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Research Article

The Effect of Group Supervision on the Psychological Counseling Self-Efficacy Levels of Psychological Counseling Candidates

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Abstract

Psychological counseling skills are the most important part of the psychological counseling profession. Psychological counseling candidates have the opportunity of performing these professional skills previously learned theoretically within the practice course of psychological counseling with another person during their undergraduate education and they receive supervision support for these practices. This study presents mixed-pattern research examining the effect of group supervision on the psychological counseling self-efficacy of psychological counselor candidates. Quantitative data were obtained from Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scale and qualitative data was obtained from the evaluation reports of the psychological counselor candidates. The quantitative findings show that group supervision is effective on all the subscales (exploration, insight, action, conflicts in relationships and client problems) of psychological counseling self-efficacy. The qualitative results backing up these findings prove that the responses of the participants can be divided into four categories of emotions, professional development, boosters, and difficulties. As a result, the findings of this research showed that the group supervision carried out in the individual psychological counseling course positively affected the psychological counseling self-efficacy perceptions of the psychological counselor candidates. Based on these findings, it has been suggested to take into consideration the improvement of the self-efficacy levels of psychological counselor candidates as well as the acquision of professional skills in counselor education.

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Grup Süpervizyonunun Psikolojik Danışman Adaylarının
Psikolojik Danışma Özyeterlik Düzeylerine Etkisi

Öz

Psikolojik danışma becerileri, rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık mesleğinin en önemli öğesidir. Psikolojik danışman adayları lisans eğitimlerinde, bireyle psikolojik danışma uygulaması dersi kapsamında önceden teorik olarak öğrendikleri bu mesleki becerileri uygulama fırsatı bulurlar ve bu uygulamalara yönelik süpervizyon desteği alırlar. Bu çalışma, grup süpervizyonunun psikolojik danışman adaylarının psikolojik danışma özyeterliğine etkisinin incelendiği karma desen bir araştırmadır. Nicel veriler, Psikolojik Danışma Özyeterlik Ölçeği; nitel veriler ise Psikolojik danışman adaylarının değerlendirme raporlarından elde edilmiştir. Nicel bulgular, grup süpervizyonunun psikolojik danışma özyeterliğinin tüm alt boyutlarında (keşif, içgörü, eylem, ilişkide çatışmalar, danışan problemleri) etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu bulguyu destekleyen nitel bulgular ise katılımcıların yanıtlarının duygular, mesleki gelişim, destekleyiciler ve güçlükler olmak üzere dört temada ayrıştığını ortaya koymuştur. Sonuç olarak bu araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular, bireyle psikolojik danışma uygulaması dersi kapsamında yürütülen grup süpervizyonunun adayların psikolojik danışma özyeterlik algılarını olumlu yönde etkilediğini göstermiştir. Buna bağlı olarak psikolojik danışman eğitiminde mesleki becerilerin kazandırılmasının yanı sıra adayların psikolojik danışma özyeterliğini de artırmanın dikkate alınması önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Grup süpervizyonu, psikolojik danışma özyeterliği, psikolojik danışman adayları, psikolojik danışma becerileri*

Introduction

The guidance and psychological counseling profession helps people to show more productive, fertile, and problem-solving behaviors and coping skills via psychological counseling with a person or a group by using therapeutic conditions and skills (Gladding, 2000; Hackney & Cormier, 2008; Haynes, Corey & Moulton, 2013; Ikiz, 2010 Ikiz & Totan, 2014). The effect of psychological counseling services depends on the professional skills effectively performed by counselors (Aladağ, Yaka, & Koç, 2014; Gladding, 2000; Uslu & Arı, 2005; Whiston & Coker, 2000; Zakaria, 2013). To achieve this, it is necessary for counselor candidates to gain these professional skills before starting the profession. At this point, it is relevant to ask to what degree psychological counselor education programs help counselor candidates gain these skills.

The most basic and significant part of this field is psychological counseling skills training, which is the first step of psychological counselor education (Aladağ, 2014; Aladağ, Yaka, & Koç, 2014). These skills function as a guide to effectively continue the counseling process and cope with the difficulties that may be encountered in this process, and they consist of both verbal and non-verbal skills (Meydan, 2014; Pamukçu & Demir, 2013; Whiston & Coker, 2000). Together with this, it is interesting that not all candidates become effective at the same level during any psychological counseling session even though they are enrolled in similar counseling training courses (Pamukçu & Demir, 2013). This situation shows that different variables may also effectthe candidates' performances. One of these variables is their belief in how effective their management is during the counseling session and to what extent they may help their client, and it was also determined that these beliefs are effective on their performances (Cormier & Nurious, 2003; Pamukçu & Demir, 2013; Urbani et al., 2002). At this point, the concept of psychological counseling self-efficacy, which is described as the belief in one's ability to effectively counsel clients in the near future, becomes relevant (Larson & Daniels, 1998). Therefore, it should be aimed to increase candidates' psychological counseling self-efficacy as well as the professional skills gained from psychological counselor training.

The practice of psychological counseling with a person is an applied undergraduate course in which candidates have an opportunity to apply and develop the skills that they have previously theoretically learnt. Supervision assistance, which is the most important part of a therapeutic

relationship and a basic step in psychological counselor training, is at the forefront to make the professional skills used in the course more effective (Büyükgöze-Kavas, 2011; DePue, Lambie, Liu & Gonzalez, 2016; Hill, Stahl, & Roffman 2007; Meydan & Koçyiğit Ozyiğit, 2016). Supervision practices are significant in terms of making growth and development possible by supervising (Wheeler & Richards, 2007; Zeren & Yılmaz, 2011). When supervision is effectively applied and a suitable supervision model is chosen, this has a positive effect on the candidates' self-efficacy perceptions and makes a contribution to the development of professional skills (Al-Darmaki, 2004; Denizli, 2010; DePue, Lambie, Liu & Gonzalez, 2016; Meydan, 2010; Meydan, 2015).

Supervision as a concept means that an experienced professional member helps a more inexperienced member in terms of functionality (Horrocks & Smaby, 2006). The basic aim is to increase the candidates' counseling skills and to protect clients (Association for Counseling Education and Supervision [ACES], 2011), because the supervision process is intended to help a psychological counselor establish a more effective therapeutic relationship with clients by increasing the readiness of the counselor (Page & Wosket, 1994; Mearns & Thorne, 1999). Accordingly, it contributes to the delivery of ethical and effective therapy services (Wheeler & Richards, 2007).

In the United States, standards for psychological counselor training and supervision have been identified by institutions such as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009). These standards include making the candidates gain information and skills and performing these skills. During this process, it is expected that the counselor candidates conduct psychological counseling for at least 100 hours under supervision, 40 hours being completed with real clients (Meydan, 2014). On average, students are required to complete 90 minutes of group supervision in addition to individual and/or triadic supervision for an hour each week. According to this, the supervisory teaching staff should have 5 students for individual supervision and 10 students for group supervision.

In Turkey, supervision in psychological counseling education has begun to be considered as a complementary and critical element of this education and it has found a place in the national literature (Siviş-Çetinkaya & Karaırmak, 2012; Koçyiğit-Özyiğit & İşleyen, 2016). However, there is insufficient information about the content and nature of existing applications (Atik, Arıcı, & Ergene, 2014; Siviş-Çetinkaya & Karaırmak, 2012). On the other hand, although in

the international literature different supervising models are found, it is necessary to develop supervision models and standards special for psychological counseling education in Turkey (Aladağ, Yaka, & Koç, 2014; Atik, Arıcı, & Ergene, 2014; Özyürek, 2009).

Özyürek (2009) examined school psychological counseling supervision given within the scope of the undergraduate programs in Turkey with a national screening survey. According to the research findings, students perform nearly 42 hours and teaching staff deal with at least 10-15 students. Thus, it is difficult for a supervisor to give individual supervision to counselor candidates. This situation necessitates the effective usage of group supervision in psychological counseling undergraduate education in Turkey. Group supervision means the regular togetherness of a supervisor and supervised people to ensure professional development (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). This process provides an ideal environment in order to debate different ideas and give feedback (Borders et al., 2012). The most important advantage of group supervision is the ability to reach more than one candidate at the same time and to follow their counseling processes with each other, and also students can take advantage of the opportunity to use these processes (Atik, Arıcı, & Ergene, 2014; Yılmaz & Voltan-Acar, 2015). Research by Ray and Altekruse (2000) showed that group supervision is as effective as individual supervision for candidates to increase their psychological counseling skills with another person. Moreover, a group supervision environment composed of peers contributes to a decrease in the possible anxiety experienced when working with a supervisor and increases self-efficacy perception, trust level, and learning opportunities (Christensen & Kline, 2001; Starling & Baker, 2000). Thus, the practice of group supervision is thought to increase students' counseling, managing sessions, and problem-solving skills.

The aim of this research is to examine the effect of group supervision studies during the course of individual psychological counseling practice in the fall term of 2017-2018 on the psychological counseling self-efficacy levels of psychological counselor candidates. It is expected that the research findings will contribute to the literature about supervision in psychological counseling education in Turkey.

Method

Design

This research is a mixed-pattern study due to the usage of both qualitative and quantitative analyses. In the analysis of quantitative data, the pre-test/post-test model without a control group is the quasi-experimental research design. In this pattern, the effect of experimental processing is tested in the study on only one group. The participants' measures of dependent variables are collected by using the same participants and scales with a pre-test before the practice and a post-test after the practice (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2018). The research design is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Symbolic Representation of the Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Process	Post-test
G	O_1	X	O_2
	Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales (Dependent Variable)	10-Week Group Supervision Study (Intervention)	Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales (Dependent Variable)

Study Group

The research data were collected from a sample that consisted of 29 fourth-year students (17 females, 12 males) studying in a undergraduate program at a state university and taking an individual psychological counseling course in the fall educational season of 2017-18.

Data Collection Instruments

Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES)

This scale was developed by Lent, Hill, and Hoffman (2003) in order to detect the self-efficacy level of psychological counselor candidates. The validity and reliability study of the Turkish version of this scale was performed by Pamukçu and Demir (2013). Factor analysis findings showed that it had a three-factor model, similar to the original form of the scale. The 41-item scale has as its first factor Helping Skills Self-Efficacy, which includes 15 items and three subscales of exploration stage skills, insight stage skills, and action stage skills. The second factor has 10 items and it is Session Management Self-Efficacy. The third factor has 16 items and it is Counseling Challenges Self-Efficacy. It has two subscales of conflicts in relationships and client problems. The scale is a 10-point scale ranging from 'no confidence' (0) to 'complete confidence' (9); the highest score is 369 and the lowest score is 0. High scores show a high

level of participants' self-efficacy. The internal consistency coefficient of CASES was 0.98. The internal consistency coefficients of subscales were 0.92 for Helping Skills Self-Efficacy, 0.95 for Session Management Self-Efficacy, and 0.95 for Counseling Challenges Self-Efficacy.

Evaluation reports of psychological counselor candidates

At the end of the individual psychological counseling course, counselor candidates were asked to evaluate themselves and the process by writing a report.

Data Analysis

The T-test for related samples was used to detect whether the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants differed significantly or not. Before this analysis, it was shown that the difference scores of two related measurement sets demonstrated the normal distribution. Thus, the related analysis could be conducted (Büyüköztürk, 2017). The qualitative data were obtained from content analysis of the reports written by 29 students at the end of the course. Content analysis is a systematic technique in which some words of a text are summarized by smaller subcategories with codes based on certain rules (Büyüköztürk, 2017).

Procedure

Ten sessions that lasted 90 minutes a day once a week were held with the participant groups receiving supervision support. The group members, in sessions, shared information about their own psychological counseling processes as a psychological counselor with the other group members and the supervisor by methods such as psychodrama, group interaction, sharing dialogues, and listening to audio recordings of clients provided that the identifying information of the clients was kept confidential (permission was received from the clients for use of these recordings). The supervisor and the group members gave feedback about what was shared.

Findings

Quantitative Findings

T-test results for related samples are given in Table 2 to determine whether the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants significantly differed.

Table 2

T-Test Results for Related Samples Regarding Counseling Self-Efficacy Levels

Measurement (CASES)							
Helping Skills Self-Efficacy							
	Test	N	X	S	sd	t	p
Exploration	Pre-test	29	30.69	4.45	28	-4.79	0.000
	Post-test	29	35.38	5.13			
Insight	Pre-test	29	29.76	6.02	28	-6.41	0.000
	Post-test	29	39.51	6.62			
Action	Pre-test	29	23.00	4.51	28	-2.52	0.018
	Post-test	29	25.41	4.59			
Session Management Self-Efficacy							
	Pre-test	29	58.28	9.72	28	-3.54	0.001
	Post-test	29	66.72	9.92	28		
Counseling Challenges Self-Efficacy							
Conflicts	Pre-test	29	23.62	8.79	28	-4.84	0.000
in Relationships	Post-test	29	33.24	7.45	28		
Client Problems	Pre-test	29	49.58	15.74	28	-4.02	0.000
	Post-test	29	60.62	13.03	28		
Counseling Self-Efficacy Total Score							
	Pre-test	29	220.96	34.59	28	-4.99	0.000
	Post-test	29	260.89	36.20	28		

Table 2 shows that the psychological counseling self-efficacy total scores significantly increased after supervision [t (28) = -4.99, p < 0.01]. The results of the scale and all subscales indicate that there is a significant difference among them after the application for exploration [t (19) = -4.79, p < 0.01], insight [t (19) = -6.41, p < 0.01], action [t (19) = -2.52, p < 0.05], session management self-efficacy [t (19) = -3.54, p < 0.01], conflicts in relationships [t (19) = -4.84, p < 0.01], and client problems [t (19) = -4.02, p < 0.01].

Qualitative Findings

In the scope of the individual psychological counseling practice course, the views of the participants who received 10 weeks of group supervision were divided into four categories including 'emotions' (positive/negative), 'professional development' ('occupational approach', 'the use of basic psychological counseling skills', 'effectively managing the psychological counseling process'), 'boosters', and 'challenges'. These categories are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Evaluation of Supervision Process

Categories and Subcategories	Frequency
1. Emotions	
1.1 Positive Emotions	
1.1.1 Decrease in nervousness over time	9
1.1.2 Increase in self-confidence	11
1.1.3 Feeling good due to client's positive change	8
1.2 Negative Emotions	
1.2.1 Extreme excitement before counseling and 1st and 2nd sessions	17
1.2.2 Fear of criticism	4
1.2.3 Disgrace	3
2. Professional Development	
2.1 Occupational Approach	
2.1.1 Increase in loyalty to the profession	3
2.1.2 To believe more in the effectiveness of counseling	2
2.2 The Use of Basic Psychological Counseling Skills	
2.2.1 Increased use of reflection of emotions and meaning	5
2.2.2 To allow silence	2
2.2.3 To use clarification skills	3
2.2.4 Increase in empathy skills	1
2.2.5 Increase in self-disclosure skills	1
2.2.6 Confrontation usage	1
2.3 Effective Management Ability of Counseling Process	
2.3.1 Ability to use the time appropriately	2
2.3.2 Increase in using different techniques and practices (role-playing, empty chair, cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques, written techniques)	5
3. Boosters	
3.1 The positive effect of having psychological counseling practice a year before	6
3.2 The positive effect of regularly having feedback in the group	10
4. Challenges	
4.1 The lack of a counseling room	1
4.2 The difficulty of writing transcriptions	4
4.3 Stagnation in some sessions	5
4.4 Crowded supervision group	2

Emotions

The emotions of the psychological counseling candidates participating in group supervision were divided into two categories as positive and negative emotions. The category of positive emotions was determined to have subcategories of decrease in nervousness over time (n = 9), increase in self-confidence (n = 11), and feeling good due to a client's positive change (n = 8). The candidates expressed their own positive emotions in the following ways:

> *"Day by day I began to trust myself more. By the end, I knew what I needed to do and when" (GL 9).*

*"The fact that someone you did not know disclosed themselves, trusted in you, told
their problems to you, and at the end they said they felt relaxed ... it gave me very
good feelings"* (GL 21).

*"Things such as counseling, clients, sessions, and voice records turned from fear
or anxiety into pleasure for me"* (GL 5).

The candidates' negative emotions were divided into three categories of extreme anxiety and excitement before counseling and in the first and second sessions (n=17), fear of criticism (n=4), and disgrace (n=3). Sample expressions of the negative feelings of the candidates are given below:

*"At the beginning of this process I was very nervous. I felt very anxious about the
uncertainty of how the process continued"* (GL 12).

*"It seemed that my lecturer would be mad at me and my friends would make fun of
me"* (GL 21).

" I was ashamed especially when I listened to my voice records" (GL 8).

Professional Development

Professional development was determined to be categorized into three themes as occupational approach, use of basic psychological counseling skills, and effective management ability in the counseling process. The occupational approach theme was categorized into two subcategories as increase in loyalty to the profession (n=3) and more belief in the effectiveness of counseling (n=2). Some views of the candidates are given below:

*"Thanks to this course, I loved my job. Everything was very unclear [before] when
a subject was explained. But I understood my job better and liked it more via these
practices"* (GL 6).

"*There is no need to lie: at the beginning I was asking whether this was necessary
... I thought it would be ineffective. But later, I understood the reality. When you
use the skills it really works"* (GL 2).

The theme of the use of basic psychological counseling skills was categorized into six subcategories as increased use of reflection of emotions and meaning (n=5), allowing silence (n=2), using clarification skills (n=3), increase in empathy skills (n=1), increase in self-disclosure skills (n=1), and confrontation usage (n=1). Some sample expressions are given below:

"At the beginning my mirroring was lacking and ineffective; in the last sessions I used mirroring more and at the right time" (GL 6).

"I could not keep silent in counseling; namely, I needed to ask a question immediately after some silence. In the last sessions I allowed this and occasionally had ten, twenty, thirty seconds of silence" (GL 12).

Effective management ability in the counseling process was categorized into two subcategories as ability to use the time appropriately (n=3) and increase in the use of different techniques and practices (role-playing, empty chair, cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques, written techniques) (n=2). Some sample expressions of the candidates are given below:

"In the first sessions the client was telling me something and I could not stop their speaking or the session ended early, but thanks to supervision I became relaxed and then in the last sessions my counseling events lasted 50 minutes" (GL 23).

"We used the technique 'Empty Chair' in the class, but then I could not understand it. I used it in a counseling session and it became very effective. My client really felt very good and relaxed" (GL 9).

Boosters

This category has two subcategories: the positive effect of having psychological counseling practice a year before (n=6) and the positive effect of regularly receiving feedback in the group (n=10). The some views of the participants are below:

"Last year I really struggled when I was counseling, even at times I was rebelling, but now I have gained advantages from doing it. Each session was an experience" (GL 21).

"Especially in group supervision, our talks about our own clients and our friends' feedback for us, the process, and our interventions really helped us to make the process better" (GL 8).

Challenges

Challenges were categorized into four subcategories as the lack of a counseling room (n=1), the difficulty of writing transcriptions (n=4), stagnation in some sessions (n=5), and crowded supervision group (n=2). Sample expressions of the candidates are given below:

*"There is no counseling room due to our university's conditions. During the
process, one of the biggest problems for me was to find a suitable environment for
my counseling sessions. Generally, we used the group rooms in the university
library, but this was not always possible" (GL 22).*

*"Only because our supervision group was very crowded, I thought that I talked
slightly less and it was difficult to get supervision about my client and counseling
sessions" (GL 11).*

Discussion

The effect of group supervision in the individual psychological counseling practice during the
2017-18 fall term at a state university on the counseling self-efficacy perception of university
students was examined in this research.

According to the quantitative data, there was a significant increase in self-efficacy total scores
and all subscale scores of the participants who received group supervision during this term.
These research findings are consistent with the results of other studies. Some research in the
literature indicated that supervision practices positively increase the efficacy level of counselors
and that group supervision positively influences counseling skills (Wahesh, Kemer, Willis, &
Schmidt, 2017). Thus, group supervision offers an opportunity for candidates to see similar
processes and share the difficulties that they experience. This environment helps their self-
efficacy increase and it contributes to the building of an effective learning environment
(Christensen & Kline, 2001; Starling & Baker, 2000). In particular, the fact that the group met
together regularly provided a chance for all the group members to follow their own and others'
counseling processes from the beginning to the end, and also they could observe their
development regarding the effective use of psychological counseling skills.

The qualitative findings showed that the responses of the participants were divided into four
categories of emotions, professional development, boosters, and challenges. The participants
reported that the nervousness they felt especially in the first sessions decreased with time, their
self-efficacy level increased, and they felt better when their clients experienced positive
changes. They further said that there was an increase in their own professional commitment and
experience levels, they more believed more in the effectiveness of counseling sessions, their

counseling skills and techniques developed, and they could use their time better. Moreover, they thought that having psychological counseling practice a year before positively contributed to these sessions and regularly joining the supervision group helped them to improve. Conversely, there were challenges that the participants faced, such as the lack of a counseling room, the difficulty of writing transcriptions, and stagnation in some sessions. These qualitative findings are consistent with other researchers' findings. Christensen and Kline (2000; 2001) indicated that feedback in supervision sessions increased the level of psychological counseling skills and the self-efficacy of the counselors. Some researchers have pointed out that there is a positive effect of participating in a supervision group on professional development (Linton & Hedstorm, 2006), with an increase in both self-efficacy levels (Christensen & Kline, 2000; Starling & Baker, 2000) and knowledge and skills (Linton & Hedstorm, 2006).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research examined the effectiveness of group supervision on the self-efficacy perceptions of counselor candidates and its findings have shown that group supervision in an individual psychological counseling course positively affects the psychological counseling perceptions of the candidates. These findings may be further supported with similar research at different universities. It is also necessary to increase the number of studies about the development of different supervision models suitable for psychological counseling education in Turkey. These models may be constructed in order to improve both self-efficacy and psychological counseling skills.

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