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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## SUPERVISION NEEDS OF SOCIAL WORKERS WORKING IN TÜRKİYE: AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY<sup>1</sup>


Türkiye’de Çalışan Sosyal Hizmet Uzmanlarının Süpervizyon İhtiyaçlarının Değerlendirilmesi:  
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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the supervision needs of social workers in various social work institutions in Türkiye based on three functions of supervision (administrative, educational and supportive). The study used a phenomenological approach. Two focus group interviews were conducted. Each group consisted of six social workers from different social work fields. Data collection tools consisted of a “Personal Information Form” and a “Semi-structured Interview Form”. Data were analyzed with thematic analysis method using the MAXQDA 2020 program. The analysis of the study was based on social workers’ opinions on supervision and their experiences about administrative, educational and supportive functions of supervision. The results supported the notion that there is a need for supervision at the institutional level for social workers. These findings are important in terms of providing some insight on how social workers define supervision and through which functions they need institutional supervision. As a result, the employer institutions and organizations are recommended to establish a formal, structured, institutional and systematic supervision system for social workers.

**Keywords:** Social work supervision, social work practice, supervision functions, focus group, social worker

1 The study has previously been presented at “European Social Work Conference 2023” - 21-24 May, Prague as an oral presentation.

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki çeşitli sosyal hizmet kurumlarında çalışan sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının süpervizyon ihtiyaçlarını, süpervizyonun üç işlevi (idari, eğitsel ve destekleyici) temelinde değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada fenomenolojik bir yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. İki odak grup görüşmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Her grup farklı sosyal hizmet alanlarından altı sosyal hizmet uzmanından oluşmaktadır. Veri toplama araçları “Kişisel Bilgi Formu” ve “Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Formu”ndan oluşmaktadır. Veriler, MAXQDA 2020 programı kullanılarak tematik analiz yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın analizi, sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının süpervizyona ilişkin görüşlerine ve süpervizyonun idari, eğitsel ve destekleyici işlevlerine ilişkin deneyimlerine dayanmaktadır. Sonuçlar sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının kurumsal düzeyde süpervizyona ihtiyaç duyduğu fikrini desteklemektedir. Bu bulgular, sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının süpervizyonu nasıl tanımladıkları ve kurumsal süpervizyona hangi işlevler aracılığıyla ihtiyaç duydukları konusunda fikir vermesi açısından önemlidir. Sonuç olarak işveren kurum ve kuruluşların sosyal hizmet uzmanlarına yönelik resmi, yapılandırılmış, kurumsal ve sistematik bir süpervizyon sistemi kurmaları önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal hizmet süpervizyonu, sosyal hizmet uygulaması, süpervizyon işlevleri, odak grup, sosyal hizmet uzmanı

## INTRODUCTION

The word “supervision” originates from the Latin words “super” (over) and “videre” (to watch) (Fehmerling, 2013, as cited in Magnussen, 2018). That is why a supervisor can be called an observer who watches the work of another. Social work is one of the professions that emphasize the importance of supervision the most (Poertner and Rapp, 1983). Social work supervision is defined as “a joint endeavour in which a practitioner, with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client-practitioner relationships and the wider systemic and ecological contexts, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession” (Hawkins and Shoheit, 2012).

Social work supervision is generally recognized for its three functions: administrative, educational and supportive (Erera and Lazar, 1994; Kadushin and Harkness, 2002; Tsui, 2005). Kadushin and Harkness (2002) describes administrative function as ensuring effective implementation of agency policies and service delivery. The main goal of this function is to ensure adherence of the personnel to the institutional policies (Kadushin, 1992). Education function enhances the values, knowledge and skills of social workers. Its main goal is to upgrade the skills of the social workers (Kadushin, 1993). Lastly, supportive function of supervision increases job satisfaction as it provides sustenance, and motivation (Kadushin, 1992; Kadushin and Harkness, 2002; Tsui, 2005). Supervisors are expected to have a positive relationship with the educational and supportive functions while fulfilling responsibilities such as directing, coordinating and improving the performance of employees (Kadushin and Harkness, 2002). These functions are not discrete. They overlap, interplay, and complement each other.

Although social work supervision has a short history of theory and model, it has a long practice history (Tsui, 2021). The origins of social work supervision and social case study can be traced back to the Charity Organization Societies (COS) movements that began in Buffalo in 1878. Firstly, supervision started on the administrative level. Supervisors were assigned to monitor untrained volunteer visitors

(Tsui, 1997). The COSs have published a guide for the case assessments and have developed a supervision system. This way, it provided knowledge and skills training for the case studies (Munson, 1978; Mo et al., 2020).

Supervision is accepted as one of the main determinants of professional development and job satisfaction for social workers and the service quality provided for the clients (Kadushin and Harkness, 2002; Tsui, 2005; Tsui et al., 2017). In other words, supervision supports social workers as it ensures their professionalism in case management, protecting their emotional and psychological health, and conducting a competent case management process.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review showed that there was no formal, structured, institutional and systematic supervision system for social workers in social service institutions and organizations in Türkiye. There were a limited number of studies about supervision needs of social workers. One of these studies, evaluated supervision needs of social workers from different fields of social work. The results showed that there was a need for supervision in multiple areas such as professional competence, case management, intervention techniques, dealing with anxiety, and ethical dilemmas (Artan et al., 2018a). Another study, focusing on social workers working with immigrants, showed that this group of professionals had very same needs, especially when they were at the beginning of their career (Artan et al., 2018b). A review study also emphasized the importance and the need of a well-established supervision system for social workers in Türkiye (Taşgın, 2019). In addition, there were only three master's theses (Karabekir, 2018; Özkan, 2020; Özkan, 2016) and one doctoral thesis (Atamtürk, 2021) on social work supervision on the national thesis screening centre (YOK Thesis). Also, there was one book on the subject called "Supervision in Social Work: A Model Proposal for Supervision System in Child Welfare" written by Atamtürk (2022). Lastly, a training for supervisor training project named "Training of Trainers on Supervision and Guidance in Refugee Protection" was detected as one and only in Türkiye (<https://sabif.istanbulc.edu.tr>, 2021). Project's partners were Istanbul University- Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Health Sciences, Ministry of Family and Social Services Istanbul Provincial Directorate and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

In the light of this information, determining the supervision needs of social workers in Türkiye will provide awareness to academicians to increase publications in the field of supervision. It will also guide social work institutions in terms of establishing a formal social work supervision system. Furthermore, this study is a first in Türkiye by carrying out focus group work with social workers for supervision needs.

This study aims to reveal how the supervision needs of social workers are shaped based on three functions of supervision: administrative, educational and supportive. The results will provide a perspective for employers and the Turkish Social Workers Association for the establishment and development of a supervision system.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Study Sample

This research was carried out with social workers working in public and private social work institutions and organizations in Türkiye. In Türkiye, social workers are employed in many places, including public, private and non-governmental organizations. In this context, it was decided to establish two focus groups consisting of social workers.

Focus group interviews are a data collection technique that has been frequently used in recent years. It helps the participants get a detailed, in-depth and multi-dimensional view, reveal how the participants perceive the situation, and help the emergence of new and different ideas within-group interaction (Çokluk et al, 2011; Kitzinger, 1995; Krueger, 1994).

### Sampling Technique

Two focus groups consisting of 6 social workers each (12 in total) were established. All the participants were working in social work institutions and organizations. Academicians were not included in this study. And social workers with less than one year of experience were excluded. Purposive sampling was used with these criteria.

The sociodemographic information of the social workers who participated in the study is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Summary of socio-demographic characteristics of study participants**

Demographic Variable	Characteristics	Frequency
Age	24-30	8
	31-40	2
	41-50	2
Gender	Male	5
	Female	7
Professional Field	Child	4
	Family	1
	Medical	3
	Forensic	3
	Local Administration	1
Occupational Experience	0-2 years	1
	3-5 years	4
	6-10 years	5
	11 years and above	2

## **Interview Process**

Group sessions were held between 15.12.2020-29.12.2020 via online video conference due to pandemic conditions. Each session lasted between 90-100 minutes on average. In-depth interviews were conducted by asking the participants 4 semi-structured questions:

1. What do you think when you hear the term “supervision”, as a social worker?
2. How is the administrative functioning in your institution?
3. How are the training and guidance practices provided in your institution to improve professional knowledge and skills?
4. What are the events that cause negative effects/stress in your professional life? In such cases, what kind of support mechanisms does your institution have?

## **Data Analysis**

MAXQDA software was used to analyze transcriptions of focus groups. In order to identify themes from the participants’ responses, the codes of two groups were combined. Three main themes were conducted for coding based on the conceptual categories of supervision: administrative, educational and supportive. The codes assigned under these main themes take a descriptive keyword phrase that captures the main themes. Sub-themes are categorized under each main theme.

## **Data Credibility**

The deciphered data obtained from the Social Workers Focus group was reviewed by 2 social workers and 1 psychologist during the first reading process. Basic encodings and high-frequency expressions were determined through the deciphered interview texts and the questions transferred to the MAXQDA 2020 program. Afterwards, the deciphered texts were re-read, and the main themes were determined by combining the common expressions of the codes created for each question. These main themes were re-read, and the codes that could enter the main themes were rearranged. In the next process, sub-themes were formed over the main themes, and the final reading was carried out. Question-based evaluations and theme expressions related to the main themes and sub-themes are explained below for each question.

## **Ethical Considerations**

All of the participants were informed about the research, and the research was carried out with their voluntary participation. Ethics committee approval of the study was obtained from Istanbul Aydın University (No: E-45379966-050.06.04-14008).

## RESULTS

Results are grouped under four main themes: (i) thoughts on the supervision concept, (ii) administrative function of supervision, (iii) educational function of supervision, (iv) supportive function of supervision. Narrative examples are presented under the related codes for each theme.

### Thoughts on Supervision Concept

Regarding answers to the “What do you think when you hear the term ‘supervision’, as a social worker?” question, focus groups’ explanation of the concept and comments on the need for supervision are listed below.

Two basic themes have been specified by the focus groups. One of them was the definition of supervision term (13 mentions), the other was the need for supervision (16 mentions) during occupational life (Table 2).

**Table 2. Thematic Content Analysis of the Focus Groups on the Supervision Concept and Needs of Social Workers**

<b>A-1- Comments on Supervision Term</b>
1a- Definiton of Supervision with Guidance and Mentoring Aspects
1b- Definiton of Supervision as Colleague Support
<b>A-2- Need for Supervision</b>
2a- Absence of Institutional Supervision System
2b- Tendency to Meet Supervision Needs through Master-apprentice Relationship
2c- Absence of Colleague Support in Institutions

### *Definition of Supervision*

Sub-themes of the definition of supervision main theme contains a definition of supervision with guidance and mentoring aspects (6 mentions) and definition of supervision as colleague support (7 mentions).

Definition of Supervision with Guidance and Mentoring Aspects

“I can describe supervision more as guidance and counseling.”

“I can consider supervision as a guiding light for me.”

Definition of Supervision as Colleague Support

“Under the name of «Adaptation Training», the compulsory training is given to the new employees in the hospital. Other than that, we may informally ask for support from more experienced friends in relatively important cases”

“We received colleague supervision while performing in Service and Profession in this field, we did not receive it in an institutional or a structured way, but we always worked in kind of a master-apprentice relationship.”

### ***Need for Supervision***

The second main theme presents the supervision needs of the social workers. Sub-themes are (i) absence of institutional supervision system, (ii) tendency to meet supervision needs through master-apprentice relationship, and (iii) absence of colleague support in institutions.

#### **Absence of Institutional Supervision System**

“I don’t know if there is a system in Ministry of Health or other ministries on an institutional level, of course, there is no structured supervision program.”

“We received the supervision of our colleagues in the field while performing their profession; we did not receive it in an institutional structure.”

#### **Tendency To Meet Supervision Needs Through Master-Apprentice Relationship**

“We have always worked in a master-apprentice relationship, from the day I started working. There were more experienced people with me and we learned the principles and procedures of the job by following more experienced constructions in every subject from how to write an article to how to handle a case.”

“We got support from more experienced people in informal way, and then there was a problem, which was that it gave the impression that we –as a social worker- knew a lot less than the people we asked questions, so we started asking people around us and getting support, it was a kind of an unofficial need.”

#### **Absence of Colleague Support in Institutions**

“There was a social worker and he was so angry that he never gave us any guidance because he always said «I had to re-teach every new-comer!».”

“We can’t help each other much through colleague support, because most of us are recent graduates and it will grow eventually as we get more experienced.”

### **Administrative Function**

According to answers given by the Social Workers focus group to the “How is the administrative functioning in your institution?”; the main theme was determined with the created codes. The sub-themes of this main theme are the division of labor in the institution (10 mentions), resources (12 mentions), and problem-solving methods in institutions (11 mentions) (Table 3).

**Table 3. Thematic Content Analysis According to the Codes and the Answers Given in the Focus Groups on the Administrative Function of Supervision**

<b>B-1- Accountability-Administrative Responsibility</b>
1a- Division of Labor
1a1- Fair Division of Labor
1a2- Random Division of Labor
1b-Resources
1b1- Lack of Institutional Support
1b2- Getting Institutional Support
1c- Problem Solving Methods in Institutions
1c1- Solving Within Group as Social Workers
1c2- Applying Institutional Management

### ***Division of Labor***

Fair Division of Labor

“Only appointments and relocations are made by the management, we have just created an equal system in terms of division of labor for ourselves.”

“Now I am working in the Provincial Directorate and I think that the issue of fair case distribution is taken into consideration.”

Random Division of Labor

“We distributed the work as a Social Workers Unit. Since the nature and the characteristics of the cases always change, it is not possible to provide an absolute equality anyway. We only distributed it on the basis of service but there could be deficiencies also.”

“There is no work distribution plan in the unit I work for, because I work in a unit that belongs to me, but we see that the real administration does not observe this and is not fair, but in the periods we worked, we were directly accountable to the inspector.”

### ***Resources***

Lack of Institutional Support

“When we request support where I work, we can get the answer that “you can handle it yourself”.”

“...we were cleaning our own desk, apart from that, when I went to Bakırköy (institution-hospital), I have paid for the file out of my own pocket and my institution have never interfered with it.”



### Getting Institutional Support

“In terms of resources, how we can use the resources in the institution or how we can make it suitable, and they generally provide the necessary contribution for the resources we request.”

“In terms of providing resources for the applicants, especially if there is no money inflow within the first 3 months of their visit to the institution, if they cannot meet the basic care materials, if they do not have any conversations with their families, the institution meets some of their needs... I do not have a problem with the source.”

### ***Problem Solving Methods in Institutions***

#### Solving Within Group as Social Workers

“In general, when we have a problem with our colleagues, we solve it by talking among ourselves.”

“If I were to talk about my own experiences during this period, I did not have a situation to go and share with the administration, after all, we have to be here by necessity and there were examples where I went to the solution with the logic that we can solve it among ourselves as adults.”

#### Implementing Institutional Management

“...there may be some instances that will cause disruption of the work, even if it is small. If the event reaches this point, I will request a meeting from the administration and share it in an environment where we are all present.”

“I tried to tolerate it a few times, I chose different alternative ways, but I saw that this situation affects both my private life and my work efficiency. At this point, I talked to the management, and they said that I should wait for a while and look for another place instead, and this problem was solved in this way.”

### **Educational Function**

Answers given by the Social Workers Focus Group to the question “How are training and guidance practices provided in your institution to improve professional knowledge and skills?” main theme was determined. Sub-themes of this theme were in-institutional training (4 mentions), and training on self-development and occupational development (11 mentions) (Table 4).

**Table 4. Thematic Content Analysis According to The Codes And The Answers Given in The Focus Groups On The Educational Function Of Supervision**

<b>C-1-Education and Occupational Development</b>
1a- In-Institutional Training
1b- Training on Self-development and Occupational Development
1b1- Training Based on Self-Development
1b2- Therapeutical Training
1b3- Academical Education

### ***In-Institutional Training***

“When I started working in an institutional way, there was a 40-day training in Ankara and there were also small trainings after this training process.”

“When I started my educational session, I had a 3-day orientation training on the field and about practical application and some information we needed to know was given from various Non-Governmental Organizations.”

### ***Training on Self-development and Occupational Development***

Training based on Self-Development

“In addition, I would try to support this with articles or readings on that field in order to complete my lack of knowledge.”

“...especially the resources were very useful for me, there were books that I used especially on social work, these are the books that I sometimes profit by on even now. I’ve been looking back at what I said would be useful from the notes I took while I was studying at the undergraduate level.”

Therapeutical Training

“I received Art Therapy training for about a year, and then I received Family & Couples Therapy training for 5 years. Then I received training in psychiatry relations with children and adolescents, but it was incomplete due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

“I first took psychodrama training for about a year. It was useful for discovering myself completely and understanding how to act in a group.”

Academic Education

“Apart from that, I was reading and researching myself, and then I headed towards Master’s and PhD period.”

“Afterwards, of course, if you do not update yourself, you cannot dominate this process if you do not

follow the new regulations, and then I started my doctorate academically and now I am at the thesis stage, I can say that I can try to improve my professional background in this way.”

### **Supportive Function**

“What are the events that cause negative effects/stress in your professional life? In such cases, what kind of support mechanisms does your institution have?”

In this main theme, there are codes regarding the support expectations of social workers in terms of support, help about the mental state that they receive from the work environment, institutions and managers in the corporate field and their professional lives. The group’s need for support due to traumatic experiences (4 mentions), the wear and burnout caused by the institutional structure (4 mentions), the burnout due to the nature of the profession (4 mentions), and the perceived stigma, especially in the mental health field (2 mentions), were formed as sub-themes of this main theme (Table 5).

**Table 5. Thematic Content Analysis According to the Codes and the Answers Given in the Focus Groups on the Supportive Function of Supervision**

<b>D-1 Support</b>
1 a- Traumatic Experiences
1 b- Burnout/Wear Out
1b1- Burnout in Institutional Field
1b2- Burnout in Occupational Area
1 c- Stigmatization

### **Traumatic Experiences**

“They had a 5-year-old girl who had been abused and was left with the effects of it. The interview I had with the child was very difficult, and her mother was very nervous and very sad. She blamed herself a lot, and after going through this, I had dreams about a child for about a week or so, and sometimes I wonder how she was doing, what she was doing, and I had a little bit of guilt. I wonder if I could help more. Whether I helped enough or not, or if I said something wrong and made her worse, and other than that.”

“I didn’t experience anything extreme, just sometimes the parties threaten us.”

### **Burnout/ Wear Out**

Burnout in Institutional Field

“I have experienced a lot of burnouts. The number of Child Support Centers in Turkey is low, we are

psychologically worn out, and I have been petitioning to leave this institution for 2 years. My petitions have not been answered for 2 years.”

“These institutions are such psychologically difficult areas that the state does not have any official application, and if you have a reference, you can work in the most comfortable place of the family units, and at the same time, if you do not have a reference and you are not a skilled employee, they will consume you.”

#### Burnout in Occupational Area

“We can experience a lot of burnouts due to the field we work in, unfortunately there is no support for burnout on the institutional level, at least I can say that there is nothing structured.”

“Due to the nature of the files and cases that come to us, the people we meet wear us out, we are threatened. When I went to the homes of the children who were dragged into crime in juvenile courts, I was threatened and kicked out of the house, and I had no security measures with me.”

#### **Stigmatization**

“When you receive mental health support, you can be stigmatized. For example, if you take an antidepressant or go to therapy, you may be exposed to statements like «it’s not good for you to work here».”

“There is no strategy at the institutional level, on the contrary, when you try to get support from somewhere on your own and someone hears it, you may encounter discourses such as “your mental health is unstable since you seek for psychological help”.

#### **DISCUSSION**

One of the interesting results of this research has been the supervision definitions of social workers. The participants perceived the word “supervision” as equivalent to the words “colleague support, guidance, mentoring”. They perceived it as getting help only in cases where they had difficulties. However, concepts such as supervision, consultation, mentorship and coaching have different basic purposes, formats, roles, relationships between partners, sources of authority, and durations (Tsui et al., 2017). Studies conducted with social workers in Türkiye also indicate that social workers define supervision as “the master-apprentice relationship, the guidance of an experienced person, counseling, and receiving support” (Atamtürk, 2021; Özkan, 2020). Therefore, the research findings are similar to the findings in the literature. The purpose of supervision is not merely guidance or mentoring. It is more than colleague support. The way the participants view supervision lacks the administrative function of supervision. Supervision is supposed to aim retaining social workers in organisations in line with the organization policies (Australian Association of Social Workers [AASW], 2014).

Social workers did not make any definitions of the supervision concept over the administrative functions. Özkan's (2020) study also showed that social workers emphasized the supportive and educational functions when they define supervision. This perception of supervision may be related to the lack of administrative supervision at the institutions. As it was clearly detected, the administrative function of the supervision is usually the least preferred one (Kadushin, 1993). Supervisors are tended to avoid the administrative responsibilities, such as monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating supervisee's work, as much as possible (Kadushin, 1993). However, the lack of this function may harm the effectiveness of the job. Without this function, ethical and practice standards cannot be monitored efficiently, and this may possible result in a decrease in accountability of the client outcomes (AASW, 2014).

Another important result of the research is that there was no fair distribution of work or the social workers distributed the work among themselves to ensure justice. Likewise, the participants stated that when there are institutional problems or problems in finding resources, social workers try to solve these problems among themselves. These findings of the study indicate that social workers need the administrative part of organizational supervision. The purpose of the administrative function is sufficient and accountable management of the staff members. The history of supervision shows that the development supervision has started with the administrative function (Tsui, 1997). The lack of this function might harm the peace in the workplace.

Another finding of the study was that most of the participants had traumatic experiences, professional burnout, and weariness due to the cases they encountered. They needed support in this regard. Besides, some of the participants stated that they experienced stigma when they received mental health support. These findings show that social workers also need the supportive function of supervision because of the absence of support mechanisms. Similarly, in the study conducted by Atamtürk (2021), social workers reported that they experienced burnout, fatigue and could not benefit from the supportive function due to the absence of a supervision system. Likewise, Özkan (2020) in their research determined that social workers have negative experiences such as traumatic experiences, stress, fatigue, and burnout. Social workers stated that they need professional support, that is, supervisors who provide the supportive function of supervision, in order to cope with these negative experiences.

The difficulties of the job might escalate when social workers do not get the support they require. Social workers are faced with secondary traumatization since they start their education as a social work student (Cunningham, 2004). In spite of these conditions, secondary traumatic stress in social workers has gained attention relatively recently (Bride, 2007). Demirbaş (2021), in their research with social workers working in the field of child welfare, also found that social workers experienced secondary traumatic stress. They suggested that an in-house supervision system should be developed. The lack of supportive function might cause a decrease in psychological well-being of social workers.

Consequently, it might have a negative effect on the quality of the service provided in institutions.

Additionally, the participants received various in-service training, continued their postgraduate education or received various therapy training from outside voluntarily. They reported less deficiency in the educational and professional development function of supervision. Social workers value teaching and giving/receiving feedback as well as development of leadership and management skills (Ketner et al., 2017). Social work profession requires an on-going education and learning period. This result shows that social workers acknowledge this necessity.

This finding also indicates that social workers mainly continue their training from other sources than their institution. This means that social work institutions do not usually provide educational function of supervision. Similarly, Özkan (2020) found in their study that social workers try to remedy their professional deficiencies in different ways. They stated that social workers need supervision regarding the educational function in a professional way. Social workers tend to reach out to other sources in order to continue their professional development. Internal supervision emphasizes the administrative function and there is usually less emphasis on professional development of social workers (Rankine, 2019). These conditions might make outsource training more appealing. External supervision provides a safe space for supervisee to evaluate their practice (Busse, 2009).

Lastly, study findings revealed that there is not an established supervision system in the institutions where the participants work. Other studies conducted in Türkiye have also concluded that social workers had supervision needs and there were no structured supervision systems in institutions (Artan et al, 2018a; Artan et al, 2018b; Karabenk, 2018; Taşğın, 2019; Özkan, 2016). High rates of absence due to stress-related problems are common in social work (Rose and Palattiyil, 2020). It is evidently possible to say the profession has a challenging nature. It is crucial for a social work unit to have a well-functioning supervision system to serve efficiently. The lack of this system results in burnout of the personnel, low job satisfaction, as well as decrease in efficient service delivery levels.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the light of all these research findings, we can state that social workers have institutional supervision needs. A structured supervision system should be established in institutions. It is recommended that the Turkey Association of Social Workers (SHUDER) take action across the country to establish a supervision system and raise awareness of the necessity of the supervision system by disseminating this and similar studies at the level of ministries, local administrations and non-governmental organizations. In addition, SHUDER should produce various projects in the field of supervision with international organizations such as IFSW / EASSW / IASSW.

## **Study Limitations**

The limitations of this study are worth mentioning. The sampling was purposive in order to include participants from different fields, ministries, gender and age. However, this may have an effect on the representativeness of the data. Secondly, the study was not longitudinal. This is why any change of the opinions, needs, and experiences of the social workers over time could not be evaluated due to time and resource limitations.

Lastly, this study had an exploratory approach within the context of three functions of supervision. Although there are more recently defined additional functions, such as mediation function (Wonnacott, 2012) or transformative function (Weld, 2012), researchers have decided to adapt the functions as originally coined by Kadushin (1992). This choice is due to the fact that this model is one of the most comprehensive conceptualizations of social work supervision and is acknowledged by practitioners and academics (Erera and Lazar, 1994).

## **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

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