

ETHICAL DILEMMA: CHALLENGES AND IMPACTS ON SCHOOL COUNSELOR WELFARE

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Abstract. School counselors frequently encounter dilemmas that challenge their professional judgment and emotional resilience. These dilemmas, when present, have the capacity to assume a heightened degree of complexity, which can impede school counselors' ability to make informed decisions, thereby giving rise to ethical dilemmas. The ability of school counselors to address ethical dilemmas is predicated on their capacity to view problems from multiple perspectives. The inability to address ethical dilemmas over an extended period and on repeated occasions can have a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of school counselors. This study aims to explore ethical dilemmas on school counselors' wellbeing through a Systematic Literature Review. Articles were sourced from reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and APA PsycArticles, with a focus on publications from the past five years. The scanning process for documents was carried out following the outline outlined in The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020, to ensure that the review process was robust and rigorous. The review identified that ethical dilemmas are common in the school counseling context, including (1) confidentiality, (2) competence, (3) role conflict, (4) relationship conflict, (5) personal bias, (6) Unethical Request, (7) Technology, and (8) Willingness of the client. These dilemmas have been shown to significantly affect counselors' psychological wellbeing. The findings reveal that frequent exposure to ethical conflicts contributes to increased stress levels and emotional exhaustion, ultimately leading to professional burnout. This research emphasizes the need for preventive strategies, such as the use of ethical decision-making models, training, and supervision. Policies should be included in a professional code of ethics that considers multicultural aspects, as well as the rights of counselors, students, and other parties involved.

Keywords: ethical dilemma, school counselor, wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

There are various terms used to refer to professionals who are tasked with supporting student welfare in schools, such as “school counselor,” “guidance counselor,” “educational counselor,” and “school psychologist. The author uses the term “school counselor” in this study to align with the term most frequently used in various literature. According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), school counselors are certified/licensed educators who improve student success for all learners by implementing comprehensive school counseling programs. School counselors design and deliver school counseling programs that improve student learning outcomes. They lead, champion, and collaborate to promote equity and access for all students by connecting their school counseling program to the school's academic mission and school improvement plan. They uphold ASCA's ethical and professional standards and promote the development of school counseling programs based on the following areas of the ASCA National Model: defining, delivering, managing, and assessing (ASCA, 2023).

A review of the literature reveals that each country has its own provisions regarding the competencies that school counselors must possess. In Indonesia, the competencies of counselors are outlined in the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 27 of 2008 on Standards for Academic Qualifications and Competencies of Counselors. This regulatory document stipulates that counselors must possess a multifaceted set of competencies, including pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. Some of these competencies are similar to those of school counselors in other countries, except that some guidelines in other countries, such as those from America and Australia, provide more detailed descriptions of competencies.

The implementation of counseling services in education requires school counselors to have the capacity to build positive relationships and maintain equilibrium among the diverse interests of various stakeholders, including students, subject teachers, principals, administrative staff, parents, and other relevant parties (Boccio, 2021). School counselors have been shown to play a crucial role in fostering a welcoming school climate and cultivating a culture of effective community partnerships among schools and families (Yildiz, 2021). Nonetheless, the ongoing discourse surrounding the roles and responsibilities of school counselors (Lewis et al., 2022) and the increasing diversity and population of learners in schools present distinctive challenges and dilemmas for school counselors that are more intricate than those encountered by other professionals in schools (Laletas, 2019).

School counselors play an instrumental role in promoting student wellbeing. In carrying out their roles, school counselors often face dilemmas, particularly those related to moral issues. The more complex the dilemmas they face, the more difficult it will be for them to make decisions and cause ethical dilemmas. In several studies, it has been found that school counselors faced with various dilemmas are often less aware of the ethical implications of their situations. Consequently, they tend to make decisions based on their instincts (Levitt, 2019) when resolving these dilemmas.

However, there is a dearth of research focusing on the wellbeing of educators, particularly school counselors. Most research on educational wellbeing focuses on students. As previously mentioned, school counselors play an important role in promoting student wellbeing. Their inability to handle ethical dilemmas has been shown to cause significant psychological distress. This can negatively impact the wellbeing of school counselors and affect their ability to perform their professional role of promoting student wellbeing. In a longitudinal study of 310 teachers in Finland, it was found that the group of teachers who often faced dilemmas experienced the highest level of fatigue when compared to teachers who rarely or only faced certain dilemmas (Heikkilä et al., 2023). This indicates that ethical dilemmas require attention from both school counselors and mental health workers in schools, as well as from professionals and professional organizations that oversee school counselors.

Therefore, research is needed to examine ethical dilemmas and their impact on the wellbeing of school counsellors. Investigating these issues will facilitate the development of alternative solutions to address the aforementioned problem. These solutions will allow school counselors to optimize their role in helping and improving student welfare by maintaining their own wellbeing. This research has the potential to assist professional organizations in developing strategies that enhance the capacity of school counselors. The implementation of such strategies may contribute to maintaining public trust in the role of guidance and counseling within educational institutions.

METHODS

The research was conducted through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR). A successful review involves three major stages: planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting the

review (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). Despite differences in procedures across various types of literature, all the reviews can be conducted following eight common steps reviews (Xiao & Watson, 2019) : (1) formulating the research problem; (2) developing and validating the review protocol; (3) searching the literature; (4) screening for inclusion; (5) assessing quality; (6) extracting data; (7) analyzing and synthesizing data; and (8) reporting the findings (Figure 1).

Step 1. Formulate the problem: The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how ethical dilemmas affect the wellbeing of school counselors. The main question was answered through the following specific questions:

1. What ethical dilemmas are confronted by school counselors?
2. What is the impact of ethical dilemmas on the wellbeing of school counselors?
3. Which strategies can be implemented to facilitate the resolution of ethical dilemmas while ensuring the wellbeing of school counselors?

Step 2. Develop and Validate the Review Protocol: The selection, analysis, and reporting of the findings were conducted in accordance with the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020" guidelines. The PRISMA flow diagram used to select the articles consists of three steps: "Identification, screening, and inclusion."

Step 3. Search the literature: Articles for this study were collected from Scopus, Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and the APAPSy Articles database sources to identify articles that address the ethical dilemmas experienced by school counselors and their impact on counselor well-being. Specifically, the search for articles in the Google Scholar data source was carried out using the Publish or Perish software program. The literature search process was conducted in accordance with keywords, years of research, and other predetermined inclusion criteria (Okoli & Schabram, 2010).

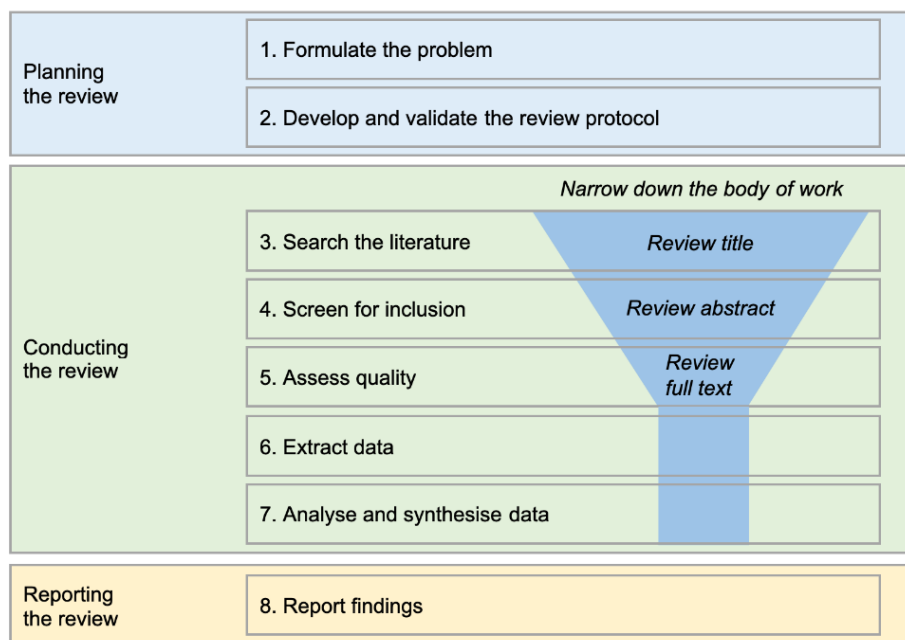


Figure 1. Process of systematic literature review

Step 4: Screen for Inclusion: Article screening involved both automatic and manual screening, retrieval of screened articles, and determination of their eligibility for review. At this point, the inclusion criteria were applied to include the articles. The article inclusion criteria are given in Table 1. Accordingly, the year range from 2020 to 2025, document type: articles, and language: English, were selected based on the inclusion criteria. The English terms and search strings using Boolean “AND” and “OR” in keywords "Ethical Dilemma" AND "School Counselor" OR "School Psychologist" AND "Welfare" OR "Well Being" were utilized to align with the database sources, thereby achieving a more extensive reach.

Table 1. Article Inclusion Criteria

1. Keywords: Ethical Dilemma AND School Counselor AND Well Being
2. Publication between 2020 - 2025
3. Document Type: Article
4. Language: English

Studies were excluded from this review if they: (1) Did not pertain to individuals working as school counselors or school psychologists. Those professions included but were not limited to doctors, nurses, therapists, lawyers, financial analysts, management consultants, accountants, coaches, teachers, etc. (2) Research related to ethical dilemmas or the well-being of school counselors in special situations, such as the current situation with the Coronavirus (Covid-19). (3) Studies not related to education at the school level.

Step 5: Assess Quality: The present study prioritizes article searches based on trusted databases that host various journals with quality articles, such as Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, APA PsyArticles, and Google Scholar. The articles were identified through two methods: an electronic database automated search system (van Dinter et al., 2021) and a manual search using the Mendeley application. The detailed results of automatic filtering through database sources are shown in Table 2. The data were subsequently filtered once more using the Mendeley application (Figure 2) to identify duplicate articles, documents other than articles (e.g., books or book chapters), and to assess the relevance of the article titles to the research focus. The researcher will also be responsible for reviewing the abstracts and re-evaluating them based on the established inclusion criteria. Subsequently, the full-text articles were retrieved and read to ensure that the content aligned with the established research focus.

Table 2. Overview of search results and study selection use automated literature search

Source	By Keyword	Document Type: Article	Publication Year (2020 – 2025)	Language: English
Scopus	6	1	3	1
Google Scholar	993	887	993	887
ScienceDirect	1.510	1.014	283	283
JSTOR	2.775	994	29	29
APA PsyArticle	689	689	141	141
Amount	5.973	2.585	1.449	1.341

Step 6. Extracting Data: At this stage, the relevant aspects of the data were extracted by coding, such as the form of ethical dilemmas, the impact on counselors' wellbeing, and coping strategies. This extraction process was carefully carried out to ensure the accuracy of the results. It is important for researchers to review the entire paper, and not simply rely on the results or the main interpretation. This is the only way to provide context for the findings and prevent any distortion of the original paper.

Step 7. Analyzing and Synthesizing Data: After the data extraction process is complete, the data are organized according to the type of review selected to draw conclusions from each aspect studied. At this stage, similar data related to the research focus are grouped and categorized. Through this stage, a complete picture that answers the research questions will be obtained.

Step 8. Report Findings: To meet the criteria of reliability and independent repeatability, the process of systematic literature review must be reported in sufficient detail (Okoli & Schabram, 2010). A comprehensive overview of all SLR steps that have been executed is provided in the discussion section, which also presents the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 1,341 articles were identified through an automated electronic database search system, utilizing sources such as Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, APA PsyArticles, and Google Scholar (Table 2), based on searches conducted according to the inclusion criteria outlined in Table 1. Thereafter, the data collected was filtered once more using the Mendeley application. A total of 241 duplicate articles and 135 documents, in the form of books, were excluded from the study because they did not meet the third inclusion criterion. A total of 678 articles or documents were rejected based on their titles, which were screened for relevance to the subject area. The most common reasons for rejection were titles related to fields such as health, or medical (310), business and management (45), technology (64), law (6), sports (10), animal welfare (6), childbirth (3), and therapy and related fields (48). A total of 186 articles were excluded from the analysis due to their titles' failure to address ethical dilemmas or wellbeing in a context other than schools.

This left 287 articles for further examination. According to the remaining articles, 135 articles were excluded from the analysis because they addressed ethical dilemmas from fields unrelated to school counselors or school psychologists. Furthermore, articles addressing the wellbeing of students, principals, or subject teachers were excluded from the study due to the presence of different ethical responsibilities. A total of 152 articles were sought for retrieval; however, only 46 of assessed for eligibility and 22 articles were found to be irrelevant. Finally, 24 articles were retained for review. The article selection flow diagram is depicted in Figure 2.

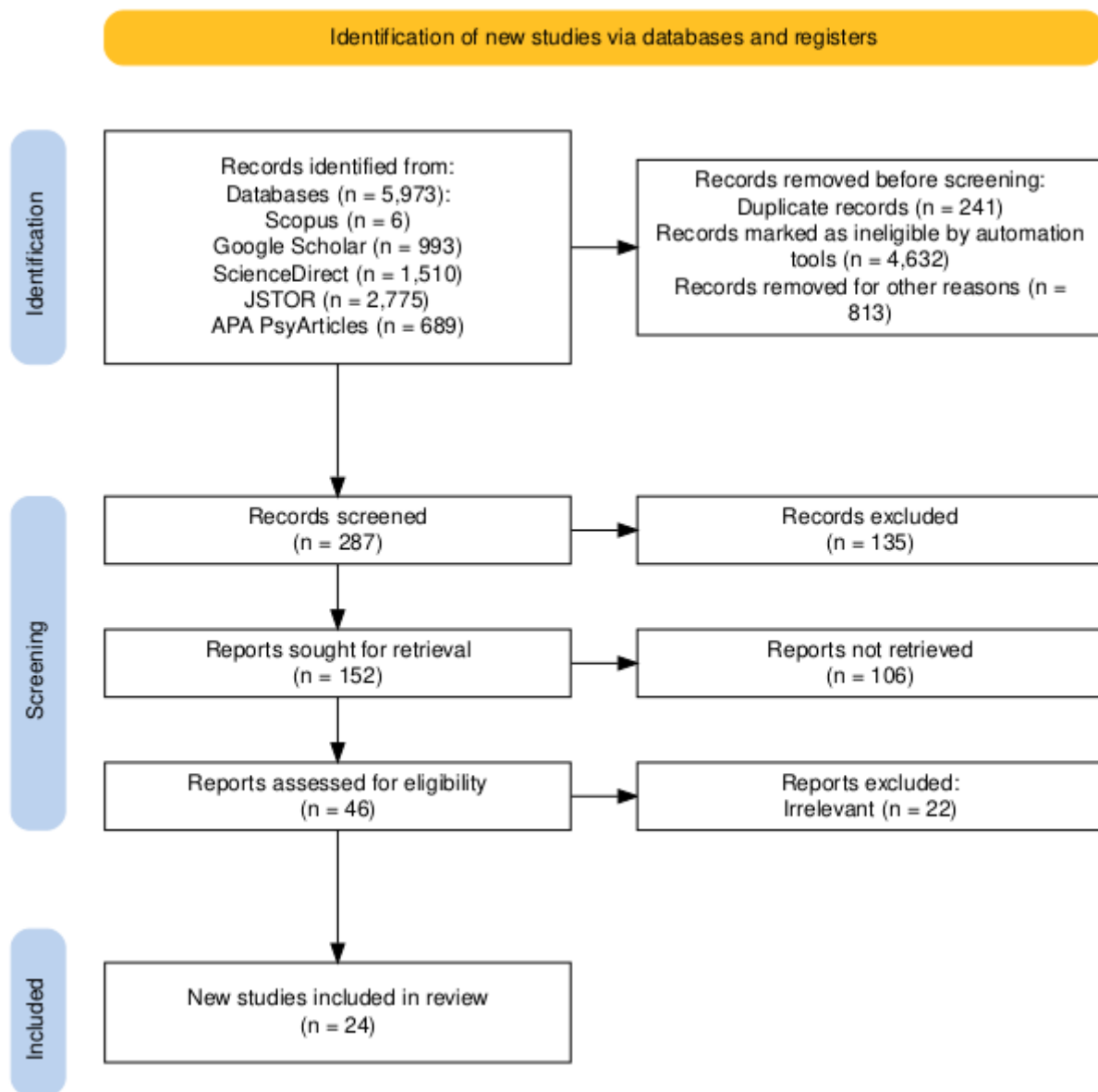


Figure 2. Article Data Review

Source: PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram (Haddaway et al., 2022)

Ethical Dilemmas of School Counselors

A dilemma, basically, is a situation in which there are good reasons to take different actions (Kitchener, 1984). Ethical dilemmas or ethically challenging situations arise when practitioners struggle to determine the appropriate response to situations that require action. This kind of dilemma arises in various situations, such as (a) when ethical principles or standards conflict with each other, (b) conflicting codes of ethics and laws or policies, (c) conflicts between ethical and moral (personal) standards, (d) conflicts between conflicting professional roles, (e) conflicts between the interests of various parties, (f) inappropriate practices from other professionals, and (g) unclear application of standards due to the complexity of the situation or other circumstances (Cottone & Tarvydas, 2016; Kitchener, 1984). In this context, school counselors are expected to adhere to the ethical standards outlined in the professional code of ethics.

School counselors frequently encounter ethical challenges in their work due to their dual role as both educators and mental health professionals. They encounter ethical dilemmas every 2 weeks, and in other reports, it is almost every day (G. S. Johnson & Purgason, 2021; Stone, 2022). The ethical dilemmas confronted by school counselors in educational institutions are, in essence, not significantly divergent from those encountered by other mental health professionals. However, distinctive ethical challenges have been identified, including those pertaining to undocumented students, bullying of LGBTQ students, and reporting suspected abuse or neglect (G. S. Johnson & Purgason, 2021). These unique ethical dilemmas have not been adequately addressed in the discourse surrounding ethical dilemmas faced by school counselors in Indonesia.

Table 3 presents the findings from the author's examination of a series of ethical dilemmas, as identified in various research articles. Despite the existence of certain parallels in the forms of ethical dilemmas revealed by disparate research findings, the ethical dilemmas currently confronting school counselors are expanding. This expansion is due to the emergence of novel challenges involving technology, record-keeping, contemporary social issues, and the development of social media (Brown & Armstrong, 2022).

Table 3. Ethical Dilemmas

No.	Researcher/Year/Source	Profession	Ethical Dilemma
1.	(Burkholder et al., 2020)	Counselors in multiple agencies and private practice	1. Request to do something by a supervisor or administrator that is considered unethical 2. Multiple relationships 3. Counselors' personal biases, such as duty to report and treatment interventions that reduce client autonomy. Counselors relying on their feelings or intuition who are concerned about imposing their values on a client.
2.	(Sivis-Cetinkaya, 2020)	School Counselor	Violation of the ethical code of confidentiality
3.	(Camadan et al., 2021)	School Counselor	1. Confidentiality 2. Competence 3. Willingness of the client
4.	(Maki et al., 2022)	School Psychologist	9 Areas of ethical dilemma: 1. Assessment • allowing psychological tests to be conducted by an unqualified person 2. Intervention • failing to follow up to ensure that intervention recommendations are effective 3. Administrative pressure • succumbing to administrative pressure regarding special education placement in the least suitable environment for the child

			• succumbing to administrative pressure to make a student eligible for special education despite being ineligible
			4. Informed consent
			5. Parental conflict
			6. School records • transferring sensitive personal information of students electronically (e.g., via email) without taking steps to ensure security
			7. Job competency
			8. Confidentiality
			9. Relationship issues/conflicts
5.	(Stone, 2022)	School counselor	1. Child abuse report 2. Confidentiality 3. Advocacy for Equal Educational Opportunities
6.	(Levkovich et al., 2023)	School Counselor	1. Guilt and doubt in managing relationships with foster/adoptive children 2. Reporting cases of abuse from host families 3. Maintaining relationships with foster families/foster parents
7.	(Şensoy & İkiz, 2023)	School counselor	1. Confidentiality 2. Unethical requests 3. Alleged child abuse 4. Uncooperative behavior of stakeholders 5. Misunderstanding of professional roles.
8.	(Cheneville et al., 2024b)	School Psychologist	Ethical dilemmas in interprofessional collaboration 1. competence, 2. Dual relationship 3. Informed consent, 4. Privacy/confidentiality 5. Assessment 6. Therapy
9.	(Tu et al., 2024)	School Psychologist	1. Mandatory reporting 2. Cooperation with education colleagues 3. Intervention by workplace authorities 4. Dual relationship 5. Safeguarding and releasing counseling information 6. Misconduct by other counseling psychologists

10. (Carlisle et al., 2022)	Counselor	7. Maintaining professional standards & quality of service
		6. Right to client autonomy
		1. Counseling relationship
		2. Values and culture
		3. Confidentiality
		4. Professional responsibility
		5. Technology

From the various dilemmas above, it can be classified according to the theme of ethical dilemma problems, so that it is found that some dilemmas related to confidentiality are the most frequent dilemmas faced by counseling teachers, followed by competence, and the lowest dilemma in the use of technology, which is summarized in the graph below:

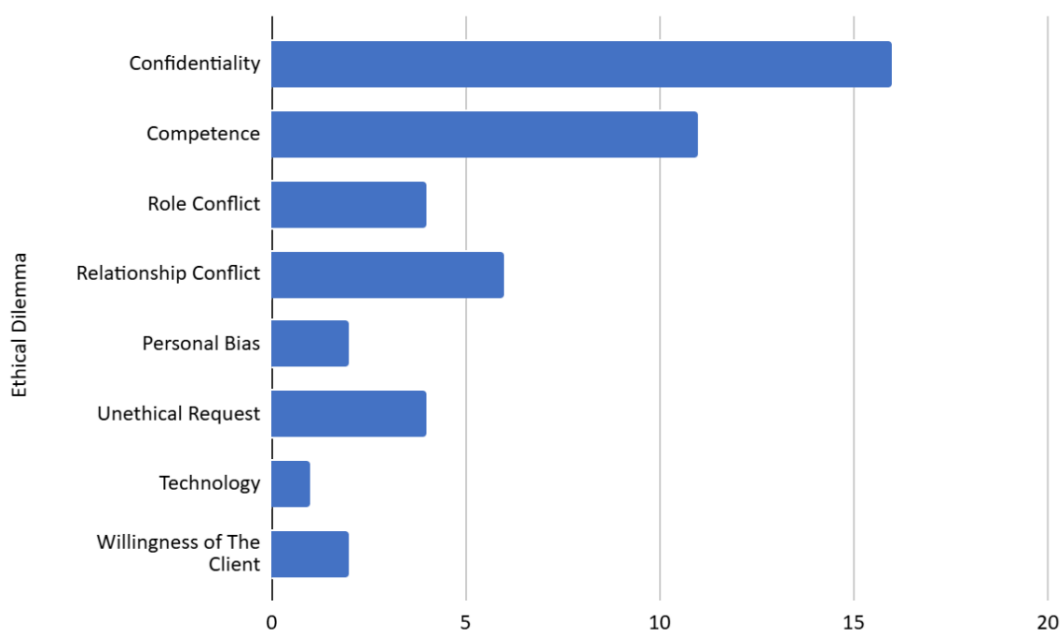


Figure 3. Ethical dilemma of school counselors

Several studies have previously explored the topic of ethical dilemmas faced by school counselors. One such example is the work of Hayman & Covert in 1986, which focused on ethical dilemmas in university counselors. This research was subsequently summarized by Gladding (2018, p. 32). It is worth noting that counselors often face ethical dilemmas in the following areas: confidentiality, role conflict, counselor competence, conflict with a supervisor or institution, and level of risk/danger. It is noteworthy that some of these ethical dilemmas persist in the present day, underscoring the necessity for a more comprehensive strategy to mitigate the various ethical dilemmas that are likely to emerge in the future.

Ethical Dilemmas on the Wellbeing of School Counselors

The psychological wellbeing of a school counselor refers to the optimal functioning of the counselor's positive psychological state, which emerges from a balanced integration of personal

and professional roles. The following indicators are associated with the psychological wellbeing of a school counselor. The six factors that contribute to wellbeing include self-acceptance, positive relations with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 2013). A multitude of studies have demonstrated that there exist circumstances in which school counselors fail to meet the fundamental standards of wellbeing. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following: positive support from the principal, role ambiguity in the counselor position, uncontrolled task expansion, and a high workload. These factors contribute to stress and burnout (Jones & Pijanowski, 2023).

In a study conducted by Heikkilä et al. (2023), 310 teachers were divided into three groups according to the frequency with which they experienced dilemmas: rarely, occasionally, and frequently. The study found that teachers in the "frequent dilemmas" group reported the highest levels of burnout. However, their recovery from job strain improved, and their levels of burnout (exhaustion) diminished over time. This finding indicates that the frequency of ethical dilemmas has a substantial relationship with the wellbeing of teachers, including school counselors. The ethical dilemma faced by school counselors, such as maintaining the confidentiality of student data and problems from unauthorized parties, is a separate pressure that affects the psychological wellbeing of school counselors. Counselors are obligated to maintain confidentiality; however, they often encounter requests for information from teachers and principals that appear to be overly insistent, which raises concerns regarding their professional relationships within the school community.

A substantial body of research has indicated that frequent exposure to ethical dilemmas without adequate coping resources can have a detrimental effect on the emotional, psychological, and even physical health of school counsellors (Jones & Pijanowski, 2023). When ethical dilemmas are unresolved, there is a greater likelihood of 'burn-out' and the experience of practitioners identifying organizational shifts from 'ethics to efficiency' (Bourke et al., 2024). School counselors can be so invested in the problems of others that they fail to realize their own shortcomings in terms of managing their wellbeing. The impacts of this phenomenon include, but are not limited to:

- a. **Burnout and Compassion Fatigue:** Repetitive ethical strain has been demonstrated to engender emotional exhaustion and a sense of ineffectiveness. When school counselors are experiencing burnout, they may (a) withdraw from their job duties; (b) compromise the ethical nature of their practices; (c) lack investment in the academic, career, and social-emotional needs of their students; and (d) carry the burnout into their personal lives (Fye et al., 2020)
- b. **Decreased Job Satisfaction:** When ethical values are compromised, counsellors often report disillusionment and reduced motivation.
- c. **Vicarious Trauma and Anxiety:** Counsellors dealing with cases of student trauma, abuse disclosures, or family crises often experience a considerable emotional burden, which is compounded by the ethical complexity of the cases with which they are confronted.
- d. **Identity Crisis:** Ethical dilemmas have the potential to challenge the professional identity of the counsellor, giving rise to doubts about competence and career path

Ethical dilemmas encountered by school counselors necessitate deliberation and consideration of various possibilities to reach optimal resolutions for the benefit of their students. The efficacy of the counselor in selecting the optimal course of action when confronted with ethical dilemmas will serve to moderate psychological exhaustion, thereby enhancing the wellbeing of the school counselor. A counselor who has attained a high degree of psychological wellbeing is capable of

maintaining equilibrium between their professional role and their personal life. Individuals who have achieved high psychological wellbeing are those who have cultivated the capacity to utilize their potential in a manner that facilitates optimal development. These individuals are distinguished by their self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, environmental mastery, autonomy, life purpose, and the capacity for personal and professional development (Purwaningrum et al., 2019). Consequently, the potential for occupational stress to manifest is mitigated.

A Discussion of Strategies for Addressing Ethical Dilemmas

To address the ethical dilemmas faced by teachers, a range of approaches has been proposed. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of training for school counselors and school counseling students that focuses on ethical dilemmas and the decision-making process (G. S. Johnson & Purgason, 2021; Maki et al., 2022). To mitigate the impact of ethical dilemmas and protect counselor welfare, the following practices are recommended:

Ethical Decision-Making Models

Providing school counselors with structured models can help them navigate dilemmas more confidently. As previously mentioned, school counselors frequently encounter dilemmas and are often uninformed about the ethical implications of the situations they confront. Consequently, they tend to make decisions based on their instincts when resolving these dilemmas. A school counselor must possess the ability to identify ethical dilemmas by being cognizant of the relevant ethical and legal standards (Cottone & Tarvydas, 2016). This makes the decision-making process in ethical dilemmas worthy of attention, as it requires a different decision-making process and can affect learners' wellbeing (M. K. Johnson et al., 2022). In this context, school counselors are expected to adhere to the ethical standards outlined in the professional code of ethics.

The code of ethics established by professional organizations aims to protect the public by educating its members about standards of conduct and facilitating the resolution of ethical complaints (Maki et al., 2022). Some codes of ethics related to mental health professionals are set by professional organizations such as, American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA), The National Association of School Psychologists' Principles for Professional Ethics (NASP), American School Counseling Association (ASCA) Ethical standards for school counselors, Australian Counselling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics and Practice (Australia), Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA) Code of Ethics (Philippines), Code of Ethics for Psychological Counselling and Guidance from the Turkish Psychological Counselling and Guidance Association (Turkey), and Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Code of Ethics (Indonesia) have various provisions that serve as guidelines in the implementation of counseling service practices in schools. These professional ethics become norms that guide the behavior of practitioners in maintaining public trust in the profession (Gao et al., 2021).

The code of ethics is designed to serve and protect the interests of clients and inform professionals about acceptable ways of practicing and standards of practice (Çerkez et al., 2018), as a basis, reference in carrying out professional duties and responsibilities, and as a guarantee of protection for providers and recipients of assistance services, especially in the face of ethical dilemmas. A school counselor can refer to the code of ethics (Boccio, 2021) for guidance on procedures and provisions, providing a strong basis for decision-making.

The professional code of ethics is a fundamental component of any professional's repertoire of knowledge. It serves as a guiding framework, particularly for school counselors, in navigating ethical dilemmas within their profession. However, this assertion is at odds with the extant literature, which documents the prevalence of school counselors who neglect to adhere to the ethical principles outlined in their professional code (Mansaray et al., 2020). This phenomenon, including in Indonesia, has been empirically substantiated by research, which has revealed that school counselors often lack a thorough understanding of the aforementioned code of ethics. The lack of familiarity with the code of ethics can serve as a catalyst for ethical transgressions that may not be recognized, as the adoption of considerations is often influenced by the personal convictions or biases of the school counselor (Gladding, 2018; Parker et al., 2022). According to Camadan et al. (2021), the ability of school counselors to identify the ethical dilemmas they face should become a factor influencing their decision-making.

As Kitchner's opinion states, as cited in Burkholder et al. (2020), practitioners may anticipate that ethical conflicts can be readily resolved by identifying the relevant section of the code of ethics. However, codes of ethics have been found to be ambiguous and contradictory. The application of codes can be problematic due to their tendency to be "too broad in some cases and too narrow in others." This finding indicates that codes of ethics are not universally applicable in addressing all ethical challenges that emerge during the course of a profession (Boccio, 2021). Regular workshops on ethical decision-making (e.g., using models like the ACA or ASCA decision-making model) can strengthen counselor confidence. A plethora of ethical decision-making (EDM) models exists; however, not all of them are applicable to the mental health field. (M. K. Johnson et al., 2022) enumerated 38 EDM models (included in this report) that can be utilized as references for ethical decision-making in ethical dilemmas for mental health professionals, and only 5 models were intended for school counselors or school psychologists. The paucity of models was also evident in a systematic review of the literature conducted (Suarez et al., 2023) on various ethical decision-making models across professions, where only 13 models were related to the field of psychology, and 2 of these were aimed at school psychologists. Based on several studies, two decision-making models are offered to mental health workers serving in schools: the Intercultural Model of Ethical Decision Making (IMED), developed by Mellisa Luke in 2013, and Solutions to Ethical Problems in Schools (STEPS), developed by Carolyn B. Stone in 2003. Professionals who understand the stages of the EDM model exhibit greater confidence in dealing with ethical dilemmas (Burkholder et al., 2020). However, some studies have found that school counselors are generally very confident in their decision-making regarding ethical dilemmas, whether they use a specific EDM model or rely on personal intuition (Boccio, 2021; Camadan et al., 2021).

Training and Supervision

Research on ethical dilemmas in school counseling and training in ethical decision-making models is limited (Brown & Armstrong, 2022). However, a substantial body of research indicates that training on ethical dilemmas and coping strategies is imperative for both school counselors and school counseling students. The development of materials and activities is necessary to educate counseling teachers about ethical dilemmas. In accordance with the assertions put forth by Burkholder et al. (2020), professionals engaged in the helping professions ought to be subject to ethics training as an integral component of their academic curriculum. This training should encompass decision-making in ethical dilemmas and cognitive development in moral areas. The use of ethical dilemma schemas or scenarios has been shown to facilitate the decision-making

process for counseling teachers. Consequently, a number of researchers have developed ethical dilemma schemas or scenarios Şensoy & İkiz, 2023) based on the categories of dilemmas most frequently encountered by counseling teachers. These scenarios can be used as a data collection tool regarding the methods counseling teachers use in resolving the ethical dilemmas they face.

In addition to training on ethical dilemmas and the EDM Model, counselors should also be trained in regular reflection practices and self-awareness to be able to manage their own emotional burdens. Research shows that aid professionals (e.g., counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, and others) report experiencing depression (Saade et al., 2022). It is an ethical responsibility for school counselors to seek help when declining wellbeing interferes with professional practice (ASCA, 2023). And given that many school leaders do not know or understand the ethical obligations of self-care in the counseling profession, awareness of this is urgent.

Regarding the role of supervisors for school counselors, in addition to supervising the performance of school counselors, it is very important for supervisors to be considered as a reliable source of consultation and support for school counselors when faced with ethical dilemmas. Consultations can also be made by school counselors with their peers in other educational institutions through professional communities or organizations. Supervisors with a professional background and a strong understanding of ethical dilemmas, in addition to familiarity with the EDM Model, are capable of providing guidance on the utilization of the EDM Model in addressing ethical dilemma situations within educational institutions. Furthermore, the role of the school counselor can be reinforced by supervisors, who can demonstrate the alignment between the school counselor's responsibilities and the policies established by the principal. It is essential that the principal be able to clearly define and support the counselor's role in order to prevent ethical violations. The principal's endorsement is instrumental in cultivating an environment conducive to ethical conduct and transparent dialogue.

CONCLUSION

This study reviews the various dilemmas school counselors encounter that hinder their ethical decision-making. These include issues related to confidentiality, competence, role conflict, relationship challenges, personal biases, unethical requests, technology, and client willingness. Such dilemmas often stem from factors like ambiguous policies and support systems, tight time constraints and heavy caseloads, and fear of legal or professional repercussions. When unable to resolve these challenges, counselors may experience burnout, compassion fatigue, decreased job satisfaction, trauma, anxiety, and identity crises. To address these issues, strategies such as employing Ethical Decision-Making Models can help counselors approach dilemmas more confidently. Additionally, ongoing ethics training and peer supervision are essential for improving ethical understanding and confidence.

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