

## **PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR PROFILE**

*(Between Expectation and Reality)*

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**Abstract:** To find out, to figure out, and to build image about professional counselors nowadays are like to find out an unidentified needle in the straw. The counselors may receive the approved of regulation No. 20, 2002 about National System of Education with joy, which explained that the counselors had been stated clearly and precisely in that regulation, and that it is equal at the same level with other professions in education field such as classroom teachers, course teachers, practice teachers, or others. Based on this fact, can counselors proud of their title without any attempts to change the paradigm so that the professional counselors deserve that title. The title of professional counselor is not automatically attached to someone without approval from an authorized firm or professional organization from which the institution that has authority to produce professional counselors are determined. Credentialing is one way to make profession parallelism and standardization for a counselor which includes certification, license, and accreditation.

**Keywords:** counselors, professional, credentialing

Until today there are not clear and precise regulations from the government or professional association in determining credentialing either in giving license, accreditation, or certification; while the need of the counselors in any setting outside the schools seems to increase.

There is a variety of curriculum in counselor education in any institutions or Teachers Training Institutions including S1, S2, and S3 level. The curriculums become more vary after the government released the Decision of Education Ministry No. 045/U/2002 to change the previous Decision No. 232/U/2000 about the major curriculum. In this decision each institution has authority to develop its own curriculum. This results in unclear the products will be, it all depends on from which institution a counselor was graduated.

There is not any match and clear cut between vocational and institutional educations, especially for S1 and S2 levels. This can be seen from guidance and counseling graduation, in one side, some still doubt to call themselves counselors, and in other side, some are confidently called themselves counselors, although their knowledge, academically and professionally, are questionable.

## **CREDENTIALING**

In line with the development, the demand of service from a “Helping Profession” will be very urgent. One kind of helping profession that is needed nowadays is a professional “counselor.” Many hopes are relied on a counselor in our lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in any service setting. There are more than 30 trends about counseling profession in the future. Findings from Daniel and Weikel in 1983 (as cited in Baruth & Robinson, 1987) describe about counseling trends from the *very possible* to the *possible* to develop in 21<sup>st</sup> century orderly. The findings are among others:

1. There will be more emphasis on accreditation of the counselor education program.
2. There will be more emphasis on long life education and in-service training for the counselors.
3. There will be more demands on the training after graduate education in special fields, such as counselors for family, parents, marriage, or drugs.
4. A counselor will have to get certificate and permission from the state.
5. There will be a decrease in counselor education program.

From the above findings, it can be stated that what Daniel and Weikel have predicted in almost a quarter of century seems to happen these days in some cases. In addition, although the study was done in America, it is not impossible that it can happen in Indonesia. If we compare with the fact in Indonesia related to the counseling development these days, what Daniel and Weikel have done also happen here, although in different sequence and emphasis.

Association of Counseling and Guidance in Indonesia (*Asosiasi Bimbingan Konseling Indonesia* or ABKIN) as a professional organization that involves the school counselors should be aware in managing the organization. The first step done by the board of the organization was to change the name of the organization. ABKIN which once named the Unity of Indonesia Guidance Officer (*Ikatan Petugas Bimbingan Indonesia* or shortened IPBI) was built in 1975. One purpose to change the name of the organization was to make the profession of the counselors more professional. In addition, the term guidance was changed to be counseling. In ABKIN, the counselors are expected to work better than before. Unfortunately, some of the guidance officers in schools feel as if they are not involved in the organization. In contrast, many graduates from program other than Guidance and Counseling have become members of ABKIN and have done counselors' job in schools. As a result, the quality of the counselors in schools decrease because they do not have counseling background. Based on this fact, it is important to make such a standardization of the profession of the counselors, especially for those who work in schools. Besides, it needs more trainings for the counselors so that they will have competence in their field and either have national or international standard, as established by the government (*Direktorat Pembinaan Tenaga kependidikan dan Ketenagaan Perguruan Tinggi*, 2004; Hosie, W.T & Glossoff, L.H., 2001).

What happens in real conditions until today is that each counselor seems to work by their own and based on criteria and standards they think it is appropriate. The only criteria they have is that they can or cannot do the job. The title of counselor can be attached by someone or addressed to anyone without considering his or her competence, educational background, and authority. This is not a good precedent, of course, if in reality we can see that the need of the counselors becomes increase in certain settings. To overcome this, it needs action to make people believe and realize the existence of the counselors (build a public trust). Below are some requirements proposed by ABKIN (2003) for a counselor. A counselor is expected to: (1) have skill and competence; (2) be based on professional counselor standard regulations and create a comfortable atmosphere for the people including: codification of professional conduct, job organization on a standardized professional conduct, and motivated to serve anyone who needs his service; (3) build a fairly codes of ethics as a consequence of the profession; (4) determine a standardized qualification and procedures of certification related to the suitability for a professional to do his job; (5) determine the model of education, minimum standard qualification, and certification of professional counselor training; (6) develop a national and international connection, networking and interdisciplinary, and human resources based on accountability and public need.

The problem is that the codes of ethics have not socialized clearly, though they are not obeyed. There is no action done by the profession association or the authority, in this case *Depdiknas*, ABKIN and special authorized team, to give punishment to those who do the malpractice in their counseling activities. Codes of ethics of the profession should be maintained in order to:

- a. reverse the profession status

- b. protect the clients from the malpractices
- c. improve the quality of the profession
- d. keep the quality standard and the profession status
- e. build a bound between the profession and the man who does that profession.

(Source: *Direktorat Pembinaan Tenaga Kependidikan dan Ketenagaan Perguruan Tinggi*, 2004).

The profession codes of ethics can be maintained if it is clear enough between those who have authority to maintain the codes of ethics and those who deserve punishment of the malpractice they may do. In Indonesia context, ABKIN should have power to maintain the profession codes of ethics. Unfortunately, the fact shows that no member of the association had ever deserved a punishment until today. This may be caused by the fact that ABKIN do not make a tight selection in recruiting new members. Besides, ABKIN as a root of the organization cannot control anything done by its members. In addition to this fact, divisions under ABKIN such as ISKIN, IPKON, IDPI, IGBI do not function in maintaining the codes of ethics. IIBKIN, IKI is the organization that seems to have precise and tight requirements in recruiting its new members. Actually, it seems that the codes of ethics—which consists of five chapters and then explained in some descriptions like qualification that deals with knowledge, value and attitude, and authority acknowledgement—ABKIN has released is more or less complete. Below are the main of codes of ethics by ABKIN:

 **Information, Testing, and Research.**

 **Service process**

- Relationship in servicing
- Relationship with clients.

✚ **Consultation and Relationship with Colleagues or Other Experts**

- Consultation with colleagues
- Take over case.

✚ **Institutional Relationship**

✚ **Self-Practice, and Report to Others**

✚ **Loyalty to the Profession**

(Source: *Direktorat Pembinaan Tenaga Kependidikan dan Ketenagaan Perguruan Tinggi, 2004*).

In relation to the sanction against the codes of ethics, the codes of ethics by ABKIN seems to be the same as in the codes of ethics released by APA and APGA in United States in early 1960s. In 1974, APGA itself had released the codes of ethics that emphasized on professional standard in terms of sample of action and integrity, and both referred to the clients. The codes of ethics by APGA involves Preamble and 7 parts of universal affairs including *counseling, testing, research and publication, and standard preparation* (George, R.L. & Cristiani, T.S., 1981). However, in further development of guidance and counseling in United States, only two organizations accredited, which had been tightly and specifically designed, the educational programs for the professional counselors, that is *Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)* and *Council on Rehabilitation Education (MAIN)*. Besides the tightly and specifically accreditation given by CACREP and MAIN, the counselors were also directed to keep and maintain actual, scientific, and professional information based on the standardized codes of ethics released by ACA in 1995 (Hosie, W.T. & Glossoff, 2001).

Credentialing in a profession organization is a compulsory aspect and it should available as an approved towards ability, trust, and authority of someone or an institution in doing their profession. In other words, credentialing is a regulation to determine whether someone or an

institution is suitable or not to hold certification, accreditation, and license. In this case, credentialing functions as formal acknowledgement for the counselors or institutions that produce the counselors.

The counselors are expected to provide themselves with *certification* from authorized institution, for both undergraduate and graduate programs. In doing his job, either formal or private, a counselor has to hold a *license* released by a profession association, in this case ABKIN. *Accreditation*, on the other hand, is given to an institution, Teacher Training Institution, or certain universities that produce counselors. Accreditation is done by National Education Department (*Depdiknas*) or a committee formed by the government for that purpose which is intended to obtain an evaluation degree on the condition a target institution must have (ABKIN, 2004; Hosie, W.T. & Glossoff, L.H., 2001). Furthermore, Hosie and Glossoff explained that in the United States accreditation can be done in National level, Regional level, or in Country level. The same thing happens in Indonesia that specific accreditation is given by a profession association for specific programs (e.g., Psychology Tester for Guidance and Counseling is given by ABKIN). Other divisions under ABKIN are better to follow what has been done by IIBKIN. What has been standardized by MAIN and CACREP, although not all, can be adopted and applied in Indonesia in order to reach professional counselor.

## **CURRICULUM VARIETY**

Another problem is the curriculum. Curriculum of an education institution, a university, or LPTK is an important element to determine its graduates profile. The profile of the counselors produced by an education institution reflects the level of that institution. Though, the more variety the curriculums used by each institution are, the more variety the profiles of the counselors will be produced. As a result, there will be counselors of UNJ, UPI, UM, UKSW,

and/or of any other universities. If it is let like that, it will be quite hard for us to get the picture of a counselor's profile. A decree from the Minister of National Education No. 054/U/2002 about the curriculum seems to make this situation getting worst because each university has authority to make its own curriculum. If we compare it with the former decree also by the Ministry of National Education No. 232/U/2000, it seems that the former one is better than the latest one in terms of its clear criteria for the curriculum, although it had disadvantages anyway. So based on the newly decree, its institution can make its own curriculum, and in turn, it will result in more vary ability of the graduates of each institution. Ideally, the main curriculum for the whole institutions should be in the same standard, but it had been reduced as well. Some important issues related to the credit (*SKS*) of the subjects as stated in the decree are among others: in Section 5 Chapter III, it is stated that the credits for undergraduate (S1) students are between 144 *SKS* up to 160 *SKS*. In Section 6 verse (2), it is stated that the Minister of National Education does not set a main curriculum of each institution as stated in Section 11 verse (1) of the former decree No. 232/U/2000. This imply that the institution itself can develop its own curriculum together with the profession community and the stakeholder based on the needs and certain consideration of each institution. The specification of the curriculum can be developed referring to local load curriculum or certain criteria such as *Pola Ilmiah Pokok* (PIP) of that institution. For the programs that deals with developing scientific academic discourse, this curriculum gap may not have effect. However, for Guidance and Counseling Program this gap has much effects, because the curriculum for this program is designed for both academic purpose and for profession education, and, as a result, there will no standardized profile of the counselors—the standardization is according to each institution.



Below is an example of the spread of subjects from two different institutions, which will result in different quality of the outputs as well.

Mata Kuliah Prodi Bimbingan dan Konseling Universitas sebelas Maret Surakarta tahun 2016

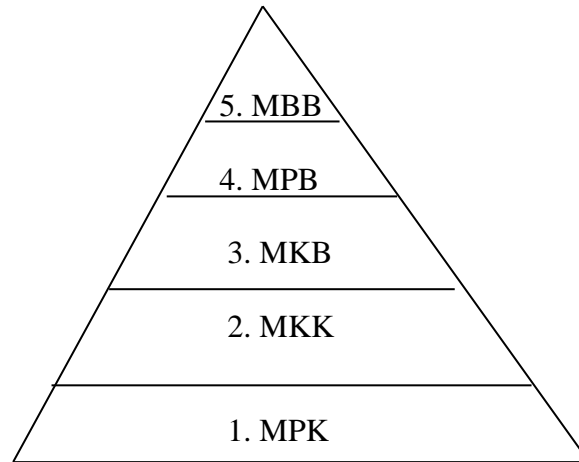
<b>KELOMPOK MATA KULIAH</b>	<b>SKS</b>	<b>Keterangan</b>
A. MATAKULIAH PENGEMBANGAN KEPRIBADIAN (MPK)	15	Wajib diikuti
B. MATAKULIAH KEILMUAN DAN KETERAMPILAN (MKK I)	13	Wajib diikuti
C. MATAKULIAH KEILMUAN DAN KETERAMPILAN (MKK II)	50	Wajib diikuti
D. MATAKULIAH KEAHLIAN BERKARYA (MKB)	43	Wajib diikuti
E. MATAKULIAH PERILAKU BERKARYA (MPB)	10	Wajib diikuti
F. MATAKULIAH BERKEHIDUPAN BERMASYARAKAT (MBB)	6	Wajib diikuti
G. MATAKULIAH PILIHAN: MATAKULIAH BERKEHIDUPAN BERMASYARAKAT (MBB)	12	Pilihan
<b>JUMLAH</b>		<b>145</b>

### **STRUKTUR KURIKULUM PROGDI BIMBINGAN KONSELING**

<b>Group of Subjects</b>	<b>UNISRI (SKS)</b>	<b>UNS (SKS)</b>
<i>MK Pengemb. Kepribadian (MPK)</i>	12	15
<i>MK Keilmuan dan Ketrampilan (MKK)</i>	62	63
<i>MK Keahlian Berkarya (MKB)</i>	45	43
<i>MK Perilaku Berkarya (MPB)</i>	18	10
<i>MK Berkehidupan Bermasyarakat (MBB)</i>	10	12
<b>J u m l a h</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>145</b>

**Source:** Data from *PEDOMAN STUDI BK 2016 UNS Surakarta Edition and Panduan FKIP UNISRI 2003* (curriculum attached)

In order to develop competence, it is better consider the curriculum spread as drawn in the following:



**Keterangan:**

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. <i>Matakuliah Pengembangan Kepribadian (MPK)</i>   | 12 SKS |
| 2. <i>Matakuliah Keilmuan &amp; Ketrampilan (MKK)</i> | 62 SKS |
| 3. <i>Matakuliah Keahlian Berkarya (MKB)</i>          | 45 SKS |
| 4. <i>Matakuliah Perilaku Berkarya (MPB)</i>          | 18 SKS |
| 5. <i>Matakuliah Berkehidupan Bermasyarakat (MBB)</i> | 6 SKS  |

From the above examples, it be concluded that the curriculums developed by UNISRI and UNS Surakarta do not reach a standard of competence development.

## **VOCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

The purpose of this subtopic is based on unavailability of a clear cut between the implementation of academic education and professional education from counselor education institutions. A clear description from profession association about students who convert to Guidance and Counseling Program from any other programs is also unavailable. Until today, each institution determines its own regulation related to conversion students—different

institution has different subjects to be taken for the conversion students. And, the fact that the implantation in counseling education either for academic purpose or for professional purpose is still done together; while, ideally, they must be separated.

Actually, the counselor education for professional purpose has been designed by ABKIN, but it is intended for the alumni of Guidance and Counseling Program of undergraduate level (S1). In other words, to continue his study to the higher education an undergraduate alumni may choose one of two different kinds of counseling education. If he prefers to be an academician, he may choose graduate schools (S2 and S3 levels). If he prefers to be a professional counselor, he may choose special education for counselors (PPK) Specialist level 1 (Sp. 1), from which he can continue to the upper level (PPK Sp. 2). The graduate of PPK Sp. 1 are similar to S2 graduate in academic education, and those of PPK Sp. 2 are similar to S3 graduate in academic education. Though, S1 level education is functioned as basic for the students and prepare them to the higher level, for both academic purpose and professional purpose (ABKIN, 2004). The question is that: Who has authority to conduct professional education? What are the preparations the authority should have in conducting the professional education? Who has authority to give accreditation to the education of counselor profession? And, what are the criteria in terms of accreditation? ABKIN as the main organization of the counselors seems does not have answers for these questions because what they have determined for all levels of education are still conceptual and they are hard to implement. UNP had tried to conduct the counselors education for the professional but it still has problems with the professional association. Related to the conversion, ABKIN has not formulated a fix curriculum for the converting students. For example, if a master graduate of Guidance and Counseling

from academic education wants to continue to the professional education (PPK Sp. 2), how many SKS he has to take and how many SKS can be conversed, or the other way round.

On the contrary, the counselor education in the United States has been standardized, in this case CACREP has determined the accreditation with some tight requirements. This is because the counselor education in the United States is directed to professional competence. Each counselor candidate is directed to be a part-timer and has to use at least 40% of their study time to practice with the clients. The same condition is implemented to the master (S2) and doctoral (S3) education in any of its specialization (Hosie & Glosoff, 2001). ABKIN has to consider the pattern of counselor education in the United States and adopt it for Indonesian condition, not only in its educational process but also in its supervision. The supervision itself should be done during the education process and when the counselors practice in the field. Of course, the qualification of the supervisors must be firstly determined (Bordes, 2001). ABKIN must have good will to do that and are able to accommodate what CACREP and MAIN have done in the United States with an intention to improve its prestige and authority.

## **CONCLUSION**

The expectation to produce professional counselors is not as easy as it is said. It needs participation from many elements of this field—those who have good will and responsibility and want to work together. Not like before where the associations blame one another; while the needs of professional counselors increase nowadays, either in the schools or outside the schools. Related to this fact, some following steps can be considered:

ABKIN has to work hard and work together with the government in a comfortable relationship, in this case the Ministry of National Education in order to formulate some steps in determining credentialing and its technical sets.

ABKIN has to recruit and work together with the elder counselors in order to ask for suggestions and instructions in developing the counseling education in Indonesia.

Send counselors to the countries where the counseling education has been established and use it as references to develop the counseling education in Indonesia.

Divisions under ABKIN should be more activated so that they can improve themselves according to their own characteristics and control their members' activities in the field.

More discussions about pattern of counselor education implementation based on the appropriate curriculum, standardized credentialing system which formulated by capable counselors who always follow the new trends in counseling, need to be done by including Department of National Education, profession association and institutions that conduct the Guidance and Counseling Program.

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