluded with a summary of discussion points. Before participation, respondents completed a short sociodemographic questionnaire regarding age, gender, education, and institution.

Data analysis was conducted using NVivo version 12 through thematic analysis to identify key themes from participants' experiences (Bennis & Mouwafaq, 2025; Terry et al., 2017). Eight stages of reflexive thematic analysis were employed, including introduction, first-cycle coding, second-cycle coding, jottings, analytic memoing, assertions and prepositions, within-case and cross-case analysis, and closure and



transition (Miles et al., 2015). First-cycle coding refers to the initial codes assigned to data chunks, while second-cycle coding generally operates on the first-cycle codes themselves (Saldana, 2016). Other analytic strategies included jottings, memos, and the formulation of assertions and propositions. Within-case and cross-case analysis were then compared for their unique advantages and contributions to the counselors' professional identity research enterprise.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Demographics

The study involved five participants who were counselors working in senior high schools in Bandung. The participants consisted of one male and four females, aged 25 to 38 years. The participants met the criteria of having between 1 and 15 years of work experience as counselors in senior high schools, being both female and male, and holding an undergraduate degree in guidance and counseling. The diversity in gender, age, and years of experience as counselors provided varied insights into the experience and meaning of professional identity among senior high school counselors.

One main theme was developed in this study, namely the indicators of professional identity. Based on the research findings, five indicators emerged from the textual data: (a) professional involvement; (b) professional knowledge; (c) professional attitudes; (d) professional roles and expertise; and (e) philosophy of the guidance and counseling profession.

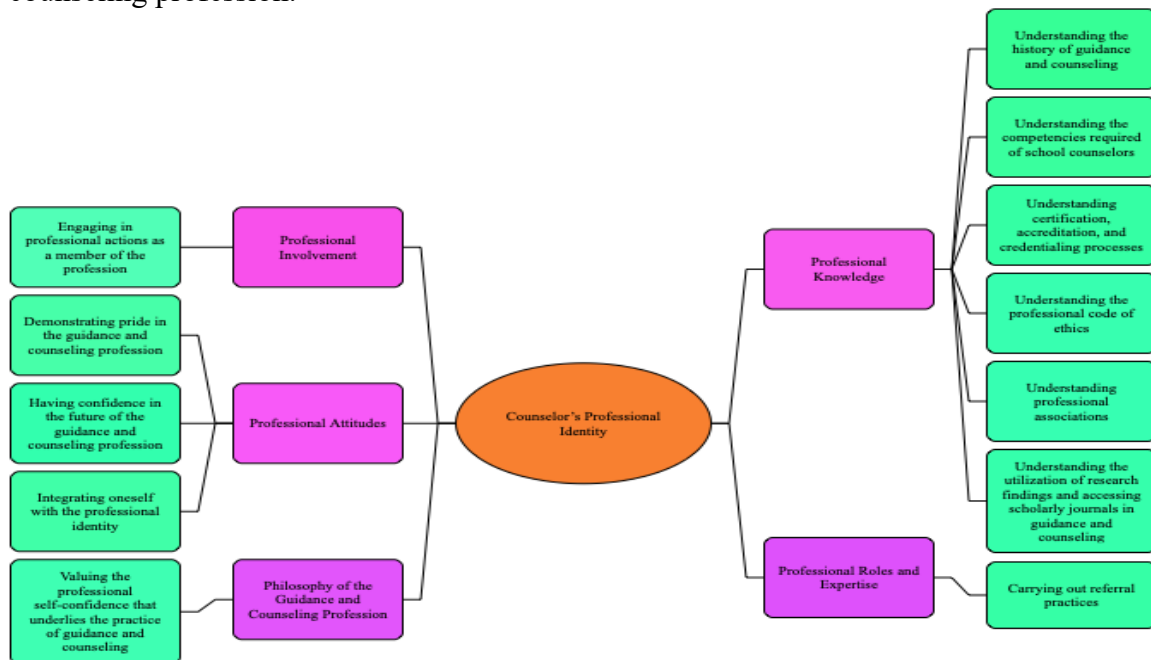


Figure 1. Mind Map of Counselor's Professional Identity

Indicators of Counselor's Professional Identity

Professional Involvement

The interviews revealed that involvement in professional organizations, particularly the Bandung City MGBK (*Musyawarah Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling*), constitutes an essential part of developing professional identity as a school counselor.



Forms of participation varied, ranging from attending seminars and workshops to regular meetings and using the organization's WhatsApp groups. Although some counselors admitted to being passive members, they still benefited from receiving up-to-date information, policy guidance, and supporting materials that enriched school guidance and counseling practices. The findings indicate that counselors' professional identity is shaped not only by school practice but also by professional networks that provide spaces for continuous learning.

The primary function of involvement in MGBK is to enhance knowledge and broaden perspectives. Respondents stated that the materials presented in seminars and workshops were highly relevant to the practical needs of school counselors.

"Participating in activities organized by MGBK... has greatly expanded and enriched my guidance and counseling knowledge, as seminars are often held with materials that support the development of our mindset as school counselors" (R1).

Similarly, another respondent considered MGBK activities a means of remaining "upgraded" in terms of information and understanding of developments in guidance and counseling (R4). Moreover, MGBK acts as a bridge between local government policies and school service practices. Policy information disseminated through activities or communication groups helps school counselors understand the latest policy directions and adjust quickly.

"The activities organized... and information shared via WhatsApp groups provide updates on current local government policies and how school counselors should respond. This helps me adapt quickly" (R2).

Participation in professional organizations strengthens social capital and a sense of community among counselors. MGBK is seen as a platform for building interschool relationships while enriching practice through collaboration with various parties, including universities. Interview findings indicate that MGBK not only provides spaces for competency development but also acts as a connector between macro-level educational policies and micro-level school practice. Information about local government policy directions, delivered through activities and communication groups, makes school counselors more adaptive, accustomed to referring to regulations, and more cautious in service decision-making.

Professional Knowledge

The interviews showed that knowledge of the history, development, and regulations of the guidance and counseling profession is considered a fundamental foundation for shaping counselors' professional identity. Most respondents emphasized that service practice cannot rely solely on experience but must be grounded in codes of ethics, regulations, and students' needs. This indicates that professional knowledge serves as both a reflective and practical basis for the execution of school counselors' roles.

Respondents also viewed the history of guidance and counseling as a reminder of the profession's main mission, which is to help individuals develop holistically. Over time, guidance and counseling services in Indonesia have expanded from career-oriented guidance to include personal, social, and academic domains. Historical understanding provides guidance for school counselors to place their services within a broader framework, emphasizing not only curative but also preventive functions.



"I interpret the history of G&C as a reminder of the main purpose of the profession, which is to help individuals become whole human beings" (R2).

Professional regulations are seen as a legal umbrella that both limits and legitimizes guidance and counseling practices. Respondents stressed that regulations provide certainty in determining actions, whether at school or for those planning to open independent services. Simultaneously, the code of ethics emphasizes the counselor's role as a facilitator rather than a dominant figure, ensuring that services focus on student empowerment. Therefore, regulations serve not only normative purposes but also as instruments for forming a more ethical and human-centered professional identity.

Professional Attitudes

Expressions of professional pride among school counselors were primarily evident in students' success in achieving educational goals or resolving personal issues. Respondents emphasized that student achievements, such as admission to a desired university program or overcoming complex problems, constitute a source of pride. Findings indicate that student success serves as the main benchmark reinforcing school counselors' professional identity.

"When a student chooses the SITH program at ITB and graduates from there... the student and parents come to thank me for guiding them, which becomes a source of pride for me" (R1).

Besides student outcomes, empathy and objectivity are considered essential pillars in building professional pride. Respondents explained that maintaining empathy means understanding students' circumstances holistically, while objectivity ensures that counseling processes remain focused on clients' needs. Applying these attitudes reflects counselors' consistency in fulfilling ethical and professional responsibilities, making pride not only emotional but also normative, grounded in professional principles.

Moreover, adherence to regulations and enforcement of service boundaries reinforces professional identity. School counselors take pride in their profession because it has clear rules and standards that ensure safety and comfort in guidance practice. Practices such as applying the principle of "guidance for all" and enforcing professional boundaries are seen as demonstrations of consistency with ethical codes and professional systems. This shows that professional pride is built not only on individual achievements but also on contributions to the institutional maintenance of service quality.

School counselors' professional identity is defined within a relational orientation, positioning them as student friends rather than mere supervisors or behavior controllers. One respondent emphasized this principle:

"School counselors are student friends, not school police".

This expression reflects a collective view that professional pride lies in balancing emotional closeness with students and maintaining professional integrity. Thus, school counselors' professional attitudes emerge from the combination of tangible outcomes, empathetic-objective service processes, harmonious relationships with parents, adherence to regulations, and a humanistic relational orientation.



Professional Roles and Expertise

Referral practices emerged as a response to clear clinical needs, particularly in cases of severe stress, anxiety disorders, trauma, PTSD indications, suicidal ideation, and inclusive education needs. Respondents reported that early identification was conducted through behavioral analysis and in-depth counseling interviews by counselors; when the identified needs exceeded the counselor's capacity, referrals were made to psychologists or protection services. The findings affirmed that counselors not only provided direct services but also acted as early detection points sensitive to students' psychosocial issues.

Cross-professional coordination was reported to be structured and involved multiple actors: homeroom teachers, parents, principals, school management, external psychologists, child protection services, as well as helpers or agencies for inclusion needs. Common coordination mechanisms included stepwise communication (parent notification and consent), scheduling external services, accompanying students to services, and joint monitoring by homeroom teachers and counselors within the school environment. Case management practices functioned on the basis of facilitators and connectors.

"The key lies in clear coordination (who does what, when), student/parent consent, and orderly documentation of progress" (R5).

Ethical and administrative aspects were identified as crucial components in implementing effective referral practices. Respondents emphasized the importance of obtaining consent from students/parents, maintaining clear communication among parties, and documenting progress systematically as part of professional accountability. In addition, service continuity was ensured through regular monitoring by the school and ongoing communication among psychologists, parents, and the school, so that responses to students' needs were not disrupted by changes in context or institution (e.g., school transfers).

Philosophy of the Guidance and Counseling Profession

A preventive approach appears as the main foundation of school guidance and counseling practice, implemented through dissemination activities, TPPK team training, rule socialization, and educational class and group services, such as emotional literacy and learning skills programs. Respondents reported that preventive interventions are applied not only at the individual level but also through systemic strategies involving teachers, parents, and school management to prevent issues such as bullying from escalating into crises. Implementing preventive measures reflects a proactive professional orientation, prioritizing prevention and collective learning as part of the institutional responsibility of guidance and counseling.

Appreciation for students' uniqueness and a humanistic perspective are central to daily practice; counselors tend to reject pathological labeling and prefer to understand each student's developmental context. Professional commitment is directed toward dignified and non-stigmatizing treatment. This approach allows for interventions sensitive to individual differences and directs services toward potential development rather than mere behavior correction.

"I implement practices by viewing every student not as naughty or foolish, but as someone who has not yet learned or distinguished right from wrong" (R2).



Non-judgmental principles and relational ethics are consistently applied in professional communication with students, parents, and stakeholders. Counselors emphasize minimal judgment, the importance of consent, and systematic documentation as part of ethical practice. This humanistic relational approach not only increases trust between students, parents, and schools but also reduces potential stigma that may hinder service access, the profession's philosophy serves as both an ethical and practical foundation for guidance and counseling operations.

Discussion

Professional involvement and exposure to evidence-based practices play significant roles in shaping identity. Counselors who actively engage in evidence-based practices tend to have more integrated and effective professional identities, which contributes to the quality of services they provide (Gearns et al., 2024; Langrehr et al., 2017). Implementing evidence-based interventions strengthens counselors' confidence in practice, which in turn increases engagement in professional communities and collaboration with peers (Schoener & Colbert, 2019).

Literature on interprofessional collaboration and school service systems indicates that cross-disciplinary partnerships enhance schools' responsiveness to students' needs (Dalouh Ounia et al., 2024). Such cooperation strengthens evidence-based practices in teaching and student support and facilitates collegial learning, which is crucial for professional development among teachers (Barrero Fernández et al., 2020). In this context, the professional identity of school counselors should be understood as relationally constructed through active participation in practice communities and cross-professional synergy, positioning them as integrated members of the educational ecosystem rather than individuals with isolated competencies (Bellido Cala, 2021). Peer support and parental engagement are essential for developing the effectiveness of school services and ensuring that all students receive the attention they need.

Findings indicate that knowledge of the history, development, and regulations of guidance and counseling is not merely theoretical information but serves as a reflective and practical foundation for counselors' daily practice. This is evidenced by understanding the counselor's vital role in supporting students' holistic development and by training experiences that shape professional identity (Blake, 2024). Professional knowledge and awareness within the counselor identity model emphasize ethical standards and practice frameworks, which are recognized as integral foundations for evidence-based decision-making (Zeglin et al., 2018). Moreover, challenges in collaborating with other educational agents highlight the importance of integrating professional knowledge to overcome barriers in support strategies (Fernández-Blázquez & Echeita Sarrionandia, 2018; Hamelin et al., 2023b). Consequently, historical and regulatory knowledge is key to achieving effective and responsive guidance practices.

Historical understanding of the guidance and counseling profession, which has evolved from career to personal, social, and academic orientations, provides an important foundation for forming a collective, dynamic, and student-centered professional identity. This awareness, enriched by regulations and ethical values, enables counselors to design integrative and adaptive services responsive to academic, emotional, and bureaucratic demands in modern education systems (Blake, 2024; Hamelin et al., 2023b).

Direct involvement in witnessing students' progress strengthens professional identity (Aydogan & Demirci, 2025; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021). This aligns with the view that counseling effectiveness is often measured by client success, which connects to



the professional meaning of counselors in education (Sadana & Kumar, 2023; Teriba & Dawson, 2024). Student achievements not only represent individual accomplishments but also provide social legitimacy that reinforces the counselor's role in the community (Bettman & Digiacomio, 2022; Zammitt et al., 2015). Through collaborative efforts aligned with social support, student outcomes reflect counselors' success in delivering effective guidance (Behl et al., 2024; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021; Simons, 2021).

Professional pride is also strongly influenced by the strategic role of maintaining harmonious communication with parents. Calm and patient communication creates the image of a credible and trustworthy counselor, ultimately supporting stronger school-family relationships (Leahy, 2015; Waalkes et al., 2023). Counselors serve not only as student companions but also as effective mediators between the educational environment and families, playing a vital role in broader social interactions within the educational ecosystem (Bettman & Digiacomio, 2022; Lapan et al., 2017; Phillippe et al., 2021). As a result, professional pride is built not only through pedagogical relationships but also through counselors' positive contributions to strengthening social networks that support cooperation among students, parents, and the school community to achieve overall student well-being (Arbeit et al., 2016; Harrison, 2019; Holliman et al., 2022). Cooperative approaches are an essential domain in education that involve all stakeholders (Falzon et al., 2020; Girmscheid, 2022; Nie & Mo, 2022; Nurjannah et al., 2024).

Referral practices in educational contexts highlight that counselors play an important role in detecting students' psychological needs. Research shows that counselors possess the skills to conduct early identification of mental health problems, including serious conditions such as severe stress and suicidal ideation, which are critical indicators for further referral to mental health services (Berger et al., 2015). The integration of counseling skills and identification capacity underscores that counselors serve as a bridge between students and necessary clinical resources, reflecting an adaptive and accountable professional orientation (Baker et al., 2014; Falcón-Linares et al., 2021).

The ethical and administrative dimensions are highly significant, including principles such as obtaining consent from students and parents, maintaining confidentiality, and documenting case progress, which are essential components of service accountability (Low, 2015; Tsega, 2024). Adherence to these procedures not only protects students but also strengthens the professional legitimacy of counselors in the eyes of society and educational institutions. The findings indicate that enhancing counselors' capacity through continuous training in early detection, case management, and interprofessional collaboration is crucial for consolidating their role as liaison agents within more effective student service networks (Lyons et al., 2024; Messina et al., 2015). Furthermore, the success of collaboration requires a deep understanding of ethical aspects and best practices, which positively influence the outcomes of school counseling services.

Research indicates that the philosophy of guidance and counseling is rooted in a systematic preventive approach, suggesting that strategies used must be planned and evidence-based (Ding et al., 2024; Maizel, 2021). Counselors are expected not only to provide individual interventions but also to create collective preventive programs, including school team training and rule socialization (Siani & Assaraf, 2016; Vajen et al., 2021). Preventive approaches reflect a proactive professional attitude, in which educational efforts are key strategies for building a healthy school environment and reducing the risk of crises and bullying (Liu et al., 2015; Nadarzynski et al., 2021). Consequently, this approach facilitates the management of complex psychosocial issues



and aligns with the emphasis on psychological and social support within schools (Govender et al., 2020; Söylev, 2017).

The philosophy of the guidance and counseling profession is shaped by ethical principles that emphasize non-judgment, respect for individual differences, and humanistic relational communication, thereby supporting the effectiveness of services for students, parents, and other stakeholders (Özabaci, 2011). Research shows a need to strengthen counselors' capacity through preventive training focused on strengths-based empowerment strategies and integration of emotional literacy and anti-bullying programs into the school curriculum. Thus, the professional philosophy serves not only as a guide for ethical values but also as a practical guide, making guidance and counseling services more operational, accountable, and impactful in the long term (Minian et al., 2016). Effective support can help address complex issues in schools, enhance student well-being, and strengthen relationships within the educational community (Zango et al., 2024).

This study offers significant contributions to educational literature by highlighting the formation of professional identity among senior high school counselors in Bandung through professional involvement, knowledge, attitudes, roles, expertise, and professional philosophy. Findings indicate that involvement in organizations and cross-school collaboration broadens perspectives and links practice to policy, while understanding regulations and professional history supports ethical and responsive services. Empathy, objectivity, and humanistic relational orientation reinforce professional legitimacy, whereas referral practices and case management emphasize counselors' role as adaptive and accountable liaisons. Preventive philosophy and student empowerment emphasize holistic development and sustainable adaptive capacity, so professional identity is formed through the integration of experience, competence, ethics, and collaboration, collectively enhancing service effectiveness and student well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the multidimensional nature of senior high school counselors' professional identity in Bandung City, emphasizing how involvement, knowledge, attitudes, roles, expertise, and professional philosophy collectively shape their practice. First, professional involvement in organizations such as MGBK not only enhances technical competencies but also broadens counselors' social capital, fostering adaptive and collaborative approaches to policy and practice. Second, professional knowledge, including awareness of the history, development, and regulations of the counseling profession, serves as a reflective and practical foundation, guiding ethical decision-making and responsive services. Third, professional attitudes, characterized by empathy, objectivity, and relational orientation, reinforce pride and legitimacy in counseling work while promoting positive outcomes for students. Fourth, professional roles and expertise, particularly in case management, referral, and cross-professional collaboration, demonstrate counselors' capacity to act as adaptive and accountable connectors between students and educational or clinical resources. Finally, the philosophy of guidance and counseling, grounded in preventive, strengths-based, and humanistic approaches, ensures holistic student development and long-term resilience. Overall, the findings reveal that professional identity emerges through the integration of experience, competencies, ethics, and collaboration, which together enhance service effectiveness and contribute to students' overall well-being.



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