

Investigation of School Counselors' Views on Culturally Sensitive Counseling¹

Okul Psikolojik Danıřmanlarının Kùltùre Duyarlı Psikolojik Danıřmaya İliřkin Görüřlerinin İncelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is making an investigation of school psychological counselor's views on culturally sensitive counseling. In this research Phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods, is used. The data of the research were collected with a semi-structured interview form through a digital form. The research group of the study consists of 22 psychological counselors, 13 female (59.1%) and 9 male (40.9%) working at various levels. The data were analyzed by content analysis technique. Categories were created regarding the school psychological counselors' perception of culturally sensitive counseling, the problems they encounter while doing culturally sensitive counseling, and the solution suggestions for the problems they encounter while doing culturally sensitive counseling. The findings of the research were discussed and suggestions based on the findings were given.

Keywords: School Psychological Counselor, Culturally Sensitive Psychological Counselor, Content Analysis.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı okul psikolojik danışmanlarının kùltùre duyarlı psikolojik danışmaya ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesidir. Arařtırmada nitel arařtırma yaklaşımlarından olgubilim deseni kullanılmıştır. Arařtırmanın verileri dijital form aracılıđıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formuyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın arařtırma grubunu çeřitli kademelerde görev yapan 13 kadın (%59.1) ve 9 erkek (%40.9) olmak üzere 22 psikolojik danışman oluşturmaktadır. Veriler içerik analizi tekniđiyle analiz edilmiştir. Okul psikolojik danışmanlarının kùltùre duyarlı psikolojik danışma algısı, kùltùre duyarlı psikolojik danışma yaparken karşılařtıkları sorunlar ve kùltùre duyarlı psikolojik danışma yaparken karşılařtıkları sorunlara yönelik çözüm önerilerine ilişkin kategoriler oluşturulmuřtur. Arařtırmanın bulguları tartiřılmış ve bulgulara dayalı önerilere yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Psikolojik Danıřmanı, Kùltùre Duyarlı Psikolojik Danıřma, İçerik Analizi

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INTRODUCTION

Culture is the foundation of a society's traditions, values, beliefs, knowledge, art and language, and daily behavior and practices that are passed down from generation to generation (VandenBos, 2015). The vast majority of conscious behaviors, as well as the way in which biological needs are met, are often acquired through learning and interaction with other members of the culture (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012). Because culture is affected by many dimensions including socioeconomic status, religion, gender, nationality and age, sensitivity to culture in mental health services covers a wide spectrum (Herman et al., 2007). In addition, cultural diversity in people's selves results from differences in tradition-customs, tasks and interactions that depicted different social environments and reflect variegated in how to adapt to those environments (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). And it can be thought that this cultural diversity will also affect the counseling relationship. For these reasons, psychological counselors need culturally sensitive counseling (Ridley, Mollen, et al., 2021). As a result of the increasing demand for culturally sensitive therapy skills, it should also be considered how psychological counselors can practice and receive feedback to develop their awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to provide culturally sensitive therapy (Calloway & Creed, 2022). Psychological counselors should also consider their personal cultures and the ways in which their personal and professional socialization can potentially influence their culture-sensitive counseling practice (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002).

Understanding the different cultural backgrounds of consulters is very important, especially in schools, in order to work effectively with consulters from different backgrounds (Amat, 2019). To develop culturally sensitive counseling competence, school psychological counselors must better understand the needs of students, their families, and their communities (Na, 2012). To be a culturally competent psychological counselor, it is necessary to possess the qualities of humanism. Likewise, to be a humanistic psychological counselor one must be culturally competent and exhibited (Sue et al., 1992). Because of Humanistic psychology is a holistic approach that includes all ecological situation of a student, it is significant that school psychological counselors interiorize this approach (Lemberger & Hutchison, 2014). It is also important for school psychological counselors to demonstrate their ability to switch between independent and interdependent self-construals when necessary to fit their consulters' cultural worldviews and orientations (Constantine & Yeh, 2001).

School psychological counselors with high culturally sensitive self-efficacy are more likely to happen more satisfied with their work with culturally diverse with individuals studying and their parents (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008). School psychological counselors have the ethical authority to find culturally appropriate ways in the counseling process to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to be successful socio-emotionally and academically (Morris, 2006). Because of this reason it is important that school psychological counselors to interiorize the culturally competent roles (Crook, 2010). When the related literature is evaluated, it is aimed in this study to determine the school psychological counselors' views on the culturally-sensitive counseling process.

1. What does culturally sensitive psychological counseling mean for school psychological counselors?

2. What are the problems faced by school psychological counselors while doing culturally sensitive psychological counseling?

3. What are the solution proposals to cope with the problems while the school psychological counselors do culturally-sensitive psychological counseling?

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, the phenomenology approach, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Phenomenology approach is used to reveal the experiences of social phenomenon (Yildirim & Şimşek, 2011). In this research phenomenological design is used to examine the views of the school psychological counselors during culturally-sensitive psychological counseling.

Research Group: The research group of the study consists of 22 psychological counselors, 13 female (59.1%) and 9 male (40.9%) working at various levels. Their seniority ranges from 2 years to 28 years. Their ages range from 24 to 53 (mean: 34.4).

Table 1. Distribution of School Psychological Counselors by Types of Institutions They Work

Institution	N	%
Pre-school	1	4.5%
Primary School	2	9.1%
Middle School	6	27.3%
High School	5	22.7%
Guidance and Research Center	4	18.2%
Science and Art Center	2	9.1 %
Practice School	2	9.1 %

Table 1 shows the distribution of research group by provinces. There are 1 person who works in pre-school (4.5%), 2 people who works in primary school (9.1%), working in middle school (27.3%), 5 people working in high school (%22.7), working at the Guidance and Research Center (18.2%), 2 people working at the Science and Art Center (9.1%) and 2 people working in the practice school (9.1%).

Data Collecting Tools

In this study semi-structured interview form is used. During the constitution of this form 3 lecturer's view are considered. Also, before application , pilot study was conducted with 2 people who work as school psychological counselor. As a result of feedbacks the final state of the form was constituted. The process of data collecting in the year 2022 was done; Considering the pandemic process, it was taken online from school psychological counselors who participated in the study. Both written and verbal informed consent forms were obtained from the participants.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this study content analysis technic was used in data analysis. In content analysis, data that are similar to each other are brought together within the framework of a common theme and interpreted in a systematic way (Yildirim & Şimşek, 2011). While doing data analysis in

this study data coding is asked from another researcher who is a doctor in the field of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and has qualitative research experience. Both the transcribed transcripts and the table of the generated themes are given. Reliability was checked using the formula of Miles and Huberman (1994) Consensus / (Disagreement + Consensus). A consensus of at least 80% is required for reliability. In the qualitative phase of this research, the general consensus was 92%.

RESULTS

The views of participants for culturally-sensitive psychological counseling constituted in two categories. This categories constituted as unconditional acceptance and awareness of different cultures. 14 School psychological counselors who participate expressed their opinion in categorie of awareness of different cultures and 5 psychological counselors expressed their opinion in categorie of unconditional acceptance. The examples related to this categories are shown at Table 2.

Table 2. Opinions of School Psychological Counselors on Culturally Sensitive Counseling

Category	f	%	Sample Opinion
Awareness of Different Cultures	14	70%	We are a country rich in culture. Considering that people are the bearers of their culture, standard psychological counseling sessions may not provide the desired benefit for every person. In this context, I think that the psychological counselor should give the session by being aware of the person's culture and considering the differences. (K21)
Unconditional acceptance	5	25%	Culturally sensitive psychological counseling means unconditional acceptance for me. (K22)

The views of participants about encountered problems during culturally-sensitive psychological counseling constituted in 7 categories. This categories are; difficulty in understanding the culture of consulter, not able to empathize, thinking not to be competence, foreign language, construction, not to face with problems and not expressing an opinion. 13 of the school psychological counselors who participated in the study expressed their opinions in the categories of difficulty in understanding the consulter's culture, 4 of them in categories of not able to empathize, 3 of them in categories of thinking not to be competence, 2 of them in categories of foreign language, 1 of them in categories of construction, 1 of them in categories of not to face with problems, 2 of them in categories of not to express an opinion. Sample participants views related to this categories are shown at Table 3.

Table 3. Opinions of School Psychological Counselors on the Problems Encountered in Culturally Sensitive Counseling

Category	f	%	Sample view
Difficulty in understanding the culture of consulter	13	65 %	It takes time to get to know the culture in question and to produce content that suits it. (K21)
Not able to empathize	4	20 %	Empathizing with the lives of people from different cultures is the most difficult thing for me to do with psychological counseling. (K3)
Thinking not to be competence	3	15%	As a psychological counselor, I can be incapable. (K5)

Foreign language	2	10%	I have language problems when working with foreign students. We do not always have the opportunity to find a translator. (K11)
Construction	1	5%	Constructing the process eclectically by considering the individual's problems and social norms. (K15)
Not having problems	1	5%	I dont have a problem. (K6)
Not expressing an opinion	1	5%	No opinion. (K18)

The views of participants about the solution proposals for encountered problems during culturally-sensitive psychological counseling constituted in 7 categories. This categories are; recognizing the consulter's culture, being unbiased, to react in empathic way, increasing competence, raising awareness in the undergraduate process, not expressing an opinion. 9 of the school psychological counselors participating in the research expressed their opinion in categories of recognizing the consulter's culture, 5 of them in categories of being unbiased, 2 of them in categories of reacting in a empathic way, 2 of them in categories of increasing the competence, 1 of them raising awareness in the undergraduate process and 1 of them expressed no opinion. This categories are shown at Table 4 with related sample views.

Table 4. Opinions of School Psychological Counselors on Suggestions for Solutions for Problems Encountered in Culturally Sensitive Counseling

Categorie	f	%	Sample view
Recognizing consulter's culture	9	45%	First, to have knowledge about the consulter's culture. (K1)
Being unbiased	5	25%	I think it would be beneficial to try to find the source of prejudice in its own internal dynamics and to eliminate the prejudice. (K13)
Reacting in empathic way	2	10%	More empathy and prioritizing cultural differences more. (K20)
Increasing the competence	2	10%	As a consultant, I can read more and improve myself more and increase my competence.(K4)
Raising awareness in the undergraduate process	1	5%	Allocating more time to cultural acitivities in university courses. Providing the opportunity to recognizing and understanding Through planned trips and organizations.(K21)
Not expressing an opinion	1	5%	No opinion. (K18)

DISCUSSION

When the views of school psychological counselor regarding culturally-sensitive psychological counseling are examined, the theme of unconditional acceptance was revealed. Although unconditional acceptance is one of the basic principles of psychological counseling, it is difficult to fully comply with this principle in culturally sensitive psychological counseling (Akalin & Türküm, 2021). When the consulters express their own emotion, ideas and beliefs, the psychological counselor should respect and accept unconditionally. In a study in which the opinions of school psychological counselors about the ethical rules to be followed while working in the field, the theme of unconditional acceptance emerged (İkiz et al., 2017). It is seen that both the relevant theoretical information and the studies carried out overlap with the findings of this research.

The views of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in culturally-sensitive psychological counseling emerged as the theme of not having problems. The combination of psychological counseling skills, theoretical approach, and culturally-sensitive competence will help the psychological counselor to gain the skills for interacting with different consulters (Amat, 2019). It can be thought that psychological counselors with high self-efficacy regarding culturally sensitive psychological counseling will be less problem-oriented about the psychological counseling process (Holcomb-McCoy et al., 2008; Ivers & Johnson, 2022). When the relevant literature is evaluated, it can be thought that the self-efficacy of the psychological counselors who stated that they do not have any problems in culturally sensitive psychological counseling is high.

When the opinions of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in culturally-sensitive psychological counseling were examined, the theme of structuring emerged. Construction is important for culturally-sensitive psychological counseling too as well as all other psychological counseling approaches (Patterson, 1996). The things that affect the consulter's emotions, actions and mentality can come from any cultures is understood. The counselor should find the right approach according to consulter's specifications and should not force the consulter to interiorize cultural values. For this reason it is important that the psychological counselor should understand the consulter's specifications culturally (Zakiyah et al., 2022). It is seen that the relevant literature is in line with the findings of this study.

When the opinions of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in cultural-sensitive psychological counseling were examined, the theme of foreign languages emerged. In a study conducted on school psychological counselors, the perception of competence of psychological counselors who speak foreign languages was found to be significantly higher than those who do not speak a foreign language (Demir, 2016). In a study conducted with the psychological counseling process at school, it was stated that the fact that refugee students do not know the language of the country they are in is a problem that needs to be resolved (Aydın & Şahin, 2017). In addition, language proficiency efficiency the self-efficacy of an international student's performance, and this may affect their tendency to seek interactions within the culture of the country of study. Due to its nature, this situation may also affect the psychological counseling process in schools (Olivas & Li, 2006).

When the opinions of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in culturally-sensitive psychological counseling were examined, the theme of raising the awareness in the undergraduate process emerged. Kağnıcı (2013) stated that culturally sensitive psychological counseling should be included in undergraduate education. It is also emphasized that psychological counselor educators should be trained to be sensitive to culture (Sue et al., 1998). In a study conducted with psychological counselors it is emphasized that the syllabus which develops the skills of cultural-sensitiveness, should include in undergraduate education (Saki & Yazıcı, 2021). In an other study examining the microaggression within the scope of culturally sensitive psychological counseling, it is emphasized considering important on culturally sensitive psychological counselor competencies in undergraduate education programs and the lectures which emphasizing respect for cultural differences culturally

sensitive (Uygur et al., 2018). It is seen that the theme of raising awareness in the undergraduate process that emerged in this research is in line with the relevant literature.

On the other hand, the theme of not being able to empathize emerged in the opinions of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in culturally sensitive counseling, and the theme of giving an empathetic response in the opinions of school psychological counselors about the solutions to the problems encountered in culturally sensitive psychological counseling..In the culturally sensitive psychological counseling literature, empathy is important component of culturally sensitive psychological counseling (Blalock, 2005; Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2011). In a study conducted on psychological counselor candidates, positive thinking was found between cultural sensitivity and empathic thinking (Aydın & Şahin, 2017). It is seen that both the relevant theoretical information and the studies carried out are in parallel with the findings of this research.

When the opinions of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in culturally sensitive psychological counseling were examined, the theme of thinking that they were not competent and the theme of increasing competency emerged when the school psychological counselors' views on the solutions to the problems encountered in culturally sensitive psychological counseling were examined. Culturally sensitive psychological counseling competence can be defined as facilitating therapeutic change through the deep incorporation of culture into psychological counseling and psychotherapy (Ridley, Sahu, et al., 2021). Being culturally competent appears to be related to a psychological counselor's cultural expertise or a skill or quality that his orientation influences (Sue et al., 2009). This theme seems to be in line with the relevant literature.

The views of school psychological counselors on culturally sensitive psychological counseling emerged as the theme of awareness of different cultures. When the opinions of school psychological counselors about the problems encountered in culturally sensitive psychological counseling were examined, the theme of having difficulty in understanding the consulter's culture emerged, and the theme of recognizing the consulter's culture when the opinions of school psychological counselors on the solutions for the problems encountered in culturally sensitive psychological counseling were examined. They must be knowledgeable about their consulter's culture and context, and interact appropriately with consulters and implement culturally appropriate interventions. Each of these traits is integral to what it means to be competent as a culturally sensitive psychological consultant (Ridley, Mollen, et al., 2021). Akalın and Türküm (2021) state that when the psychological counselor does not know much about the consulter's culture, expressing this with the principle of sincerity and being informed about the consulter's culture while communicating with the consulter is an appropriate approach to culturally sensitive counseling. It is seen that this theme is in parallel with the relevant literature.

When the Opinions of School Psychological Counselors on Solution Suggestions for the Problems Encountered in Culturally Sensitive psychological Counseling were examined, the theme of Being Without Prejudice emerged. The psychological counseling process includes psychological counselors with consulters from different cultures and religions. The psychological counselor will be prone to cultural biases and this will render the psychological

counseling process ineffective (Zakiyah et al., 2022). If a psychological counselor suspects that the psychological counseling process is starting to become relevant to him and his personal values, or realizes that it conflicts with the consuler's values, he should take a step back and consider whether his biases are affecting his ability to work with the consuler (Daniel Balva, 2022). When working with different cultures, it is important for the psychological counselor to gain awareness of how personal values can/influence both the emerging problem and the therapy goals (Wilson & Stith, 1991). It should not be forgotten that the culture in which psychological counselors live can be directly or indirectly affected by their prejudices about different cultures (Kağnıcı, 2013). It is seen that the relevant theoretical information is in parallel with the findings of this research.

This research has some limitations. Since this research was conducted in a qualitative research design, there are limitations inherent in qualitative research. To understand, for example, from the experiences of others, it is necessary to understand how an experience took place and what kind of action the person involved took. In qualitative studies, it may not be possible to fully determine how the experiences of the participants regarding the phenomenon they reported develop (Crescentini & Mainardi, 2009). In this study, while the views of psychological counselors on culturally sensitive psychological counseling are discussed, the inability to examine their past experiences in depth can be considered as a limitation of the research.

The research group of this study consists of school psychological counselors. Considering that the ability of supervisors to show openness, respect and sincerity is important in order to learn about the culture of the people under supervision (Cook et al., 2020), studies on the supervision process with different cultures can be carried out in future studies. In this study, when the Opinions of School Psychological Counselors on Solution Suggestions for the Problems Encountered in Culturally Sensitive psychological Counseling were examined, the theme of Being Without Prejudice emerged. It is important for psychological counselors to be aware of their own cultural biases, learn about a consuler's culture, and actively seek culturally sensitive skills and techniques (Olivas & Li, 2006). Psychoeducational studies based on self-awareness can be carried out in undergraduate education that will enable psychological counselors to become aware of their own prejudices. In addition, the theme of Raising Awareness in the Undergraduate Process emerged in this research. Researchers and educators in school psychological counselor education programs may wish to identify and evaluate the impact of special education activities designed to help their students develop culturally sensitive psychological counseling competency (Constantine, 2002). In future studies, studies examining culturally sensitive psychological counseling education in the undergraduate program can be carried out.

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