

## RESEARCH

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## ARAŞTIRMA

## Açık Erişim

## The Effect of Psychodrama on The Burnout Level of School Counselors

*Rehber Öğretmelerde Psikodramanın Tükenmişlik Düzeyine Etkisi*

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study aims to determine the effect of psychodrama on the level of burnout in school counselors. **Method:** The study was conducted as experimental nonrandomized controlled trial. The population of the study consisted of 67 school counselors working within the Gaziosmanpaşa District Directorate of National Education and the sample consisted of 20 school counselors, who agreed to participate in the study, as experiment (n=9) and control (n=11) groups. The study was conducted ten sessions in total, 3 hours once a week, between September and October 2019. Socio-Demographic Questionnaire Form and "Maslach Burnout Scale" were used as data collection tools. **Results:** While there was a decrease in the burnout levels of the school counselors, in the experimental group after psychodrama, no significant change was found in the measurements made in the control group. In particular, a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.002$ ) was found after psychodrama in the Emotional Exhaustion Sub-dimension of the Experiment group. **Conclusion:** Psychodrama is an effective method in reducing burnout.

### Article Information

#### Keywords

School counselor, burnout,  
psychodrama

#### Anahtar Kelimeler

Rehber öğretmen, tükenmişlik,  
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#### Article History

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### ÖZET

**Amaç:** Bu çalışma, psikodramanın rehber öğretmenlerde tükenmişlik düzeyine etkisini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. **Yöntem:** Çalışma deneysel, randomize olmayan kontrollü çalışma olarak yürütüldü. Araştırmanın evrenini Gaziosmanpaşa İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü bünyesinde görev yapan 67 rehber öğretmen, örneklemini deney (n=9) ve kontrol (n=11) olmak üzere araştırmaya katılmayı kabul eden 20 rehber öğretmen oluşturdu. Çalışma, Eylül-Ekim 2019 tarihleri arasında haftada 3 saat olmak üzere toplam on oturumda gerçekleştirildi. Sosyo-Demografik Anket Formu ve "Maslach Tükenmişlik Ölçeği" veri toplama aracı olarak kullanıldı. **Bulgular:** Deney grubundaki rehber öğretmenlerin psikodrama sonrası tükenmişlik düzeylerinde azalma olurken, kontrol grubunda yapılan ölçümlerde anlamlı bir değişiklik bulunmadı. Özellikle Deney grubunun Duygusal Tükenmişlik Alt boyutunda psikodrama sonrası istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark ( $p < 0,002$ ) bulundu. **Sonuç:** Psikodrama rehber öğretmenlerde tükenmişliği azaltmada etkili bir yöntemdir.

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**Ethical Statement:** The study was approved by the Health Sciences University Gaziosmanpaşa Taksim Training and Research Hospital Ethics Committee on 24.07.2019. (No: 2019-105).

## INTRODUCTION

The prerequisite for a person to be in full social well-being is to have a healthy social and business life. It is not possible for a person to be in full well-being in societies where job and life security cannot be ensured, there is no opportunity to find a job, and the unrest caused by income inequality cannot be eliminated. Individuals' work environments, their relationships in the workplace, status and role ambiguities, problems with the people served, and administrative negativities can impair the health of the employees. Prolonged persistence of these adverse conditions can lead to burnout syndrome. Burnout is a multifactorial psycho-cognitive syndrome that causes physical and psychological problems and reduces efficiency and productivity (Janighorban et al., 2020). Although the definitions of burnout vary, Kaya et al. (2010) stated in their article that Maslach defines burnout as "a professional person being detached from the original meaning and purpose of his/her profession, he/she can no longer really care about the people he/she serves".

Psychodrama is a way for participants to relive psychological and social issues rather than just talking about events in their lives. Psychodrama sessions conducted using this method are designed to provide purification (catharsis) and gain insight, examine truth and develop logical thinking, and develop learning and behavior change in psychodrama (Karataş & Gökçakan 2009).

Psychodrama is an experimental method of psychotherapy designed to heal individuals, groups, and societies based on the dramatization of events, thoughts, and emotions. (Orkibi, 2019). Psychodrama can be used in groups under the guidance of a specially trained therapist (Chung, 2013). Group members express their feelings and thoughts spontaneously, dramatizing them, rather than talking about related events in their lives; thus, it aims to find some solutions to existing their problems in the lives of group members and to increase insight and awareness (Jacobs et al., 2012).

Data on the positive impact of psychodrama practice on different patient groups are available in the literature. Studies have shown many effects of psychodrama practice such as increased hope and self-confidence of individuals, increased ability to cope with events, improvement in psychological health, improvement in anger, improvement in self-esteem, decrease in depression and hopelessness scores, increase in quality of life, decrease in anxiety and depression scores (Vural, 2014; Terzioğlu, 2018; Sproesser, 2010).

## METHOD

### **Type of Research**

This study was conducted as a nonrandomized controlled trial to evaluate the effect of psychodrama on the burnout level of school counselors.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study consisted of 67 school counselors working within the Gaziosmanpaşa District Directorate of National Education and the sample consisted of 20 school counselors, who agreed to participate in the study, as experiment (n=9) and control (n=11) groups. The study was conducted

between September - October in 2019. A total of 10 sessions of psychodrama were conducted, once a week, 3 hours per session. Psychodrama sessions lasted a total of 10 sessions, once a week for three hours. Measurements were carried out before and after psychodrama practice as pre and post-tests. The psychodrama study was conducted by a psychodramatist who completed psychodrama training at the Abdülkadir Özbek Psychodrama Institute.

### ***Inclusion Criteria***

- Expressing the burnout
- Being a volunteer

### ***Exclusion Criteria***

- Having a psychiatric diagnosis

### ***Extraction Criteria***

- Not following the group rules
- Not attending two consecutive sessions

## **Psychodrama Sessions**

There are three main phases in a psychodrama session: the warm-up, the action and the sharing.

***Warm-up phase.*** The psychodrama session starts with a warm-up phase to prepare the panelists and director for the characters, themes and the situation at hand. Warming up lets members to rise up spontaneity and break group resistance. At that stage, decide what kind of work the group will do and who will be the protagonists.

***Action phase.*** This phase is the action phase where the decisions made during the warm-up phase are put into practice. In this stage, the psychodramatist applies the basic techniques of psychodrama and some auxiliary techniques.

***Sharing Phase.*** The group session is the stage at the end of the psychodrama performance where the group members give feedback about their character. The feedback and comments of the psychodramatist regarding the process are also very important at this stage (Şimşek et al., 2019).

## **Data Collection Tools**

***Sociodemographic Questionnaire.*** It consists of four questions including age, gender, profit-loss statement and working time.

***Maslach Burnout Scale (MBS).*** The Scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981) and referred to in the literature as the Maslach is a seven-point Likert scale. The scale consists of 22 items and three subscales. Among these subscales, the depersonalization subscale consisted of 5 items, the emotional exhaustion subscale consisted of 9 items, and the personal achievement subscale consisted of a total of 8 items. The scale items were rated "1: never" and "7: always". Ergin translated the Maslach Burnout Scale into Turkish in 1992, after pre-application to a group of 235 people, according to the answer options given to the seven levels from this group and the original table were "0: Never", decided to divide the scale into five levels and arrange it as "4: Always", and use this five-level version in the study. High levels

of burnout reflect high scores on the depersonalization subscales and emotional exhaustion and low scores on the personal achievement subscale. Moderate burnout reflects moderate scores in all three subscales, low scores are reflected in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization subscales, and high scores are reflected in personal achievement subscales. While scoring, three different burnout scores are calculated for each individual (Çapri, 2006).

### Ethical Aspect of the Research

Approval numbered 2019-105 was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Gaziosmanpaşa Taksim Training and Research Hospital for this study. Written consent was obtained from school counselors who agreed to participate in the study.

### Limitations of the Study

The fact that the study was in a small sample group constituted its limitation.

### Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 package program. Continuous variables were presented as mean±standard deviation, median, and categorical variables were presented as numbers and percentages. Data were checked for agreement with the normal distribution using the Shapiro-Wilk test. When the parametric test hypothesis was met, the test of significance of the difference between the two means was used to compare independent group differences; When the parametric test hypothesis was not met, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare differences between independent groups. when controlling the variation between measurements; T-tests were used for dependent groups when parametric test hypotheses were met, and 2-sample Wilcoxon tests were used when parametric test hypotheses were not met. Differences between categorical variables were analyzed using the chi-square test.

## RESULTS

This section includes the socio-demographic characteristics of the school counselors.

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic Characteristics of Counselors (N = 20)

		Experimental Group		Control Group		Between-Groups <i>p</i>
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Gender	Female	8	88.8	7	63.6	0.319
	Male	1	11.1	4	36.3	
Age	18-25	0	0	0	0	0.081
	26-30	6	66.6	2	18.1	
	31-35	2	22.2	6	54.5	
	36-40	1	11.1	3	27.2	
Profit-loss statement	41 and older	0	0	0	0	0.379
	Income is less than expenses	6	66.6	7	63.6	
	Break Even	1	11.1	0	0	
Working time	Income is more than expenses	2	22.2	4	36.3	0.14
	0 - 5 year	5	55.5	1	9.0	
	6 - 10 year	2	22.2	4	36.3	
	11 - 15 year	1	11.1	3	27.2	
	16 and above	1	11.1	3	27.2	

75% (n = 15) of the counselors in the study are women. It was found that the counselors in the experimental and control groups participating in the study were similar and the groups were homogeneous.

**Table 2.** Comparison of the Experimental and Control Group Counselors' Scores on the Burnout Scale Between Groups

Burnout Scale	Experimental Group (n=9)		Control Group (n=11)		Between- Groups p
	X ± S.S	Med (min - max)	X ± S.S	Med (min - max)	
Emotional Exhaustion Sub-Dimension					
Before Psychodrama	29 ± 4.64	29 (23 - 34)	18.27 ± 4.38	19 (10 - 24)	0.0001** α
After Psychodrama	21.67 ± 4.27	21 (16 - 30)	19.91 ± 4.83	20 (11 - 26)	0.405 α
Difference Between Two Groups	7.33 ± 4.92	7 (1 - 18)	-1.64 ± 1.69	-2 (-5 - 1)	0.0001** α
In-Group p	0.002* φ		0.009* φ		
Desensitization Sub-Dimension					
Before Psychodrama	10.56 ± 3.97	9 (5 - 18)	8.09 ± 3.21	8 (5 - 16)	0.152 β
After Psychodrama	9.22 ± 1.92	9 (6 - 12)	9.36 ± 2.91	9 (5 - 17)	0.941 β
Difference Between Two Groups	1.33 ± 2.69	2 (-3 - 6)	-1.27 ± 1.1	-1 (-3 - 0)	0.021* α
In-Group p	0.176 φ		0.003* φ		
Personal Success Sub-Dimension					
Before Psychodrama	27 ± 3.28	27 (21 - 31)	30.82 ± 3.89	30 (24 - 40)	0.031* α
After Psychodrama	30.33 ± 4.06	30 (23 - 37)	27.18 ± 5.67	28 (16 - 37)	0.179 α
Difference Between Two Groups	-3.33 ± 3.97	-3 (-10 - 1)	3.64 ± 4.08	3 (0 - 15)	0.0001** β
In-Group p	0.036* φ		0.005* γ		
Total					
Total Before Psychodrama	66.56 ± 6.69	65 (56 - 79)	57.18 ± 4.79	59 (47 - 64)	0.002* α
Total After Psychodrama	61.22 ± 4.92	60 (53 - 69)	56.45 ± 5.61	58 (44 - 64)	0.061 α
Total Difference	5.33 ± 6.78	5 (-6 - 14)	0.73 ± 5.5	-1 (-3 - 16)	0.095 β
In-Group p	0.046* φ		0.641 γ		

\*\* p < 0.001, \* p < 0.05, α: t test in independent groups ; β: Mann Whitney U test; φ: t test in dependent groups; γ: Wilcoxon Paired two sample test

### When we look at the findings of the Emotional Exhaustion Sub-dimension

As can be seen in Table 2, the psychodrama was applied to the counselors of the experimental group; there was a statistically significant (p<0.002) difference between the results before and after the test. Significant differences emerged when scores gradually declined after psychodrama. The decline in the scale scores indicated that the emotional exhaustion of the counselors in the experimental group was reduced. The MBI was applied to school counselors in the control group; a statistically significant difference (p<0.009) was also found between the results before and after the test. Significant differences occurred in the increase in scores after psychodrama. Counselors in the control group experienced increased emotional burnout. In addition, when we look at the difference between the two groups in terms of scores before and after psychodrama, there is a statistically high difference between the two groups (p < 0.001).

**When we look at the Desensitization Sub-Dimension findings**

When examining the internal changes of the two groups, there was no significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of the experimental group ( $p < 0.176$ ); the scale value of the control group increased significantly after the posttest. Furthermore, when examining the differences between the two groups in terms of pre- and post-play scores ( $p < 0.003$ ), a statistically significant difference was found between the two groups ( $p < 0.021$ ).

**When we look at the findings of the Personal Success Sub-dimension**

When will we examine the changes that have occurred within the two groups; There was a significant difference between the experimental ( $p < 0.036$ ) and control ( $p < 0.005$ ) groups. After psychodrama, the scores of the experimental group increased; scale scores of the control group decreased. In addition, when the differences between the two groups in terms of pre- and post-training scores were examined, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ( $p < 0.0001$ ).

Although occupational burnout is one of the most prominent questioning issues in the field of occupational health; the burnout experienced by counselors is a chronic phenomenon that mostly causes wear and tear. Specific, holistic and personalized interventions are effective in reducing burnout (Wiederhold et al., 2018). This study found that Psychodrama is an effective method to reduce the burnout of counselors. In literature, the burnout of counselors in Turkey could be found in a single study examining the efficacy of psychodrama. In addition, it was seen in the studies that the scale was not evaluated on its sub-dimensions and it was discussed over the general scale scoring. For this reason, the sub-dimensions have been discussed in line with the supplementary literature. Gökkaya and Özdel found a statistically significant difference between the total scores of counselors before and after the study in their Psychodrama study and stated that Psychodrama is a usable method in reducing occupational burnout (2016). According to the quotation from the same study; Etiz (2006) and Pişmişoğlu (2006) stated in their thesis that Psychodrama is effective in reducing occupational burnout. Thacker found that Psychodrama provide reducing burnout (1984). Psychodrama helps the individual to improve communication skills, manage stress, and reduce burnout by helping to increase psychological resilience. Kutlukturkan et al., similarly, in planning individual and organizational interventions to reduce burnout; they emphasized the necessity of organizing programs that provide psychological support, the importance of developing communication skills and providing training on coping strategies (2016). There are three sub-dimensions associated with burnout. Emotional exhaustion means feeling tired and emotionally worn out. In this study, while there was a decrease in emotional exhaustion subscale scores after Psychodrama in the experimental group; there was an increase in the control group. In addition, an advanced level of significant difference was found between the two groups. Emotionally exhausted individuals may experience anxiety and / or depression after a while, as a result of which a decrease in professional satisfaction develops and this may result in quitting the job. Orkibi stated in his study that burnout supports quitting and there is a negative relationship between burnout and career commitment (2015). Grigorescu et al., found a reduction in nurses' depression and anxiety levels in their Psychodrama study; they also stated that there was a decrease in their personal and professional burnout (2020). Al-Hammuri found that psychodrama-based training reduced depressive symptoms (2018). Similarly, Şimşek

et al. found that Psychodrama decreased social anxiety and increased empathy skills (2020). On the other hand, Özbaşı and Tel stated that psychodrama may lead to the development of adaptive mechanisms and lower levels of fatigue and exhaustion in the workplace (2015). Kokkinos pointed out that burnout creates chronic work stress in individuals. Anxiety and depression also negatively affect the personal success of the individual (2007). Personal success sub-dimension refers to a person's negative self-evaluation, personal achievement poverty, personal achievement competence, and overcoming problems with success. At this point, the person begins to feel ineffective and lacks the qualification for personal thinking. Self-esteem decreases and depression begins to occur. It is accepted that as the scores in this sub-dimension decrease, the level of personal achievement decreases. In this study, while the scores of the experimental group increased, the scores of the control group decreased. This result means that Psychodrama helps counselors to reduce burnout by increasing personal success. In a study by Esfahani et al., examining burnout in midwives, they stated that low levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization lead to high personal success (2012). In addition, Janighorban et al. stated that psychological resilience has an important role in predicting the variances of burnout in the field of personal success (2020). Desensitization means that individuals “distance themselves from those receiving service, receiving a strict, even inhumane response”. In this study, while the depersonalization scores of the experimental group after Psychodrama decreased; there was an increase in the control group. Sometimes, communication problems and sometimes being psychologically weak can cause these problems. Psychodrama helps individuals to discover themselves, understand the perspective of others and associate their own feelings or thoughts with others, thus, while handling the emerging communication problems more effectively, on the other hand, it helps to increase the psychological resilience of the person by strengthening the self. In a study conducted by Oflaz et al. with nurses, it was determined that Psychodrama is useful in solving communication problems (2011). Chen and Fang (2016), El Dahshan and Dorgham (2013), Rashidazar et al. (2018) and O'Brien (2011) found a significant relationship between total psychological empowerment score and three burnout domains.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this study, psychodrama was found to be an effective way to reduce levels of burnout. It is recommended that psychodrama studies aiming to reduce the burnout of counselors should be carried out in different institutions and regions by including qualitative analysis methods.

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### **Author Contribution**

This study was conducted by all the authors working together and cooperatively. All the authors substantially contributed to this work in each step of the study.

### **Conflict of Interest**

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

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### **Ethical Statement**

For this study, the approval of Gaziosmanpaşa Taksim Training and Research Hospital Ethics Committee numbered 2019-105 were obtained.

**Ethics Committee Name:** Gaziosmanpaşa Taksim Training and Research Hospital

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