



## Clarifying the Stages of Group Supervision through Action Research<sup>1</sup>

### Eylem Araştırması Aracılığıyla Grup Süpervizyonu Aşamalarını Belirginleştirmek<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed to clarify the stages of group supervision carried out in the field of clinical supervision. We used the action research design in the study. Accordingly, we followed a cycle of defining the focus area, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting the data, and developing an action plan. The participants consisted of four graduate supervisees studying in a state university's Counseling and Guidance Program in Turkey. We obtained the data from observations, interviews, validation committee meetings reports, and the researcher's and participants' journals. The study results revealed that the 14-session group supervision, in which the Discrimination Model was followed in the Participative Group Supervision format, consisted of four stages: beginning, transition, working, and termination. The results revealed that there were dynamics based on the problem of belonging to and trusting in the group, incompetence, uncertainty, and anxiety in the first stage, which was the beginning stage. The study showed that the second stage of the group supervision process was the transition stage and that the group dynamics that defined this stage were the dynamics based on dissatisfaction, conflict, grouping, competition, and resistance. The results, which revealed that the third stage of the group supervision process involved the working stage, showed that the dynamics at this stage were based on having a sense of belonging to and trust in the group, focusing on development, and tending to receive and provide peer support. The results revealed that the final stage of the group supervision process was the termination stage and that the group dynamics that defined this stage were based on having dual feelings such as relaxation and sadness, self-evaluation, individualization, and dependence on the supervisor. The study results revealed that the supervisor exhibiting the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant and ensuring peer participation could be functional in coping with the

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dynamics that emerged in the process. Furthermore, the study results showed that the stages of the group supervision process could be clarified based on the action research method.

**Keywords:** Clinical supervision, systematic supervision process, discrimination model, participative group supervision, group supervision, group supervision stages, group supervision dynamics, action research

**ÖZ:** Bu araştırmanın amacı, klinik süpervizyon alanında yürütülen grup süpervizyonu sürecinin aşamalarını belirginleştirmektir. Araştırmada eylem araştırması deseninden yararlanılmıştır. Buna göre araştırmada odak alanı belirleme, verileri toplama, verileri analiz etme ve yorumlama ile eylem planı oluşturma döngüsü takip edilmiştir. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını Türkiye’de bir devlet üniversitesinin Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Programında öğrenim gören dört yüksek lisans öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Veriler; gözlemlerden, görüşmelerden, geçerlik komitesi toplantı tutanaklarından, araştırmacı ve katılımcı günlüklerinden elde edilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları, Ayrıştırıcı Süpervizyon Modeli’nin Katılımlı Grup Süpervizyonu formatında takip edildiği 14 oturumluk grup süpervizyonu sürecinin başlangıç, geçiş, çalışma ve sonlandırma olmak üzere dört aşamadan oluştuğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bulgular, başlangıç aşaması olan ilk aşamada gruba aidiyet ve güven sorunu yaşama, yetersizlik, belirsizlik ve kaygı temelli dinamikler olduğunu açığa çıkarmıştır. Araştırma bulguları grup süpervizyonu sürecinin ikinci aşamasının geçiş aşaması olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bulgular geçiş aşamasını belirleyen grup dinamiklerinin memnuniyetsizlik, çatışma, gruplaşma, rekabet ve direnç temelli dinamikler olduğunu göstermiştir. Grup süpervizyonu sürecinin üçüncü aşamasının çalışma aşamasını kapsadığını ortaya koyan bulgular, bu aşamadaki dinamiklerin ise gruba aidiyet ve güven duymak, gelişime odaklanmak, akran desteği almaya ve vermeye yönelmek temelli olduğunu göstermiştir. Bulgular, grup süpervizyonu sürecinin son aşamasının sonlandırma aşaması olduğunu, bu aşamayı belirleyen grup dinamiklerinin ise rahatlama ve hüznün gibi ikili duygular yaşama, öz değerlendirmede bulunma, bireyleşme ve süpervizöre bağımlılık temelinde olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Araştırma sonuçları süreçte ortaya çıkan dinamiklerle baş etmede süpervizörün öğretmen, psikolojik danışman, müşavir rolleri sergilemesinin ve akran katılımını sağlamanın işlevsel olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca araştırma sonuçları grup süpervizyonu sürecinin aşamalarının eylem araştırması yöntemine dayalı olarak belirginleştirilebileceğini ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Klinik süpervizyon, sistematik süpervizyon süreci, ayrıştırıcı süpervizyon modeli, katılımlı grup süpervizyonu, grup süpervizyonu, grup süpervizyonu aşamaları, grup süpervizyonu dinamikleri, eylem araştırması

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Group supervision provides rich learning settings such as indirect learning (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; McKenney et al., 2019), receiving and providing peer support, different counselor styles, and witnessing client profiles (Borders et al. 2012; Valentino et al., 2016). Nevertheless, group supervision offers an environment that normalizes feelings of anxiety and incompetence (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders et al., 2012; Mastoras & Andrews, 2011; Ülker Tümlü, 2019; Ülker Tümlü, 2022) and provides opportunities for socialization and interaction, especially for graduate supervisees (Hutchings, 2017). Furthermore, the fact that it is economical with regard to provide supervision to more than two people at the same time (Borders & Brown, 2009) has made group supervision preferable in recent years (Aladağ & Kemer, 2017; Atik, 2017). Group supervision has been required as a supervision method within the framework of the standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (2016). On the other hand, the fact that group supervision provides the mentioned opportunities requires carrying out this process systematically (Borders & Brown, 2009) and working effectively with the group dynamics that emerge in the process (Borders & Brown, 2009; Proctor, 2008).

The literature reveals that group dynamics that emerge in group supervision are generally evaluated based on the group dynamics that occur in small group studies and the group counseling process. In this context, in parallel with the group development process expressed by Tuckman and Jensen (1977) as forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning in the literature, Yalom (1995) indicates this process as the beginning, transition, working, and termination stages, respectively. These two processes are also followed by integrating them into the group supervision carried out within the context of clinical supervision (Corey et al., 2010; Corey et al., 2017; Gladding, 2018). Undoubtedly, the rich literature on the group development process supports the group supervision processes carried out in the field of clinical supervision. On the other hand, studies need to systemize the group supervision process, clarify the stages of this process, and reveal the unique dynamics of each stage. However, the effort to carry out an effective supervision process by integrating each element of supervision can be difficult for supervisors (Campbell, 2006). In this sense, it is essential to begin with selecting a supervision model and a supervision method to carry out a systematic supervision process. Furthermore, it is functional to benefit from dynamic research processes to understand and improve the situations arising while conducting this process.

### 1.1. Discrimination Model (DM)

The selection of a supervision model guides the preparation for the supervision to be provided to carry out a systematic supervision process (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Although there are numerous supervision models in the literature, the Discrimination Model (DM) draws attention as a functional model in terms of being sensitive to the supervisor's style and the supervisees' needs (Bernard, 1979; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014).

In the DM, a supervisor takes the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant during the supervision process and manages a feedback process that is focused on counseling performance skills, cognitive counseling skills, self-awareness, and professional behaviors (Bernard, 1979; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2009). While the role of the teacher within the scope of the DM includes the supervisor's engagement in different instructional activities (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2009; Campbell, 2006), the role of the counselor corresponds to the fact that the supervisor has a therapeutic relationship with the supervisee without being the counselor of him/her (Borders & Brown, 2009). The role of the consultant involves the supervisor's cooperation with the supervisee and the

supervisor's behaviors to encourage him/her to find his/her style (Borders & Brown, 2009; Neufeldt, 2007). On the other hand, counseling performance skills, one of supervision focuses, involve the counselor's verbal and non-verbal observable behaviors during a counseling session (Bernard, 1979; Borders & Brown, 2009). Nevertheless, cognitive counseling skills include thoughts on understanding the themes in the client's shares and messages (Bernard, 1979; Borders & Brown, 2009). Self-awareness involves the intrinsic dynamics of the supervisee that may affect his/her relationship with the client (Bernard, 1979; Borders & Brown, 2009). Finally, the processes for considering the ethical, legal, and professional instructions are emphasized by the focus of professional behaviors (Borders & Brown, 2009). The DM represents a supervision process in which three supervisor roles are followed by being matched with four supervisor focuses according to supervision needs. Moreover, following the DM in the group supervision process enriches the process (Rubel & Atieno Okech, 2006).

## 1.2. Participative Group Supervision

Participative group supervision (PGS), a type of group supervision method, is a supervision process that a supervisor dominantly manages; however, each supervisee's participation in the supervision process is ensured (Proctor, 2008). In other words, participative group supervision refers to the supervisor's cooperation with the group members (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Proctor, 2008). In this respect, in a supervision process in which participative group supervision is followed, supervisees both contribute to the group process and benefit from the group.

## 1.3. Action Research

Action research is a process followed in many fields, such as education, health, art, and industry (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Action research conducted in educational settings enables the researcher to develop his/her practice to understand and improve the quality of teaching (Mertler, 2014). The action process allows cooperation with people who will contribute to development and provides a systematic way for implementers to develop their own practices (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006).

In the action research process, the efforts to understand and improve the quality of education are parallel to the efforts to conduct the supervision process systematically. In this context, it is consistent with the cyclical process of action research in which a supervisor evaluates the supervision process and makes preparation for the next supervision session based on the needs of the supervisor, supervisee, and client (Borders & Brown, 2009). Moreover, in this process, the supervision received by the supervisor to improve the supervision process and his/her supervision style (Borders & Brown, 2009; Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 1990) is parallel to the action researcher's cooperation with the experts who will contribute to development throughout the process (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Therefore, it seems functional to use action research to understand and improve the supervision process.

## 1.4. Current Study

This study aims to improve the group supervision process conducted in the field of clinical supervision and clarify the stages of this process. Within the scope of the study, we completed the supervision process for the individual counseling practicum, which was attended by graduate students, based on the DM and PGS. This study, which we conducted based on the action research design, sought to answer the question, "How was the group supervision process for individual counseling practicum implemented?"

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1. Research Model

In this study, we followed the Dialectic Action Research Cycle, one of the applied action research designs proposed by Mills (2003), to provide a roadmap. Accordingly, in this study, which we discussed within the scope of a doctoral thesis, we followed these steps respectively: (1) Defining the focus area, (2) Developing an action plan, and performing the first implementation as part of the preparation for the supervision process, (3) Collecting data on the implemented action plan, analyzing the data, and updating the action plan, (4) Implementing the primary supervision practice in line with the action plan we reviewed, and collecting and analyzing data in this context, (5) In the post-supervision process, collecting data on determining the experiences of supervisees in the process, analyzing the data, and reporting the process. Each stage had a cyclical process in itself. We reviewed the literature at all stages of the study and used the evaluations of the validation committee. We conducted the current study by focusing on how the group supervision process that we discussed in the fourth and fifth steps of the study was implemented.

### 2.2. Participants

We conducted the research with graduate students in the supervision process for individual counseling practicum at a state university in Turkey in the spring semester of 2017-2018. Within the scope of the study, we conducted a pre-interview with the supervisees and obtained supervisees' written consent to participate in the study (32nd Validation committee meeting's reports, 02.02.2018; Researcher's journals, p.150, 13.02.2018). In the study, which initially included five participants (1 male and four females), the male participant withdrew from the study since he left the graduate program. We presented the information of the participants in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Information of Supervisees*

No	Nick Name	Gender	Age	Job	Working status	Working experience
1	Neslihan	Female	25	School counselor	Full-time employed	Two years
2	Beril	Female	22	Unemployed	-	-
3	Naz	Female	22	Research assistant	Full-time employed	One year
4	Selin	Female	26	School counselor	Full-time employed	Three years

### 2.3. The Roles of the Researchers

In the action research process, implementers mostly explore their “own backyards” (Glesne, 2014). In other words, in this process, researchers understand and develop their practices (Johnson, 2011). This corresponds to the insider role of researchers in the action research process (Glesne, 2014). Likewise, in this research, the researchers were the instructors and supervisors who took part in the same program with the participants. Thus, the authors, who are the insider researchers of this study, are naturally both one of the main data sources and the data collectors of the research. In this scope, both authors had some roles in the study. While the first author had the supervisor and researcher roles in the study, the second author had the role of supervising the supervisor and advising the researcher in the study process.

## 2.4. Content of the Group Supervision Process

We followed these steps in creating the content of the group supervision process. First, we developed a 14-session supervision action plan, each session open to change and development based on the DM and PGS. Nevertheless, we designed the group supervision process in accordance with the beginning, transition, working, and termination stages by considering the group development process (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977; Yalom, 1995). However, we considered that this process might vary according to the observed group dynamics. We also established each supervision session in accordance with the beginning/warming up, working, and sharing/termination stages (Henderson, et al., 2014). We also designed a supervision agreement. We developed additional forms to be used in the supervision process (Counselor Evaluation Form, Post-Supervision Evaluation Form, Individual Counseling Session Case Form, and Informed Consent Form for Clients) and teaching materials (role-playing videos, sample client-counselor scenarios). Second, we implemented the action plan within the scope of the "first practice" (in the process of supervision of two separate groups of five people). Third, we updated the action plan by considering the outputs of the first practice and the supervision needs of the supervisees who would participate in the supervision process we focused on in this study. Fourth, we implemented the updated action plan (see Table 2). Fifth, we observed each supervision session by video recording. We also ensured that the researcher and the supervisees kept journals after each supervision session. Sixth, we analyzed the data from the supervision process on a weekly basis, evaluated these analyses with the validation committee every week, and planned the next supervision session. Seventh, after the entire supervision process, we reviewed the analyses we carried out throughout the process. After determining the supervisees' experiences in this process, we reported the process. In each process, we benefited from the validation committee's opinions and the literature.

**Table 2:** *Group Supervision Process*

Stages	Supervision Sessions	Content of Sessions
Beginning stage	1. 2.3.	Meeting
		Introducing the PGS Process with DM Focusing on duties and responsibilities Establishing group supervision principles Preparation for counseling sessions Working with group dynamics
Transition stage	4.5.6.	Preparation for counseling sessions Managing the feedback process Working with group dynamics
Working stage	7.8.9.10.11	Preparation for counseling sessions Managing the feedback process Working with group dynamics
Termination stage	12.13.14.	Managing the feedback process Preparation for counseling sessions Preparation of supervisees for termination Evaluation Working with group dynamics Termination of the supervision relationship

## **2.5. Data Collection Methods**

During the data collection in action research, using various data collection methods is important for the study's credibility (Johnson, 2011; Mertler, 2014). The data collection techniques of this study were observations, interviews, validation committee meetings' reports, supervisees' journals, and researcher's journals.

### **2.5.1. Observations**

Observation, which is used as an important data collection technique in the action research process (Mills, 2003), was this study's main data collection technique. We recorded the observations that we made within the scope of the study on video in order to collect detailed data on the study process (Johnson, 2011) and observe and improve the supervision process (Haggerty & Hilsenroth, 2011). Furthermore, a member of the validation committee, a field expert, took part in each supervision session as a participant observer. After each session, the first writer/supervisor watched and transcribed the videos for observation. The researcher recorded 42 hours of video during the study process and transcribed 490 pages of observations of this process.

### **2.5.2. Interviews**

In this study we used the focus group interviews. Within the scope of this study, we developed two semi-structured interview forms based on the evaluations of the validation committee and the literature for use in the interview (17th Validation committee meeting's reports, 24.02.2017, 45th Validation committee meeting's reports, 21.05.2018). In the first interview form, we included questions to determine the supervisees' perceptions of counseling efficacy, their concerns, and expectations ("How do you find yourself as a counselor?", "What concerns do you experience regarding the supervision process?", and "What are your expectations about the supervision process?"). In the form we created for the post-process focus group interview, we included questions to determine the supervisees' experiences in the group supervision process and their perceptions of the supervisor's style ("How do you evaluate the 14-week supervision process in general?", "What are your views on the style of your supervisor?", etc.). The first interviews we recorded lasted 43 minutes, and the second one lasted 85 minutes.

### **2.5.3. Supervisee Journals**

Journals are an important reflective material during action research (Mertler, 2014) and the supervision process (Campbell, 2006). Within the scope of this study, we developed the "Post-Supervision Evaluation Form" for the participants to reflect on their feelings, thoughts, and perceptions about their supervision experiences in the process. The supervisees filled out the form at the latest one day after each week's supervision session and sent it to the first researcher/supervisor via e-mail.

### **2.5.4. Researcher Journals**

The researcher's journals are a tool for thinking about how the study is designed with the researcher and participants, how actions and interactions shape the continuation of the process, and where the power dynamics are (Glesne, 2014). In this study, the first researcher kept a journal in which she reflected the experiences she gained in the entire study process, and the second researcher reviewed these journals periodically. Each journal included information on the date, time, place, and context. The researcher kept a journal of 190 pages during the entire process.

### **2.5.5. Validation Committee Meetings' Reports**

During this study, a validation committee presented various perspectives, discussed the emerging issues, and made guiding recommendations (Mertler, 2014). The validation committee also took the responsibility of providing the supervision of supervision. Within the scope of the study, two faculty members working in the Department of Guidance and Counseling, one of whom was the second author of this study and the other one was the observer of the supervision process, and a faculty member working in the Computer and Instructional Technology Education Department took part in the validation committee. The validation committees involved in all stages of the study, from designing to reporting, met once a week. During the study, we conducted 50 validation committee meetings, each lasting for approximately one to one and a half hours. The first researcher audio-recorded the validation committee meetings and kept the meeting's reports after each meeting. The committee members signed these reports every week.

### **2.6. Analysis of Data**

We analyzed and interpreted the data that we obtained during the supervision process and after this process. In this context, we followed the 6-step inductive analysis process proposed by Creswell (2012). These steps that do not always have to be followed consecutively are as follows (1) organizing the data, (2) reading the data, (3) coding the data, (4) general description and creating themes, (5) associating the themes and descriptions, (6) interpreting and reporting the themes (Creswell, 2012). In this context, the first researcher transcribed observations and interviews and organized the journals and the validation committee meetings' reports. The researcher read all the data obtained repeatedly and reviewed them within the context of the research question to make general sense. The researcher coded the data obtained every week within the context of the group dynamics that emerged in each supervision session and the processes of coping with these dynamics. Based on the data she coded, the researcher reached general descriptions about which stage of the group supervision process each dynamic could be associated with, and she associated these descriptions with each other. The researchers interpreted and reported the descriptions. During this process, the second researcher and the validation committee checked the validity of the data.

### **2.7. The Trustworthiness of the Study**

The way to ensure the credibility of qualitative research is triangulation (Patton, 2014). Triangulation in qualitative research means providing multiple perspectives in theoretical, methodological terms and in terms of data sources (Neuman, 2014; Patton, 2014). In this study, we used the deep theoretical literature to provide triangulation and worked with a relevant study group. Nevertheless, we collected data throughout the study rather than a specific study period (January 2016-January 2019), we used numerous data collection techniques, and we obtained data from different sources such as participants (supervisees), researcher, and validation committee. Furthermore, the researchers' experiences in qualitative research, counseling, and supervision increased the credibility of this study. Nevertheless, the fact that 50 validation committee meetings were held during the study that could confirm the data's accuracy supported study's credibility. Furthermore, the fact that we reported the entire study process in detail and presented evidence for the results increased the credibility of this study. Finally, the Ethics Committee Approval obtained for the study on 25.01.2017 also made this study executable.



### 3. RESULTS

In this study, we carried out a 14-session group supervision process based on the DM and PSG. The group dynamics were decisive in dividing the process into stages. The results showed that the dynamics that emerged in the group supervision process were associated with counseling performance skills, cognitive counseling skills, professional behaviors, and self-awareness, four supervision focuses based on the DM. Furthermore, the results showed that the supervisor could cope with the group dynamics in the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant and by involving peers in the supervision process. We presented the results on the group dynamics that defined each stage and the way these group dynamics were discussed under four titles.

#### 3.1. Results on the Group Dynamics Defining the Beginning Stage

The study results revealed that the first three group supervision sessions corresponded to the beginning stage. The dynamics that defined this stage were having feelings such as anxiety, curiosity, uncertainty, excitement, incompetence, and relaxation, embarrassment and shyness in the group setting, and the problem of belonging to and trust in the group. The indications of the feeling of relaxation that the supervisees experienced after the normalization of their anxiety, uncertainty, excitement, and curiosity are as follows:

*Researcher/Supervisor: How are you feeling right now? (silence for 3 seconds)*

*Beril: I am currently experiencing anxiety and relaxation at the same time.*

*Naz: Exactly, me too.*

*Beril: It's the first time like this (laughs). On the one hand, I feel relaxed that everything will be alright, your speech is very positive, and everything is very right, but I wonder if it will be possible to catch up with this much content, my inner voice never stops. I have those two feelings at the same time. (1<sup>st</sup> session, 4<sup>th</sup> video, 03:30–04:40, 02.13.2018)*

The results showed that the supervisees felt anxious about fulfilling their responsibilities in the supervision process in relation to the focus on professional behavior at the beginning stage. The indication of the result that the researcher/supervisor acted to support supervisees under the role of consultant in order to create a safe supervision setting for supervisees is as follows.

*Researcher/Supervisor: I have now shared our supervision agreement to concretize our fourteen-week process. Your responsibilities that I have specified do not belong to a single week but are spread over fourteen weeks. Moreover, you are in a supervision group, which means that you are not alone, and we will overcome your anxiety and fear together. (1<sup>st</sup> session, 4<sup>th</sup> video, 03:10–06: 23, 02.13.2018)*

The results showed that supervisees experienced incompetence and compared themselves with the other members of the group at the beginning stage.

*I frequently questioned myself on how confident I was within the scope of counseling skills. . I thought about whether everyone in the group had similar anxieties as me. (Naz's 1<sup>st</sup> session journals, 12.18.2018)*

We obtained results indicating that some supervisees felt shyness and discomfort since the issues related to self-awareness of some supervisees came to the fore at the beginning stage. An example of the researcher/supervisor addressing this situation in the role of a counselor is as follows:

*Researcher/Supervisor: So, did anything disturb you today?*

*Beril: It is not discomfort, but when we talk about, for instance, when we talk about my fear of making mistakes, I guess I was scared for some reason (smiles) . . . I need to solve it, something that I need to solve.*

*Researcher/Supervisor: You are nervous because you have encountered something that you need to solve.*

*Beril: Yes (2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 6<sup>th</sup> video, 10:24–11:43, 02.20.2018).*

### 3.2. Results on the Group Dynamics Defining the Transition Stage

The results showed that the dynamics in the group varied from the fourth supervision session compared to the beginning stage. We determined that this situation continued until the seventh session. In this process that we considered as the transition stage, the results showed that there were those who exhibited leadership behaviors among the members and that the members competed with each other and the supervisor, felt anger toward each other and the supervisor, were dissatisfied, resisted to receive and provide feedback, resisted to fulfill their responsibilities, started to form groups, and experienced conflict based on power relations. The results revealed that the researcher/supervisor used techniques such as creating an open communication setting, active listening, being empathetic, empty chair, Socratic questioning, strategies such as being instructive, and using humor and metaphors in relation to three supervisor roles in coping with these dynamics. An indication of the result that the members felt anger toward each other and the supervisor during the transition stage and were dissatisfied with the supervision process is as follows:

*I was surprised by Selin's thoughts on her client. I realized that I was bored for a while. It was like an individual lesson rather than a group lesson at that moment. I had nothing to tell. What I listened to were things that would not contribute to me. I did not feel bored except during that time. (Beril's 4<sup>th</sup> session journal, 03.11.2018)*

The observation records of the 5<sup>th</sup> supervision session exemplify the result indicating that the researcher/supervisor exhibited the role of counselor on the focus of self-awareness in order to clarify the feelings experienced in receiving and providing feedback.

*Researcher/Supervisor: Actually, what you were trying to do was helping. . .that sharp expression behind your feedback may cause the other side to become defensive (I tell Selin, and then I turn to Beril) . . . If it becomes obstructive or makes you feel angry or irritated in any way, then it is good that we are talking about it, too.*

*Beril: I feel neither anger nor irritation (smiles) because I already think that Selin's style is like that; I think that is the way she talks from the beginning.*

*Researcher/Supervisor: What are you feeling right now? (I turn to Selin) (5<sup>th</sup> session, 5<sup>th</sup> video, 11: 01–19:41, 03.13.2018)*

The results revealed that a supervisee exhibited a defensive approach in the face of feedback during the transition stage and that this defensiveness was based on transference. The researcher/supervisor focused on this situation, which was related to the focus of self-awareness, by using the empty chair technique in the role of a counselor and allowed the supervisee to separate his transfer from the supervision process. Nevertheless, we determined that there was a need to create an open communication setting in supervision (38<sup>th</sup> Validation Committee Meetings' Reports, 03.19.2018). Moreover, at the transition stage, we observed that supervisees transferred some of the conflict situations they experienced

regarding the feedback processes to their journals instead of sharing them directly in the group setting. The researcher/supervisor coped with these dynamics by providing a safe supervision setting, an invitation to open communication, and self-disclosure. Furthermore, in the observation records of the 6th supervision session, it is possible to see an indication that the researcher/supervisor played the role of a teacher on the focus of professional behaviors by exhibiting an instructive approach to what an effective supervision process should be:

*Researcher/Supervisor: I would also like to say this (turning to Selin). Yes, there is a transfer in the process, but beyond that, feedback may sometimes be strong and contain final truths. . .The feedback you have provided is invaluable, it shows that your friend is working on the counseling process, it shows your effort to adopt her client and help her. . .But on the other hand, it is important that the feedback is provided in a flexible, concrete way that does not contain final truths. . .*

*Selin: Yes, I definitely need to change my style.*

*Researcher/Supervisor: Well, if I feel any sharpness in your feedback, does it bother you if I intervene and help you change your way of expression?*

*Selin: It would definitely be better because at that moment I have the chance to notice and change it (6<sup>th</sup> session, 1<sup>st</sup> video 00: 00–23:25, 03.20.2018)*

### 3.3. Results on the Group Dynamics Defining the Working Stage

The study results showed that the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth sessions corresponded to the working stage. According to the results, the indicators of the transition to the working stage were that the group members trusted each other and developed closer relationships, and there were changes in the seating arrangement during the group supervision process. The results also revealed that the members took their peers as a model instead of competing, focused on self-development efforts, preferred open communication, were more receptive while receiving feedback, and were more self-confident while providing feedback during the working stage. At this stage, the results also showed that supervisees started to adopt their peers' counseling processes and that their sense of belonging to the group increased. Furthermore, the results revealed that at this stage, the supervisees attempted to understand themselves as an individual rather than considering the group as the source of their incompetence and anxieties, that they started to use the group as a therapeutic force in overcoming their anxiety and incompetence and made self-evaluation. The results indicated that the supervisor's empathic, instructive, and supportive behaviors in connection with the teacher, consultant, and counselor roles were effective in coping with the group dynamics at this stage. A result of the change in group seating arrangement after the resolution of conflicts during the working stage is as follows:

*This course, Beril sitting directly next to me and Selin, and also being directly on the angle of view of the camera were meaningful for me, which made me think that she got used to the process and reduced her burdens on me and Selin. Furthermore, I was also very happy to see the whole group, including Selin, chatting before the supervision session. I think the ice toward each other was broken. All of these indicate that the course of our group dynamic may have changed. (Researcher's journals, 03.28.2018, p.172)*

The indicator of the result that supervisees communicated more openly and directly with each other during the working stage is as follows:

*Selin: I want to say in this way, I reveal myself too much in the process, I tell the features about myself, do I take too much time. . .I doubt if I am too far ahead in the supervision process and blocking you.*

*Naz: You know. . . I realize that rather than your personal shares taking time, I just sometimes feel like you have a bit of a hard time accepting our feedback. Otherwise, I do not think that experiencing emotional things is time-consuming. (9<sup>th</sup> session, 8<sup>th</sup> video 00:29–01:33, 04.11.2018)*

An example of the fact that the supervisees adopted their peers' clients and provided learnings from feedback given to their peers in the working stage is as follows:

*During the supervision process, I deliberately wanted to make Beril's client, who did not make sharings in the process, talk. When I saw Beril's difficulty in the face of silence, I generally thought why we just keep quiet and couldn't let ourselves in silence. I thought that the feedback provided to Beril and Neslihan was significant and that if I had clients with similar problems in the future, this feedback would be useful for me as well. (Naz's 9<sup>th</sup> session journal, 04.10.2018)*

### **3.4. Results on the Group Dynamics Defining the Termination Stage**

The study results indicated that the termination stage was initiated from the eleventh session. According to the results, the indicators of the transition to the termination stage were that the members felt sorrow, sadness, and comfort together because the end of the process was approaching, the peers had greater trust in each other and provided more objective feedback, the members started to make self-evaluation, there was an increase in counseling self-efficacy, a decrease in anxiety and an increase in ability to provide peer supervision. Nevertheless, the results showed that at this stage, supervisees started to become independent of the supervisor on the one hand, and on the other hand, some supervisees developed a dependence on the supervision process and experienced resistance and regression. The results revealed that the supervisor focused on the evaluation processes while working with the relevant dynamics, prepared supervisees for the termination of the supervision process, and clarified the situations related to the dependence on supervision. The following observation data reveal that the researcher/supervisor exhibited the role of the consultant in the focus of professional behaviors and, in this way prepared the members for termination:

*Selin: I feel empty and sad. What will happen when it is over?*

*Researcher/Supervisor: We have three more sessions. . . Like every relationship that ends, this process also has an end. . . You will be continuing without a supervisor. . . Of course, just as your clients can get help when they need it after their process with you, this also applies to you in terms of getting supervision. . . you can get help from other supervisors when you need it. Based on the feedback you provided to each other here, I have observed that you have developed toward becoming your own supervisor. (11<sup>th</sup> session, 6<sup>th</sup> video 24:48–29:18, 04.24.2018)*

An indication that the supervisees started to make self-evaluations at the termination stage, and in this sense, they reviewed both their individual development and the development of the group is as follows:

*In this supervision session, I have observed that my feedback is different now. I have observed that I can make more detailed and careful comments. . . I have realized that the group and I have improved a lot since the beginning of the process. For instance, while the grade I will get in a course is very important for me, now seeing my progress in this process is more important to me than the grade. This is a big change for me (Neslihan's 11<sup>th</sup> session journal, 05.07.2018)*

The results showed that a member exhibited resistance and regression during the termination stage, lacked the motivation to fulfill her responsibilities, and developed dependence on supervision. The example that the supervisor focused on self-awareness in the role of the consultant through support and encouragement in order to overcome this situation is as follows:

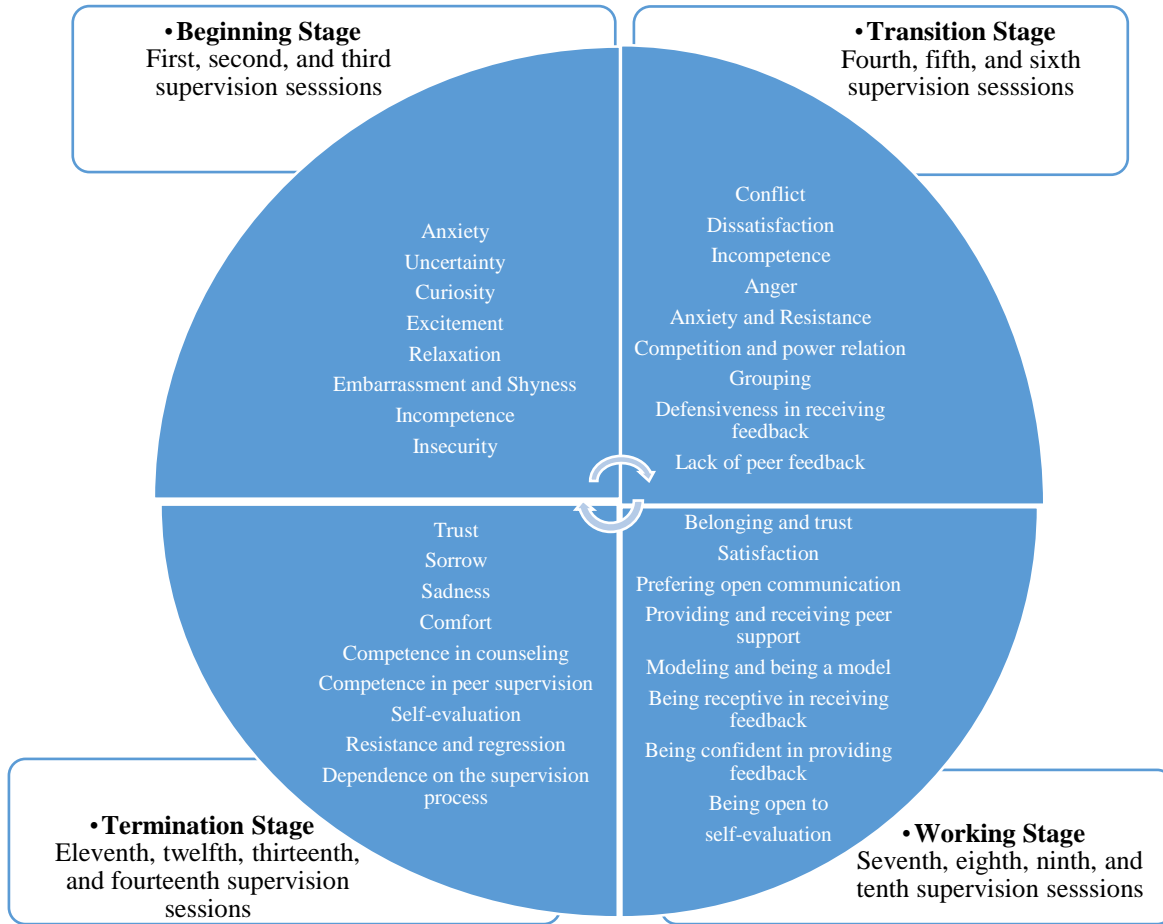
*Researcher/Supervisor: I see that you have very good sessions when you devote yourself, but your sessions can be superficial when you withdraw yourself. I am fully aware that you have the power, and I actually brought this up so that you can realize this power.*

*Beril: Thank you, I never thought like that. I need to think a little about myself.*

*Researcher/Supervisor: It is precious for me to bring this up and support you right now. However, I would also like to say that you may not always encounter a supervisor who encourages and holds your hand; in this sense, I would like to remind you that the ways to increase your intrinsic motivation are also within yourself. (12<sup>th</sup> session, 3<sup>rd</sup> video, 06:58–25:00, 05.08.2018)*

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In this study, we carried out a systematic group supervision process based on the DM and the PGS method. The study results revealed that the group supervision process consisted of four stages: beginning, transition, working, and termination. The results showed that the group dynamics that defined each stage were very diverse (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Stages of Group Supervision and Group Dynamics Experienced in Each Stage

The study results showed that different strategies (see Table 3) could be implemented to cope with the group dynamics that emerged during the group supervision process. The results demonstrated that each dynamic might be transformed into a therapeutic force for the development of the group in this way. The study results showed that the group supervision process could be carried out based on PGS based on the DM.

**Table 3:** *Strategies Implemented in Coping with the Group Dynamics in the Group Supervision Process*

Supervisor's strategies
Development of a supervision agreement
Clarifying the goals of group supervision
Making adequate preparation for supervision
Creating an atmosphere of positive supervision
Focus on underlying issues
Balancing between challenge and support
Encouragement
Normalizing anxiety, conflict, and resistance
Self-disclosure
Being empathetic and sensitive
Providing regular feedback
Receiving regular feedback
Creating an open communication setting
Confrontation
Activating peer support
Being a model
Informing
Being open to communication
Working with transference, counter-transference and parallel processes
Being accessible
Receiving the supervision of the supervision
Audio/video recording of the supervision process
Ensuring that supervisees keep a journal
Keeping a journal as a supervisor

## 5. DISCUSSION

The study results showed that the beginning stage of the group supervision process corresponded to the first three supervision sessions. We determined that the dynamics that defined these three sessions as the beginning stage were related to experiencing problems of belonging to and trust in the group and feelings of incompetence, uncertainty, and anxiety. We concluded that it was functional to share a supervision agreement, create a safe atmosphere of supervision in the group, normalize the anxieties, be supportive, and address instructive processes in order to cope with these dynamics. In parallel with these results, the literature and studies also emphasize that supervisees have various feelings, such as anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity at the beginning of the supervision process and need to be understood, encouraged, and motivated in this process (Aladağ, 2014; Aladağ & Kemer, 2017, Carroll, 2014; Dryden & Reeves, 2014; Ellis et al., 2015; Jen Kuo et al., 2016; Connor et al., 2016; Meydan & Koçyiğit, 2019; Ülker Tümlü 2019; Ülker Tümlü & Ceyhan, 2021). Therefore, the fact that we conducted the beginning stage of the supervision process to cover the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant in this study is consistent with studies in the literature.

The results revealed that the dynamics that defined the transition stage were based on dissatisfaction, conflict, competition, and resistance. The results indicated that it was functional to be prepared to manage the group dynamics that may occur during the transition stage, to receive feedback from supervisees in supervision sessions, to use journals, and to receive supervision for the supervision process in coping with these dynamics. Furthermore, we determined in the study that the video recording of the supervision process provided an opportunity to observe each group dynamic after supervision. Nevertheless, the results showed that the use of techniques such as creating an open communication setting, active listening, self-disclosure, empty chair, Socratic questioning, and humor and metaphors in connection with three supervisor roles (teacher, consultant, counselor) at this stage were functional in coping with the dynamics with conflict and resistance. Similar study results revealed that conflict, competition, and dissatisfaction could be felt during the group supervision process, in consistent with

this study (Knight, 2017). Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the necessity of considering these dynamics in preparation for the supervision process (Gazzola et al., 2013; Haans & Balke, 2018). In this context, the literature also indicates that it may be effective to make supervisees write journals during supervision processes (Borders & Brown, 2009; Campbell, 2006). Moreover, the literature emphasizes that unless individuals are asked whether there is any situation that disturbs them in the supervision sessions, they do not make an explanation about the situations that do not go well in the process, and in this context, it is important to ask for feedback from them (Henderson et al., 2014). Nevertheless, similar study results support that the video recording of supervision processes can make many group dynamics observable (Haggerty & Hilsenroth, 2011). Furthermore, similar study results also indicate that an atmosphere of supervision that is supportive and based on open communication is effective in coping with group dynamics with conflict (Engholm-Hedegaard, 2020).

We observed that the group dynamics that defined the working stage were based on the fact that conflict was replaced by open communication and working, and the desire for development came to the forefront. Accordingly, we observed that it was highly functional to support the supervisees to create their style in connection with the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant in the supervision process, to make various instructive interventions such as being a model, giving information, explanation, role-playing, and being empathetic. Similar studies also emphasize that working in a group comes to the forefront after effectively managing intra-group conflicts in the group supervision process (Proctor, 2008) and that it can be functional to carry out this process based on supporting, empathy and teaching (Harris & Brockbank, 2011; Oh & Soloman, 2014).

According to the results, the group dynamics regarding the transition to the termination stage were experiencing dual feelings about the end of the group, issues related to personal development and the development of the group, evaluation becoming prominent, and dependence on supervision. The results showed that it was functional to focus on a systematic evaluation process, prepare supervisees for the termination of the supervision process, and clarify the situations related to dependence on supervision in order to cope with these dynamics in three supervisor roles. Indeed, the literature also indicates that it is necessary to focus on a systematic evaluation process at the termination stage of the supervision process (Borders & Brown, 2009). Nevertheless, in parallel with this study, similar studies reveal that supervisees may develop a dependence on the supervision process (Wrape et al., 2017), and therefore, it is an ethical responsibility to prepare supervisees for the end of the supervision relationship (Barnett & Molzon, 2014; Borders et al., 2014). Furthermore, in parallel with the results of this study, the literature emphasizes that it is necessary to discuss the dual feelings of supervisees for saying goodbye (Borders & Brown, 2009).

In this study, we used participative group supervision as a type of group supervision, and we conducted a supervision process in which the researcher/supervisor was the dominant supervisor, and peers contributed to the supervision process. In this respect, peer perspective and support were involved in the feedback. On the other hand, the literature emphasizes that in a supervision process where there is only peer feedback, and in this sense, the supervisor is only the moderator, peers may not be objective (Dryden & Reeves, 2014), and it may be possible to use providing continuous peer support (Ladany & Bradley, 2010). Furthermore, difficulty and conflict may occur in complying with responsibilities due to the absence of a supervisor in the hierarchical sense in such a supervision process (Campbell, 2006). On the other hand, in the supervision process expressed as authoritarian group supervision in which the peer is not involved in the process, there may be power relations between the supervisor and supervisees because of providing one-to-one feedback in the group setting (Proctor, 2008). Therefore, the execution of a PGS-based group supervision process in this study was functional in managing the group dynamics and ensuring the change and development of supervisees.



## 5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We consider that this study, which we addressed to clarify the stages of a rich form of supervision such as group supervision, will shed light on the literature, implementers, and researchers. In this context, following the action research method within this study's scope enriched and strengthened the study as a whole and the supervision process. Different studies have also demonstrated the usability of action research in the field of supervision (see Lakeman & Glasgow, 2009; Van Rijn et al., 2008). However, it is necessary to consider that each action research process is unique and that different action research processes may produce different results. The literature focuses on the uncertainty of the consultant role, which was discussed within the scope of the DM (Crunk & Barden, 2017). Bernard and Goodyear (2014) explain this ambiguity as the roles of teacher and counselor are more familiar than the role of consultant. Nevertheless this is a limitation of DM. Therefore, we recommend conducting similar studies and practices based on different supervision models. Furthermore, supervision processes can be affected by the supervisor's personal characteristics, culture, and experiences (Ryde, 2011). Therefore, it is important for researchers and implementers to consider that clinical supervision processes conducted by different supervisors may produce different results.

### **Author Contributions**

The first author conceived the research idea, and structured and drafted the manuscript. The first and second authors analyzed the data. The first author edited the manuscript and made comments on the final version.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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