



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Problems Encountered in the Counseling Process in the Context of Cultural Sensitivity and Coping Methods: Opinions of School Counselors

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to examine the problems that arise in the context of cultural sensitivity in the counseling process and the methods of coping with these problems based on the views of school counselors. The study included a total of 35 participants, with 25 female and 10 male, who had a minimum of three years of professional experience in private and public schools during the 2021-2022 academic year. Interviews were conducted digitally on the Zoom platform using a semi-structured form developed by the researcher. All interviews were subjected to content analysis. According to the results of the data analysis conducted with the Maxqda 2020 program, the participant's perspective on the concept of cultural sensitivity consists of self-awareness, respect, and acceptance of different cultures. The most important cultural challenges reported by the participants were gender and sex, different value judgments, socioeconomic status, and language. Feelings of inadequacy and desperation were reported as the most intensely felt emotions in the face of these challenges. Participants reported using various methods to overcome cultural challenges, such as consulting colleagues, gaining knowledge, and making various suggestions to overcome cultural inadequacies. It is thought that the findings obtained in this study will create an important awareness as it is a first in the literature, and it is hoped that it will contribute to policymakers, counselor educators, counselor candidates, and all counseling professionals in this field.

Multicultural counseling has been considered as a "fourth force" alongside traditional theories such as psychoanalytic, humanistic and cognitive-behavioral theories and has begun to be considered as a general approach that includes all other theories explaining human behavior (Pedersen, 1991). Multicultural counseling approach is defined as an approach in which counselors are aware of the effects of their culture on the counseling process in their relationships with their clients who are similar and dissimilar to them and use intervention methods and techniques appropriate to the cultures of their clients (Erkan, 2020; Sue, 2001; Sue & Sue, 2016). Since the early 2000s, researchers in Türkiye have started to conduct various studies and researches influenced by multiculturalism studies in the world. In Turkish literature, concepts such as "multiculturalism (Kararımak, 2008; Lüleci, 2014; Mocan-Aydın, 2000)," "multicultural counseling (Hatunoğlu, 2017; Kağnıcı, 2013; Kararımak & Aydın, 2007)," "cultural sensitivity in counseling (Doğan, 2000; Erdur-Baker, 2007)," or "culturally sensitive counseling (Aydın, 2014; Bektaş, 2006; Erkan, 2020; Koç,

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2003)" have been used to convey a similar meaning. In the international literature, terms such as cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, cultural competence, culture-related competence, and multicultural competence are commonly used. The most frequently encountered term is cultural sensitivity (Whaley, 2008). In this study, the term 'culturally sensitive counseling' was preferred as it was thought to be more appropriate to the philosophy of counseling.

When we examine the need for research on cultural sensitivity from the perspective of Türkiye, it is argued that there are 47 sub-ethnic cultures in Türkiye and these are divided into sub-groups (Yüksel, 2011). In addition, there are 17 different languages and six different religious beliefs in the country and these are also divided into subgroups. Although this classification is made only in terms of ethnicity and religion, it is emphasized that Türkiye has a multicultural structure when other cultural elements are considered (Önder, 2007). In addition, when differences in sexual identity, disability status and intergenerational differences are taken into account, cultural sensitivity has an important value in Türkiye (Sezer, 2017). On the other hand, Türkiye is a country receiving migration due to its geographical location. It is reported that more than 3.5 million refugees have migrated to Türkiye in the last ten years (Akyıldız, 2022). Given this rich cultural diversity, it is believed that research on cultural sensitivity will increasingly gain significance in the field of counseling, which primarily centers around effective communication and interaction with individuals. It is emphasized that counseling services should be adapted to culturally diverse populations and experts should be competent to work with clients with cultural differences (Hays, 2008).

In Türkiye, there are schools in every region, regardless of province, district, village or neighborhood, and the psychological counseling process in these schools is carried out by school counselors. In the counseling process to be carried out in schools, students, i.e. clients, will participate in the process as a member of the culture in which they are located and will carry their own individual culture to the counseling process. For this reason, it is important for school counselors to be aware of their perceptions of different cultures, to understand the needs of their clients and to develop appropriate intervention skills for them (Kağnıcı, 2021). Knowing the difficulties faced by school counselors in this context and examining the coping skills they develop will provide reference for future research and practices.

According to the multicultural counseling approach, a healthy therapeutic relationship is only possible if counselors respect the diversity of their clients and understand the culture they are a part of (Corey, 2008; Launikari & Puukari, 2005; Pumariega et al., 2005; Sinclair & Monk, 2005). Otherwise, as Ljungber (2006) puts it, counselors will be experts who build walls against other individuals who are not from their own culture and experience cultural confinement. Similarly, it is important for counselors to be aware of the fact that their own cultural characteristics as well as their attitudes and prejudices are fed by their cultural background. Therefore, two questions such as "What does the client mean to me?" and "What do I mean to the client?" gain importance in the counseling process.

The answers to these questions are vital for the successful progress of the counseling process (Launikari & Puukari, 2005). Limited or no awareness of the client's own cultural values and attitudes can reduce or prevent the effectiveness of the process (Şahan & Akbaş, 2018). From the perspective of the clients, when they are given the chance to choose, they may prefer to work with psychological counselors with similar characteristics. However, in order for the process to progress and achieve success, it is not enough to have only similar characteristics (Erdur Baker, 2007). In this context, psychological counseling needs to have culturally sensitive competencies that include respect for individual differences and empathy.

The lack of these competencies can be a barrier to the success of the counseling process. Counselors' prejudices and attitudes, the existence of contradictory ideas about cultural sensitivity, irrational reasoning, philosophical underpinnings of counseling approaches can be barriers to effective culturally responsive counseling (Akalm & Türküm, 2021). For this reason, there are some competencies that counsellors should have in order to carry out the culturally sensitive counseling process efficiently. According to the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), these competencies are a) being aware of the counsellor's own subjective evaluations and biases, b) understanding the worldview of clients from different cultures, and c) determining appropriate intervention methods and techniques. These competencies, which are divided into three dimensions: beliefs and attitudes, knowledge and skills, are the skills that every counsellor should have

in order to conduct a successful culturally sensitive counseling process (Sue et al., 1992). Counselors in Türkiye should be aware of the problems of their clients, adapt theories and skills in accordance with the needs of their clients, be aware of the effects of their clients' differences on the counseling process, and be aware of the effects of these differences on their attitudes and prejudices (Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association, 2011).

According to the researches, inadequacy in cultural sensitivity leads to the following results: a) a decrease in the empathic attitude of the counselor towards the problem experienced by the client (Ridley et al., 1994; Wrenn, 1985), b) problems such as an increase in the error rate encountered in determining appropriate intervention methods (Atkins et al., 2017), and c) negative consequences such as the inability of clients belonging to ethnic minority groups to benefit from psychological help services and early termination of the process (Ridley et al., 1994; Sue, 2001). When the negative outcomes are evaluated, it is stated that it is important for counselors to improve their awareness in order to increase cultural sensitivity (Torres-Rivera et al., 2001).

In Türkiye, Guidance and Psychological Counseling services are mainly provided in educational institutions (Korkut-Owen, 2007). The Vocational Qualifications Authority of Türkiye (VQA) emphasizes the importance of school counselors possessing the requisite competencies to offer culturally sensitive counseling (VQA, 2017). Similarly, the ethical standards of the Turkish Counseling Association (2011) emphasize the need to respect individual differences and pay attention to cultural background.

In Türkiye, psychological counseling and guidance professionals are trained at the undergraduate level, and the emphasis on cultural sensitivity is relatively new. In recent years, an elective course on culturally sensitive counseling has been added to the curriculum (Kağnıcı, 2021). Given that some school counselors may not have completed a culturally responsive counseling course, or may have only partial knowledge without full internalization, this study was designed to investigate their proficiency and competence concerning cultural sensitivity. It also aims to explore their attitudes towards cultural sensitivity, identify any encountered challenges, and propose strategies for coping with them. In Türkiye, many studies have been conducted to determine the difficulties faced by school counselors in educational environments (Hatunoğlu & Hatunoğlu, 2006; Hamamcı et al., 2004; Karataş et al., 2013; Parmaksız & Gök, 2017; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012), and in studies examining the needs and problems of counselors working with foreign (Syrian) students, it was stated that the problems encountered were lack of language and education (Ay-Yılmaz, 2019; Özel, 2018). The lack of an in-depth study addressing the difficulties related to cultural sensitivity, except for foreign (Syrian) students, increases the importance of this study. Uncovering counselors' perceptions of working with clients from different cultures may be a critical step in taking precautions to provide effective, sensitive, and culturally appropriate counseling services. Schools are the first social environments to which students apply. Receiving effective psychological counseling will affect both their ability to solve their current problems and their attitudes toward seeking psychological help in the future. It is thought that identifying the obstacles to culturally sensitive counseling and determining how to deal with these problems will form an important basis for the psychological counseling process to be successful and to respond to the needs of clients more effectively.

Another significant aspect of this research pertains to its methodology. A review of studies focused on the culturally responsive counseling approach reveals a predominant use of quantitative measurement methods (Ağ, 2017; Aydın, 2014; Bakioğlu, 2017; Lülecı, 2014; Özer, 2014; Yıldırım, 2020) with an emphasis on determining various variables and predictors (Aydın & Şahin, 2017; Buyruk Genç, 2019; Korban, 2018; Lülecı, 2014; Sezer, 2017). However, there is a dearth of interview-based data, a qualitative method that allows for obtaining in-depth insights from participants. It is anticipated that the data gathered through this study, which examines the perspectives and experiences of the participants, will make a valuable contribution to the evolution of a culturally sensitive approach for both current and future school counselors and candidates, thereby advancing the field as a whole.

Purpose of The Research

In this study, it is aimed to obtain the opinions of school counselors about the problems they face within the framework of cultural sensitivity and their coping methods. In line with this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought within the scope of the research.

1. What are school counselors' views on the concept of culturally sensitive?
2. What are school counselors' views on cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity?
3. How do school counselors evaluate the effects of their own culture on the counseling process?
4. What are the challenging cultural elements that school counselors face in the counseling process?
5. How do school counselors feel about the challenging cultural elements they encounter in the counseling process?
6. What are the coping methods used by school counselors for the challenging cultural elements they encounter in the counseling process?
7. What are school counselors' views on the cultural sensitivity and adequacy of counseling approaches used in schools?
8. What are the opinions of school counselors about the areas they need to carry out the culturally sensitive counseling process more effectively?

Methodology

Research Design

In this qualitative study, school counselors' perspectives were examined using a phenomenological research design. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), the data sources in phenomenological research are individuals or groups who have directly experienced the situation in question and can provide insights into it. In line with this, the research was carried out using a phenomenological design to gather the views of school counselors regarding the challenges they encounter in the context of cultural sensitivity, as well as their coping strategies.

Participants

The study group of this research consists of school counselors with at least three years of professional seniority in schools in different regions representing different cultural experiences and at various teaching levels. In order to gain a certain amount of professional experience, psychological counselors who are new to the profession were not included in the study. In order to create a heterogeneous group of school counselors, a purposive sampling method including criterion sampling was used. Purposive sampling is preferred when it is desired to work with groups that meet one or more situations that have certain characteristics or meet certain criteria in accordance with the purpose of the research (Koç-Başaran, 2017). A total of 35 participants, 25 female and 10 male, voluntarily participated in the study. For in-depth interviews, interviews with approximately 30 people are considered sufficient in terms of sample size (Başkale, 2016). Since it was desired to collect data from all regions, data completeness was reached with 35 people. Care was taken to ensure that the participants were from different regions and cities, and an interview request was sent to one person who met the research conditions. The cities of the volunteer participants who agreed to be interviewed were determined on a voluntary basis. Trabzon, Giresun, Tokat, Samsun and Kastamonu from the Black Sea region; Kayseri, Ankara and Konya from the Central Anatolia region; Mersin Isparta, Hatay and Adana from the Mediterranean region; Afyon, Muğla, İzmir, Denizli and Manisa from the Aegean region; Bitlis, Hakkâri, Van, Erzurum and Muş from the Eastern Anatolia region; Şırnak, Urfa, Mardin, Gaziantep and Diyarbakır from the Southeastern Anatolia region; Tekirdağ, İstanbul and Kocaeli from the Marmara region. It is seen that 60,6% (f=23) of the participants are 25-30 years old, 21% (f=7) are 30-35 years old and 18,4% (f=5) are 35 years old and above. 80% (f=28) of the participants have bachelor's degree and 20% (f=7) have master's degree. 34,3% (f=11) of the participants have 3-5 years of experience, 44,8% (f=18) have 6-10 years of experience, and 20,9%

(f=6) have more than 10 years of experience in school counseling. Of the school counselors, 2.9% (f=1) work in kindergarten, 17.1% (f=6) in primary school, 42.9% (f=15) in secondary school and 37.1% (f=13) in high school. It is seen that 2,9% (f=1) of the participants live in villages, 20% (f=7) in districts, 20% (f=7) in small cities and 57,1% (f=20) in metropolitan cities. It is seen that 5,7% (f=2) of the participants work in villages, 34,3% (f=12) in districts, 17,7% (f=6) in small cities and 42,9% (f=15) in metropolitan cities. While determining the participants, attention was paid to the fact that the undergraduate degree was in guidance and psychological counseling.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, a personal information form and a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher were used to collect data. The demographic information of the school counselors was determined through the personal information form developed by the researcher by reviewing the literature on seniority, the campus unit where they live and the levels of the institution they work in. In accordance with the purpose of the interview, a literature review was conducted and a semi-structured interview form was developed. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared for the problem and sub-problem situations in accordance with the research purpose. Before the pilot interview was conducted, the semi-structured interview questions were taken to the opinions of field experts who have conducted studies on cultural sensitivity/multicultural counseling. Expert opinions were obtained from four field experts, two professors and two assistant professors in the field of Guidance and Psychological Counseling from three different state universities. In line with the feedback received, a new semi-structured interview form consisting of 10 questions was created by editing repetitive questions that were not suitable for the purpose of the research. Pilot interviews were conducted with two school counselors to test the functionality and comprehensibility of the semi-structured interview form. After the expert opinion and pilot interviews, the semi-structured interview form was made suitable for data collection. The open-ended questions and additional probing questions in the semi-structured interview form were prepared in the preparation process within the framework of the opinions of the experts and the literature and made ready for the application.

Data Collection Process

The data of the study were obtained through interviews with school counselors working in private and public institutions affiliated to the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of National Education in December and February of the 2021-2022 academic year. Interviews with the participants were conducted through online channels (Zoom platform) due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the distance of the participants from the researcher. Participants were informed about the research topic and process before the research and informed consent form and video and audio recording consent documents were sent. Interviews were recorded by video and audio recording with the permission of the participants. The interviews lasted an average of 35 minutes, the shortest being ten minutes and the longest 75 minutes. Immediately after the interviews, interview transcripts were made and explanatory notes were kept on the interviews. Participants were informed that the research was voluntary and that they could terminate the interview at any time. Great care was taken in keeping the records and the information recorded was made accessible only to the researchers.

Data Analysis

The data of the study were collected during the interviews with the participants and transcripts of the interview records were created with the code names "P1, P2...." given to the participants immediately after the interviews. Content analysis method was used to analyze the data. The aim of content analysis is to organize the data obtained within the framework of certain themes and codes and to organize and interpret them under certain headings in a way that the reader can understand (Sağlam & Kanadlı, 2019). Before analyzing the data, the transcripts created by the researcher were read again. Maxqda 2020 program was used to analyze the data, and 264 pages of data consisting of interview transcripts were analyzed. After the data analysis, primary coding was carried out by the researcher. Primary coding was followed by secondary coding and the codes obtained by the researcher were divided into categories that were thought to address similar purposes. The codes organized under categories were combined under themes in accordance with the research purpose. As a result

of the data analysis, 5 main themes, 22 sub-themes and 251 codes were obtained. In order to ensure reliability, opinions were received from field experts and the data analysis process was finalized by making the necessary revisions within the framework of the feedback received.

Researcher's Role

In qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is important in designing the research, collecting the data, analyzing the data and reporting the findings (Fink, 2000). The fact that the first writer's undergraduate and first professional experience took place within the framework of her own culture prevented her from encountering cultural differences frequently. She started to experience professional difficulties arising from cultural differences when she started working in a different region. She observed that other colleagues who were not familiar with the dominant culture of the region had similar problems with her and had difficulty in coping with these problems. She initially designed the research based on the ethnicity, sect and language differences she encountered, but when she reviewed the literature, she realized that these cultural elements were addressed in a broader framework and expanded the scope of her research to include multiculturalism elements. In all processes from the planning of the research to the reporting of the research, ethical principles were tried to be adhered to and the studies carried out were carried out within this framework. The researcher tried to adopt an objective attitude in the interviews and realized a data collection process in which the participants were motivated to actively participate thanks to their professional experience.

Validity and reliability findings of the study

In this study, certain criteria used in qualitative research were taken and references to validity and reliability were tried to be established. In the study, the criteria used for credibility, transferability, reliability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) were discussed.

Credibility. Following the review of the literature, semi-structured interview questions were prepared by taking the opinions of experts who have conducted studies in the field and on the research topic. The researcher used her professional skills to ensure that the participants gave sincere answers. The data obtained by obtaining participant confirmation was re-evaluated with 2 participants. It was tried to ensure credibility in the research by getting the information that the sentences were conveyed verbatim.

Transferability. In this study, in order to ensure the transferability of the research, detailed information about the sampling method, number of participants, demographic characteristics, limitations of the research, data collection methods and tools are explained in the relevant sections.

Reliability. In order to ensure the reliability of the research, inter-coder agreement was checked during the data analysis process. A certain part of the research was coded by another researcher and Maxqda program was used to check the agreement between the coders. Through the program, the data set of two different coders was analyzed and the kappa statistic was measured. Kappa test result was .42 Kappa test takes a value between 0 and 1 and reliability is accepted for .40 and above in the analyzes (Wynd et al., 2003). The obtained kappa value of 0.42 ultimately indicates a moderate level of agreement. It is believed that this situation arises from the influence of the evaluators' subjective perspectives. However, since this value falls within the accepted reliability threshold, the data is considered reliable.

Confirmability. The raw data obtained from the interviews were re-presented to the participants and they were asked to give feedback to the statements that they thought did not reflect themselves. The participants confirmed that the statements were their own.

Findings

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of the data analysis are presented based on the views of the participants regarding the questions asked for the sub-objective of the research.

School Counselors' Views on the Concept of Culturally Sensitive

In the interviews with school counselors, the question "What does the concept of culturally sensitive mean to you?" was asked for the sub-objective of the research. In Table 1, the codes related to the theme of "Knowledge

and Awareness" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the opinions of the participants are given.

Table 1. Participants' views on the concept of cultural sensitivity

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Knowledge and Awareness	1. Understand different cultures	18
	2. An attitude of acceptance of different cultures	15
	3. Show sensitivity	15
	4. Respect	13
	5. Treat all cultures equally	8
	6. Our basic principles in psychological counseling	2
	6.1. Unconditional acceptance	22
	6.2. Empathy	13
	6.3. Flexibility	7
	6.4. Being tolerant	5
	6.5. Being understanding	3
	6.6. Transparency	1

"I think that the concept of culturally sensitive is to fully accept the existence of all cultures and to evaluate and accept each culture on its own basis and the person it has within it when approaching them." (P21) stated that cultural sensitivity is to be accepting towards different cultures and to evaluate the individual within the cultural framework in which they i in with this awareness. The views of one of the participants who frequently emphasized unconditional acceptance and empathic approach are as follows: "It means that I should not only look at an event from my own point of view, but also from their point of view. As a psychological counselor, I find it very important to be able to feel empathy. This concept of empathy is also very meaningful and very valuable to me in terms of cultural sensitivity." (P15).

Participants who stated that awareness of the existence of different cultures other than their own is important also mentioned the perception of normality. (P29) expressed the views that a phenomenon that is normal in one culture may be considered abnormal in a different culture as follows: "It means that I am aware of the fact that not only based on the culture I grew up in, but also that they may have come from different cultures, that something that is abnormal for my culture may be normal for them."

The main reference point of the participants' views on the concept of cultural sensitivity is the basic principles of psychological counseling; self-awareness and being accepting towards different cultures, having knowledge about different cultures and having an egalitarian approach towards different cultures.

Findings on School Counselors' Views on Cultural Differences Requiring Cultural Sensitivity

In the interviews with school counselors, the question "What are the cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity?" was asked for the sub-objective of the research. In Table 2, the codes related to the theme "Differences that require cultural sensitivity" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the opinions of the participants are given.

Table 2. Participants' views on cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Differences that require cultural sensitivity	1. Language	28
	2. Religion	21
	3. Sex / Gender	19
	4. Ethnic origin	15
	5. Family structure and attitude	11
	6. Lifestyle	10
	7. Geographical location	8
	8. Socioeconomic level	8

9. Different value judgments	7
10. Perspective	6
11. Political opinion	3
12. Sexual orientation	3
13. Identity gains	2
14. Disability status	1
15. Being in a minority position	1
16. Age	1
17. Marital status	1

Participant (P33), who stated that cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity are determined by feeding on subjective experiences: *"In my opinion, this may vary according to the most important element in people's lives. For some people, religion is very important, it is religion for that person. If they is a person whose racism is predominant, or if they are very fond of his/her own nation and race, it is race for that individual."*

Stating that individuals can even have different neighborhoods in the same community, the participant said that this small change can make a difference in individuals: *"I think even something is effective, you know? Neighborhood, neighborhood culture. Because even those who live in different neighborhoods have very different cultures or age, the period they were born...Here, age, the neighborhood they live in, the structure of their family, the family's attitude to raising children, I think they all affect the culture of the person."* (P12) The participant stated that age and family structures are cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity.

The opinions of the participants regarding cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity are as follows:

"Simply put, I work with Syrian students. Language comes to my mind first. There are many sub-ethnic groups in Türkiye and the group I work with is Syrian students, language comes first. Then there are sectarian differences, which are subgroups of religion, although not so much religion. There are sub-sects of Islam. Socioeconomic level comes to mind. Right now I work with people who are in a very poor economic situation, but there are also people with a very good socioeconomic status among them. Or there are those who are really much worse, there is the middle level. Apart from that, I think of political views. People's perspectives on life can actually stem from cultural differences. I think the saying that geography is destiny is true in certain areas." (P2)

"It could be family structures, the concept of gender, the perspective of boys and girls. It can be marital status. Apart from that, it could be whether the other person has children or not. Then, it could be the way they speak or their lifestyle, religious life, that is, their view towards religion. In my opinion, these can be cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity." (P3)

"There are many different languages in the regions where we work. Even though we live in the same country, language is actually one of the main ones. I have worked in the east and I am working in the west now. We can call language among the differences. Likewise, sometimes we encounter homosexual or other clients or students with sexual preferences, sexual identities." (P22).

"Religion, gender, color, ethnicity, as you just mentioned, our origin, our socioeconomic status, whether we live in the village or in the center. I mean, even these are the points that we will include cultural sensitivity." (P26)

"It's basically a lifestyle for me. What I call lifestyle can include many things. I don't know, it could be clothing, it could be the way of speaking, it could be someone who came from a region, someone who came from that region, someone who doesn't speak Istanbul Turkish, or someone who comes from Eastern Anatolia, or someone who speaks a different language, we used to speak Kurdish and then they could hardly speak Turkish, or someone who speaks Turkish and doesn't speak Kurdish working in the east, it could be language. It could be ethnic origin, it could be gender. In addition, evaluating gender in the context of gender roles can also be something that requires sensitivity to culture... When we put the culture part, I think of things like gender, socioeconomic level, religion, language, ethnicity. Lifestyle can basically be called lifestyle." (P32).

One of the participants (P31) said, *"Also the disability status, actually, let me not forget this. If the person has any type of disability, I think it also expresses that difference."* emphasized the dimensions of multiculturalism by emphasizing disability.

Findings on How School Counselors Evaluate the Effects of Their Own Culture on the Counseling Process

For the sub-objective of the study, the participants were asked the question "How does your own culture affect the counseling process?". In Table 3, the codes related to the theme of "Self-awareness" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the views of the participants are presented.

Table 3. Participants' Views on the Effects of Their Culture on the Counseling Process

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Self-awareness	1. Self-awareness	53
	2. Impact of culture on the process	43
	3. Defining its culture	31
	4. Prejudiced approach	15
	5. Conflict of norms	10
	4. Growing up with certain cultural codes	4

Note. The same statements were stated by more than one participant.

In their statements, the participants frequently emphasized that self-awareness serves as a roof, and awareness of their subjective culture and knowledge of different cultures. ((P1), who stated that he has two different cultural identities in the society due to his ethnic origin and religious sect, expressed this situation as follows: "Culturally, I am a person who hosts very different cultures, in fact, I am very close to the minority part of this society, in fact, I am not very close, I am twice black for this country, I always say so. I always say that I am twice "Black". That is why I have a more liberal perspective." The participant (P26) expressed her views on self-awareness as follows: "This is both a difficult and easy question. We need to ask this question first, am I aware of my own culture? Are we aware of ourselves? Because I think being aware of having these cultural values can also come from thinking that there may be different cultures."

The participants who mentioned the negative impact of subjective culture on the psychological counseling process expressed their views as follows:

"The Alevi (A sect of Islam) population is very high in the region where I work now. Sometimes I can encounter them a lot or on the contrary, there may be people who think that I will not understand them because of my religious view. You know, they try to be more certain. In the early days of my profession, I used to involuntarily use words like inshallah, mashallah, thank God, but I realized that for the other person, this can be an obstructive word, it can be an obstructive attitude, and when I hear it, it is as if I say that there will be no solution, we refer it to God, I can't do anything, and I try to completely remove them from the therapeutic process and my professional life. Instead, I start to use words like I hope, we will try to solve it or we will move forward together, we will follow the process. My religious orientation can affect our therapeutic process sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. Or people who have very strong religious beliefs can easily find support from me because of my outward appearance. For example, they can expect support from me, such as "It came from God, it will go like this, right, teacher?". I don't say anything about my beliefs in the counseling process as much as possible. I try not to. I mean, I wouldn't want this to be an obstacle, but my years of experience, my appearance can negatively affect our therapeutic process." (P13)

"In the past years, my own culture could sometimes put my counseling process into narrow molds. In recent years, I think I have been able to improve myself more or gain more awareness in this regard. But in the previous years, I realized that my own culture obviously limited me, and that these limits sometimes hindered progress in the counseling process. To the extent that I can get out of these limits, I can relax the other party more and the other party can express himself more easily. This is because even though we think that we do not reflect, or at least I think that I do not reflect for myself, when I look back, I unintentionally reflected my past processes, let me say the norms of my own cultural structure, to my counselees. I think this has been a big disadvantage and one of the obstacles to progress." (P18)

Emphasizing the similarity between their subjective culture and the culture they work in, (P31) said, "And now, when I want to have an impact on the parent or the child, knowing the channel through which I can reach the

parent, knowing the social norms, as I said, informs me through which channel I can reach the parent... Sometimes we approach the parent in such a way that what we say to the parent does not make much sense to us, that is, what we say to the parent does not make much sense to him, we even get very angry, we come to him differently. But when I know her sensitivity, it is actually better, we can understand each other more easily." stated that this situation facilitates the process.

(P35), who stated that subjective culture has a facilitating role in establishing the therapeutic relationship in the psychological counseling process, expressed this situation as follows:

"In our Alevism culture, we have this thing that everyone is a person. In fact, that unconditional acceptance, that word "Can" (Alevi saying means soul, life) is a thing, for example, even when I address my students, even when I address my clients: -Hello, "Canlar", sit down, come" Canlar", "Can" sit down... That's why I believe that the culture I grew up in has a positive effect on my counseling process."

The participants who stated that their subjective culture had no effect on the counseling process stated that they learned not to reflect it in the education they received as follows: *"I can say that I learned not to reflect my own culture because of the education I received... I think we have blunted it thanks to the education we received, pedagogical formation..."* (P8).

The opinions of the participants who shared the effect of their prejudiced attitudes and behaviors on the psychological counseling process are as follows:

"Actually, this is our biggest disadvantage in counseling. Sometimes we do this even though we don't want to. At first, we can feel that the other party thinks the way we think and we act accordingly... For example, I am working at the high school level now, but I was working at the kindergarten level before. You say something to the parent about the way they raise children or the way they treat their children, but when you add a little bit of your own culture into it, you say, "Hodja, but it is like this here. This is how it is here" ... "These are our rules", and the therapeutic relationship is cut off somewhere." (P3)

"Speaking for myself, I was a person who had prejudices about race because of the city I lived in. I grew up in a culture where Turkish nationalism was more dominant. But of course, I think that I have sculpted myself a lot in this regard due to my profession. Another issue is that I still have prejudices about people's orientation in terms of gender. I mean, I can't compromise on this issue. Sometimes there are obstacles in front of me. These are obstacles that come from within myself... For example, last year I had this experience with my children. They started to reflect their political views at school. You know, I guess the political views of our parents more or less, after the stories they shared on WhatsApp, you know, their attitudes at school, you know, because I come from a very nationalist environment on this issue, sometimes I involuntarily feel as if the other student is not a student but someone from the opposite view. This is a situation I really have difficulty with. Especially since I can communicate more with my 8th grade students, I really had difficulty in this regard." (P7)

The statements in which the participants stated that they may experience conflict between the norms accepted in the culture they work in and the truths they have in their subjective cultures are as follows

"It is a fact that the value judgments in the place where I was born and where I live now definitely conflict, and this can sometimes negatively affect my counseling process. I sometimes feel that I am in a dead end." (P10). "Sometimes what you know right and what the client knows right can sometimes conflict, but when I am in such a situation, I think: Now this is my client, he does not live in my culture, he does not live my truth, and after our one-hour meeting, he will continue his own life. It is important for him to be harmonious in that life. Therefore, I know that it would be more beneficial to provide services in accordance with his/her life while helping him/her. Therefore, I think it is more important to provide services in accordance with his/her life, not according to my own truths." (P14)

Findings Regarding the Challenging Cultural Elements Encountered by School Counselors in the Counseling Process

The participants were asked the question "What are the challenging cultural elements you encounter in the counseling process?" for the sub-objective of the study. In Table 4, the codes related to the theme of

"Challenging Cultural Elements" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the views of the participants are given.

Table 4. Participants' Views on the Challenging Cultural Aspects They Encountered in the Counseling Process

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Challenging cultural factors	1. Sex /Gender	35
	2. Different value judgments	18
	3. Socioeconomic level	17
	4. Language	15
	5. Religion	14
	6. Family	12
	7. Ethnic origin	10
	8. Sexual identity	5
	9. Past experiences	4
	10. Rituals	3
	11. Did not meet	1
	12. Age	1

Participants mentioned many challenging issues they encountered in the counseling process. Their views on sex and gender roles, one of these factors, were combined under a common code. Participants' views on gender and gender roles are as follows:

"If we talk a little bit about gender again ... I come across this a lot, especially in terms of vocational guidance. In the work I do in terms of vocational guidance or career counseling, especially when I emphasize that professions are not limited to genders, male students or female students group some professions with certain genders as professions for boys or professions for girls. This is actually a reflection of gender in the counseling process in the sense of vocational or career counseling." (P5)

"Regarding gender, I can say that there are of course differences when interviewing a male student or a female student. Especially when meeting with a men student of different ethnic origin, for example a Syrian male student, I have to pay extra attention to the value judgments he has. Because there is a woman in front of him, they are not in favor of opening themselves more, or when we meet outside the school, in the garden, etc., I try not to touch them, because they do not like it, considering the culture they come from..." (P11).

The problems experienced by the participants regarding gender roles are as follows: the relegation of girls to a secondary role, the value given to men majority , the place of female in society, and the boundaries of the sexes. (P18) expressed her views on the context of sexual identity as follows: *"I don't know if you know about this k-pop and some of these bts k-pop groups, I work at an all-girls high school and I started to encounter a lot at an all-girls high school. We are faced with a generation that doesn't like the opposite sex anymore, likes their girlfriends, tries to take on a male identity...In other words, we are faced with a generation that prefers genderlessness. This is one of the things I encounter the most. I mean, I think we are experiencing a cultural difference and a change right now."*

The participants stated that they encounter students with different mother tongues due to the coexistence of different ethnic identities in the institutions where they work. The opinions of the participants regarding the language factor as a difficulty they face are as follows:

"Especially, for example, the language issue is very challenging. As I just explained, if the other person does not speak Turkish at all- and there are a lot of such students- of course, it disrupts the communication in the counseling process or at work... I don't want to bring an interpreter in between or I don't want to bring another student who speaks Turkish. Because how will what I say be conveyed to the other party, how will that person convey it, or how will what they say come to me, at that point, yes, I have difficulties." (P11)

"For example, at this point it was language. For example, when my students in Eastern Anatolia were expressing themselves, I could not fully understand what they were telling me because they spoke a different language in their families." (P29)

In terms of language as a challenging factor, participants frequently reported difficulties in understanding and being understood. They expressed the drawbacks of using translators and the damage caused to the process by the shift of meaning in the transfer of language.

Stating that family structures were also a challenging factor in the psychological counseling process, the participants stated that the cultural dynamics within the family could be an obstacle in the process. The views of the participants regarding the family are as follows:

"There was cultural intertwining. What I mean is that in a house there are grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, in other words, in every room in a house, there is a different member of the family and they are all in the same house, and everyone interferes in each other's lives. Especially grandparents, grandmothers, grandfathers, even in a matchmaking style. Let our girl marry that family's child. So there are no boundaries. Exactly, there were absolutely no boundaries, there were no boundaries in the family. Everyone was interfering and especially the older parents were always interfering too much in the boundaries of the younger ones." (P16)

"This is about the value judgments of families. Some families, I'm going to be a bit sexist again, but some families raise girls to be, how should I put it, confident and self-confident individuals, while some families raise them in such a way because they have their own value judgments that girls should not be educated or that they should be more quiet, calm and not get involved in social events. And at this point, the presence of both groups together in a school causes serious conflicts. And these value judgments are effective in the development and upbringing of children, up to the low self-esteem of other individuals." (P33)

The participants stated that the transparency of the boundaries within the family and the difficulties experienced by their clients at this point cannot be overcome, the existence of family dynamics, parental attitude and the ambiguity of parental roles as the background of the difficulties they face while working with clients in the psychological counseling process.

The participants who mentioned the difficulties they encountered in the psychological counseling process due to religious rituals and sectarian differences expressed this situation as follows:

"The biggest difficulty in the province where I work is not religion, but sectarian discrimination. Alevism and Sunnism (A sect of Islam) is not really a problem in my city, but I can say it is a difficulty. Because there are two different cultures. They live together, but since it is a distinction that affects their lifestyles, it actually affects me in many ways." (P13)

"For example, if I need to meet with a parent, that parent has to stay at home for 40 days or 4 months, for example, if she is a woman and her husband has died. Here our work is interrupted. I mean, I see that I cannot do that when in fact that is the person I need to meet with, when I need to meet with him/her. I mean, you cannot change the reason for this. The other person has a religious value, a tradition. You can't just say, "Come on, break it down and adapt it there. Of course, these things make it difficult." (P23)

Participants who stated that socioeconomic level was a challenging factor in the psychological counseling process associated this situation with low socioeconomic level. Regarding the main opinion of the participants, which is that physical needs are not met, (P30) stated her views as follows:

"First of all, socioeconomic level and the need for security really come first. You are working with a community that has come out of war, and let alone empathizing with the children there, or imposing some values, understanding their world view, they have a need for security... A student community that has come out of war and shows signs of post-traumatic stress disorder. You cannot speak the same language, they have great problems in trusting you. You cannot express that you understand them... So yes, one of their biggest problems is the need for security, low socioeconomic status, and value judgments."

It was stated by the participants that the studies that can be done to improve the psychological resilience of individuals whose physiological needs and security needs cannot be met may be insufficient, and that this situation is often encountered as a challenging factor in the psychological counseling process.

Individuals who stated that they did not experience difficulties when working with individuals from different cultures expressed that there would be no difficulties if they adhered to their subjective experiences and the basic principles of psychological counseling. The opinions of the participants are as follows:

I had already learned to respect people because I grew up seeing different kinds of people. Because accent makes a difference, speech makes a difference. Religious sect makes a difference. I learned to respect them. I don't have any problems in this sense. This is the positivity it adds to me." (P2)

"...I don't have much trouble with the background I have gained from my previous work and the years I have worked. I mean, I don't think I would have much trouble even if there were many differences. Because I think that everyone should accept each other with their differences, treat each other with their differences, treat, behave and address each other accordingly. In this way, I don't think I can have too much trouble." (P21)

Findings on School Counselors' Feelings Regarding Challenging Cultural Elements They Encountered in the Counseling Process

In the interviews with school counselors, the question "What do you feel when you encounter cultural elements that challenge you in the counseling process?" was asked for the sub-objective of the study. In Table 5, the codes related to the theme of "Challenging emotions" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the opinions of the participants are given.

Table 5. Participants' views on how they feel about the challenging factors they encountered in the counseling process

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Compelling emotions	1. Inadequacy	13
	2. Despair	12
	3. Anger	7
	4. Sadness	7
	5. Anxiety	5
	6. Uneasiness	4
	7. Wasteful rowing	3
	8. Sympathy	3
	9. Bewilderment	3
	10. Fear	3
	11. Self-confident	2
	12. Psychological fatigue	2
	13. Panic	2
	14. Tension	2
	15. Feeling alien	1
	16. Compassion and pity	1
	17. Depersonalization	1
	18. Professional dissatisfaction	1
	19. Conflict	1

Participants expressed that they experienced negative emotions such as feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, fear, tension, professional dissatisfaction and anxiety when they encountered challenging cultural elements. The feelings of the participants regarding the challenging situations they experienced are as follows:

"I feel inadequate. I feel inadequate in situations that require cultural sensitivity. That is my biggest feeling. Inadequacy. I feel incomplete." (P1)

"How do I feel... I mean, first of all, I'm scared. Why am I scared? I wonder if I will do something that will make the other person feel bad or if they will feel excluded, that's why I am stiff. There were times when I realized this during the interview." (P11)

"Honestly, my first feeling is uneasiness. I inevitably experience a fear, wondering how I should proceed, what I should do." (P13)

"Umm...Well, there is helplessness actually. I mean... For example, in such situations or for example, you know, sometimes you listen to the child, but he was born and raised in the family. So there are certain limits. And you know, you can't change some things. I mean, you can't change his mother, his father, the house he was born and raised in, the culture there. Yes, you know, it makes you feel helpless. It makes you feel very small." (P24)

It was stated that the basis of the negative emotions experienced by the participants was a lack of knowledge and therefore they experienced competence concerns. In neutral emotion expressions such as depersonalization, participants referred to the word "getting used to" and stated that they started to get used to the process or the challenging elements that they might encounter.

Findings Related to Coping Methods Used by School Counselors for Challenging Cultural Elements Encountered in the Counseling Process

The participants were asked the question "Which coping methods do you use when you encounter cultural elements that challenge you in the counseling process?" for the sub-objective of the study. In Table 6, the codes related to the theme of "Coping Skills" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the opinions of the participants are given.

Table 6. Participants' Opinions on the Coping Methods They Use for Challenging Factors

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Coping Skills	1. Consultation with colleagues	15
	2. Learning about culture	9
	3. Communication skills	8
	4. Parent / Home visits	7
	5. Trying to understand	7
	6. Activities	6
	6.1. Embodiment	2
	6.2. Story books/ fairy tales	1
	6.3. Story cubes	1
	6.4. Role playing	1
	6.5. Emotion recognition/concretization	1
	7. Sustaining the therapeutic process	6
	8. Reading/Research	6
	9. Empathic approach	5
	10. Trust	4
	11. Using social support mechanisms	4
	12. Change the focus	4
	13. Consultation with teachers / Supervision	4
	14. Solution-oriented approach	3
	15. Using an interpreter	3
	16. Calming down / Taking a break	3
	17. Social activities	2
	18. Making a painting	2
	19. Adaptation skills	2
	20. Seeing the client's coping skills	2
	21. Self-confidence	1
	22. Peer mediation	1
	23. Social assistance	1
	24. Method change	1
	25. Bibliotherapy	1
	26. Receiving therapy trainings	1
27. Movie/book/documentary	1	
28. Play therapy	1	
29. Obtaining information about the client	1	
30. Providing information	1	
31. Confrontation	1	

Participants stated that they often consulted with colleagues and exchanged opinions or information when they encountered a challenging factor. Participants' views on consultation with colleagues are as follows:

"For example, when I had difficulties, I consulted with my colleagues, and as a result of the support I received from them, or as a result of the consultations I had with other colleagues working in a similar culture, I developed a more solution-oriented perspective towards these problems." (P5)

"Apart from that, I was trying to get ideas from other psychological counselors in the region where I was working or from the teachers who were born and raised in that region and who also taught in the same place. In terms of guiding me at this point. These were useful for me. Or I was meeting with teachers who had worked there and then transferred to a different place. I was getting suggestions on what the differences were and what I could do." (P29)

It was shared by the participants that participants who had the opportunity to exchange information with their colleagues or supervision received support from their teachers. In this way, the participants stated that they were able to manage the process better and felt more comfortable.

As another coping method, participants mentioned learning about the culture. They stated that having information about the culture helps to understand and make sense of the existing problems. They stated that visits such as home visits, neighborhood visits, and visits to shopkeepers are useful. The opinions of the participants about these activities are as follows:

"I think that parent visits are especially very effective. I think that parent visits are very valuable in order to get to know the cultures and to get to know the student in a way that covers multiple purposes. Because we both know that culture, we know the culture, neighborhood, geography, environment where we work, and we improve our awareness of our clients and students." (P5)

"It is important to get into cultures to understand them. I even went to the students' houses as a guest for this. I ate their very famous food. We had tea conversations with them. For example, I was very surprised, coffee culture was very important in their culture and they would never send coffee without drinking it. This was a great disrespect. I mean, there are so many interesting things, as I said, I experienced it by going into it and my perspective changed as I experienced it." (P30)

The participants explained their coping methods: consulting with colleagues, using an interpreter, drama and game activities or using psychological counseling theories and techniques.

Stating the importance of empathy and its contribution to the process, the participants shared that the strength of the therapeutic relationship to be established is beneficial in the process and the methods they use to create it. They expressed this situation as follows:

"I try to stay calm, I try to be cool, I know that I really want to help the other person and the other person wants help from me. What can I do in this situation, I try to solve it by staying calm. This is what I use. Since the rest is very problem-oriented, it is actually easy after establishing this in the first place. I realized that the stronger I build that relationship, the better it goes." (P13)

"I try to move forward on issues that we can agree on, because if I strengthen the communication between us, it is easier to resolve whatever cultural issues we are blocked on in the later stages of the negotiations. But if our communication is not strong, there is a blockage there, then he doesn't ask for your help or he doesn't want to meet with you, he feels judged. You can't be useful... If different values and judgments cause me difficulties, I take a break. I move forward on issues where we can meet on common ground. I strengthen communication. When I strengthen communication, we already solve it in the next stage." (P14)

School Counselors' Findings Regarding the Culturally Sensitive and Adequacy of Counseling Approaches Used in Schools

The participants were asked the question "Do you think that the counseling approaches you use in schools are culturally sensitive and adequate?" for the sub-objective of the study. In Table 7, the codes related to the theme

of "Cultural sensitivity and adequacy of the approaches used in schools" are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the opinions of the participants are given.

Table 7. Participants' Views on the Culturally Responsive and Adequate Approaches Used in Schools

Theme	Codes	Frequency
Cultural Competence and Sensitivity of Approaches Used in Schools	1. Not enough	20
	2. Not quite enough	14
	3. Adequate	10
	4. Sensitive	2

When the opinions of the participants regarding the cultural sensitivity and adequacy of the theories used are examined, it is seen that the theories developed in a different culture are generally not sufficient for our country. The opinions of (P13), who stated that the theories developed in individualistic societies are not suitable for the collectivist structure in our culture, are as follows: *"Most techniques and theories have not come out of our culture anyway, in fact, they have not come out of our culture at all. Naturally, it can be different, for example, many theories are very individualistic, but when I tell the person that you are a special individual apart from your family, you can do this, it is not very functional. We have to manage the situation with the family because we have a collective culture. At school, it is not possible to say that you are unique and you can do anything you want. He goes to class, there is a teacher, he goes to recess, there is a teacher on duty, he goes out, there is an administrator. So it is actually not very effective. But when we consider all of them together with their environment, psychological counseling services at school are of course effective. But if we use these theories one-to-one, I think they are not very effective. It is not very effective if we use them exactly as we received them."* (P13)

The participants stated that the adaptability of the approaches used in schools to the process depends on the ability of the counselor and that theories alone are not appropriate or sufficient.

The participant (P15), who stated that the approaches used in schools are culturally sensitive and adequate, expressed this view as follows: *"I am a psychological counselor who believes that psychological counseling can be shaped according to itself within the framework of ethical rules and without leaving that bone structure. Therefore, I try to use whichever counseling approach and theory is appropriate for the culture I am in."*

Findings Regarding School Counselors' Needs for More Effective Culturally Sensitive Counseling (CSC) Process

The participants were asked the question "What do you think you need for the culturally responsive counseling process to be carried out more effectively?" for the sub-objective of the study. In Table 8, the codes related to the "Need" theme are presented as a table and the reference sentences containing the opinions of the participants are given.

Table 8. Participants' Views on the Studies Needed to Conduct the CSC Process More Effectively

Theme	Codes	Frequency
The Need	1. Training Need	21
	2. More about cultures	15
	3. Seeing a case / analyzing a case	9
	4. Wednesday meetings	8
	5. Theoretical knowledge	7
	6. Being aware of one's own prejudices	5
	7. Supervision studies	5
	8. Training of all educators	5
	9. Booklet	3
	10. Orientation activities	3
	11. Adding as a course to universities	3
	12. Free thinking environment	2
	13. I can ensure my personal development	2
	14. I need to feel the need	1
	15. Being open to innovations	1

Participants mentioned the need for training in order to carry out the CSC process effectively. They stated that it would be useful to provide training not only theoretically but also practically. The views of the participants are as follows:

"If I talk about being a teacher, in this sense, it can be very useful for the ministry or the individual who belongs to that culture to get to know that culture through his/her colleagues. For example, I think that the value judgments of that culture should be explained to the individual, the activities of that culture or that culture's gender roles, stereotypes, priorities, red lines, perspective on life, perspective on the world, philosophy of life should be explained to the individual, but I think that the individual should listen to this not only from an individual or from one source, but from many different sources in a plural way. Because in this way, they will get more realistic and more concrete and healthy information. Otherwise, when the individual tries to learn these cultures alone, the process may take a little longer...I think it would be useful to ensure the adaptation and adaptation process in a cultural sense, especially with the trainings to be held at the level of colleagues in that culture or the workplace or the ministry, for example at the ministry level if we are going to think on a large scale." (P5)

"You know those Wednesday meetings Freud used to have. People gather and talk about it. I think it would be more useful if studies, trainings, seminars are organized where such people can be influenced by each other and get support." (P2). "Maybe coming together with psychological counselors from different cultures who work with different cultures and sharing their experiences can be guiding for us." (P9). "Taking applied courses on such cases during the undergraduate program. I mean, I am not talking about a verbal book, maybe it can be in the form of theatrical drama, but I think there should be applied courses that can prepare us for certain conditions, I think we should observe how we will carry out a process with a person from a different religion, sexual orientation, a different race or a person whose customs and traditions are completely different from us, with a supervisor, with a counselor. I think we should go through this process first with his guidance." (P16)

In addition to the need for training and case studies, the participants stated that a guide that could be prepared could be useful for them to carry out the process effectively. (P11) expressed this view of the participants as follows:

"Maybe a training or, I don't know, a booklet to guide us while counseling against cultural differences. I think these would be useful, like a guide that we can refer to during the interview."

When the opinions of the participants are analyzed, it is seen that obtaining information about culture, structured modular guides or case studies can be useful.

Discussion

In this study, the participants' views on the problems faced by school counselors in the context of cultural sensitivity and their coping skills during the counseling process carried out in schools were examined. The study aims to raise awareness about school counselors' competencies in working with cultural differences by focusing on the views of the participants. As the first finding of the study, school counselors' views on the concept of culturally sensitive were determined. When these views are examined, it is seen that the perception of cultural sensitivity is basically shaped around the acceptance of different cultures, respect for different cultures and the basic principles of counseling (transparency, unconditional acceptance, empathic approach, respect and tolerance). This finding is in line with the views of Bush et al. (2001), who put empathy at the center of cultural competence and pointed out that the individual should be effective and competent in communicating with individuals from other cultures. Participants' views on empathic approach are also supported by studies predicting the relationship between empathy and cultural sensitivity in the literature (Aydm & Şahin, 2017; Constantine, 2000; Kağnıcı, 2011; Sezer, 2017).

Participants' views on basic counseling skills are similar to those of Patterson (2004). According to Patterson (2004), it is sufficient to know the principles of person-centered therapy such as unconditional acceptance, empathic communication, respect, and transparency. All counseling is multicultural and no other competencies are needed for multicultural counseling. However, the concept of cultural sensitivity goes beyond basic

counseling skills. Cultural sensitivity also aims to raise awareness about the existence of different cultures in society, in other words, to provide social justice (Bemak & Chung, 2017; Kağnıcı, 2015). Although no data were obtained from participants in this context, it can be said that there is an awareness of the existence of other cultures when expressed as acceptance and respect for different cultures.

It is thought that the knowledge and awareness of the experts participating in the study regarding the concept of cultural sensitivity are sufficient. However, cultural sensitivity includes not only understanding the cultural differences of the client, but also being aware of the counselor's own assumptions, values and prejudices, and developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques (Sue et al., 1992). Although there was no data on these dimensions in the findings, when counselors were asked about their views on the impact of their own culture on the counseling process in the third question of the study, it was seen that responses were also received in this context.

The second finding obtained from the participants' views includes their views on cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity. Individual differences are effective in the formation of cultural differences (Gülmüş, 2021). Therefore, the individual differences of each individual nourish the ground for multiculturalism. According to Gülmüş (2021), the main starting point of cultural sensitivity is to prevent conflicts by understanding the similarities and differences in the subjective cultures of individuals. For this reason, the participants' views on cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity are important. Language, religion, sex/gender, ethnicity, family structure and attitudes, lifestyle, socioeconomic level, geographical location, different value judgments, point of view, sexual orientation, political view, disability status, being in a minority, age and marital status were considered as issues that require cultural sensitivity in the clients they work with. These views of the participants are largely consistent with the definition of multiculturalism by APA (2002). According to APA (2002), factors such as age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic level, ethnic origin, language, religion, etc. constitute the wide range of multiculturalism, that is, cultural sensitivity. It is seen that the participants have developed knowledge about issues that require cultural diversity. The fact that the participants frequently emphasize language and religion is due to the fact that Türkiye hosts different ethnic origins on its vast geographical structure and that each group has differences in their mother tongues. The fact that Turkish, the national language, cannot be used by immigrants and that each region has dialectal differences in language use can be cited as reasons for this. When we evaluate it in the religious context, it can be explained as the differentiation of sectarian differences within groups and the determining role of religion on social norms.

In this research, there are different opinions from the APA's definition that emerged in the context of cultural differences that require cultural sensitivity. It is thought that these opinions of the participants who think that geographical location should be addressed at the point of cultural sensitivity have emerged due to the cultural differences in Türkiye's unique geographical structure. Another finding is that differences in political views should also be approached sensitively. In terms of Türkiye, this finding is thought to be related to the fact that politics is an important phenomenon in society and that polarization is experienced from time to time over political identity (Kiriş, 2010). In the context of Türkiye, it is thought that political thoughts should be handled carefully in terms of culturally sensitive counseling.

The findings regarding the participants' views on how they evaluate the effects of their own culture on the counseling process were self-awareness, being aware of the effects of their own culture on the process, prejudiced approach and conflict of norms. Counselors should first be aware of their own cultural norms and prejudices; they should have knowledge about the effects of their own subjective process on their thoughts towards clients from different cultures, their counseling approach and process (Stampley & Slaght, 2004). Participants' views are that counselors with self-awareness can consciously approach the problems of clients from different cultures they encounter in the counseling process and carry out the culturally sensitive counseling process in a healthy way. These views of the participants are supported by the studies on counselors' mindfulness predicting their competencies in CSC (Bakioğlu, 2017; Ivers et al., 2016; Tourek, 2014; Torres-Rivera et al., 2001). Counselors' awareness of their culture is related to their multicultural/culturally sensitive awareness development (Atkins et al., 2017; Constantine et al., 2001; Johnson & Williams, 2015; Ottavi et al.,

1994). It is important for school counselors to be aware and conscious of their subjective cultures and to be sensitive to their effects on the counseling process.

When the views of the participants regarding the problems they face in the context of cultural sensitivity in the counseling process, which is the fourth finding of the study, were examined, gender and gender roles were stated as the most important challenging factor. In addition, clients with different value judgments, socioeconomic level, language, religion, family, ethnicity, sexual identity, past experiences, rituals and age were mentioned as challenging issues. In this study, the most common challenging issue encountered by counselors was sex/gender. It is similarly found in other studies that gender or gender phenomenon can create various obstacles or resistances in the counseling process within the cultural context (Haskan Avcı et al., 2019; Landes et al., 2013). Similar findings were found in the study conducted by Koçyiğit and Meşe (2020) on gender attitudes of mental health workers. According to this study, there are opinions that the gender of mental health professionals and the gender of the client affect counseling.

Another response to the fourth question of the study was that the participants had difficulties with family structure and attitudes. While Mattis and Kurter (2014) supported this finding, Güçlücan (2016) found that the most challenging factor was language, followed by different value judgments. In the data obtained by Güçlücan (2016), the fact that the family factor is not frequently mentioned in the challenging factors differs from the views of our participants. The expression of socioeconomic level as a challenging cultural factor expressed by the participants is evaluated as the fact that psychological counseling approaches address the needs of clients with medium and high socioeconomic levels, and that it is difficult to understand the needs of individuals with low socioeconomic levels and to determine the appropriate intervention approach (Koç, 2003). The lack of sufficient studies in the literature on the approaches to be applied to clients with low socioeconomic status may cause counselors to ignore socioeconomic status or create difficulties in developing coping skills with this factor (Çetin & Akgül, 2023). Participants' views on the language factor are supported by studies in the literature. It is seen that language is a challenging factor when working with groups from different cultures (Akay et al., 2018; Apak, 2014; Deniz et al., 2016; Güçlücan, 2016; Şimşir & Dilmaç, 2019). Apart from family, gender/sex and language, no supportive qualitative or quantitative study was found in the literature on challenging factors such as ethnic origin and different value judgments stated by the participants. Cultural elements such as ethnic origin, language, and lifestyle of individuals can be shaped and vary within geographical location.

When the findings on how the participants felt about the challenging cultural elements they encountered in the psychological counseling process were examined, it was seen that the participants mostly felt inadequacy, helplessness, anger, sadness, as well as anxiety, uneasiness, frustration, sympathy, bewilderment, fear, self-confidence, psychological fatigue, panic, tension, feeling alien, compassion and pity, insensitivity, professional dissatisfaction and conflict. Erkan (2020) and Korban (2018) explained their views on inadequacy, helplessness and professional dissatisfaction they felt when they encountered challenging cultural elements. According to these studies, the perceptions of helplessness, professional dissatisfaction (Korban, 2018), competence and professional satisfaction (Erkan, 2018) that they felt when they encountered challenging cultural elements support the views of the participants. It is seen that the participants struggle with predominantly negative emotions when they encounter challenging situations. In order for counselors to feel more competent, they need to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and competence, and have more knowledge and awareness about cultural sensitivity (Anuar & Jaladin, 2017; Barden & Greene, 2014; Greene et al., 2014; Kağnıcı, 2011; Özer, 2014). It is reported that there is no differentiation in the culturally sensitive competencies of psychological counselors depending on age and professional experience (Kılıç et al., 2022). These competencies are developed by taking courses (Chao & Nath, 2011; Kağnıcı, 2013).

Regarding the sixth finding of the study, which is the coping methods they used for the challenging cultural elements they encountered in the counseling process, it is seen that the participants mainly consulted with colleagues, learned about cultures and tried to improve their communication skills. In addition to these, it is seen that they used coping methods such as trying to understand the client, making parent/home visits,

maintaining the therapeutic process, reading/researching, using activities, using an empathic approach, creating a trust relationship, using a social support mechanism, changing the focus, receiving supervision support, calming down/taking a break, offering a solution-oriented approach, using an interpreter, and trying to instill hope. Coping or coping skills are behavioral and cognitive methods to solve a problem (Bedel & Kutlu, 2018). The coping skill to be developed for a challenging situation encountered is shaped by our efficacy belief for that situation. Similar to the findings of this study, Mattis and Kurter (2014) reported that the coping skills of psychological counselors are obtaining information and consultation. In this finding of the study, it is determined that counselors need to learn more about culture and need various skills for culturally sensitive counseling.

The seventh finding of the study, which is the seventh finding of the research, is that the views on the culturally sensitive and adequacy of the counseling approaches used in schools are largely insufficient or not fully adequate. Fewer respondents saw them as adequate or sensitive. It is frequently emphasized by researchers that therapy theories are healing methods created for individuals who fit Western cultural understandings (Bedi, 2018; Bektaş, 2006; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1994; Sue & Sue, 2016). The views that psychological counseling approaches are not suitable for Turkish culture because the individual community structure and family structures in Türkiye are not similar (Doğan, 2000; Mocan-Aydın, 2000) are in parallel with the views of our participants. These views of the participants, who stated that it is important to adapt the approaches used, are in line with the views of the participants who evaluated the suitability of various traditional theories to Turkish culture in the literature (Beyazyüz & Göka, 2010; Gültekin & Voltan-Acar, 2004; Poyrazlı, 2003); Şenol-Durak & Fıfşılıoğlu, 2007; Tagay et al., 2016; Voltan-Acar, 2004; Yorgun & Voltan-Acar, 2014) and expressing opinions on how they can be adapted (Ak et al., 2014; Sarı, 2015; Tanrıku, 2011). This finding emphasizes the necessity of making the methods and techniques used culturally sensitive.

The last finding of the study is the opinions of school counselors about their needs in order to carry out the culturally responsive counseling process more effectively. Participants stated the need for training and the need to learn about cultures as the most important needs. In addition to this, other needs they mentioned were seeing cases/case analysis, Freud's Wednesday meetings, theoretical knowledge, being aware of their own prejudices, supervision studies, all educators having knowledge, orientation studies, adding to be added as a course at universities, preparing a booklet/guide, providing personal development, having a free thinking environment and being open to innovations. In this context, the participants stated that in addition to the theoretical trainings they would receive for the CBCC approach, gaining skills through practical trainings would facilitate them to carry out the process more effectively. Studies have shown that culturally responsive counseling training enables counselors to create perceptions of competence (Bakioğlu, 2017; Constantine, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers 1999; Tourek, 2014) and that they can get the outcomes of the process healthier (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005; Pietrantonio & Glance, 2019). In response to these studies, it has been stated both by the participants and studies in the literature (Chao, 2013; Farmer et al., 2013; Kağnıcı, 2013) that the theoretical education given alone will not be sufficient and that skills training should also be provided. Participants who expressed their need for supervision training with the theme of multicultural approaches stated that being able to access the ease of consulting faculty members could improve their perceptions of competence. There are studies in the literature that multiculturalism and culture-oriented supervision trainings increase counselors' perceptions of competence and improve the therapeutic process (Chopra, 2013; Gatmon et al., 2001). Participants expressed their views that a guideline or structured counseling modules that can be prepared under the leadership of the ministry or authorized institutions can be useful. In this sense, it is thought that supportive and informative studies will be useful. It is believed that methods such as organizing cultural awareness days, symposiums, congresses, organizing meetings, and preparing written materials will be beneficial for the professional development of counselors.

Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

The main limitation of this study, which examines the problems and coping methods of school counselors in the context of cultural sensitivity in the counseling process, is that the data obtained are based on the subjective views of the participants. For this reason, it is thought that observational studies as well as quantitative studies in the field will be effective in determining the current problems and coping methods. Another limitation of

the study is that the data obtained cannot be compared with the data of another study since there is no other study similar to this study. Repetition of this and similar studies would be useful in terms of comparing the results.

During the interviews, it was learned that the participants' perceptions of competence regarding the CSC approach were low. It is seen that it is important that the multicultural/culturally sensitive counseling course, which is given in a limited number of universities within the scope of doctoral or master's courses, should be reduced and expanded to undergraduate levels as a compulsory course rather than an elective course. It is thought that a region-specific study can be an effective resource for educators working in that region and researchers who will conduct research. The fact that the participants stated that they frequently consulted their colleagues as a coping method for the difficulties they encountered shows that there is an effective source of help in this field. It is thought that professional solidarity groups that can be formed or orientation studies to be conducted can strengthen this resource. In addition to these, making use of the methods that counselors use or state that it would be useful to use in coping with difficulties can be a guide for future studies.

It is thought that in-service trainings to be organized by the Ministry of National Education, guidelines to be prepared, and increasing supervision trainings in universities may be beneficial to increase the competence of experts working in the field in the context of cultural sensitivity. In the dimensions addressed by the research, it is seen that there are deficiencies in the adaptation of counseling theories to Turkish culture. In future studies, what do counselors do in the context of cultural sensitivity in the use of intervention techniques based on theories? Seeking answers to the questions of how they make the techniques culturally sensitive can pave the way for new research.

This research was conducted with psychological counseling field experts. It is possible to conduct similar studies with other professional groups. It is thought that multidisciplinary interventions can be developed with the data emerging from various studies that can be conducted with different professional groups.

Conclusion

In this study, the views of the participants on the difficulties encountered in the cultural context in the counseling process in schools and the coping methods they use in response to the subjective cultural evaluations that form the basis for these difficulties were taken. In the research, the participants frequently mentioned gender and sex, different value judgments, language, religion, and family as the challenging cultural elements they encountered, and frequently stated that the coping methods they used in response to these challenging cultural elements were consulting their colleagues and obtaining information about the culture. During the research process, it was seen that the participants stated that being aware of their own subjective culture, being aware of its effect on the counseling process and intervention skills, and gaining knowledge about different cultures are important in gaining competence. In this context, it was seen that it is important to revise the curriculum in the context of cultural sensitivity while training psychological counselors in universities and to raise awareness of the effects of psychological counselor candidates' subjective experiences on the counseling process. The coping skills obtained from the participants show that the field workers struggle with the difficulties they face within the framework of their knowledge and experience. It is hoped that this study will provide a new perspective on the development of individual awareness of school counselors, school counselor trainers and in-service training planners.

Author Note: This study is derived from the thesis prepared by the first author under the supervision of the second author at Giresun University, Institute of Social Sciences

Author Contributions. This study is derived from the thesis prepared by the first author under the supervision of the second author at Giresun University, Institute of Social Sciences. Each of the authors played a role in formulating and designing the study. Data collection and analysis was carried out by the first author. The second author controlled and guided all stages. Furthermore, all authors meticulously reviewed and endorsed the ultimate manuscript.

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