

Building The Professionalism of Prospective *Make-up Artists*: The Influence of Professional Ethics Understanding on Cosmetology and Beauty Students

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Keywords

Professional Ethics; Make-Up Artist; Professionalism Attitude; Vocational Education; Cosmetology

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the beauty industry has increased the demand for professional makeup artists (MUAs) who possess not only technical competence but also strong professional attitudes and ethical awareness. In vocational beauty education, an understanding of professional ethics is essential for developing responsible, disciplined, and client-oriented practitioners. However, a gap between expected professional standards and students' demonstrated professional attitudes remains a challenge. This study aimed to assess students' understanding of professional ethics, evaluate their professional attitudes, and examine the influence of professional ethics understanding on the professional attitudes of cosmetology and beauty students as prospective MUAs. The study employed a quantitative descriptive design and involved 124 students from the Cosmetology and Beauty Education Study Program at Padang State University who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, assumption tests, simple linear regression, a t-test, and the coefficient of determination in SPSS Statistics 25. The results showed that students' understanding of professional ethics and their professional attitudes were categorized as good, with mean scores of 91.49 and 62.38, respectively. Regression analysis revealed that professional ethics understanding had a positive and statistically significant effect on professional attitudes ($t = 12.266$, $p < 0.05$), explaining 55.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.552$). In conclusion, strengthening professional ethics education plays an important role in developing professional attitudes among prospective MUAs and should therefore be integrated into vocational cosmetology and beauty education.

INTRODUCTION

15 students from the Cosmetology and Beauty Education Study Program at Padang State University. The preliminary survey showed that 93.3% of respondents had professional experience in the beauty industry outside their academic activities, while all respondents (100%) perceived an understanding of professional ethics as influential in shaping their professional attitudes (Bijani et al. 2019; Kashif et al. 2018; Monroe 2019; Remišová et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2019). The most frequently reported factors encouraging professional conduct during practical activities were maintaining a professional self-image (80%), awareness of the importance of professional ethics (73.3%), responsibility toward clients (66.7%), and compliance with standard operating procedures (SOPs) during practical activities (66.7%). In comparison, learning activities and lecturer guidance were reported by 13.3% of respondents. The most commonly reported barriers to professional conduct were pressure and

fatigue during practical activities (60%), limited practical experience (33.3%), workplace environmental influences (26.7%), limited understanding of professional ethics (20%), and low self-motivation (20%). Although relatively few students explicitly identified limited ethical understanding as a direct barrier, these preliminary findings indicate that professional conduct may be influenced by multiple personal, educational, and workplace factors (Dehghani 2020; Huang et al. 2016; Martin et al. 2019; Schiff et al. 2021; Tormo-Carbó et al. 2019).

Previous studies have examined professional ethics and MUA professionalism from different perspectives, including consumer perceptions of MUA service quality (Putri & Yupelmi, 2025) and business ethics in MUA practices (Alifiana, 2019). However, quantitative studies specifically examining the relationship between professional ethics understanding and professional attitudes among prospective MUAs in vocational higher education remain limited. This research gap provides the basis for examining students as the unit of analysis and empirically investigating the relationship between these two constructs. The novelty of this study lies in quantitatively examining the influence of professional ethics understanding on professional attitudes specifically among prospective MUAs in higher education. The findings are expected to provide an empirical basis for strengthening professional ethics education within cosmetology and beauty programs.

Based on the aforementioned considerations, this study aimed to (1) assess the level of professional ethics understanding among students from the 2022 and 2023 cohorts of the Cosmetology and Beauty Education Study Program, (2) assess students' professional attitudes, and (3) examine the influence of professional ethics understanding on students' professional attitudes as prospective makeup artists (MUAs).

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach to examine students' understanding of professional ethics and their professional attitudes and to test the relationship between the two variables (Sugiyono, 2014; Lestari & Hadi, 2020). The study was conducted in the D4 Cosmetology and Beauty Education Study Program, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Padang State University.

The study population comprised 179 students, including 85 students from the 2022 cohort and 94 students from the 2023 cohort. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 124 respondents. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) enrollment in the 2022 or 2023 cohort of the Cosmetology and Beauty Education Study Program, (2) completion of coursework related to professional ethics, and (3) practical experience providing makeup services and interacting directly with clients.

The independent variable (X) was professional ethics understanding, measured through indicators related to the recognition of professional ethical principles, selection of work procedures consistent with ethical standards, and application of ethical principles in service practices. The dependent variable (Y) was professional attitude, measured through indicators of competence, work effectiveness and efficiency, responsibility, intellectual and emotional capabilities, future orientation, and independence.

Primary data were collected using a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire administered online through Google Forms. Before data collection, the instrument underwent expert

validation and was pilot-tested with 30 respondents to assess item validity and reliability. Secondary sources, including scholarly journals, books, and previous studies, were used to support the theoretical framework.

Instrument validity was assessed using corrected item–total correlations with a critical r value of 0.361 ($n = 30$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Of the 30 items measuring professional ethics understanding, 28 were retained and two were excluded. Of the 25 items measuring professional attitudes, 20 were retained and five were excluded. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.951 for professional ethics understanding and 0.903 for professional attitudes, indicating high internal consistency (Sugiyono, 2017). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test, a linearity test, simple linear regression, a t -test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2). All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

This study involved 124 students of the Makeup and Beauty Study Program class of 2022 and 2023 at Padang State University as respondents. The descriptive statistical results of the two research variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Results

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Red	Std. Deviation
Understanding Professional Ethics (X)	124	41,00	140,00	91,4919	18,85093
Professionalism Attitude (Y)	124	29,00	95,00	62,3790	12,90213

Source: SPSS output version 25, primary data processed, 2026.

The Understanding of Professional Ethics variable obtained an average score of 91.49 with a standard deviation of 18.85, while the Professionalism Attitude variable obtained an average score of 62.38 with a standard deviation of 12.90. The two average scores are in the range of good categories, indicating that in general students have an adequate understanding of professional ethics and professionalism attitudes as a provision to enter the world of work.

Instrument Test Results

The validity test on 30 items of the Professional Ethics Understanding instrument (r table = 0.361) resulted in 28 valid items and 2 invalid items, while the validity test on 25 items of the Professionalism Attitude instrument resulted in 20 valid items and 5 invalid items. Invalid items are not used on the primary data collection. The results of the reliability test with *Cronbach's Alpha* are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Remarks
Understanding Professional Ethics (X)	0,951	Highly Reliable
Professionalism Attitude (Y)	0,903	Highly Reliable

Source: SPSS output version 25, 2026.

Both *Cronbach's Alpha* values are far above the minimum threshold of 0.60, even in the range of 0.81–1.00 which is categorized as very reliable, so the research instrument is suitable for use as a measuring tool.

Analysis Prerequisites Test

The normality test using the *Kolmogorov–Smirnov* method yielded an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.191 (> 0.05), which indicates that the residual data is normally distributed.

The linearity test through *the ANOVA Table* produced a significance value of *Deviation from Linearity* of 0.158 (> 0.05), which shows that the relationship between Professional Ethical Understanding and Professionalism Attitude is linear. With the fulfillment of these two assumptions, simple linear regression analysis is worth continuing.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Test

The results of data processing produced a regression equation model as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis and t-Test

Models	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	15,845	3,873		4,091	0,000
Understanding Professional Ethics (X)	0,509	0,041	0,743	12,266	0,000

Dependent variable: Attitude of Professionalism (Y). Source: SPSS output version 25, 2026.

Based on Table 3, the regression equation is obtained:

$$Y = 15.845 + 0.509X$$

A constant value of 15.845 indicates that if the Understanding of Professional Ethics is zero, the Professionalism Attitude of students is estimated at 15.845. The regression coefficient of 0.509 with a positive value shows that every increase in one unit of Professional Ethics Understanding will be followed by an increase in Professionalism Attitude of 0.509 units. The t-value of 12.266 with a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05) indicates that the influence is statistically significant, so that an alternative hypothesis (H_a) that states that there is a positive and significant influence between the Understanding of Professional Ethics on the Professionalism Attitude of Cosmetology and Beauty students as MUA candidates is declared accepted.

Coefficient of Determination

Table 4 presents the results of the determination coefficient test.

Table 4. Determination Coefficient Test Results (Model Summary)

Models	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,743	0,552	0,549	8,669

Predictor: (Constant), Understanding of Professional Ethics. Source: SPSS output version 25, 2026.

An R value of 0.743 indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The R Square value of 0.552 shows that the Understanding of Professional Ethics is able to explain 55.2% of the variation in students' Professionalism Attitudes, while the remaining 44.8% is influenced by other factors outside of this study, such as practical experience, learning environment, learning motivation, and student personality characteristics.

Understanding professional ethics is one of the aspects that plays an important role in shaping the professionalism of prospective Make-Up Artist (MUA) candidates. This study shows that the level of professional ethics understanding of students of the Cosmetology and Beauty Study Program, Padang State University class of 2022 and 2023 is in the good category, with an average score of 91.49. These results show that most students have understood the professional code of ethics, professional responsibility, integrity, honesty, and the importance of maintaining the comfort and confidentiality of clients in the practice of cosmetology services. This condition indicates that students not only understand the technical aspects of

makeup, but also have knowledge about professional behavior standards that must be applied when entering the world of work. These findings are in line with the opinion of Pane et al. (2024) who stated that professional ethics are closely related to responsibility, integrity, and compliance with professional rules. In addition, the results of this study also strengthen the findings of Silaban (2025) which states that understanding professional ethics plays an important role in shaping professional behavior through the application of codes of ethics and service responsibilities. Thus, understanding professional ethics is the foundation for students to provide quality service while maintaining client trust.

The results of the study also showed that the professionalism attitude of students was in the good category, with an average score of 62.38. These results illustrate that students have shown a professional attitude which is reflected in the ability to maintain service quality, be responsible for work, respect time, work together, maintain appearance, and be able to communicate well with clients and colleagues. This attitude is an important provision for students in facing the demands of an increasingly competitive world of work, especially in the field of beauty services that prioritize service quality and customer satisfaction. The results of this study are in line with the theory of Sedarmayanti (2017) which states that professionalism is a person's ability to carry out work based on competence, responsibility, commitment, and compliance with professional standards. In addition, the research of Handayani et al. (2018) also explains that professionalism is not only influenced by technical ability, but also by work attitudes, discipline, ethics, and responsibility in carrying out the profession. Therefore, the professionalism of prospective MUA candidates is not enough only to be built through the mastery of makeup skills, but also through the formation of professional character during the educational process.

Based on the results of simple linear regression analysis, the equation $Y = 15.845 + 0.509X$ was obtained, with a calculated t-value of 12.266 and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results show that there is a positive and significant influence between the understanding of professional ethics on students' professional attitudes. The positive regression coefficient shows that the higher the understanding of professional ethics that students have, the higher the professionalism attitude shown. The value of the determination coefficient ($R^2 = 0.552$) indicated that understanding of professional ethics contributed 55.2% to the formation of students' professional attitudes, while the remaining 44.8% was influenced by other factors outside the study. These findings show that professional ethics not only function as theoretical knowledge, but also become the basis for shaping students' professional behavior when providing services to clients. Students who have a good understanding of professional ethics tend to be more responsible, maintain integrity, be able to respect client rights, and carry out services in accordance with professional standards. On the other hand, low understanding of professional ethics has the potential to affect the quality of service and reduce the level of professionalism of MUA candidates. The results of this study are consistent with the research of Nengsih et al. (2022) which shows a significant relationship between ethical aspects and professionalism. Research by Pane et al. (2024) also explains that understanding professional ethics contributes to the formation of professional behavior through increased responsibility, integrity, and compliance with professional codes of ethics. The suitability of the results of this study with previous research shows that professional ethics is one of the main factors in building professionalism in various fields of work, including the profession of Make-Up Artist.

Based on the results of the study, professional ethics learning needs to receive greater attention in beauty vocational education. Strengthening ethical material is not only provided in the form of theory in class, but also needs to be integrated into practicum activities, service simulations, and industrial practices so that students are able to apply ethical values in real terms in service to clients. Thus, graduates of the Cosmetology and Beauty Study Program are expected not only to have good technical competence, but also to have integrity, responsibility, and a professional attitude in accordance with the demands of the beauty industry. However, the results of the determination coefficient show that there are still 44.8% of other factors that affect students' professionalism attitudes. These factors can be in the form of practical work experience, learning environment, learning motivation, organizational experience, lecturer support, and experience interacting with clients. Therefore, the development of student professionalism needs to be carried out comprehensively through synergy between professional ethics learning, strengthening technical competencies, and continuous practical experience.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion, three main conclusions were drawn. First, the level of professional ethics understanding among students from the 2022 and 2023 cohorts of the Cosmetology and Beauty Education Study Program at Padang State University was categorized as good, as reflected in their understanding of professional codes of ethics, professional responsibility, integrity, honesty, and the application of ethical principles in cosmetology practices. Second, students' professional attitudes were also categorized as good, as demonstrated by their work responsibility, discipline, communication skills, professional appearance, and commitment to client satisfaction. Third, professional ethics understanding had a positive and statistically significant effect on students' professional attitudes as prospective makeup artists (MUAs), with $p < 0.001$ and $t = 12.266$. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.552$) indicated that professional ethics understanding explained 55.2% of the variance in students' professional attitudes. Accordingly, the research hypothesis was supported. These findings indicate that a stronger understanding of professional ethics is associated with more positive professional attitudes among students preparing for careers in cosmetology and beauty services.

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