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Overview of Consultation Studies in School Psychological Counseling and Guidance Services 2000-2020: A Metasynthesis Study

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Abstract. The aim of the study is to present analysis and synthesis of research from 2000-2020 in Turkey and a variety of countries about the topic of consultation services in schools. A total of 30 studies were investigated within the scope of the research, findings obtained from the articles underwent analysis and synthesis processes within the framework of the meta-synthesis research method with a meta-synthesis study completed accompanied by the determined themes. Most studies considered in the meta-synthesis research were completed based on qualitative research and experimental models. The majority of studies included perceptions about cooperation of teachers and parents with psychological counselors. Studies completed with the experimental model were based on consultation models with psycho-education programs applied to people providing consultation services or people benefiting from them assessing the efficacy of the programs used. Consultation services are an important part of psychological counseling and guidance services. For this reason, performing research about consultation services will contribute to studies and the quality of education related to consultation services given to guidance counselor candidates should be increased in psychological counseling and guidance departments.

Keywords. School, cooperation, consultation services, psychological counselling.

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The traditional model and teacher are frequently centered in the understanding of education chosen in the past, while the contemporary education understanding is gaining popularity with the jump in educational systems due to changes in the world in general and education has begun to center students. The student-centered educational understanding aims to cultivate individuals who are adjusted to their surroundings and themselves in physical, social and emotional terms, and is based on respecting the differences of all students. While aiming to develop students from all aspects, the student personal services system has gained an important place with changes made to the education system (Girgin, 2004).

The basic aim of guidance services given in schools is to assist students in self-realization. Students within the education system are not just limited to academic success, studies that will contribute to personal development are completed with the aid of school psychological counselors and guidance services (Yeşilyaprak, 2002).

Though school counselors have received education about running guidance services, with the changing guidance understanding it does not appear sufficient for counselors to only ensure participation in guidance services in schools. Providing support through services offered with a common guidance understanding in cooperation with teachers, parents, administrators, and other factors in the school environment interacting with students is required in the name of assisting students in all aspects of development. All of this common work is given the name consultation services (Baysal, 2002; Kepçeoğlu, 1999). This service is among the basic duties of school counselors (Reschly, 1976).

Consultation is the process of the counselor providing psychological services and education services operating in cooperation with personnel to develop the learning and adjustment of a student or student group (Erchul, 2011; Erchul & Martens, 2010; Erchul & Ward, 2016). Akman (2002) defined consultation as the assisting relationship with the counselor with the aim of contributing to a student's development based on cooperation of all individuals associated with the student. Kahnweiler (1979) described consultation as services provided indirectly by counselors with the aim of elevating the development level of students from all aspects (Cited: Dustin & Blocher, 1984). Borders and Drury (1992) added parents and other people employed in schools to their definition of cooperative work targeting development of students. In another definition, consultation was defined as systemic intervention services including the counselor, student, parent and other school personnel (Sheridan et al., 2012; Tagay & Sarı, 2012). Yeşilyaprak (2002) stated that sharing about areas of

expertise between counselors with teachers, parents and administrators; efforts in organizations to develop a common understanding; and work contributing to the development of other individuals interacting with students are assessed within the scope of consultation services.

Consultation services, along with work targeting increased efficiency from services offered to students, do not just operate directly with students. Instead, studies are performed with teachers employed in the school and administrators to create a guidance understanding developed within the school culture and targeting increased interaction of both families and teachers with the student (Kepçeoğlu, 1999). Studies to strengthen cooperation may be completed individually or in groups. Counselors may assist other stakeholders in learning strategies through the psycho-education route (Borders & Drury, 1992). Additionally, consultation emerges as both a preventive and improving service (Erchul, 2011). Parker, Castillo, Sabnis, Daye, and Hanson (2019) stated that this service provided by school counselors can be used as a mechanism to increase and maintain the welfare of individuals of school age by encouraging evidence-based practices in schools, homes and other environments.

Akman (2002) stated that there are two different consultation types based on the number of people involved and the qualities of the consultation services. Individual consultation may be held with teachers or parents and the work related to the problem is completed with a single person. Group consultation brings all stakeholders related to the topic within the scope of the problem together and is defined as cooperation under supervision of the psychological counselor.

When research about consultation is investigated, some limitations are present because consultation involves more than just the relationship between counselor and client. For this reason, the consultation relationship is a very difficult and complicated topic (Hazel, Newman & Barrett, 2016). As a result, the limited research performed related to consultation in Turkey is notable.

The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to synthesize the research conducted in between the years 2000-2020 that investigated consultation services in schools. Synthesis of findings obtained in different research is considered to be important in terms of seeing the effects of consultation services, one of the most important foundation stones of guidance services, on school counselors, teachers, students and parents and to develop effective recommendations.

Method

Design

The meta-synthesis method was used in this research. Meta-synthesis research interprets and assesses the findings in different studies performed about a chosen thematic area, aiming to reveal similarities and differences in study results and develop new recommendations (Ay & Polat, 2016). The first example of a meta-synthesis study in the field of education was seen in 1988 (Noblit & Hare, 1988), and then it began to be frequently used in different science branches (Cited: Ay & Polat, 2016).

It is recommended to limit the sample for the research topic in studies about meta-synthesis as meta-synthesis requires in-depth research of the topic and interpretative comparisons. Additionally, meta-synthesis studies provide an important literature resource for future research about the topic in terms of synthesizing different research results (Sözbilir & Çalık, 2014).

Selection of Research

With the aim of determining studies to be included in the research, collective screening was performed in Eskişehir Osmangazi University library databases and preliminary screening in the Google Scholar database. During screening, the research words used were “consultation, psychological counselor-teacher cooperation, psychological counselor-parent cooperation, teacher-parent cooperation, school-family cooperation”. The studies obtained by screening for these words were reviewed and different studies were reached from the reference lists. The inclusion criteria for studies determined at the start of the research were investigated and in total 30 different articles were included within the scope of the meta-synthesis research.

Table 1.

Codes, years and samples in studies

Code	Year	Sample
A1	2013	Teachers (n=19)
A2	2017	-
A3	2013	-
A4	2017	Teachers
A5	2019	School psychologists (n=15)
A6	2019	-
A7	2010	Teacher and preschool students (n=14)
A8	2012	-
A9	2019	Teachers participating in private educational courses (n=17)
A10	2016	Consultation trainers (n=7)
A11	2016	School psychologists (n=262)
A12	2016	-
A13	2014	Masters students in school psychology (n=92)
A14	2013	Masters students in psychology (n=4)
A15	2013	-
A16	2016	Social studies teachers (n=50)
A17	2006	Teachers and psychological counselors (n=23)
A18	2019	Parents and psychological counselors (n=412)
A19	2002	-
A20	2019	Psychological counselors (n=15)
A21	2004	Teachers (n=157)
A22	2010	Preschool students
A23	2014	Parents (n=45)
A24	2019	Teachers (n=25)
A25	2003	-
A26	2004	School psychological counselors, teachers, parents and students
A27	2004	Teachers (n=23)
A28	2009	Teachers (n=274)
A29	2010	Teachers (n=35)
A30	2016	School psychologists (n=11)

Samples in research investigated within the scope of the study comprised teachers, counselors, school psychologists, parents, consultation trainers, master's students, teachers participating in private education courses and students. Of the research, 11 (36.6%) were completed with teachers. For 7 studies (23.3%), the sample only comprised teachers. There were 6 studies (20%) with school counselors and school psychologists chosen as the sample, while there were 3 (10%) studies where parents were included. Three (10%) studies included students as the sample group. There was 1 (3.3%) study with consultation trainers, and 1 (3.3%) study with teachers attending private education courses. The number of studies completed with people receiving master's education in the field of psychology was 2. There were 2 studies including school counselors and teachers together, and 2 studies including parents with school counselors together.

The samples, research questions, findings and recommendations in the studies were investigated and synthesized within the scope of meta-synthesis research steps and the study was completed.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Studies

- Original research article
- Performed between 2000-2020
- Topic is consultation services
- Whole article is accessible.

For determination of studies to include in the meta-analysis, literature screening was performed with EBSCO, ProQuest, and Science Direct databases. When screening studies, the words, “consultation, consultancy and consultation services” were searched in the titles of studies and accessible studies were included in the meta-analysis. The publication interval for studies was determined as 2000-2020 and studies between these dates were included in the research.

Investigation of Relevant Research

When completing meta-synthesis research, the steps that need to be followed (Ay & Polat, 2016) are as follows, though there may be small differences between researchers:

1. Determine the research question. Within the scope of the research, the topic chosen was “effects of consultation services”.
2. Relevant article screening. Literature screening was performed in accordance with the determined criteria.
3. Evaluate the references. Studies found within the scope of the research were investigated, findings and abstracts were reviewed.
4. Determine research criteria and choose which studies will be included in the research.
5. Separate studies included within the scope of the research into themes from the aspect of sample, findings, etc.
6. Assess and interpret findings emerging in line with the determined themes.
7. Report the research process and findings.

Results

The findings of studies investigated within the meta-synthesis research are as follows:

Table 2.

Research models used in the included studies

Model	Study Code
Screening model	A3, A8, A19, A25
Qualitative research model	A1, A2, A5, A7, A9, A10, A12, A14, A16, A17, A18, A20, A24, A27, A30
Experimental model	A6, A15, A22, A23, A26, A28, A2
Quantitative research model	A4, A11, A21

The two most commonly used models in the research included within the scope of the meta-synthesis were the experimental model and qualitative research model. Of studies, 50% were performed with the qualitative research model, while 23.3% used the experimental model. The studies using the screening models were coded A3, A8, A19, and A25. Studies using the experimental model were coded A6, A15, A22, A23, A26, A28, and A29. Three studies (10%) coded A4, A11 and A21 used the quantitative research model. Studies using the qualitative research model were coded A1, A2, A5, A7, A9, A10, A12, A14, A16, A17, A18, A20, A24, A27, and A30.

Table 3.

Distribution of studies according to theme

Theme	Subtheme	Study code
Research with screening model	History of consultation services	A3, A8, A19, A25
Research with qualitative research model	Perceptions and needs of teachers in relation to consultation	A1, A2, A5, A7, A9, A10, A12, A14, A16, A17, A24, A27, A30
	Perceptions of parents about consultation	A18
Research with the experimental model	Efficacy of consultation training programs	A6, A15, A22, A23, A26, A28, A29
Research with quantitative research model	Scale development	A4, A11, A13, A21
	Survey development	

The studies included in meta-synthesis were examined and grouped under four main themes: Research with screening model, Research with qualitative research model, Research with the experimental model, Research with quantitative research model.

Table 4.

Measurement devices used in studies

Measurement Device	Studies
Rational Affective Behavior Group Consultation	A1
Interview Form	A4, A5, A14, A16 A17, A18, A20, A27, A28, A30
Demographic Information Form	A4, A30
Interpersonal power inventory	A4
Mental Health Literacy Scale	A4
Interpersonal power inventory	A4
Mental Health Literacy Scale	A4
Teacher Belief Inventory	A4
Cognitive Needs Scale	A4
Proactive Personality Scale	A4
Openness to Experience Scale	A4
Teacher Anxiety Scale	A4
Behavior Principles Teacher Information Form	A4
Teaching and Class Management Variables Form	A7
Universal Screening for Early Literacy Skills	A7
Audio-Recorded Consultation Sessions and Written Reflection Journals	A9
Coding	A10
Questionnaire	A11
Consultation Self-Efficacy Scale	A13
Consultation Information Scale	A14
Computer Simulation Platform	A14
Consultation Services with Families Assessment Survey	A18
School Psychologist Professional Skills During Counseling Scale	A21
Observation Form	A22
Parent Self-Efficacy Scale (PSOC)	A23
Consultation Satisfaction Inventory	A23, A28
Parental Stress Inventory-Short Form (PSI-SF)	A23
Survey for the Evaluation of Classroom Teachers' Consultancy Services	A24
Q String Question Cards	A24
Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)	A29

For the 30 studies investigated within the meta-synthesis, a total of 28 different scale tools were used. (It appears some studies used more than one scale tool.) Among the scale tools, the most frequently chosen were interview forms used in 33.3% of studies (10 different studies).

Findings according to Themes and Subthemes

Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 provide findings about the subthemes stated in Table 3. In this section, significant findings reached by the investigated studies are presented.

Table 5.

Findings for research with the screening model

Findings	Study code
Perceptual mapping may be a beneficial practice for client-focused consultation in schools. It ensures an organizational approach.	A3
Consultation ensures systematic intervention. The counselor allows more easy access for the student to other people.	A8
Teaching psycho-educational methods to people performing school psychological counseling consultation assists in developing an action plan to solve certain problems	A8
Giving importance to consultation services in schools assists in developing a common guidance understanding	A19
Psychological counselors require information and skills for consultation to be effective	A19
Lessons related to consultation in RPD graduate and postgraduate education programs will make it easier for guidance teachers to gain information	A19
When literature is investigated, consultation services appear important	A25
School psychologists have an important role in determining client needs	A25
Counselors discovering strategies benefitting clients should be given the necessary education	A25

When studies completed with the screening model are investigated, important information related to the history of consultation services and models are notable. When studies completed in both Turkey (A8, A19) and abroad (A25) are examined, the main element in consultation services appears to be counselors.

Table 6.

Findings for research with qualitative research methods

Findings	Study code
Flexibility of thoughts among teachers increased after group consultation	A1
The consultation process positively affects communication between teachers and surroundings.	A1
After group consultation, stress levels of teachers reduced	A1
Teachers stated they have more rational thoughts	A1
Consultation is important in terms of supporting the educational development of bilingual students	A2
School psychological counselors should develop value judgments about consultation	A2
Families of children in disadvantaged situations should participate more in consultation and education processes	A5
School personnel should be directly educated and informed	A5
Counselors working with the medical model reduce capacity for offering comprehensive services	A5
Counselors should support teachers, students and teachers in the areas of confidence and self-esteem	A5
Counselors should undergo continuous education through official and other sources and should develop themselves	A5
Comprehensive support studies are effective for students and on students	A7

Class-wide consultation provides necessary competencies for the next educational level among students	A7
Students in addition to teachers benefit from a consultation-based intervention program	A7
One of the traps that most special education preservice teachers fall into is very rapid progression during problem-solving consultations and they begin to give dysfunctional advice.	A9
One of the traps that most special education preservice teachers fall into is very rapid progression during problem-solving consultations and begin to give dysfunctional advice.	A9
Supervision is important for individuals giving consultation services	A9
Special education preservice teachers are unsuccessful in using psychological counseling skills. They don't know what to ask and what to reflect.	A9
Use of voice recording during the consultation process is beneficial	A9
In spite of the literature, consultation trainers have difficulty with systematic provision of multicultural programs	A10
Multicultural consultation education is more difficult in homogeneous ethnic groups and multicultural groups	A10
Trainers experience difficulty about how to deal with the concept of differences	A10
There is a need for onscreen document-sharing group video conferencing, instantaneous messaging, recording features, and cloud storage for the teleconsultation model in consultation	A12
Though counselors are sure of their counseling knowledge, their counseling competence is limited.	A14
Though counselors know the general problem-solving counseling process, it was revealed that everyone approached the implementation of this process differently	A14
Not all teachers see consultation as required, some think it will shake the student's confidence	A16
Parent awareness of consultation services provides advantages for consultation with teachers and indirect follow-up	A16
Consultation is beneficial for school adjustment, development of positive behavior, strengthening school-family cooperation and creating a productive learning environment.	A16
While giving consultation services, attention should be paid to individual differences of students, development levels, parent sensitivity and value perceptions	A16
Some teachers think students feel inadequate, question their confidence and have limited feelings of independence during the consultation process	A16
Teachers apply to psychological counselors mostly for not listening in class, talking in class, distraction, adjustment problems, failure, school phobia, stealing behavior, cursing, and disobedience of the teacher.	A17
Teachers desiring cooperation makes it easier to obtain positive outcomes. Disinterested and unwilling teachers generally choose to suppress the problematic behavior.	A17
While teachers in public schools consider seeking help from a psychological counselor as inadequate; teachers in private schools are afraid of losing their jobs if they have problems with their students.	A17
Psychological counselors see consultation services as necessary.	A18
Psychological counselors have not received any education or lessons about direct consultation, most want to participate in in-service training about the topic if organized.	A18
In addition to socioeconomic differences between parents attending consultation services, mothers appear to feel more competent compared to fathers.	A18
Most school administrators have a positive attitude to consultation services.	A18
The majority of psychological counselors do not abide by a single consultation model, most topics they provide services about are adolescent period characteristics, exam anxiety, transition to upper-level education and friend relationships. As methods, they give seminars, individual interviews, home visits and brochure studies.	A18

Mainstreaming students at primary school level requires consultation about being referred to health organizations, attention deficit-learning difficulties, educational guidance for crisis intervention, and school phobia-orientation services.	A20
In the middle school stage, the topics requiring consultation services are the adolescent period, behavior problems, technology addiction, in-family communication, substance addiction, crisis intervention, special education and professional guidance.	A20
At high school level, in addition to topics from middle school, consultation is required for topics like test anxiety, transition to upper level education, and career counseling topics.	A20
The most frequently used consultation resources for psychological counselors are guidance research centers, professional groups, internet, academics, books about the field and social network groups.	A20
School psychological counselors stated that consultation services provide positive results; however, they are not fully adequate.	A20
Teachers with more professional experience have more clear expectations from guidance teachers during consultation.	A24
Giving seminars related to guidance and consultation services to class teachers newly beginning work will increase the quality of services and expectations.	A24
Class teachers adopting a developmental guidance understanding expect guidance teachers to solve problems and lighten their burdens.	A24
Class teachers adopting a developmental guidance understanding require support in preparing programs suitable for development level of students and to communicate more healthily with students and parents.	A24
Most teachers believe in the importance of cooperation, that counseling support is beneficial and that receiving assistance from the counselor is productive when needed.	A27
Teachers find benefit in performing guidance activities for topics like social relationships in classes and academic performance.	A27
Teachers with students from different cultures in classes stated they received assistance from psychological counselors about topics like referral-integration, especially	A27
Though teachers find group guidance beneficial, they think that individual interviews for everyone who needs them and spending more time with psychological counselors will be more beneficial.	A27
Teachers and students generally attend due to academic concerns experienced as a result of language problems.	A30
Teachers and students generally attend due to academic concerns experienced as a result of language problems.	A30
The incidence of behavioral problems is less than academic concerns	A30

Studies choosing the qualitative research model generally focus on perceptions of teachers related to consultation services (A1, A16, A17, A24, A27, A30). When the research results are examined, most teachers thought that consultation services were necessary and were enthusiastic about cooperating with counselors. Additionally, it was observed that the consultation services required by teachers and counselors differed according to the school level and development period of students (A20).

Table 7.

Findings for research with experimental models

Findings	Study Code
The stereotype threat is a significant threat for all students. Teachers tend to stereotype students with variables such as their grades, gender and race.	A6
Psychological counselors are trained about psychology, education, counseling and counseling methodologies and are ideal professionals offering strategies to remove the stereotype threat in school environments.	
The study explained the stereotype threat interruption model (STIM) developed against stereotype threats stage by stage and discussed psychoeducational and psychosocial effects.	A6
STIM will increase self-respect of students and ensure they are proud of multiculturalism.	A6
Rational affective-social cognitive (RA-SC) consultation is an effective and evidence-based framework to indirectly encourage success of teachers and students. The school psychological counselor in the counseling role may use RA-SC consultation to analyze the class status and search for alternative solutions in cooperation to develop the services provided by teachers	A15
During group consultation, the school counselor may make it easy to discuss this situation based on informing group members about the RA-SC therapy framework.	A15
School counselors may be encouraged to use the ABC model to discover the thoughts, feelings and behavior of group teachers and students.	A15
Identifying and challenging the irrational beliefs of teachers may lead to development of rational thoughts and more healthy emotions.	A15
Positive behavior supportive consultations led to positive effects for each of 4 preschool classes	A22
From before the consultation program until the end, a significant level of increase was observed in the in-class participation of students	A22
According to observation results for teachers, students with in-class problematic behavior can be said to reduce the incidence of this behavior.	A22
According to comparisons of pre-test and post-test results, parents were satisfied with the education program and stated that the program positively contributed to their communication with their children.	A23
There were participants who wished to benefit from education in the future.	A23
After qualitative interviews, 10 out of 12 parents stated the program had no negative aspects, while 2 parents stated they were not satisfied as the program duration was too short.	A23
Uniting the whole school in a common target framework increases efficiency.	A26
Parents saw contribution to the development of children and increased their assistance for what was done in school	A26
Counselors created significant change in the school by becoming aware of their competency and developing a common understanding for the whole school.	A26
Leadership training (modeling) given to school psychological counselors assisted in belief in themselves and becoming aware of their abilities	A26
Most teachers were satisfied with the Instructional Consultation (IC) study and found the process effective	A28
Teachers felt more adequate in terms of problems they will face in the future after the training program.	A28
Teachers stated their problem-solving skills developed and they learned new behavior strategies	A28

Points to achieve targets for students of teachers who completed the consultation program increased compared to other students.	A29
The ability of teachers to comply with the consultation program increased over time.	A29
Teachers were satisfied with the program.	A29

When studies completed with the experimental model are investigated, the effects of education programs prepared based on different consultation models were observed on teachers, parents, students and school counselors/psychologists. After the programs, findings were obtained showing people who participated in the programs felt they were more competent about consultation, had strengthened problem-solving and communication skills and academic success of students increased.

Table 8.

Findings for research with quantitative research methods

Findings	Study code
Consultation practice plays an important role in encouraging the effective use of evidence-based practices in class	A4
There are several teachable teacher factors (e.g., information, beliefs) that may be targeted to increase susceptibility to consultation and some invariable factors (e.g., openness, proactive personality) which may be shown to require alternative or complementary practices to ensure consultation.	A4
The study investigated what type of survey study is required for consultation research	A11
The process created a scale including the subdimensions of cultural competency, intervention-observation, interpersonal relationships, self, intervention-planning, and communication skills.	A13
A scale was developed comprising the subdimensions of the expert being knowledgeable, attitudes toward interaction and coordination of the intervention process.	A21

For studies completed with the quantitative research model, 5 (60%) performed scale and survey development studies about the efficiency of consultation services. When the study coded A4 is investigated, it appears there are teachable aspects of consultation services.

Conclusion

This meta-synthesis study investigated studies published in our country and different countries from 2000-2020 and included 30 articles in the research. When studies are investigated, the most important and unifying element in consultation services is the psychological counselor (A8, A19, A25). Contrary to this, it is notable that both in Turkey and abroad, school counselors do not receive adequate education about the topic of consultation. As the consultation process is based on cooperation, both school counselors and teachers and administrators having more information about the consultation topic will increase the efficiency of services.

The low number of studies based on the quantitative research model among the investigated studies is noteworthy. Researchers generally remain loyal to the qualitative research model due to the low numbers of scales and inventories developed about the topic of consultation (Table 2). Additionally, the studies completed with the meta-synthesis model from 2000-2020 are very limited.

When studies completed with the experimental model are investigated, notable results of consultation education and services are the reduction in stress levels of both parents and teachers and increase in communication skills and problem-solving skills. This situation shows that consultation services are effective in terms of acquiring skills. Consultation services including parents, especially, increased in-family interaction and parents who thought it will contribute to child development were observed to have increased desire for cooperation about the topic (Table 7).

Situations where teachers require consultation may differ according to the development level of students, their self-efficacy perceptions and the educational level of the study. The situations where teachers and parents most frequently require consultation appear to be academic performance of students, test anxiety and transition to upper-level institutions (Table 6). As the professional experience of teachers increased, their expectations related to consultation increased and it appeared they adopted a development guidance understanding.

Recommendations

The number of experimental studies included in the meta-synthesis research is not adequate in terms of being able to fully understand the relationship between different variables of consultation services and seeing in which areas benefit is provided. Programs should be developed and applied based on different consultation models.

Most school counselors do not feel fully competent in themselves about the consultation topic. In order to end this situation, undergraduate and masters' programs should include consultation services from a broader perspective. In-service training should be given for consultation services under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education.

In order for the consultation process to be functional, teachers, school administrators and other elements in the close surroundings of the school should all work in cooperation, and a common guidance understanding should be developed in schools.

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Conflict of Interest

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