

## First attempt to evaluate of burnout among school counselors after lifting pandemic rules in Indonesia

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### Abstract

The rate of burnout in school counselors is a critical issue in regulating individual work activities. This is a first and cross-sectional study that intends to examine the burnout of school counselors after the permitting of lifting due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. It is reported that 188 school counselors in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi have filled out the Counselor Burnout Inventory to measure the burnout case they are dealing with. The data that has been raised was evaluated via the Rasch Model. The results of the study show that the rate of Burnout in school counselors has different statuses from each other, and highly depends on the demographic aspects investigated in this study. The study also verified that all school counselors were frustrated with their effectiveness as counselors. Nevertheless, counselors still promote their professionalism to advance the counseling services and promote the welfare of their clients. Discrepancies in the rate of school counselor burnout based on demographic aspects are also discussed in this article.

**Keywords:** Burnout; school counselor; rasch model; pandemic rules; indonesia

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## Introduction

The phrases "Together we can stay Covid-19 safe" and "New Normal" have been voiced in recent times by numerous societies. The goal is to campaign for all people around the world to set up "getting used to" and "making peace" with the current Covid-19 situation. Several policies that had been limiting community activities were gradually being relaxed. However, the public is still asked to maintain the central health protocols such as wearing masks in public places. The policy of easing community activities also allows the present school or college to hold physical meetings in person. This means that teachers and students can take part in face-to-face learning at school. The presence of teachers and students in schools also directly requires school counselors to return to carrying out counseling services for students. In line with this situation, school counselors have started a recent round of counseling services after the easing of the Covid-19 pandemic customs.

School counselors have many roles within schools and often work with many stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, families, and communities (Mullen, Chae, Backer, & Niles, 2021). The implication is that the role and function of school counselors are currently faced with various job demands, and have a great chance of experiencing burnout so that it affects counseling services for their students at school. (Mullen & Gutierrez, 2016). Burnout can be expressed by three core responses: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Hamelin, Viviers, Litalien, & Boulet, 2022). Study conducted by King, Subotic-Kerry, and O'Dea (2018) explained that burnout was associated with lower workload manageability, lower satisfaction with school mental healthcare, greater impact of work stress upon wellbeing, and greater frequency of providing care outside of school hours. Burnout is also triggered by the caseload and organizational support felt by school counselors. (Bardhoshi & Um, 2021).

During the Covid-19 pandemic period, it was known that most of the educators in schools experienced burnout symptoms (Alqassim et al., 2022), and emotional factors and professional experience are believed

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to be predictors of burnout (Răducu & Stănculescu, 2022). This phenomenon occurs not only in teachers but also in other professions, including psychotherapists or counselors (Van Hoy et al., 2022). The incident of school counselors experiencing burnout before the Covid-19 pandemic has been well documented (Baldwin-White, 2016; Hardiman & Simmonds, 2013; Moate, Gnilka, West, & Bruns, 2016). However, the incident of school counselor burnout after the easing of rules due to the Covid-19 pandemic is a different study. This is our first attempt which intends to bring preliminary information regarding the description of school counselor burnout and its variations based on demographic aspects in Indonesia.

## Method

### Procedure

This is a cross-sectional study aimed at assessing school counselor burnout. This study was conducted from September to October 2022. In order to reach a wider range of study subjects, we coordinated our research objectives with teams in each region (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi). Data collection is done online using Google Forms which are distributed in a targeted manner via text messages such as WhatsApp and Telegram. We determine specific criteria for prospective participants who will be involved in this study, namely (1) already have *Nomor Unik Pendidik dan Tenaga Kependidikan* (NUPTK), and (2) the status of a school counselor who has been officially appointed at his school.

The data collection process also involves several volunteers who are assigned to the designated area points to ensure the distribution of data is spread and represents the needs of the research to be carried out. Prior to data collection, the school counselors were provided with information by the research team on matters related to the objectives of this study. There is no compulsion for the respondents to participate in this study, and; all respondent's personal information is credential.

### Participants

This study recruited 364 school counselors who worked in the areas of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. However, only 188 school counselors, i.e., 85 (45.21%) male and 103 (54.79%) female, were ultimately included because they gave a complete response to this study. In the end, we did not include 178 other school counselors because they did not completely respond.

In terms of demographics, 89 (47.34%) school counselors work in Jakarta, 30 (15.96%) in Bogor, 23 (12.23%) in Depok, 5 (2.66%) in Tangerang 37 (19, 68%) in Bekasi, and 4 (2.13%) in transferring assignments from their original schools. The school counselors in this study 153 (81.38%) were educated in counseling education, and 35 (18.62) were educated outside the counseling field. Meanwhile, the number of school counselors based on their length of service, namely 13 (6.91%) school counselors worked less or a year, 64 (34.04%) had worked for 2-5 years, 47 (25%) had worked for 6 – 10 years and 64 (34.04%) have worked over 10 years as a school counselor.

The status of the school where the school counselors work is 108 (57.45%) in public schools, and another 80 (42.55%) work for private schools. The school levels are 71 (37.77%) school counselors work in junior high schools, 7 (3.72%) work at Madrasah Tsanawiyah, 49 (26.06%) work in high schools, 6 (3.19) work in Madrasah Aliyah, and 55 (29.26%) work in Vocational High school. Furthermore, 151 (80.32%) school counselors stated they were married, while another 35 (18.62%) were unmarried, and 2 (1.06%) were divorced. The last aspect that is also important in this study is that only 79 (42.02) school counselors have attended professional counseling education, and another 109 (57.98%) have not attended counseling professional education. All respondents involved in this study agreed and will use the data for academic purposes or activities.

### Instrumentation

We have used the Counselor Burnout Inventory (CBI) developed by Lee et al. (2007), where CBI has 20 items in 5 measurement indicators, such as (1) Negative work environment, 4 items; (2) Devaluing client, 4 items; (3) Deterioration in Personal Life, 4 items; (4) Exhaustion, 4 items, and; (5) Incompetence, 4 items. CBI in this study uses a 5-point Likert-rating, with gradations of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Simply Agree (SiA), Less Agree (LA), and Disagree (D).

Previous studies confirmed the CBI has adequate psychometric properties to measure counselor burnout (Lee et al., 2007). In line with the objectives of this study, we have adapted and re-validated according to the Indonesian context. The results in Table 1 show that CBI has adequate reliability in the 364 samples tested. In the validity's estimation of CBI through Principal Component Analysis (PCA), it is known that the value of Raw variance explained by measures reaches 42.6%, so CBI is unidimensional. In the CBI item analysis,

1 item was found, namely No. 5 *"I have little empathy for my client"* with outfit (MNSQ > 0.5 - 1.5). For that reason, we removed item No. 5 and only 15 CBI items were used in this study.

**Table 1.** Reliabilities of CBI (N=364)

	Mean Logit (SD)	Separation Index	Reliability	Alpha Cronbach
Items	0.00	6.06	.97	.94
Persons	-2.56	2.12	.82	

### Data Analysis

We used Rasch Model (Bond & Fox, 2007; Sumintono & Widhiarso, 2014) via WINSTEPS Software (Linacre, 2006) as the primary choice for analyzing research data. The analyzed aspects include (1) the burnout level of school counselors, (2) the description of school counselor burnout based on the demographic aspects included in this study.

## Results and Discussion

### Overview of School Counselor Burnout

The results of data analysis showed that school counselors experienced low burnout (Mean = -2.56 Logit). From the 19 items tested in this study, it was shown that item No. 8 *"I am no longer concerned about the welfare of my client"* is the most difficult item for all school counselors to agree on (+1.79 Logit). Item No. 19 *"I feel frustrated by my effectiveness as a counselor"* is the item most school counselors agree on (-1.18 Logit). A complete summary of school counselor burnout rates is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Distribution of School Counselor Burnout measurements based on CBI items (N=188, I=19)

No.	Items	Score	Measure	S. E	Outfit MNSQ
8	I am no longer concerned about the welfare of my client	212	1,79	0,21	0,5462
6	I have become callous toward client	221	1,44	0,18	0,6304
7	I am not interested in my client and their problem	240	0,93	0,15	0,7188
12	My relationships with family members have been negatively impacted	246	0,80	0,14	0,6346
13	Due to my job as a counselor, I feel tired most of the time	249	0,74	0,14	0,5703
15	Due to my job as a counselor, I feel overstressed.	262	0,50	0,13	0,6983
14	I feel exhausted due to my work as a counselor	299	-0,04	0,11	1,3047
2	I am treated unfairly in my workplace	302	-0,08	0,11	1,1001
4	I feel negative energy from my supervisor	303	-0,09	0,11	1,1776
11	I feel I have poor boundaries between work and my personal life	316	-0,25	0,11	0,8802
16	Due to my job as a counselor, I feel tightness in my back and shoulders	320	-0,29	0,11	1,3253
17	I feel I am an incompetent counselor	327	-0,37	0,11	1,0100
3	I feel bogged down by the system in my workplace	332	-0,43	0,10	1,1864
20	I do not feel like I am making a change in my client	334	-0,45	0,10	0,9523
1	I feel frustrated with the system in my workplace	357	-0,69	0,10	1,1631
9	I feel I do not have enough time to spend with my friends	359	-0,71	0,10	1,1750
18	I am not confident in my counseling skills	362	-0,74	0,10	0,7863
10	I feel I do not have enough time to engage in my personal interest	374	-0,86	0,10	1,1096
19	I feel frustrated by my effectiveness as a counselor	408	-1,18	0,10	0,8059

Note: Item No. 5 Status = Deleted due to Outfit > 0.5 - 1.5 Logit

In order to understand burnout of school counselors and the CBI items tested in this study, we present a Wright-Map for Persons and Items as shown in Figure 1. In the Wright-Map, there is a left-hand panel (Person-Map) outlining the distribution of school counselors involved in this study and coded by number and gender (L=Male, and P=Female). The distribution of this person-map is displayed based on the results of the burnout analysis of school counselors from the high 13L & 181L (top) to the lowest 122P, 136L, 16L, and so on (bottom). Meanwhile, the right-hand panel of the Wright-Map contains an Item-Map which shows the distribution of the CBI Items sorted by the items most difficult for respondents to agree with, namely Item 8, (above), to the one most easily agreed by all school counselors, is Item 19 (below).

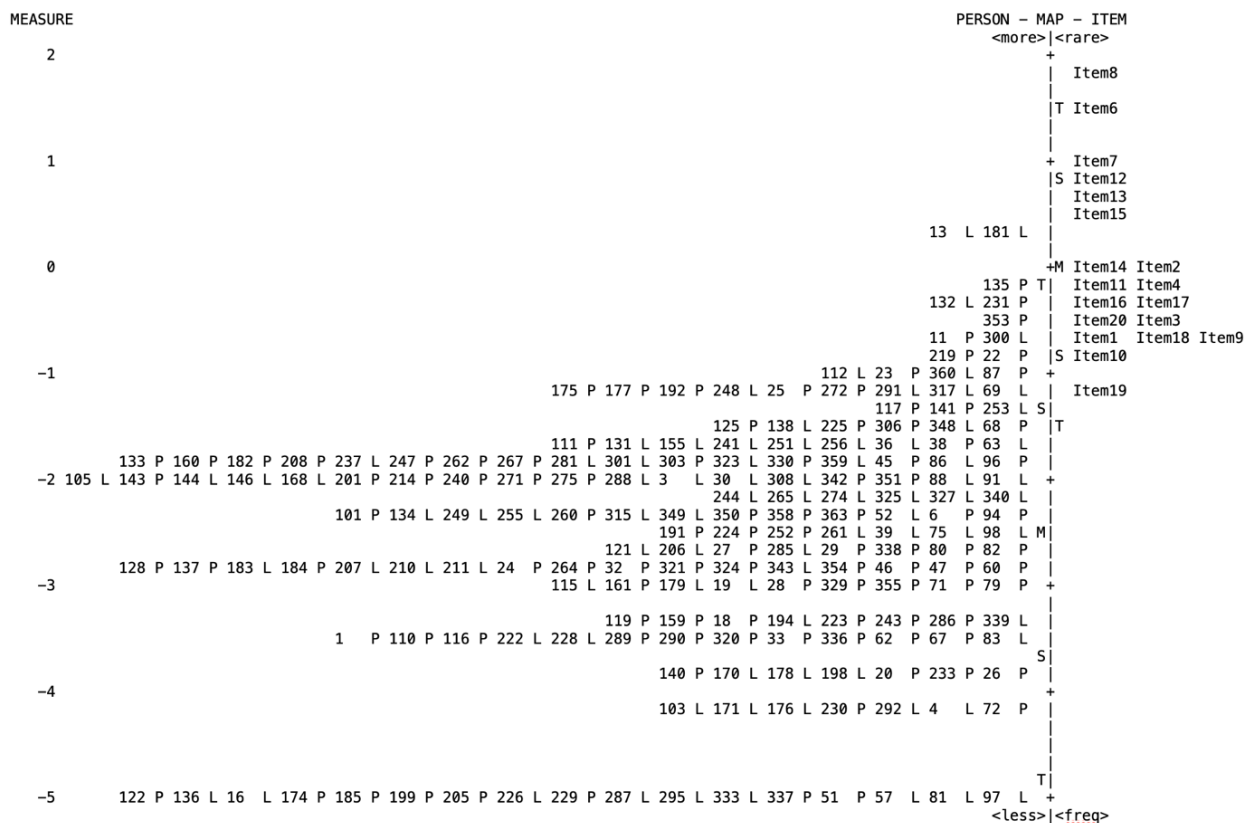


Figure 1. Wright-Map of School Counselor Burnout (N=188, I=19).

**School Counselor Burnout by Demographic Aspect**

This study also examines whether there is a significant difference in the incidence of school counselor burnout based on certain demographic aspects. We tested CBI with 8 demographic aspects, such as (1) Gender, (2) Educational Background, (3) Longest Service as School Counselor, (4) Marriage Status, (5) Professional Education, (6) School Areas, (7) School Levels, and (8) School Status. The results of data analysis from 8 demographic aspects tested through CBI, there are 3 aspects that show significant differences in each group, such as (1) Longest Service as School Counselor (.0006 < 0.05); (2) Marriage Status (.0094 < 0.05), and; (3) Professional Education (.0017 < 0.05).

Table 3. Distribution of School Counselor Burnout based on demographic aspects that have been tested through CBI (N=188, I=19)

No.	Aspect	Mean Measure	Reliabilities	F-Test	Prob>F
1.	Gender	-2.56	.83	.08	.7704
	- Male	-2.53	.84		
	- Female	-2.58	.83		
2.	Educational Background	-2.56	.83	3.33	.0660
	- Counseling Education	-2.24	.88		
	- Non-Counseling Education	-2.64	.81		

No.	Aspect	Mean Measure	Reliabilities	F-Test	Prob>F
3.	Longest Service as School Counselor	-2.56	.83	6.00	.0006 <sup>*)</sup>
	- < 1 Year	-1.84	.74		
	- 2 – 5 Years	-2.22	.86		
	- 6 – 10 Years	-2.78	.80		
	- > 10 Years	-2.89	.80		
4.	Marriage Status	-2.56	.83	4.76	.0094 <sup>*)</sup>
	- Unmarried	-2.14	.83		
	- Married	-1.12	.87		
	- Divorces	-2.68	.82		
5.	Professional Education	-2.56	.83	10.67	.0017 <sup>*)</sup>
	- Has taken PPG-BK	-2.88	.78		
	- Non-PPG-BK	-2.33	.85		
6.	School Areas	-2.56	.83	1.35	.2455
	- Bekasi	-2.53	.85		
	- Bogor	-2.61	.82		
	- Depok	-2.52	.85		
	- Jakarta	-2.67	.82		
	- Tangerang	-1.51	.83		
7.	School Levels	-2.56	.83	1.58	.1799
	- Madrasah Aliyah	-3.49	.67		
	- Madrasah Tsanawiyah	-2.98	.79		
	- Senior High School	-2.37	.86		
	- Vocational School	-2.51	.81		
	- Junior High School	-2.62	.83		
8.	School Status	-2.56	.83	.06	.7964
	- Public School	-2.54	.83		
	- Private School	-2.59	.84		

Note: <sup>\*)</sup> Prob>F Significant on 0.05.

#### Burnout of School Counselors in terms of Demographic Aspects and Responses to CBI Items

The existence of differences in the Burnout of School Counselors in terms of Demographic Aspects is an interesting finding in this study. To enrich the results, we also tested the variation of school counselor Burnout at the level of CBI items based on the same 8 demographic aspects previously. We used the Differential Item Functioning (DIF) test in Rasch modeling to determine which items were biased in each of the demographic groups tested in this study.

Table 4 shows that overall, there are items showed by DIF (Prob < 0.05), in which the items in question clearly show differences in the responses of school counselors based on their demographic aspects. For example, school counselors pointed out Item No. 2 “*I am treated unfairly in my workplace*” occurs in public schools and private schools”.

**Table 4.** The Comparison of School Counselor Burnout based on demographic aspects tested based on CBI Items (N=188, I=19)

No.	Demographics Aspect	Differential Item Functioning (DIF) <sup>*)</sup>	DIF Prob
1.	Gender	DIF Items	
	- Male	None	None
	- Female		
2.	Educational Background	Item No. 14 (I feel exhausted due to my work as a counselor)	.0393
	- Counseling Education		
	- Non-Counseling Education		
3.	Longest Service as School Counselor	Item No. 10 (I feel I do not have enough time to engage in my personal interest)	.0317
	- < 1 Year		
	- 2 – 5 Years		
	- 6 – 10 Years		
	- > 10 Years		



No.	Demographics Aspect	Differential Item Functioning (DIF)**)	
		DIF Items	DIF Prob
4.	Marriage Status - <i>Unmarried</i> - <i>Married</i> - <i>Divorces</i>	Item No. 3 (I feel bogged down by the system in my workplace)	.0362
5.	Professional Education - <i>Has taken PPG-BK</i> - <i>Non-PPG-BK</i>	Item No. 10 (I feel I do not have enough time to engage in my personal interest) Item No. 20 (I do not feel like I am making a change in my client)	.0257 .0339
6.	School Areas - <i>Bekasi</i> - <i>Bogor</i> - <i>Depok</i> - <i>Jakarta</i> - <i>Tangerang</i>	None	None
7.	School Levels - <i>Madrasah Aliyah</i> - <i>Madrasah Tsanawiyah</i> - <i>Senior High School</i> - <i>Vocational School</i> - <i>Junior High School</i>	Item No. 12 (My relationships with family members have been negatively impacted)	.0478
8.	School Status - <i>Public School</i> - <i>Private School</i>	Item No. 2 (I am treated unfairly in my workplace)	.0354

This study aims to explore the burnout of school counselors, especially in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi. School counselor burnout studies are very important because psychological conditions play a big role in determining individual work activities. In addition, burnout can be used as a basis for understanding the psychological dynamics of school counselors that are constantly evolving. Burnout is a term used to describe conditions of severe stress triggered by work.

The findings of this study indicate that school counselors feel frustrated by my effectiveness as a counselor. School counselors, like all mental health professionals, are at high risk for burnout (Moyer, 2011). Study conducted by Bardhoshi, Schweinle, and Duncan (2014) revealed that one of the factors that caused school counselor burnout to occur was because they carried not only out counseling activities, but they were also charged with other (non-counseling) work. Despite the frustration that plagued school counselors, encouraging things were confirmed in this study where school counselors still care about the psychological well-being of their clients. All counselors find it difficult to simply ignore aspects related to the client's condition and well-being. This is in line with the main idea of Solmonson, Roaten, and Sawyer (2011) which emphasizes that counselors need to maintain professionalism and uphold the interests of their clients; including the welfare of the client in it.

This study also shows that (1) the longest Service as School Counselor; (2) Marriage Status, and; (3) the involvement or absence of Professional Education school counselors provides a significant variation in the incidence of Burnout. This study confirms that the longer the school counselor works, the higher the burnout rate experienced. Sumerlin (2009) explained that work as a counselor from various perspectives has been considered a job that requires deep appreciation and high passion. Without it school counselors will face situations that are complicated, painful, and trigger burnout in the long term. The same thing happened, where divorced school counselors also experienced higher burnout compared to unmarried or married school counselors. What is most interesting is the higher incidence of burnout experienced by school counselors who have attended professional counseling education compared to counselors who have not attended counseling professional education.

Another finding in this study also shows that differences in responses to CBI items based on demographic groups have brought their own consequences in addressing burnout specifically. For example, there are differences related to the fatigue felt in carrying out the role of school counselors between school counselors who have an educational background in counseling and school counselors who do not have an educational background in counseling. Another example is that school counselors feel constrained by the system in their workplace; and also feel unfairly treated in their respective schools. The results further confirm that the emergence of burnout is also caused by non-technical aspects of counseling itself (Gnilka, Karpinski, & Smith, 2015; Maor & Hemi, 2021). Although the incidence of burnout among school counselors in this study

is still in the low category, it does not mean that this condition is seen as a normal condition. This study confirms that the incidence of burnout can vary across demographic groups.

## Conclusion

This first study concretely shows that burnout occurs among school counselors in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi after the easing of activities and rules due to Covid-19. Other findings also show that the incidence of Burnout among school counselors has different levels, and highly depends on the demographic aspects tested in this study, such as (1) how long they have worked as school counselors, (2) their marital status, (3) have attended professional counseling education organized by the government, (4) educational background, and (5) the status and level at which school counselors work.

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