



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Career Counseling in Public Schools through the Eyes of Counselors in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the views of counselors on career counseling services carried out in Turkish schools were examined. 15 counselors working on career issues in schools, in Guidance and Research Centers (GRCs) and in universities participated in the study. As one of the qualitative research methods, case study was used, and the data were analyzed using content analysis. Based on the analysis, the findings were discussed under seven main themes: (1) meaning of career, (2) student's career-related problems, (3) students' career-related needs, (4) effective career counseling, (5) effective career counselor, (6) facilitating factors in career counseling, and (7) complicating factors in career counseling. The findings were discussed in the light of career counseling literature.

Career counseling has a history of approximately seventy years in Turkey. The seeds of career counseling were planted with the efforts that trace back in the beginning of guidance services in the Turkish education system in the early 1950s. In the early 1990s, the changes in the field of vocational guidance started to find reflection over time on the practices in the Ministry of National Education (MEB), and the emphasis on “vocational choice” was replaced with the emphasis on “career development process” and “career development tasks” (Yeşilyaprak et al., 1995).

Career counseling is an occupational counseling process that focuses on the client's career development problems. In this process, various career problems, such as choosing a occupation, making various career-related decisions, coping with job stress or looking for a job, are discussed (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2016). In order to deal with all these problems effectively, career counseling competencies are necessary in addition to counselor competencies. Although career counseling competencies vary from country to country, the basic competencies that are generally accepted are as follows; 1) career development theory; 2) individual and group counseling skills; 3) individual/group assessment; 4) knowledge/resources; 5) program management and implementation; 6) consultation; 7) diverse populations; 8) supervision; 9) ethical/legal issues; 10) research/evaluation; and 11) technology (National Career Development Association, The National Career Development Association [NCDA], 2009).

Career counseling services in Turkey are mainly provided by school counselors. While there are differing policies around the globe, counselors can offer career counseling services once they graduate from the Guidance and Counseling (GC) undergraduate program. In the present GC undergraduate programs (Higher

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Education Council – Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu [YÖK], 2018), the counselor candidates take the theoretical course “Vocational Guidance” in the 5th semester and the applied course “Vocational Guidance Practices” in the 6th semester. Although career counseling can be found in GC undergraduate programs, it is only elective and differs in content across university curriculums.

In addition, these compulsory courses have been included in the program only since 2007-2008 and therefore, there are many counselors and non-field guidance teachers who were appointed without having taken these courses. In fact, in a study conducted in 2021 with 70 guidance teachers working in primary schools (Ulaş-Kılıç & Demirtaş-Zorbaz, 2021), it has been shown that approximately one-quarter of these teachers (22.4%) graduated from departments other than GC, and only 18% of 70 teachers took a relevant applied course. Moreover, even if counselors have taken these courses as compulsory courses, they start to work at four different levels upon graduation and public personnel selection examination: preschool, primary school, middle school and high school.

Being able to provide career counseling to individuals in different developmental stages requires certain competencies. In another recent study (Ulaş-Kılıç & Demirtaş-Zorbaz, 2021), only 15.4% of the counselor participants stated that the courses taken in the undergraduate program is contentwise sufficient for providing career services in primary school. In another study (Çivilidağ et al., 2015), researchers investigated the views of school principals, school counselors and adolescents were examined. They showed that the most common activity for vocational guidance was to apply tests and scales. However, career counseling is not only a process of using only tests and scales, but a much more comprehensive service. Significantly, the 2023 Education Vision of the Turkish Ministry of National Education points to a vision that emphasizes life-long career development, a vision that goes beyond mere assessment-based career services and requires quality career counseling.

As Büyükgöze Kavas, Şanlı and İslam (2021) stated, the number of studies revealing career self-efficacy of counselors in Turkey is limited. But one of these limited studies (Küçüktepe, 2014) showed that one of the areas where counselors felt most inadequate was vocational guidance. Also, when the findings of the two current studies mentioned above are taken into account, it becomes clear that school-based career counseling services should be examined comprehensively, the deficiencies thereof should be determined, and improvement efforts should be carried out.

In this study, the views of counselors working with career issues in schools, in guidance and research centers (GRC) and universities on career counseling services in schools were examined. When the literature in Turkey is examined, no current research has been found on this subject. With the changing world conditions, career needs are also changing, and it is thought that the views of counselors on the current status of career counseling services in schools will contribute to improvement efforts.

Method

Research model

In the present study, case study method was used. Case study is an empirical method that examines a phenomenon in its real context (Yin, 2018). The phenomenon in this study was career counseling services in Turkish public schools.

Participants

The participants consisted of school counselors, GRCs and universities. The participants were purposefully sampled. The main criterion was that the counselors participating in this study would be working with career-related issues. Working in different education levels (preschool, primary school, middle school, anatolian high school and anatolian imam hatip high school) was also a criterion for participation. A total of 15 counselors, including five (1 male, 4 female) school counselors, five (4 men, 1 woman) counselors working in GRCs, and five (2 men, 3 women) counseling academicians, participated in the study.

The interview form

A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used. While preparing this form, first of all, the literature on career and career self-efficacy was examined in detail. Related measurement tools were reviewed, and a draft form was created. Afterwards, the draft form was finalized by taking the opinions of a faculty member who is competent in the field of career counseling. The questions in the semi-structured form were as follows: “What does career mean to you?”, “What are the primary career problems of students?”, “What are the primary career needs of students?”, “What does effective career counseling look like?”, “What does an effective career counselor look like in terms of personality characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes?”, “What are the factors that facilitate effective career counseling services?” and “What are the factors that complicate effective career counseling services?”

Process

The ethics committee approval required for the study was obtained from Dokuz Eylül University on 07.02.2022. Focus group interviews within the scope of the study were conducted online by the first author. An informed consent form was sent to the participants digitally before the focus group interview. Focus group interviews were held separately for each group, with each interview lasting between 50-70 minutes. In order to improve the data transcription process, audio and video recordings were taken with the consent of the participants during the online focus group interviews.

Data analysis

First, the recorded video and audio data were transcribed and made ready for analysis. Then, the transcribed data were analyzed by the two researchers of the study. Content analysis was made separately based on the data from each first participant of three different focus group interviews (school, GRC, university). Thus, approximately 20% of the total data (3 participants out of 15) were coded. In qualitative studies, instead of coding all the data by two separate people, coding 15-20% of the data and then, once the intercoder reliability is in place, one of them continuing to code, is among the suggestions in the literature (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Upon coding the data from the three participants, the intercoder reliability was calculated using the Miles and Huberman Model (1994). The intercoder reliability ratios for the school, GRC and university groups were 84%, 81% and 81%, respectively. Achieving values above 80%, the intercoder reliability was accepted as adequate (see Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, the analysis of the data from the remaining 12 participants was continued and completed by the fifth researcher.

Lastly, sub-themes that emerged were detected the main themes, which were determined in advance according to the semi-structured interview form questions. In order to increase the reliability, the data were presented with frequencies and direct quotations. The participants were given code names for direct quotations to ensure confidentiality. The first number in the code names correspond to the participants' group (1 = school, 2 = GRC and 3 = university), whereas the second number corresponds to the participants themselves (e.g., P.3.2 - the second participant of the university group).

Validity and reliability measures

Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research are sought by way of meeting criteria such as credibility, transferability, consistency and confirmability in ensuring validity and reliability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In this study, taking these criteria into account, care was taken to establish a clear relationship with the participants, to use probing questions, to present the data as they were without adding comments, to cite direct quotations from different participants, and to the keep data safe. Thus, measures were taken to act in accordance with the nature of scientific research, ensuring validity and reliability.

Role of the researcher

All the interviews were conducted by the first researcher, who is a PhD candidate in GC, and data analysis was carried out within the collaboration of the first and the fifth researchers, of which the latter is a master's student in GC. The first researcher holds a previously published qualitative research, a qualitative master's thesis

completed, and a qualitative data analysis training. Also, the researcher tried to preserve the quality of the process by taking care to use active listening skills and to stick to the semi-structured interview form throughout the interviews.

Results

Seven main themes were determined from the semi-structured interview questions. These were as follows; 1) meaning of career, 2) students' career-related problems, 3) students' career-related needs, 4) effective career counseling, 5) effective career counselor, 6) facilitating factors in career counseling, and 7) complicating factors in career counseling. The first question was not asked to the university group, so six main themes were determined in that group. Sub-themes appearing under these main themes are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Main Themes and Emerging Sub-Themes Across Counselor Groups

Main Theme	School (n = 5)	GRC (n = 5)	University (n = 5)
1. Meaning of career	Financial gain (n=3) Status (n=3) Progress (n=2) Finding a job (n=1) Life satisfaction (n=1) Journey (n=1)	Lifestyle (n=3) Occupational success (n=2)	
2. Students' career-related problems	Deficiency (n=4) Uncertainty (n=3) Money-centeredness (n=3) Sexism (n=2) Exam-centeredness (n=1)	Deficiency (n=5)	Deficiency (n=5) Academic achievement-centeredness (n=1)
3. Students' career-related needs	Knowing self (n=5) Knowing occupations (n=4) Knowing schools (n=2)	Knowing self (n=4) Career planning (n=3) Knowing occupations (n=2) Getting help from competent experts (n=2) Family work (n=1) Increasing opportunities (n=1)	Knowing self (n=3) Knowing occupations (n=3) Gaining career awareness (n=2) Increasing opportunities (n=2) Work experience before university (n=2) Increasing efficacy expectations (n=2) Gaining transferable skills (n=1) Gaining a future-oriented time perception (n=1)
4. Effective career counseling	Individual and group counseling (n=5) Consultation (n=3) Getting to know and assessing the individual (n=2) Multiculturalism (n=1)	Individual and group counseling (n=4) Getting to know and assessing the individual (n=3) Consultation (n=1) Program development and implementation (n=1)	Individual and group counseling (n=3) Getting to know and assessing the individual (n=3) Multiculturalism (n=3) Career development theories (n=3) Professional development and ethics (n=3)
5. Effective career counselor	Skill (n=4) Knowledge (n=4) Personality characteristic (n=3) Attitude (n=1)	Personality characteristic (n=4) Skill (n=2) Knowledge (n=2) Attitude (n=2)	Skill (n=4) Personality characteristic (n=4) Attitude (n=4) Knowledge (n=3)
6. Facilitating factors in career counseling	Useful materials (n=4) Digital opportunities (n=3) Collaboration (n=2) Characteristics of counselor (n=1)	Useful materials (n=4) Tests (n=2) Client's openness to innovations (n=1) Availability of services (n=1)	Seminars/trainings (n=4) Supervision/teamwork (n=4) Digital opportunities (n=3) Useful materials (n=1)
7. Complicating factors in career counseling	Systemic deficiencies (n=5) Lack of awareness and motivation (n=4) Lack of materials (n=3) Reluctance of clients (n=1)	Lack of awareness and motivation (n=3) Lack of materials (n=2) Systemic deficiencies (n=2) Incompetent counselor (n=2)	Lack of awareness and motivation (n=4) Incompetent counselor (n=3) Systemic deficiencies (n=3)

Meaning of career

When the school counselors were asked about the meaning of career, they defined career as financial gain, status, progress, finding a job, life satisfaction and journey, as financial gain and status were the prominent

answers. GRC counselors defined career as lifestyle and occupational success. The views of some of the participants were as follows:

“Actually, career is a journey... Surely, an individual’s status and income are actually an important process that affects life satisfaction and affects at least half of our lives.” (P.1.1)

“For me, it’s career advancement. Improving yourself. On the one hand, gaining a title and on the other hand, getting satisfaction with your education or where you are progressing.” (P.1.2)

“I think it’s in a way determining lifestyles. Because when you choose a occupation, you also determine your lifestyle.” (P.2.3)

Students’ career-related problems

Counselors in all groups mentioned the current deficiencies at the very beginning of the students’ career-related problems. Here, especially students’ lack of knowledge about occupations and themselves came to the fore. One participant commented, *“Children do not have full awareness of what they like to do inside or outside of school. The process actually starts with this... Again, children do not know about occupations...” (P.1.1)*, while another participant stated, *“It is very important for our children to recognize their own interests, talents, tendencies and to know themselves” (P.2.3)*. Another participant said, *“I think that in general, students at all levels have difficulty in knowing themselves” (P.3.1)*.

On the other hand, school and GRC counselors mentioned the lack of social support, and counseling academicians mentioned the lack of knowledge about today’s career paradigm. Two participants expressed their views as follows:

“They lack support to model and create motivation.” (P.2.4)

“I think it applies to all levels: Not being able to understand the paradigm of the day regarding the career process... In the standard classical decision-making process, there are 3-4 options, and we reduce them, focusing on one option. On the contrary, in today’s paradigm there is a very serious need to expand [one’s options].” (P.3.2)

In addition to these deficiencies, school counselors included uncertainty, money-centeredness, sexism and exam-centeredness among students’ career-related problems, whereas counseling academicians mentioned academic achievement-centeredness.

Students’ career-related needs

In connection to the students’ lack of knowledge about occupations and themselves, counselors in all groups expressed the most basic career needs of students in terms of knowledge about occupations and about self. One participant said, *“I think one of the basic needs is to know about occupations and also recognizing their interests and talents” (P.1.2)*. Other participants similarly said, *“First of all, they need to know themselves so that they can make choices accordingly” (P.1.3)*, *“We must help them recognize their interests and talents” (P.2.5)*, *“I think they need knowledge... about occupations and [they need] self-discovery” (P.3.1)*.

In addition, school counselors emphasized knowing the schools that students may prefer in the future, while GRC counselors emphasized career planning, getting help from competent experts, family work and increasing opportunities. Counseling academicians underlined the need of improving career awareness, increasing opportunities, work experience before university, increasing efficacy expectations, gaining transferable skills and gaining a future-oriented time perception. Some participants expressed their views as follows:

“Individual career planning is also one of the indispensable works.” (P.2.5)

“First of all, [one needs to] to improve career awareness. I mean, why should I choose an occupation?” (P.3.4)

Effective career counseling

Counselors in all groups defined effective career counseling primarily as good counseling and mentioned knowledge and skills in individual and group counseling. Here, they especially emphasized the importance of informing the individual about career-related variables. School counselors and GRC counselors mostly

expressed the importance of having the client know their own characteristics and occupations. On the other hand, school counselors placed significant emphasis on introducing the national examination systems to the client, while GRC counselors placed significant emphasis on teaching the client to set goals. Under this theme, the participants shared their views as follows:

“You have to master [career] knowledge, the current system, current occupations, occupations for ten years [or] maybe twenty years from now. But more than that, accepting that we cannot know everything, and being open to learning, knowing the ways to access knowledge and showing them to the student.” (P.1.4)

“[You need] to know the student, help the student know themselves and recognize the occupational fields, and secondly, [you need] to understand the reasons that affect their choice of occupation and the reasons that provide motivation, [and you need to] raise awareness [in the student] about the working fields following graduation.” (P.2.4)

“A good career counselor is first and foremost a good counselor. In fact, we do pretty much the same thing, except that we focus more on career problems.” (P.3.2)

Secondly, counselors in all groups mentioned tests and non-test techniques under the category of knowing and assessing the individual. One participant said, *“It is necessary to proceed by applying scales and questionnaires” (P.1.2)*, whereas another participant similarly said, *“I think they should be able to go beyond classical measurement tools and have a good grasp of qualitative methods” (P.3.4)*.

In addition, school counselors and counseling academicians mentioned the importance of multiculturalism for effective career counseling, while school and GRC counselors mentioned consultation in the context of parent/guardian work. Professional development and ethics and career development theories were also viewed as significant elements of effective career counseling, as mentioned by counseling academicians. In addition, program development and implementation were mentioned by one GRC counselor.

Effective career counselor

Counselors largely agreed that an effective career counselor should have certain personality characteristics, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Here, a prominent personality characteristic in each group was openness to development/innovation. In addition, counseling academicians especially mentioned cooperativeness. Being patient was another personality characteristic emphasized by school counselors. Two of the participants stated the following:

“[It entails] being open to innovation as a personality characteristic, following the developments, constantly following the age with the young people, looking to the future without being stuck in the past.” (P.1.4)

“Being open to innovations and learning, prone to cooperation.” (P.3.5)

Apart from personality characteristics, counselors in all three groups stated that an effective career counselor should possess knowledge about occupations and the changing business life. On the other hand, school counselors emphasized knowledge about the national examination systems, while counseling academicians emphasized knowledge about career development and counseling theories. One participant said, *“Robots have started to be used more... Here comes the metaverse... It is necessary to have [knowledge about] them. New fields are emerging” (P.2.1)*. Other views were as follows:

“We need to know the examination systems in our country.” (P.1.2)

“Career theories [and] counseling theories... One needs to have knowledge and skills in those.” (P.3.3)

When it came to skills, all counselors stated that an effective career counselor should firstly have basic counseling skills, while counseling academicians also mentioned counseling process skills such as getting to know the individual, setting goals, and case conceptualization. Their views were as follows:

“I never thought it was necessary to have a completely different skill in a career.” (P.1.3)

“To have basic psychological counseling skills, communication skills, to establish a secure bond...” (P.2.4)

“He should be able to dominate the whole career-related field. I think he should know not only the assessment tool, but how to choose this assessment tool or whether it is necessary, sometimes where to stop

or how to continue in the counseling process, how to conceptualize the case, what a career development story means.” (P.3.1)

Finally, under the category of attitude, one school counselor mentioned cultural sensitivity. And GRC counselors talked about being trustworthy and caring, whereas counseling academicians talked about openness to consultation/supervision and ethics.

Facilitating factors in career counseling

Counselors in all groups mentioned that useful materials in career counseling would be facilitating. Here, one participant working as preschool counselor mentioned toys, while others mentioned books/booklets/manuals. Some of their statements were as follows:

“There may be a booklet for primary, secondary and high schools by the Directorate General for Special Education and Guidance Services, where we can get ideas from field experts, who have written articles and theses in career guidance.” (P.1.2)

“We do not have a package program to use as an instrument. We do not have a structured training process. We don’t even have a roadmap to follow.” (P.2.1)

“Simple materials, easily accessible and easy to use, where [counselors] can look at as to what they can do... In fact, the Ministry of National Education actually has such studies. We recently worked on a project... on a booklet. I think [these resources] can make career counseling process a lot easier.” (P.3.2)

School counselors and counseling academicians also emphasized digital opportunities and stated that there was a need for testing scales and educational videos for counselors. GRC counselors also indicated that valid and reliable tests would be facilitating, although they did not mention digital materials as did the other two groups. One participant said, *“You know, there is e-rehberlik (e-guidance) in MEBBİS (Ministry of National Education Data Processing Systems). There we can see whether a middle-school student has met with the counselor, and if so, what the agenda was. Therefore, perhaps such a system can be created for career services” (P.1.5)*. Another participant said, *“Measuring tools should definitely be in our hands and should exist in all education levels. Starting from there, it would be easier to convince the families at least” (P.2.3)*.

In addition, some of the school counselors said that collaboration with students and counselors is facilitating. A school counselor, emphasizing the characteristics of the counselor, said that the career counselor should be engaging: *“People who are experts in the occupations of the future can introduce their occupation to us, so that we can pass it on to our students” (P.1.2)*.

In addition, some of the GRC counselors stated that the client’s openness to innovations would be a facilitating factor, while one of them emphasized service accessibility.

“[It would facilitate the career counseling process if] the client has various options and is open to differences.” (P.2.4)

“I can only add one thing: Could we facilitate the accessibility of the services?” (P.2.5).

Finally, most of the counseling academicians mentioned seminars/trainings and supervision/teamwork as facilitating factors. One participant expressed his opinion as follows: *“When I think about facilitating factors in the process, giving additional trainings and providing supportive trainings about the supervision processes... All this would actually be significant, it would make things easier” (P.3.3)*.

Complicating factors in career counseling

Finally, counselors were asked about complicating factors in career counseling, and most of the participants in all groups mentioned lack of awareness and motivation observed particularly in families. School counselors also mentioned lack of awareness and motivation observed in teachers/administrators in school contexts. Some of the views were as follows:

“The parents impose their own expectations, ignoring [the student’s] interests and talents” (P.2.4).

“When we look at it culturally, it is a process that always goes hand in hand with the family. There is a critical moment at the end of high school, which is a very chaotic moment. The exam result is on one side,

the child on the other, the parents on the other. Again, you are working at the extremes. I think this is a serious obstacle.” (P.3.2)

“From my point of view, one of the most difficult things for me –working in primary school– is the attitudes of teachers... When we tell them that we will provide career services to children, we ask teachers for their class hours, since there is no legal class hour [for guidance purposes]. Most of them ask, ‘What is up with career in this age?’” So we are faced with such a perception.” (P.1.2)

In addition, a significant part of the participants in all groups stated that counselors could run into time problems in providing career counseling services at schools, referring to systemic deficiencies. One participant described the problem along the lines of *“not being able to spare enough time for the client in the school environment”* (P.2.4). Another participant said, *“Now we all know the problems related to the school and the system. [There are] too many students, but not enough counselors”* (P.3.1).

School counselors also emphasized that there was a lack of career focus in the current school system, mentioning lack of emphasis on career, lack of age-specific activities and limited career routes. Similarly, a GRC counselor drew attention to unstable guidance policies. Counseling academicians also mentioned lack of material support for guidance services, ongoing myths about career counseling and deficiencies in university-based counselor education as systemic deficiencies. In addition, in parallel with the facilitating factors, some of the school and GRC counselors emphasized that lack of up-to-date measurement tools and lack of ready-made package programs could also be challenging. In addition, GRC counselors and counseling academicians explained that sometimes counselor incompetence would be a complicating factor as well. Finally, one school counselor drew attention to client reluctance as a complicating factor.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, opinions on career counseling services carried out in schools were examined. The findings were covered under seven main themes: (1) meaning of career, (2) students’ career-related problems, (3) students’ career-related needs, (4) effective career counseling, (5) effective career counselor, (6) facilitating factors in career counseling and (7) complicating factors in career counseling.

In light of the findings, counselors working in schools and GRCs explained career in terms of financial gain, status, progress and lifestyle, and these concepts were in line with the basic variables suggested by traditional career development theories. However, traditional career development theories mostly reflect the Euro-American perspective (Gsyberg, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003), whereas for individuals in many cultures, occupation only serves to meet basic needs and is not at the center of life (Kağnıcı, 2020). In this regards, it could be said that it is necessary for counselors working in schools and GRCs to be able to look at the concept of career from a broader perspective, particularly in light of current counselor roles such as advocacy.

It is seen that school counselors and GRCs explain career with concepts such as financial gain, status, success, and lifestyle, and these concepts are in line with the basic variables put forward by traditional career development theories. However, traditional career development theories mostly reflect the Euro-American perspective (Gsyberg, Heppner, & Johnston, 2003), and or individuals in many cultures, occupation only serves to meet basic needs and is not at the center of life (Kağnıcı, 2020). In this context, it is thought that it is necessary for school counselors and GRCs to have a broader perspective on the concept of career, considering their current roles as advocacy.

The counselors who participated in the study defined the main career-related problems of students as lack of knowledge about professions and themselves, lack of social support, uncertainty, money-, exam- and academic achievement-centeredness. It could be seen that the problems identified were mainly evaluated in the context of Parsons’ basic factors, whereas social phenomena such as sexism were given relatively little attention. However, according to Pope’s (2000) classification of the developmental stages of career counseling, in the sixth (that is, the last) stage, in the years after 1990, with the effect of multiculturalism, variables such as race, being an ethnic minority, being a woman, being an individual with a disability started to be included in the theories developed about career (Siyez, 2020).

In parallel with the problems mentioned, psychological counselors working in schools and GRCs defined the needs of students as knowing occupations, knowing self, career planning, getting help from competent experts

and family work, whereas counseling academicians defined the needs of students as gaining career awareness, increasing opportunities, work experience before university, increasing efficacy expectations, gaining transferable skills and gaining future-oriented time perception, in addition to knowing self and knowing occupations. It could be said that the traces of the matching-focused theoretical perspective were evident here, where the needed career service was seen mainly along the lines of getting to know the individual and professions and then matching the two. This finding seems to support Yeşilyaprak's (2019) view that vocational guidance services in Turkey have come to be provided as "selection guidance", where the counselor helps a last grade middle- or high-school student only select and list various high schools (or universities) upon the reception of a nation-wide exam result. However, it was noteworthy that counseling academicians mostly emphasized helping the client gain current career skills.

Counselors in all groups defined effective career counseling in terms of having knowledge and skills in individual and group counseling, getting to know and assessing the individual, introducing professions and the examination system to the client, teaching the client to set goals, and multiculturalism. Although all of these overlap with the career counseling competencies defined by the National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2009), it was observed that counselors, especially counseling academicians, emphasized professional development and ethics and theoretical knowledge as well.

When it came to effective career counselors, the participants suggested that they should be open to development/innovation, culturally sensitive, collaborative, patient; have knowledge about occupations and changing work life, national examination systems, theories of career development and counseling; have basic counseling skills and process skills, be open to consultation/supervision and work ethically. One of the striking findings was that counselors working in schools and CRCs focused mainly on basic level skills. Process skills were emphasized only by counseling academicians. This finding could be considered as a warning message that career counseling in schools may not be perceived as a process-oriented comprehensive service.

In light of facilitating and complicating factors in career counseling, useful materials, digital opportunities, scales/tests, educational videos and supervision were viewed by the participants as facilitating. On the other hand, lack of awareness and motivation observed in families and teachers, systemic deficiencies (lack of time and lack of career focus in the current school system), lack of material support, myths about career counseling and deficiencies in university-based counselor education were complicating factors. The facilitating contribution of useful materials in career counseling was emphasized by the counselors working in schools and GRCs. Similarly, Köse and Diker (2015) observed that counselor performance increased when they were provided with necessary materials. The participants in the study seemed to point to the same direction, and based on their responses, there seems to be a significant need to produce and spread valid and reliable measurement tools, books/booklets and career information resources. In addition to providing materials, it seems important to help school counselors gain competence in program development, its management and its implementation, which is one of the competencies in career counseling. Moreover, another previous study in Turkey showed that counselors were not at the desired level in terms of their engagement in receiving supervision (Ergüner-Tekinalp, Leuwerke & Terzi, 2009). And significantly, among the three participant groups in the present study, supervision was emphasized as a facilitating factor only by counseling academicians.

When it comes to systemic deficiencies, which were stated among the complicating factors, it is believed that they need to be taken into account, particularly by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. The shortage of time in the career services carried out in schools was an issue underlined by all of the three groups of counselors. Reintroducing guidance and counseling hours in school curricula could help overcome the difficulties experienced in this regard.

When all the findings were evaluated together, it was seen that school counselors and GRC counselors approached career counseling more in terms of vocational guidance in the light of traditional theories and approaches. And this observation revealed the particular need to support professional development, which again is one of the competencies in career counseling, also underlined by the counseling academicians. As the world is changing rapidly, career-related problems and needs are becoming diverse. It is observed that the trait-

factor theories commonly used by career counselors are not sufficient to cope with today's diverse problems (Bacanlı & Büyükoze Kavas, 2022). As a result, many current theories, approaches and models are emerging. However, as Öztemel (2020) states, counselors need to use theoretical approaches that can meet the changes required by today's changing digital age. In this respect, it seems essential for school counselors to be aware of these current theories, approaches and models and to carry out their services beyond vocational guidance services in light of current counselor roles.

In conclusion, based on the present findings, it is recommended that current theories, approaches and models should be taught in undergraduate programs, and counselor candidates should be helped in gaining current counselor roles, so that career services in schools might be improved. As indicated by previous study (Camadan & Sarı, 2021), school counselors are most in need of professional training on career development. Therefore, the competencies of school counselors in Turkish K-12 settings should be improved considering current competencies with in-service trainings, in addition to undergraduate programs.

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