

Trends of Professional Competencies on Guidance and Counseling Teachers: A Survey in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Professional competencies are critical for guidance and counseling (GC) teachers to provide effective and accountable support services in educational settings. This study aimed to map the professional competency profiles of GC teachers and identify areas requiring enhancement. Data were collected from 93 GC teachers at public senior high schools in Bandung City, Indonesia, using a quantitative survey design. A validated questionnaire, based on national regulatory standards, was used to measure seven key aspects of professional competence, including assessment, program design, implementation, evaluation, supervision, personal development, and collaboration. The results indicated that 61% of participants demonstrated a medium level of competency, with only 20% reaching a high level. Teachers showed relative strength in theoretical knowledge and program planning but struggled in applying digital tools, conducting program evaluations, and supervising counselor trainees. Factors such as limited training, insufficient institutional support, and high counselor-to-student ratios were identified as contributing barriers. These findings highlight the need for targeted professional development programs that incorporate digital integration, collaborative models, and structured supervision frameworks. The study concludes that without systemic efforts to strengthen professional capacities, the effectiveness of school-based counseling services may remain limited. Further research is recommended to evaluate the impact of mentorship programs and technology-enhanced training models on long-term competency improvement among GC teachers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 27 of 2008 highlights the responsibilities and performance expectations of counselors within the formal education systems. Counselors are required to meet competency standards to provide expert services

in guidance and counseling, aiming to empower counselees to make decisions for productive, prosperous lives. Guidance and counseling, as a profession, is defined by four main characteristics: unique expertise, standardized education, structured professional training, and appropriate remuneration, all ensuring safe and professional practice (Taufiq, 2023). Professional competency integrates knowledge, skills, and the ability to embody professional values (Jacob et al., 2025).

Previous studies have indicated that counselor competencies remain insufficient (Amor Almedina & Serrano Rodríguez, 2019; Demir et al., 2022; Ertelt et al., 2022; Jansson, 2024; Nilsson & Bengtsson, 2024; Rodríguez Morales et al., 2023). Research has shown that counselors often require additional training or supervision (Foon et al., 2020; McCarty et al., 2022; Mukhlisiana et al., 2024; Rodríguez Morales et al., 2023; Sofyan et al., 2024a; You et al., 2021), lack competence collaboration and self-efficacy in their practice (Awalya et al., 2023; Jarwan & Al-frehat, 2020), ethical dilemmas of school counselors (Şensoy & İkiz, 2023; Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2015), and face professional practice limitations such as health promotion, prevention, and remedial services (Jansson, 2024).

A preliminary study conducted by the researchers in 2023, involving 23 senior high school GC teachers in Bandung City, revealed that: (a) teachers possessed an adequate understanding of counseling assessment concepts but struggled to implement them in practice; (b) they could design guidance and counseling programs but faced difficulties in implementing comprehensive programs; (c) they were confused about coordinating and organizing necessary resources; (d) they were unable to provide appropriate recommendations for program improvement and development; (e) they rarely reported evaluation results to stakeholders; and (f) they seldom utilized evaluation findings for program enhancement.

The negative impacts of low professional competencies among GC teachers, as outlined, include issues related to their responsibilities and performance expectations (Cao et al., 2024; Crowell et al., 2015; Green & Lloyd, 2021; Kolbert et al., 2016). High school counselors suffer an ambiguous role (Blake, 2020; Gibbons & Williams, 2017). Low professional competencies increase the likelihood of errors in decision-making, which can have detrimental effects on the future of counselees (Håkansson et al., 2020; Karacan Ozdemir & Aracı İyiyaydin, 2019; Richards & Gedzyk-Nieman, 2024; Saputra et al., 2025; Sattin-Bajaj et al., 2018). Ultimately, lack of accountability (Isrofin et al., 2024; Vail, 2022; Zulu et al., 2022)

The purpose of this study is to explore professional competencies as the integration of knowledge, skills, and measurable abilities required for effective performance. The study aims to delve deeper into the professional competency profiles of GC teachers through a survey approach, intending to provide a comprehensive overview and serve as a basis for developing policies to improve professional competencies in the future.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research design

This study was conducted using a survey design to assess trends in professional competence among GC teachers. Additionally, another survey was conducted to examine the clinical activities performed by these teachers in real-world school settings while carrying out their responsibilities.

2.2 Participants

The participants in this study were GC teachers from public senior high schools by random sampling across the city of Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. A total of 93 participants took part in the study. There were no restrictions based on age, experience/length of teaching as GC teachers, certification status, and participation in professional organizations.

2.3 Data collection technique

The survey involved distributing questionnaires by Google Forms to participants to analyze trends in professional competencies. The researchers designed the professional competency

questionnaire, which was subjected to expert validation and reliability testing prior to its use. The tests confirmed that the questionnaire was valid and reliable, ensuring its appropriateness for the survey.

The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia No. 27 of 2008 and Permendikbud No. 111 of 2014. The questionnaire development process included the following steps: (a) defining the objectives of the questionnaire, (b) identifying the aspects and indicators of the variables, (c) formulating the questions or statements, (d) determining the measurement scale, (e) completing the questionnaire with introductory, main, and closing sections, (f) validating the questionnaire, (g) conducting a trial, (h) revising the questionnaire, (i) distributing the questionnaire, and (j) analyzing the data (Komalasari et al., 2016).

Table 1. Sample Questionnaire for Measuring Professional Competencies

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Aspect: Conducting and Utilizing Student Development Assessments Creating formats to collect student data in an easily understandable and usable manner.					
Aspect: Designing Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs Developing operational action plans for the implementation of guidance and counseling services in each class.					
Aspect: Implementing Learning, Social, Personal, and Career Counseling Programs Applying basic services to motivate students to achieve optimal academic performance.					
Aspect: Evaluating Inputs, Processes, Outcomes, and Impacts of Programs Assessing the effectiveness of one's activities as a counselor after executing a unit of a guidance and counseling program.					
Aspect: Supervising Professional Practice for Counseling Students Conducting structured monitoring to ensure supervisees carry out required activities effectively in real-world settings.					
Aspect: Enhancing Personal and Professional Quality Continuously Demonstrating dedication as a member of organizations such as ABKIN or MGBK at the branch (city/regency) level to enhance the image and role of GC teachers in education.					
Aspect: Collaborative Activities with School Personnel in Co-curricular Programs Collaborating with teachers and school staff to ensure co-curricular activities align with the school's educational goals.					

There were seven aspects of professional competencies, and the researchers broke down each aspect into several indicators. The first aspect consisted of ten indicators: 1) developing non-test instruments, 2) analyzing test and non-test data about students, 3) using ITP or ATP, 4) developing cumulative student data formats to collect student information, 5) interpreting psychological test results and providing explanations, 6) utilizing student data for school program development, 7) utilizing student data for student placement, 8) utilizing student data for career guidance, 9) utilizing student data to assist teachers in understanding students and guiding their learning, and 10) utilizing student data to provide assistance to students individually or in groups.

The second aspect consisted of two indicators: 1) developing guidance and counseling programs for the schools where GC teachers worked, and 2) translating these programs into operational plans for each class under their responsibility. The third aspect consisted of seven indicators: 1) delivering basic services, 2) delivering responsive services, 3) conducting individual planning, 4) managing and administering guidance and counseling programs, 5) utilizing media and technology in counseling, 6) collaborating in partnerships, and 7) performing participatory tasks. The fourth aspect consisted of two

indicators: 1) evaluating the process and outcomes of guidance and counseling program implementation and 2) ensuring program accountability or responsibility for the overall program. The fifth aspect consisted of two indicators: 1) implementing supervision programs and 2) evaluating and following up on supervision programs. The sixth aspect consisted of five indicators: 1) evaluating and following up on supervision programs, 2) pursuing advanced studies, 3) participating in training related to guidance and counseling, 4) utilizing scientific forums, community discussions, and mass media, and 5) engaging in research, development, and academic writing. The seventh aspect consisted of three indicators: 1) planning and developing programs, 2) mentoring self-development, and 3) fostering values and character development.

2.4 Data analysis

The questionnaire used in this research consisted solely of positive statements. The scoring mechanism assigned a score of 1 for the response "never", 2 for "rarely", 3 for "sometimes", 4 for "often", and 5 for "always". The data analysis was conducted in several stages: (1) computing the overall percentage of participants' professional competence achievement and categorizing the results; (2) determining the percentage of professional competence achievement for each aspect and indicator, followed by categorizing the results; (3) computing the percentage of participants in each achievement category based on the total number of participants ; (4) computing the percentage of participants in each achievement category for each indicator of professional competence. The classification of professional competence achievement was based on the classification outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Classification of Professional Competency Achievements

Range of Achievements	Classification
$X < 211$	Low-Competency
$211 \leq X < 307$	Medium-Competency
$X > 307$	High-Competency

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that GC teachers demonstrated professional competency within the medium classification. Several factors influence their professional competence, including educational background and transferable skills (Stan et al., 2010), proficiency in various assessment and intervention techniques used in counseling practice (Suprihatin, 2018), and awareness and adherence to professional ethics (Hajati, 2020; Lund et al., 2017). Additionally, environmental support, such as a conducive work environment and ongoing training for skill development (Jaladin et al., 2023), plays a significant role. Non-cognitive factors, such as positive attitudes (Nuryanto et al., 2024), stress tolerance (Gimbert et al., 2023), and adaptability (Stan et al., 2010), also contribute to their professional competency.

Further details regarding this achievement data are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Total of Professional Competency Achievements for Each Classification

Classification	Achievements (%)	Amount
Low-Competency	18 %	17
Medium-Competency	61 %	57
High-Competency	20 %	19

To gain deeper insight into the distribution of professional competencies among guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, the analysis was further broken down by specific competency aspects. Table 4 presents a detailed classification of achievement levels—high, medium, and low—across the seven core aspects measured in this study. These aspects include student assessment, program design and implementation, evaluation practices, supervision, continuous professional development, and collaboration with school personnel. This breakdown enables a more nuanced understanding of which specific areas GC teachers excel in and which require targeted improvement efforts.

Table 4. Percentage of Achievement in Professional Competency for Each Aspect

Code	Aspects of Professional Competency	Classification	Achievements (%)	Amount
A1	Conducting and Utilizing Student Development Assessments	High-Competency	9.7 %	9
		Medium-Competency	77.4 %	72
		Low-Competency	12.9 %	12
A2	Designing Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Programs	High-Competency	12.9 %	12
		Medium-Competency	72 %	67
		Low-Competency	15.1 %	14
A3	Implementing Learning, Social, Personal, and Career Counseling Programs	High-Competency	18.3 %	17
		Medium-Competency	63.4 %	59
		Low-Competency	18.3 %	17
A4	Evaluating Inputs, Processes, Outcomes, and Impacts of Programs	High-Competency	20.4 %	19
		Medium-Competency	61.3 %	57
		Low-Competency	18.3 %	17
A5	Supervising Professional Practice for Counseling Students	High-Competency	23.7 %	22
		Medium-Competency	45.2 %	42
		Low-Competency	31.1 %	29
A6	Enhancing Personal and Professional Quality Continuously	High-Competency	20.4 %	19
		Medium-Competency	60.2 %	56
		Low-Competency	19.4 %	18
A7	Collaborative Activities with School Personnel in Co-curricular Programs	High-Competency	13.9 %	13
		Medium-Competency	65.6 %	61
		Low-Competency	20.5 %	19

3.1 Assessment and Program Evaluation

The majority of participants (77.4%) were classified in the medium-competency category for conducting and utilizing student development assessment results and understanding their environment. Another challenge identified was the implementation of assessments. Many GC teachers struggle to conduct assessments effectively due to time constraints, lack of technical knowledge, and an inability to develop valid assessment tools, which affects the accuracy of the services they provide (Hanifah, 2017). Additionally, the lack of training in technology-based assessments can be a significant barrier (Asabere & Amoako, 2021). Based on an interview with a GC teacher in Bandung, he often juggles multiple tasks within the school environment, which limits the time they he can dedicate to conducting assessments. A GC teacher may need to assess large groups of students but has limited time to engage in a detailed analysis of each individual case. This leads to rushed evaluations that may not capture the full scope of a student's needs or strengths.

GC teachers in Indonesia have yet to fully leverage assessment tools (Sukmawati & Yusri, 2020). The medium-competency (72%) in designing comprehensive guidance and counseling programs suggests that while GC teachers have a basic understanding of planning, they often lack innovation or the ability to adapt to student's needs. (Gysbers & Henderson, 2017) highlight the importance of a deep understanding of the comprehensive guidance and counseling framework. A study (Pirmansyah et al., 2020) reveals that school counselors in madrasahs within Garut Regency face challenges in effectively managing guidance and counseling services, with 43% classified as performing poorly. This suggests that school counselors continue to face difficulties in effectively managing these services. The majority GC teachers (63.4%) fell into the medium-competency classification, indicating that while they were

capable of implementing guidance and counseling programs, they often lacked adaptability in tailoring strategies to meet individual needs (Skantz-Åberg et al., 2022).

The majority of GC teachers (61.3%) were classified in the medium-category for program evaluation. A counselor's knowledge of evaluation, skills in assessing programs, and self-efficacy in utilizing data significantly influence their ability to evaluate programs effectively (Sari, 2023). A research found that counselors' knowledge and skills in program development contributed to 59% of their self-efficacy in program evaluation (Mujiyati et al., 2020). A GC teacher in Bandung conducted yearly evaluations of their GC program, but struggled to effectively use the feedback from students and parents. Lacking training in data analysis, they were unsure of how to use the feedback to improve the program, which resulted in repeated mistakes and a lack of program progress.

3.2 Supervision and Professional Development

Medium-competency (45.2%) and low-competency (31.1%) levels in supervising counselor-in-training students indicated that many GC teachers lack confidence in their supervisory roles. Efforts to personalize school counselors through formal education, supported by supervision during their educational process, aim to enhance their clinical and multicultural competencies, which are crucial for delivering effective guidance and counseling services in school (Sofyan et al., 2024b). Clinical supervision contributes to increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions (Sabella et al., 2024). It also strengthens counselors' confidence in their professional abilities and fosters strong relationships between counselors and their counselees (Öztürk & Duran, 2024). Additionally, clinical supervision is a vital practice for mental health professionals working in various therapeutic contexts (Bledsoe et al., 2019). The absence of adequate supervision programs and institutional support frequently hinders the development of counselor competencies. Clinical supervision encompasses three overarching themes that underpin the fundamental principles of effective school counseling supervision, described as "simple, not easy": (1) counselor growth, (2) supervisor expertise, and (3) sustainability (Gillen et al., 2024).

From the interviews conducted with GC teachers, several challenges emerged regarding their lack of confidence in supervising counselor-in-training students. One interviewee shared their experience of feeling unprepared and unsupported when it came to overseeing counseling students during their practicum. They mentioned that while they had the theoretical knowledge, they felt untrained in how to provide meaningful feedback and guide students effectively in their professional development. For instance, one GC teacher discussed how they often struggled with giving constructive feedback to trainees, unsure if their evaluations were clear enough or if they were offering the right kind of support. This uncertainty led to a sense of inadequacy in their role, which further impacted their confidence.

Another case highlighted the absence of a structured mentorship program. One GC teacher shared that they felt isolated in their supervisory responsibilities and lacked regular guidance from experienced supervisors. Without structured supervision, many GC teachers were left to navigate their supervisory roles on their own, which resulted in feelings of doubt and frustration. The lack of adequate clinical supervision programs, as identified in the interviews, frequently hindered the development of counselor competencies. A GC teacher shared how the absence of routine meetings or guidance from a senior supervisor meant that errors were repeated, and best practices weren't shared, which led to a lack of progression in the professional growth of counselor trainees.

Specific recommendations for establishing a mandatory supervision program for new counselors include implementing structured mentorship programs, providing supervisor training, increasing institutional support, fostering a culture of feedback, monitoring progress, and conducting regular evaluations. By implementing these recommendations, schools can create a robust system that strengthens the professional development of new counselors, fosters confidence in supervisory roles, and ultimately enhances the quality of counseling services provided to students.

3.3 Collaboration and Teamwork

The majority of guidance and counseling teachers (65.6%) were in the medium-competency category in collaborating with school personnel. The probability of GC teachers engaging in collaborative efforts relies on their interpersonal relationship skills and overall effectiveness. Fostering mutual understanding and empathy is crucial for establishing harmonious two-way communication (Lin, 2024). Counselors addressing complex issues involving at-risk youth can improve the effectiveness of prevention programs by adopting a collaborative consultation model. This approach promotes the development of more comprehensive and integrated programs, minimizing fragmentation and duplication of efforts (Keys et al., 1998), and aiding in the prevention and management of sexual misconduct in schools (Edwards, 2017). Additionally, it fosters collaboration among all participants in the educational process, contributing to the creation of supportive learning environments (Mrvar & Mažgon, 2017), and enhancing student achievement (Yavuz et al., 2017).

From the interviews with GC teachers, several challenges regarding collaboration with school personnel emerged. One teacher shared their struggle to establish effective communication with teachers and administrators due to time constraints and competing priorities, making it difficult to integrate GC programs into the school curriculum. Another GC teacher highlighted the challenge of accessing professional development opportunities, as scheduling conflicts and a lack of institutional support often left them isolated in their growth. Additionally, some teachers noted that school management hesitated to allocate time for ongoing learning or collaboration with external experts, leading to a disconnect from broader professional networks and limiting their ability to implement new ideas in their practice.

Specific recommendations to encourage collaboration between schools and professional counseling organizations are structured collaboration time, partnerships with professional counseling organizations, mentorship and networking programs, and integration of counseling into the broader school framework. By addressing these challenges and implementing these recommendations, the school can foster a more collaborative and integrated approach to counseling, benefiting both GC teachers and students.

3.4 Technology and Digital Counseling Tools

The use of media and technology in guidance and counseling has become a crucial factor in enhancing the effectiveness of counselors' services in the digital age. As the education system continues to evolve, guidance and counseling services are playing an increasingly vital role in adapting to the needs of the digital era. Studies indicate that incorporating technology and digital media in guidance and counseling services can improve accessibility, foster the development of digital skills (Soleha et al., 2023), offer greater time flexibility (Harahap et al., 2023), and facilitate more comfortable interactions (Basri, 2018). Equally important, the use of technology plays a key role in ensuring accountability and assuring stakeholders that guidance and counseling services positively contribute to student success (Isrofin et al., 2024). Several challenges hinder counselors from utilizing technology effectively in guidance and counseling services, including limited technological skills, inadequate facilities (Basri, 2018), a high counselor-to-student ratio (Sumarwiyah & Zamroni, 2024), and concerns regarding security and privacy (Harahap et al., 2023).

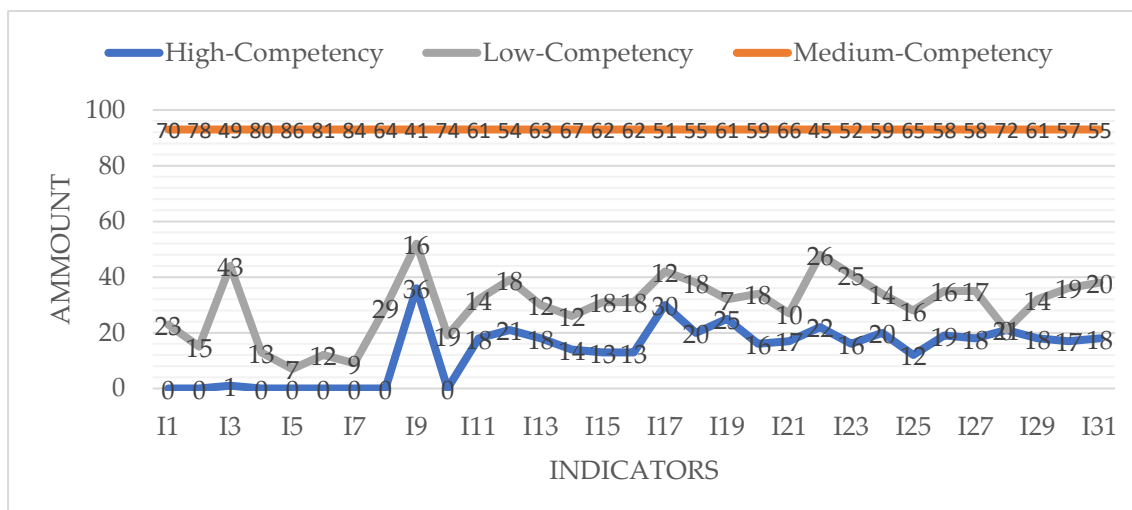


Figure 1. Percentage of Achievement in Professional Competency for Each Indicator

Collaboration with school personnel, along with the competencies to supervise and evaluate counseling programs, are essential indicator of effective school counseling practice. The importance of collaborative efforts, shared responsibility, and the implementation of proactive policies to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct in schools has been emphasized in the literature (Edwards, 2017). Moreover, the role of school counselors in collaboration should be understood more broadly –not only within the school environment but also in terms of partnerships with external organizations, institutions, and community stakeholders to address the diverse challenges faced by students and their families (Mrvar & Mažgon, 2017). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2016) underscores the expectation that school counselors actively participate in leadership, advocacy, and systemic change through collaboration and cooperation. As Haskins and Singh (2016) note, collaboration is a fundamental aspect of effective counseling practice. Counselors are expected to advocate for students while being attuned to the broader ecological systems that influence students' psychological well-being and adaptability (Cigrand et al., 2015; Havlik et al., 2018).

Equally important is the ability to supervise and evaluate counseling programs to ensure their relevance and impact. Program evaluation, particularly when driven by data, is critical for maintaining the quality and effectiveness of counseling services (Corey, 2016). However, recent findings indicate that only 16%–22% of guidance and counseling (GC) teachers met high competency standards in program supervision and evaluation, highlighting a significant area for professional development.

Several challenges emerged regarding their use of technology in counseling from the interviews with GC teachers. One teacher shared that despite recognizing the benefits of incorporating digital tools into their practice, they struggled with limited technological skills, which hindered their ability to effectively use digital media in their sessions. Another teacher explained that inadequate facilities, such as outdated computers or unreliable internet connections, created significant barriers to technology integration. As a result, they were unable to fully leverage digital tools to improve counseling services, which impacted accessibility and the overall effectiveness of their programs.

Additionally, GC teachers who engage in scientific forums, research, and character development play a strategic role in promoting professionalism and educational success. Their active involvement in scientific forums and research is essential for professional growth and the enhancement of guidance and counseling services in schools. This includes involvement in seminars, workshops, action research training, panel discussions, scientific forums, writing academic journals (Fitri et al., 2016), and developing indigenous approaches (Sarwono, 2018). Counselors play a key role in character education as a guide, mediator, and problem solver, assisting students in addressing (Hamni et al., 2025; Panzola & Karneli, 2020; Rachmadiyah, 2024; Rizai & Ussolikhah, 2022; Sari, 2023).

The GC teacher mentioned the difficulty of balancing a high counselor-to-student ratio, which made it challenging to dedicate time to learning and implementing new technological strategies. This workload, combined with concerns about maintaining security and privacy in online interactions, further complicated the integrations of technology into their counseling practices.

To address these challenges, specific recommendations include creating digital training modules to help GC teachers develop the necessary technological skills. These modules could cover topics such as using online counseling platforms, conducting virtual workshops, and maintaining data security. Offering flexible, on-demand training would provide GC teachers with the time flexibility they need to learn and adapt to digital tools. Moreover, schools could allocate resources to improve the technological infrastructure, ensuring that all GC teachers have access to the necessary equipment and internet connectivity. Providing continuous support and guidance from more experienced peers or external experts would also help GC teachers integrate technology into their practices effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the professional competencies of guidance and counseling (GC) teachers in Bandung City are generally at a moderate level, with notable gaps in specific areas. While most teachers demonstrate competency in designing counseling programs, challenges persist in implementation, adaptation to individual student needs, and effective utilization of assessment results. Limited technological proficiency and inadequate training further hinder the integration of digital tools in counseling services, while supervisory skills and collaboration with school personnel remain underdeveloped, impacting the overall effectiveness of counseling interventions. To enhance GC teachers' competencies, targeted professional development programs should be prioritized, particularly in the areas of technology integration, data-driven decision-making, and interprofessional collaboration. Policymakers should consider revising training curricula to incorporate practical applications of digital tools in counseling, and schools must provide structured mentorship programs to strengthen supervisory skills and foster interdisciplinary teamwork. However, this study is limited by its sample size, as it only includes 93 GC teachers from public senior high schools in Bandung City, which may not fully represent the broader population. Additionally, self-reported data may introduce potential response bias, affecting the accuracy of competency assessments. Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of targeted training interventions in improving GC teachers' competencies, with a longitudinal approach providing deeper insights into how professional development efforts translate into improved counseling outcomes. Expanding the study to include teachers from different educational levels and regions would allow for more generalizable findings.

Conflicts of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest on this research.

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