



Counselor Candidates' Experiences Regarding Counselling Supervision

Psikolojik Danışman Adaylarının Psikolojik Danışma Süpervizyonuna İlişkin Deneyimleri

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ABSTRACT: Supervision process, which plays a critical role in the professional development of counselor candidates, is an important part of counselor education. In this sense, an increasing number of studies have focused on understanding the supervision process in recent years. Thus, this research, designed as a case study, aimed to investigate counselor candidates' experiences during individual counseling supervision process. The study group included ten female and five male senior students in guidance and counseling undergraduate program. The participants carried out six to eight individual counseling sessions with their clients under supervision. During the supervision process, both individual and group supervision sessions were carried out and the supervisees took feedback from the supervisors and their peers. Study data were collected with an evaluation form containing 11 open-ended questions to obtain student experiences. Content analysis results yielded four themes: a) challenges, b) facilitative elements, c) professional and personal development, and d) suggestions. The findings were discussed in the light of existing literature and recommendations for counseling supervision were presented.

Keywords: Individual counseling, counseling supervision, counselor education, mixed supervision.

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ÖZ: Psikolojik danışman adaylarının profesyonel gelişiminde önemli bir rol oynayan süpervizyon süreci psikolojik danışman eğitiminin vazgeçilmez bir parçasıdır. Bu nedenle, son yıllarda süpervizyon sürecini anlamak amacıyla birçok çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu araştırma, bir vaka çalışması olarak tasarlanmış olup, bireyle danışma süpervizyonu sürecinde psikolojik danışman adaylarının deneyimlerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma grubu, rehberlik ve psikolojik danışmanlık lisans programına devam eden on kadın ve beş erkek son sınıf öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcılar süpervizyon altında altı ila sekiz bireysel psikolojik danışma oturumu gerçekleştirmiştir. Süpervizyon sürecinde hem bireysel hem de grup süpervizyonu gerçekleştirilmiş ve psikolojik danışman adayları süpervizörlerinden ve akranlarından geribildirim almışlardır. Çalışmanın verileri, katılımcıların deneyimlerini elde etmek için araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanmış 11 açık uçlu soruyu içeren bir değerlendirme formu ile toplanmıştır. İçerik analizi sonuçları dört tema ortaya çıkarmıştır: a) zorluklar, b) kolaylaştırıcı unsurlar, c) mesleki ve kişisel gelişim ve d) öneriler. Bulgular, mevcut literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve psikolojik danışma süpervizyonu için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Bireyle psikolojik danışma, psikolojik danışma süpervizyonu, psikolojik danışman eğitimi, karma süpervizyon.

1. INTRODUCTION

Counselor education should equip counselor candidates with theoretical knowledge and skills and provide opportunities to put these into practice (Büyükgöze-Kavas, 2011). Individual counseling practicum course provides counselor candidates significant opportunities to practice what they have acquired during their education with actual clients. During the practicum, counselor candidates experience the counseling process from the intake interview to the termination stage, practice counseling skills, develop a conceptual framework of their clients' current problems, and establish a therapeutic relationship with their clients based on ethical principles (Allan, McLuckie, & Hoffecker, 2016; Borders, 2014; Carroll, 2014). Counselor candidates need to be supported throughout the practicum so that they can effectively use their knowledge and skills, manage the anxiety of working with actual clients, and evaluate and improve their skills by receiving effective feedback. Counseling practice under supervision addresses these needs (Atik, 2017; Koçyiğit, 2020; Meydan, 2021; Meydan & Özyiğit-Koçyiğit, 2016).

Counseling supervision can be defined as the support and intervention provided to less experienced counselors by experienced counselors to ensure the professional development of counselors and the well-being of their clients (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014; Blount & Mullen, 2015). The supervision process has three main goals; to support counselor candidates' personal and professional development, to develop their counseling skills, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the counseling process and the competence of the counselor (Ladany & Bradley, 2001). Supervision has an educational and supportive function in terms of professional roles, therapeutic knowledge and skills, conceptualizing the client's problem, and gaining self-awareness (Hart, 1982). Although the practices differ among countries, conducting individual counseling sessions under supervision is an important requirement in counselor education. There are several studies in the literature on counseling supervision, yet the number of these studies is still limited. One of the most important variables in understanding the supervision process is to evaluate the contribution of supervision to their development by taking the supervisees' views on the process. Based on this need, the current study aimed to understand supervisees' experiences, understand the effect of supervision on counseling skills, and evaluate the effective and ineffective aspects of supervision.

Supervision can be carried out based on different models, formats and techniques. Psychotherapy theory-based models (e.g., Cognitive Behavioral Theory), developmental models, and process models can be used in the supervision process (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Different supervision techniques are widely used such as process notes, audio and video recordings of counseling sessions, observation, and role-playing (Corey et al., 2010). Individual, group or mixed supervision formats (including individual, triadic and peer group supervision) can be used in the supervision process (Barletta, 2007; Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Since the supervision process is critical for the professional development of a counselor candidate, researchers have been conducting research in recent years to understand the supervision process, to investigate the effectiveness and quality of supervision models/methods, techniques, and formats, and to explain the role of supervision in counselor candidates' development (Borders et al., 2014; Falender, Shafranske, & Ofek, 2014; Kemer et al., 2019).

In Turkey, guidance and counseling undergraduate programs involve individual counseling practicum courses in 4th-year fall and spring terms (Higher Education Council [YÖK], 2018). The course catalogue defines individual counseling practicum course as "counseling with the individual using basic counseling skills and techniques under supervision" (YÖK, 2018), highlighting the

supervision process. Hence, it can be argued that supervision is also recognized as one of the most important elements of counselor education in Turkey. On the other hand, the standards regarding who leads the process, how many students are involved, and which supervision models/methods/techniques are used in the supervision process are not clear and differ between universities (Aladağ, 2014; Atik, 2017; Kemer & Aladağ, 2013; Koçyiğit, 2020; Meydan, 2014; Siviş-Çetinkaya & Kararımak, 2012). The number of studies aimed at understanding the supervision process and its effectiveness is rapidly increasing in Turkey as in the world, and these studies are of great importance in developing standards for counseling supervision. Studies on supervision conducted in Turkey focused on topics such as supervision in counselor education (Siviş-Çetinkaya & Kararımak, 2012), supervision models (Erkan-Atik, Arıcı, & Ergene, 2014; Esen-Çoban, 2005; Eryılmaz & Mutlu, 2018; Koçyiğit, 2020; Meydan, 2014), counselor candidates' opinions about supervision (Aladağ et al., 2011; Atik, 2017; Atik et al., 2016), supervisory styles (Atik, 2017; Meydan, 2021), the impact of supervision process on counselor candidates' counseling self-efficacy (Bakalim et al., 2018; Çakır et al., 2018; Koç, 2013), and exploring client experiences (Kurtyılmaz et al., 2019). Nevertheless, studies on supervision in Turkey are still limited and further studies are needed to provide a framework for the concept of supervision and develop its content (Aladağ, 2014; Erkan-Atik et al., 2014; Meydan & Koçyiğit-Özyiğit, 2016; Siviş-Çetinkaya & Kararımak, 2012).

Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (CBT) based supervision model, one of the theory-based supervision models, was used in this study as the supervision model. Supervision based on cognitive behavioral theory is generally structured and educational (Corey et al., 2010). In addition, a mixed supervision format (including individual and group supervision) was implemented in this study. While each model has its advantages and limitations, peer group supervision has significant advantages such as providing counselor candidates with a greater variety of feedback, giving opportunities to both receiving and give feedback, providing vicarious learning opportunities, and including diverse case examples (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Borders, 2012). In addition, when the ratio of supervisor and supervisee is taken into account, it seems functional to benefit from group supervision during the supervision processes (Aladağ & Kemer, 2016; Atik, 2017). On the other hand, considering that there is a time limit in the group supervision process and the feedback cannot be deepened (Borders et al., 2012), it is recommended that individual supervision be used in addition to group supervision (Tümlü & Ceyhan, 2021). The supervision techniques used in this research were process notes, transcriptions of the audio recordings of counseling sessions and role-playing. Considering the supervisee/supervisor ratio, the mixed supervision format can be an effective tool for counseling supervision in Türkiye. This format benefits the advantages of both group and individual supervision and allows counselor candidates to gain a more comprehensive view by bringing together different experiences and perspectives. This supervision format also allows counselor candidates to see different cases and to learn by modeling. Nevertheless, research on mixed supervision format is still limited. The current research aimed to explore the efficacy and value of mixed supervision format by focusing on counselor candidates' experiences. This research set out to understand counselor candidates' experiences regarding the supervision process and to investigate the contribution of the supervision process to their counseling skills. For this purpose, answers were sought to the following research questions:

1) What are counselor candidates' experiences regarding the mixed format individual counseling supervision process?

2) What is the contribution of the mixed format supervision process to counselor candidates' counseling skills?

It is believed that this research will provide an opportunity to review and organize supervision practices with its in-depth examination of the supervision process, thus making a significant contribution to the literature in the field of supervision.

2. METHOD

Case study design was used in this study. As a design, a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of data (Yin, 2014). The explored phenomenon in this research was the supervision process within the scope of the individual counseling practicum course.

2.1. Study Group

The study group consisted of ten female and five male undergraduate students aged between 21 and 23 who volunteered to participate in the research. Participants were selected by purposive sampling, a sampling method in which investigators use personal judgment to select a sample based on the specific purpose of the research (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). In determining the study group, it was aimed to reach the students who had completed the individual counseling sessions and who regularly participated in individual and group supervision sessions. Students who met these conditions and volunteered to participate in the study constituted the study group.

2.2. Data Collection

The data were collected by using an online evaluation form with 11 open-ended questions aiming to obtain participants' feelings and opinions about the supervision process and the knowledge, skills, and practices that they acquired through supervision. The form included questions to evaluate the counseling practicum process, the progression of the supervision process, and the counseling skills and competencies gained through the supervision process. The questions were developed by the researchers based on the literature and finalised by taking the opinions of two field experts. Sample questions in the form were: "As a counselor candidate, what do you think about the contribution of supervision?", "Which counseling skills do you think you have improved during the supervision process?", "Was there anything that challenged you during the supervision process, and if so, what were they?" Participants filled out an online evaluation form at the end of the term in the 2022-2023 spring semester.

2.3. Supervision Procedure

Within the scope of the individual counseling practicum course, participants conducted individual counseling sessions ranging from six to eight sessions, each lasting 45-50 minutes, under the supervision of the researchers. Both researchers followed the same format in individual and group supervision. The counselor candidates received individual supervision ranging from six to eight sessions and seven group supervision sessions. They sent the transcripts and reports weekly via e-mail to their supervisors and peers in their supervision group. Supervisors gave written individual feedback on the transcripts and provided individual feedback sessions, which lasted approximately 20-25 mins, for evaluation of the previous session and for planning the next session. Supervision groups were

facilitated by the instructors. In the first group session, instructors provided a guideline to the participants including structure, attendance, participation, and giving constructive feedback as described by Borders (1991). In the remaining sessions, supervisors provided information on counseling skills and techniques, and case formulation. Group sessions included sharing cases, discussion of common problems and difficulties, and rehearsal of some techniques. Counselor candidates also received both written and oral feedback from their peers on counseling skills, case conceptualization, and session planning. Borders (1991) recommended a group meeting format, in which counselor candidates and supervisors meet every week or every two weeks for 90 to 120 minutes. Group supervisions were held every 2 weeks, consisting of 8-10 counselor candidates and each session lasted approximately 90 to 120 minutes.

2.3.1. Ethical Issues

Ethical permission was obtained from Akdeniz University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (decision date and no: 18.05.2023 / 278). At the beginning of the study, the clients were informed about individual and group supervision, and an informed consent form was obtained for voluntary participation in the counseling process. The personal information of clients was removed in the group supervision and in transcripts to ensure confidentiality. In addition, informed consent was obtained from counselor candidates for their participation in this study. The findings section presents codes from C1 to C15 instead of participants' names to ensure confidentiality.

2.4. Data Analysis

In this study, content analysis was used to investigate the underlying themes of counselor candidates' written responses. In the data analysis, each researcher read the responses written by the participants in the forms independently first, and participants' written descriptions were coded and named based on the relevant literature (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Then, researchers came together, common coded parts in all forms were identified, and new common codes were generated (Averill, 2014). Afterwards, the repetitive patterns and emerging connections were combined and integrated, and themes and sub-themes were formed in general terms. After the themes were identified and named, the data and coding were reviewed by two researchers. At this stage, themes that were similar in content but named differently, and the codes under these themes were combined under a single common theme. At the same time, sub-themes were added to some of these themes and some themes were renamed. After these steps were completed two researchers evaluated the codes and the themes, and the opinion of a third researcher having experience in qualitative analysis was obtained on the codes and themes. Accordingly, the codes and themes were finalized. Four themes were identified based on qualitative data analysis.

The participants were selected by purposive sampling method, and the questions to be asked were defined clearly to ensure the external validity of the research. To ensure internal validity, the questions in the evaluation form were prepared based on the relevant literature on individual counseling supervision in Türkiye (*see*, Aladağ & Kemer, 2016; Aladağ & Kemer, 2017; Atik & Erkan-Atik, 2019; Büyükgöze-Kavas, 2011; Kemer & Aladağ, 2013; Meydan, 2015; Meydan & Koçyiğit, 2019). Two expert opinions were obtained before finalizing the questions.

2.5. The Role of the Researchers

Both researchers have doctoral degrees in guidance and counseling and are experienced in teaching and supervising guidance and counseling students. Researchers also received trainings on CBT-based therapies including supervision. Both of the researchers have experience in qualitative research methodology, and they took an active role in the process of preparing research questions as well as collecting, coding, analyzing, and interpreting the study data.

3. FINDINGS

The four themes which were obtained regarding participants' experiences during the supervision process were named as Challenges, Facilitative Elements, Professional and Personal Development, and Suggestions. Table 1 presents these themes, sub-themes, and the codes.

Table 1: Themes, Sub-themes, and Codes

Challenges	
Sub-themes	Codes
Transcription of the sessions	Difficult and tiring
	Time pressure
Building a therapeutic relationship	Client's resistance
	Difficulties related to client's personal characteristics
Using appropriate skills and techniques	Feeling anxious about the session
	Timing in using techniques
Facilitative elements	
Sub-themes	Codes
Transcription of the sessions	As self-reflection, informative & improving
Extra reading	Knowledge
	Confidence
Supervising style, method, and model	Different perceptions
	Having a theoretical framework
	Support/encouragement
	Guiding

Session planning	Readiness A feeling of control
Building a therapeutic relationship	Client's personal characteristics
Professional and Personal Development	
Sub-themes	Codes
	Techniques and skills
	Awareness about the therapeutic process and factors
	Career awareness
Professional development	Coping with performance anxiety
	Awareness about what to improve
	Ethics and confidentiality
	Counseling self-efficacy
	Self-awareness
Personal development	Social and communication skills
	Empathy
Suggestions	
Sub-themes	Codes
Suggestions for future counselor candidates	Time management and planning
	"Courage to be imperfect"
	Rehearsal and role-play
	Extra reading
	Developing listening skills
	Importance of confidentiality and professional boundaries
	Giving more importance to counseling skills courses
Suggestions for supervision	Group supervision
	Theoretical framework

3.1. Challenges

According to the findings, counselor candidates experienced various challenges in the supervision process. These challenges were clustered into three sub-themes: *transcription of the sessions, building a therapeutic relationship, and using appropriate skills and techniques.*

Two codes emerged under the sub-theme titled transcription of the session: Difficult and tiring and time pressure. Counselor candidates described writing the transcripts as tiring and stated that they experienced intense time pressure, especially since they had to complete and send them in a limited time. A counselor candidate expressed her feelings with the following words:

“Transcribing each session and getting them on time was a challenge in itself.” (C10)

“Transcribing promptly made me very stressed and exhausted and it even lowered my motivation... it took a lot of time and after a while, I felt that I was not getting any results.” (C15)

Building a therapeutic relationship with the clients was another challenging factor underlined by supervisees. Emerging codes under this subtheme were clients’ resistance and difficulties related to clients’ personal characteristics. One of the supervisees stated that *“The client had difficulty in opening herself up in the beginning... when the client did not open herself, I felt blocked and inadequate.” (C3)*

Another supervisee expressed his experiences in this way:

“The most difficult part was my client's personality traits and resistance. The client was resistant to the process and me. She exhibited her concern and resistance in the first session pointing to my lack of experience and to the fact that she did not know me at all. Having experienced this stunned me and hurt my faith in the process at first. ...my client was constantly on the lookout for finding fault. That she did not believe in the counseling process was the hardest thing.” (C8)

Clients’ characteristics and the presentation of the problems were also described as challenging in the process. For instance, one supervisee described her experience as follows:

“My client had many irrational beliefs that were difficult to change...He had a difficult relationship with his mother and his father and had some problems with his relatives, and he had intense feelings about them that he could not express. I had a hard time reflecting these feelings at times.” (C1)

Using appropriate skills and techniques was another prominent sub-theme regarding challenges. Two codes emerged: feeling anxious about the session and timing in using the techniques. Some of the supervisees stated their anxiety as presented in the following comments:

“It was the first time that I was going to have a counseling session with an actual client. This made me worried. I had concerns such as, Can't I do it? Am I doing something wrong?” (C9)

“...before the sessions, sometimes I was worried about what to do in the session, I was wondering whether I was inadequate” (C12)

Some of the supervisees stated their challenge in using appropriate skills and techniques promptly as follows:

“I can say that applying the empty chair technique was the most challenging thing for me...I attempted to use this technique to help my client express feelings and thoughts that he could

never express to his mother. When we used the empty chair, a therapeutic relationship had not yet been established between us, it was too soon. Therefore, my client had difficulty expressing his feelings and did not want to continue, and I also had a hard time coping with this situation and I did not want to push my client further.” (C1)

“In the sessions, my client sometimes spoke for too long. In this case, there were moments when I was worried about whether I should intervene. I had difficulties in the sessions where I experienced such situations. In addition, I had difficulty reflecting the feelings as I was always focused on thoughts in the sessions (C6)

3.2. Facilitative Elements

Supervisees identified some factors that facilitated the supervision process. Facilitative factors were clustered in the following sub-themes: transcription of the sessions, doing extra reading, supervising style, method, and model, session planning, and building a therapeutic relationship.

The supervisees highlighted the transcription of the sessions under the facilitative factors theme as well. Although the counselor candidates found it challenging, they stated that it was also informative and constructive. Some of the supervisees stated their opinions as follows:

“Although it is difficult, I can say that transcribing has a very positive effect on learning (C1).

“... transcribing takes a lot of time, but it allows us to see all the mistakes we have made and contributes to learning.” (C2)

Another prominent sub-theme was extra readings. The codes that emerged in the statements included the statements that extra reading facilitated the process, increased knowledge and increased self-confidence. Some of the supervisees described their experiences as follows:

“It was very helpful to have information about the developmental problems we have dealt with during this period, to read about how to work with these issues, and to take a look at the basic counseling techniques.” (C12)

“Social anxiety was my client’s immediate problem. Reading on this subject and benefiting from various sources helped me conceptualize the case and made the process easier.” (C7)

“Before the sessions, I read the sections related to the session from the book on principles and techniques and made the session planning in my mind. For example, before I made the intake interview, I read the part about the intake interview from the book. In this way, I entered the sessions with a plan in my mind and I was prepared. By doing so, I felt very comfortable.” (C10)

Supervisees stated that the model (CBT-based), method (mixed method), and supervision style (structured and encouraging) that they used facilitated the supervision process. Emerging codes under this sub-theme were different perceptions, having a theoretical framework, support/encouragement and guiding. One supervisee stated her opinion as follows:

“I can say that the factor that made the process easier for me was our CBT-based model. Because it was structured, I was clear about what to do and when to do it.” (C1)

The supervision method (individual and peer group) was also regarded as a facilitative element. Supervisees described their opinions as follows:

"...focusing not only on my own session but also on the sessions of my groupmates helped me see what was right and wrong. Another issue was that it was important to get feedback from both my supervisor and my friends. Because sometimes our friends can see things that one of us, even our instructor cannot see, and this is very useful. Giving feedback is as important as getting it in this process. Seeing what is done right or wrong makes it very easy to learn." (C8)

"I read my friends' transcripts and gave feedback every week. This way, I learned about a lot of cases and learned how to progress in different cases." (C13)

".. feedback from my supervisor and peers also made this process much easier. When I went to an individual supervision session with a lot of things in my head, I always came out with a clear session plan. It was very instructive. Being evaluated by my peers was also good for seeing my own performance from different points of views." (C1)

"Having individual supervision every week and planning the next session together with the supervisor made the process easier for me." (C4)

Some of the supervisees stated that their supervisors' style (e.g. encouraging manner) facilitated the process:

"First of all, the constructive feedback of my supervisor made the process easier for me." (C2)

"The support and encouragement of our supervisor and planning the sessions together made the process easier. Getting support from our supervisor was the most important facilitator for me." (C11)

"The factor that facilitated the process was generally the feedback of my supervisor...it reduced my anxiety and helped me find a road map." (C14)

One of the most prominent sub-themes emphasized as a facilitative factor by counselor candidates was the session planning during the process, which had readiness and a feeling of control codes. For instance, one supervisee indicated the following:

"I was very stressed at the beginning of the sessions. Not knowing how and what to do was making me nervous. I think it is very important to have a session plan and be prepared. Because when it is planned, the process progresses very well, the stress decreases." (C2)

Establishing a therapeutic relationship and the clients' characteristics were described as facilitating. Some of the supervisees stated their experiences as follows:

"The relationship we established with the client over time, the client's self-disclosure, and the client's high awareness enabled us to progress in the sessions." (C1)

"When you focus on the client and make the client feel comfortable in the session, everything goes smoothly. Moreover, due to my client's willingness to change, I was hopeful about the process." (C11)

"I can say that the fact that my client is very intelligent, does her homework regularly, observes herself, and takes notes about her own developments and brings them to the session without reminding her made the process easier." (C8)

3.3. Professional and Personal Development

According to the findings, counselor candidates showed improvements both professionally and personally during the supervision process. Seven codes emerged regarding professional development: techniques and skills, awareness about what to improve, awareness about the therapeutic process and factors, career awareness, coping with performance anxiety, ethics and confidentiality, and counseling self-efficacy.

Accordingly, the counselor candidates stated that they developed certain techniques and skills in this process. They identified the skills and techniques they needed to improve. Table 2 presents the skills that the counselor candidates thought they developed and/or should develop, along with the quotations.

Table 2: *Quotations Related to Skills That Were Developed And/Or Needed to Be Improved*

Skills	Quotations
Paying attention and active listening	<i>"I realized that I needed to improve my listening skills. I was interrupting the client too much and asking too many questions. I was directing the client without being aware of it. Because until now, I realized that I was giving advice or state my opinion when someone told me something. I think that my listening skills especially improved in the process."</i> (C4)
Reflection of content	<i>"I realized that my basic skills such as reflection of content, reflection of feelings, structuring, asking questions and summarizing have improved. As I look at my transcripts again, I see that there are big differences and improvements between the first sessions and the last sessions."</i> (C12)
Reflection of feeling	<i>"...However, I especially want to improve my ability to reflect emotions. I want to be able to express my client's feelings better and experience the feeling of being understood. I don't want to repeat the same emotive words over and over. I often use the list of emotions to overcome this problem."</i> (C2)
Questions	<i>"One of my favorite skills is the skill of asking questions... it was amazing to see the enlightenment on my client's face after a proper and correct open-ended question. With effective questions, the client noticed something new and was surprised. I think that I use the skill of asking questions adequately in each session."</i> (C8)
Encouragement	<i>"I encouraged my client from time to time, sometimes because of what they did, sometimes because of what they could do. Maybe I could have encouraged more. He needed encouragement."</i> (C1)
Summarizing	<i>"I evaluated myself at a sufficient level regarding my ability to summarize. I believe that using this skill at the beginning and end of each session improves this skill. The more and correctly we use a skill, the more we improve. I think I made a good transition to summarizing at the end of the session."</i> (C8)
Clarification	<i>"When I reviewed my sessions, I realized that I couldn't use clarification although I wanted to use it. Because even though I asked my client for an example for clarifying, I couldn't get it."</i> (C15)
Self-disclosure	<i>"We had similar concerns with my client. When I shared my concerns, I felt that our relationship was strengthened."</i> (C15)
Confrontation	<i>"How you go about confrontation is very important. When the client was ready, I did the confrontation in a question form, tentatively, and it worked very well."</i> (C1)
Using silence	<i>"...this is the skill that I need to develop the most. As my supervisor said, 'Is it me who can't stand the silence or is it my client?' When I faced this question, I thought that I needed to improve this skill and I tried using it and found that it was effective. The session was better when I used silence."</i> (C15)

Being in the here and now	<i>“During the sessions, I realized that I should be completely focused on the client and should use the technique of being in the here and now. Focusing on myself stressed me out and I could not listen to the client. When I focused completely on the client and the principle of being in the here and now, the sessions progressed very well.” (C2)</i>
Structuring	<i>“I often had to use the skills of structuring and being in the here and now because my client initially did not believe in the process and was resistant. I've found that using these skills and the right amount of self-disclosure and encouragement works great.” (C8)</i>

As counselor candidates realized that they improved their counseling skills and techniques in the process, their self-confidence and counseling self-efficacy levels increased as well. Some of the supervisees expressed their experiences with the following statements:

“I was very afraid of this course. I didn't feel well-equipped. We had taken many courses until this year, but they were always theoretical courses. We are still not fully qualified but doing this practice before starting the profession has improved us a lot. We saw the possible problems and learned how to carry out the counseling process.” (C5)

“I believe that I can establish a sincere therapeutic relationship with the clients.” (C9)

“I really felt like a real counselor during the sessions. My skills improved and I learned many techniques. I cannot say that I am completely experienced, but I am much more experienced than in the past. All this happened thanks to the supervision process.” (C15)

“As my client progressed, belief in myself increased as well. It was very special and exciting for me to be able to touch a person's life. Even the dream of being able to continue doing this in the future excites and motivates me” (C8)

One of the most important expressions of the supervisees for the process was that they gained career awareness as a part of their professional development. One supervisee stated her comments as follows:

“...in addition, this course showed us that how suitable we are for this profession. Some said that they could never do this job, while others said that this is definitely their profession. I am one of those who say that this is my profession. I felt lucky to have studied in this department and enjoyed my profession for the first time...after counseling with an actual client; I understood better that we need to have these abilities and skills. And we need to enjoy this process if we're fit for this job. It makes me feel good to realize this.” (C9)

Supervises' feedback showed that they improved on ethics and confidentiality issues as a part of their professional development in the supervision process. Some supervisees expressed their progress with the following comments:

“I know how to approach clients, how to apply confidentiality and ethical rules (C12)

“They should take privacy very seriously. They should not even say a single sentence about counseling in any setting. ...it's best never to talk about sessions outside of group sessions” (C9)

“I realized the importance of protecting our professional identity in our relationship with our clients that we should not compromise, and that every issue regarding ethics and confidentiality is important.” (C7)

Another sub-theme that emerged in the findings was that the supervision process contributes not only to the professional development of the counselor candidates but also to their personal development. In this process, counselor candidates stated that they improved their self-awareness, social and communication skills, and empathy. Some of the supervisees defined their experience related to personal development as follows:

"I can say that I discovered myself not only professionally but also personally in the whole process." (C15)

"This process taught me to be responsible, to have a sense of duty and to use time well." (C14)

"I use counseling skills even in my daily life. I try to listen to people around me effectively." (C12)

"I realize that I communicate more calmly, by listening and trying to understand while communicating in my private life. I learned to try to understand people rather than judge them. It has helped me a lot in terms of my personality." (C11)

3.4. Suggestions

The last theme that emerged in the findings was titled "suggestions". The counselor candidates made some suggestions for both the prospective supervisees and the future supervision processes based on their own experiences. The most prominent codes that emerged under the suggestions for future counselor candidates sub-theme were *time management and planning*, *"courage to be imperfect"*, *rehearsal and role play*, *extra reading*, *developing listening skills*, *importance of confidentiality and professional boundaries* and *giving more importance to counseling skills courses*. Some quotations related to this sub-theme were as follows:

"I was very anxious at first. When I completed the first session, I thought it was terrible. But when I listened to the records, I realized it wasn't as bad as I thought. I had put myself under pressure. They (prospective supervisees) may be worried at first, but they should never forget that we can be able to control this. I would tell them to stay calm, that everyone has made mistakes in the process, so they shouldn't be catastrophizing." (C3)

"In this process, people criticize themselves too much and experience a lot of performance anxiety. It is normal to experience this anxiety. You just must deal with it in a healthy way. I want them to know that we all make a lot of mistakes, and we learn a lot from those mistakes." (C1)

"I recommend that they not only read but also rehearse the skills by role playing with their friends." (C2)

"Since our field is an evolving field, I recommend that they do a lot of reading. Each reading they do will contribute to their sessions and increase their readiness and self-confidence." (C8)

"They should certainly place a great emphasis on counseling theories and principles and techniques courses." (C5)

Supervisees also provided suggestions for improving the supervision process. The most prominent codes that emerged under the supervision process sub-theme were *group supervision* and *theoretical framework*. Some quotations related to this sub-theme were as follows:

“Regular participation in group supervision should be ensured. Moreover, when coming to the group supervision, they must come ready, having read their friends' transcripts, otherwise they will not be able to benefit from the group supervision.” (C14)

“If group supervision is to be done, I think it is appropriate to read the transcripts in a timely manner and to give feedback. Otherwise, things add up and you cannot give efficient feedback.” (C12)

“I suggest they read the ABC model and do a lot of reading to learn.” (C10)

4. DISCUSSION and RESULT

The experiences of the counselor candidates in the individual counseling supervision process were examined in the current research. Findings yielded four themes as *Challenges, Facilitative Elements, Professional and Personal Development, and Suggestions*.

Supervisees stated that writing transcripts, establishing a therapeutic relationship with the client, and using appropriate skills and techniques were the most challenging factors in the process. According to Stoltenberg (1981), the professional skills of the counselor candidates develop throughout the process. Counselor candidates are anxious at first and more dependent on the supervisor. They become independent as they improve in the process, and their self-confidence, empathy level, personal and professional awareness increase, and finally they internalize the standards of the profession (Stoltenberg, 1981). The experiences of counselor candidates showed that as they progressed in the supervision process, their ability to establish therapeutic relationships and cope with difficult clients improved, and their self-efficacy, especially in basic skills, increased. Therefore, while the counselor candidates reported establishing a therapeutic relationship as challenging at the beginning, they described it as a facilitating factor as the process progressed. In this context, it can be argued that the factors that the counselor candidates described as challenging decreased in parallel with their professional development.

Transcribing the sessions, doing extra reading, feedback by supervisors and peers, and session planning and building a therapeutic relationship were defined as facilitative factors in the process by the supervisees. Although the counselor candidates mentioned transcribing the sessions as challenging, they also stated that it was the most effective and improving factor. They stated that transcriptions provided opportunities for self-evaluation and receiving peer supervision. They also stated that while writing the transcripts, they became aware of the points that they did not notice during the session, and in this sense, they stated that writing transcripts improved their counseling skills. These findings are parallel with previous research findings on supervisees' views on transcriptions (Aladağ & Kemer, 2016; Atik, 2017; Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Koçyiğit, 2020). Students also emphasized the importance of coming to the sessions prepared, by citing doing additional readings before the session, doing rehearsals before using the technique and preparing a session plan. Consistent with the findings of the current study, the study by Kemer et al. (2019), which examined the supervisors' and supervisees' characteristics during an effective supervision process, indicated that the counselor candidate's time planning and preparation for the session made the process effective.

Findings of this study revealed that supervising style, model, and format were reported as facilitative factors. Supervisees described the role of the supervisors as encouraging, guiding, and supportive. The studies conducted in Turkey revealed similar findings indicating that the supervisor's

encouraging attitude and being instructive/guiding facilitated the establishment of the supervision relationship and the supervision process (Atik, 2017; Denizli et al., 2009; Koç, 2013; Ladany et al., 2013; Meydan, 2019; Meydan & Denizli, 2018). As for the CBT-based supervision model used in this study, the supervisees stated that the conceptualization of the problem based on the Cognitive Behavioral Approach and the progress based on this approach in the interventions were guiding them. In light of this information, it can be argued that CBT-based supervision is effective in helping counselor candidates to conceptualize the problem and improve intervention skills.

Based on the findings, it can be stated that the mixed supervision format, in which both peer group supervision and individual supervision were used together, was characterized as beneficial and facilitating for the process. In this context, current research findings are similar to previous research findings. The preference for group supervision seems practical and functional due to its advantages such as providing multiple perspectives, multiple case examples and counseling styles, vicarious learning opportunities, and learning by modeling (Borders et al., 2012). For instance, in their study with counseling graduate students, Starling and Baker (2000), found that group supervision worked well when combined with individual supervision, and enhanced the supervision process. Similarly, the studies conducted in Turkey emphasized the various benefits of group supervision. For instance, according to the research by Atik and Erkan-Atik (2019), peer group supervision provided counselor candidates with different perspectives; offered the opportunity to work on multiple cases; helped them witness and normalize similar experiences; enabled them to take an active role in the process; increased their self-awareness and self-esteem, and ultimately offered a satisfactory supervision process that contributed to their professional development. In this sense, it can be argued that current research findings are compatible with previous research findings. On the other hand, individual supervision gave supervisees the opportunity to focus individually on their skills and the therapeutic relationship. Thus, in line with the previous studies indicating the benefits of using both individual and group supervision models (Aladağ, 2014; Atik & Erkan-Atik, 2019; Borders et al., 2012), the findings of this study emphasized that mixed model supervision modality combines the strengths of both supervision models.

According to the findings of the current study, the supervision process contributed to personal and professional development at the same time. Consistent with previous research findings, supervision contributed to improving basic counseling skills; increased awareness about the therapeutic process and factors, encouraged counselor candidates to use techniques and interventions, improved conceptualization of the presenting problem of the client and intervention skills, helped attain professional ethics principles and finally helped improve counseling self-efficacy (Atik & Erkan-Atik, 2019; Bakalım et. al, 2018; Bernard & Godyear, 2019; Erbaş, Koç & Esen, 2020; Eryılmaz & Mutlu, 2018; Falender, Shafranske & Ofek 2014; Wahesh et al., 2017). Nevertheless, supervisees indicated that they needed to improve some basic counseling skills, such as using silence and reflection of the feelings, and needed to improve advanced counseling skills. These findings are in line with the previous findings which indicated that counselor candidates experienced difficulties in using advanced counseling skills (Meydan, 2015; Yaka & Koç, 2014). Similar to previous findings (Ellis, 2010; Erbaş et al., 2020; Meydan, 2019; Meydan & Denizli, 2018), the supervision process contributed to the supervisee's personal development in addition to professional development. For instance, Erbaş et al. (2020) stated that the supervision process improved the communication skills and empathic understanding of the counselor candidates. Consistent with previous findings, supervisees indicated that the supervision process increased their self-awareness, self-confidence, empathy levels and interpersonal skills.

Finally, under the suggestions theme, two sub-themes emerged: suggestions for future counselor candidates and suggestions for supervision. Participants provided suggestions for future counselor candidates to improve their skills and gain optimum benefit from the supervision process. Their suggestions included managing the time effectively and making session planning, managing their anxiety, developing their skills by reading and role-playing, and giving importance to courses that are related to practicum. They also suggested participating in group supervision sessions regularly, being prepared for group supervision sessions, and gaining an understanding about the theoretical frame by reading. These findings were similar to the findings of the previous studies which emphasized the knowledge of counseling skills and theories provided by prerequisite counseling courses, practicing skills, mastery experiences, and managing emotions to improve the supervision process (Kurtyılmaz et al., 2019; Mullen et al., 2015; Starling & Baker, 2000).

Consequently, the findings of the present study reflected the counselor candidates' individual counseling supervision experiences. The findings of the current research emphasized the importance of the supervision process in improving professional skills in counselor education in Turkey. It is believed that the information obtained based on the experiences of the counselor candidates will prove to be a useful resource for counselor educators and supervisors. In light of the findings under the facilitative elements and suggestions, it can be recommended to use the mixed model in supervision (if the number of counselors per supervisor is suitable) to increase the quality of the supervision process. Thus, it may be recommended for counselor educators to provide individual and group supervision in balance. Although it is believed that this research will contribute to the literature, it also has some limitations. First, the obtained themes were limited to the counselor candidates who participated in the current study. Second, the data included in the current study were limited to the counselor candidates' perspectives. Supervisors or clients may have different perspectives on the supervision process. Lastly, the data obtained from this research were limited to the undergraduate students. For future studies, it may be suggested that researchers work with larger samples focusing on the effectiveness of the supervision process by including variables related to supervisors and clients. Researchers, who plan to conduct research in this field, may compare the effectiveness of mixed supervision with other supervision methods, and investigate the qualifications and skills that supervisors should have to carry out the process effectively.

Declaration of Contribution Rate of Authors

The authors contributed equally to the research.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declared that they have no competing interests.

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