

Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet

ISSN: 2147-3374 / E-ISSN: 2602-280X

Derleme Makale / Review Article

Consultancy Measure in Türkiye: Current Status, Problems and Solution Suggestions

Türkiye’de Danışmanlık Tedbiri: Mevcut Durumu, Sorunları ve Çözüm Önerileri

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Başvuru: 6.09.2024
Kabul: 24.01.2025

Atf: Korkmaz, B.C., Demiryürek, Y.B ve Akdemir, Z. (2025). Consultancy measure in Türkiye: current status, problems and solution suggestions. *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet*, 36(1), 145-167.
DOI: 10.33417/tsh.1544961

ÖZ

Çocuk refahı tüm dünyada önemli bir konudur. Bu alanda ülkeler çeşitli koruyucu ve önleyici tedbirlere başvurumaktadırlar. Bu anlamda Türkiye 2005 yılında 5395 Sayılı Çocuk Koruma Kanunu ile Danışmanlık Tedbirini uygulamaya başlamıştır. Çocuğun ailesi yanında desteklenmesini amaçlayan Danışmanlık Tedbiri çocuğun biyopsikososyal gelişimini sağlama gayesindedir. Diğer tedbir türlerine göre daha yaygın olan Danışmanlık Tedbirine ilişkin herhangi bir derleme çalışmasına rastlanmamıştır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma Türkiye’de mevcut yasalara ve güncel bulgulara dayalı olarak Danışmanlık Tedbirinin günümüzdeki durumunun incelenmesi sonucunda sorunların ve çözüm önerilerinin ele alınmasını amaçlamaktadır. Risk altındaki çocuk ve ailesi için alanında uzman uygulayıcılar tarafından belirli bir yasal çerçevede sunulan Danışmanlık Tedbiri sayesinde iyileşen aile işlevselliği hem çocuk hem de ebeveynlerin iyilik halini artırmaktadır. Sonuçları itibariyle başarılı olduğu öne sürülen Danışmanlık Tedbirinin uygulamadaki aksaklıklarına birçok çalışma tarafından dikkat çekilmektedir. Uygulayıcıların bulunduğu kurumda mevcut iş yükünün fazla olması ve geri dönüt mekanizmasının sağlanmamasına ihtiyaç duyulması gerekçeleriyle sadece Danışmanlık Tedbiri kararlarını uygulamakla yükümlü bir birimin oluşturulması önerisi konusunda literatürde fikir birliği bulunmaktadır. Politika yapımcıların bir takım iyileştirmelere gitmeleri halinde Danışmanlık Tedbiri uygulamasının çok daha etkin bir şekilde çocuk ve ailesini destekleyebileceği öngörülmektedir. Çocuğun ailesi ile birlikte güçlendirilmesi hedefiyle yola çıkan Danışmanlık Tedbirinin diğer ülkeler tarafından da örnek alınabilecek başarılı bir uygulama olma yolunda ilerlediği söylenebilir. **Anahtar kelimeler:** Çocuk refahı, aile, ebeveynlik, danışmanlık tedbiri.

ABSTRACT

Child welfare is a critical issue worldwide. Countries apply various protective and preventive measures in this area. In this sense, Türkiye started implementing the Consultancy Measure in 2005. The Consultancy Measure ensures that children are supported together with their families by strengthening them. No review study has been found regarding the Consultancy Measure. Thus, this review examines the Consultancy Measure based on laws and current literature findings. Enhanced family functioning, through the Consultancy Measure provided by expert practitioners within a specific legal framework, promotes the well-being of at-risk children and their parents. On the other hand, numerous studies emphasize the shortcomings in implementing the Consultancy Measure, which is asserted to be successful in terms of its results. There is a consensus in the literature on the proposal to establish a unit solely responsible for implementing the Consultancy Measure decisions due to the high workload and the need to strengthen the feedback mechanism. In this regard, the Consultancy Measure application can support the child and the family much more effectively if policymakers make some improvements. It can be said that the Consultancy Measure, which aims to strengthen the child with the family, is trying to be a successful application that can be taken as an example by other countries.

Keywords: Child welfare, family, parenting, consultancy measure.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the first place where children learn behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes (Szcot, 2016). In this sense, the newborn child is entirely dependent on parents (Bhabha, 2017). That is why most children resemble their parents, who are the first role models and permanent caregivers (Yılmaz, 2023). Parents shape their children according to their existing capabilities by considering norms and beliefs (Solís, 2021). In this period, extended family members also get involved to help parenting improve (Baral, 2023). Also, parents use other community resources to improve their parenting skills. People who make up the immediate microsystem of parents, such as relatives, neighbors, and teachers, are among the primary sources from which they receive help (Romman, 2013). Therefore, the phenomenon of parenting inevitably receives its share of society's contribution and influence. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the culture and ingrained beliefs of society that contribute to parenting in terms of understanding the meaning attributed to parenting.

While parenting practices vary from culture to culture, the perception of the child's nature has always been positive (Meynerts, 2018). Most cultures consider the child innocent, so the child's surrounding environment is criticized when any misbehavior emerges (Maheshwari, 2021). The closest ones of children are mostly their parents. In this regard, as far as children are responsible for what behavior they choose to take place, their parents are also blamed because they are in charge of their children (Burroughs, 2020). Also, society expects parents to meet all kinds of needs of their children, such as shelter, food, education, and health (Alamelu & Revathy, 2022). Children whose needs are not met and who are not given sufficient attention face adverse outcomes. At this point, literature findings show that ineffective parenting may lead to antisocial behavior (Krohn et al., 2019), emotional-behavioral disturbance (Suchman & Luthar, 2001), delinquent behavior (Stewart et al., 2002), aggression (Murray et al., 2013), low self-control (Boyd & Higgins, 2006) and negative developmental outcomes for children (Kesmen & Jidauna, 2021). On the other hand, research regarding parental outcomes demonstrates that ineffective parenting is likely to cause loss of parental control (Hilton & Desrochers, 2002), parents' stress (Shawler & Sullivan, 2017) and parent conflict (Conica et al., 2023). Considering the current literature findings, ineffective parenting causes irreversible damage to family dynamics and children's development. However, it should not be forgotten that there are families where effective parenting is insufficient to ensure the child's optimal development due to environmental factors (Madosky, 2015).

Sometimes, even in families with effective parenting, the need for support arises due to the child's traumatic history. Shemesh et al. (2005) put forward that for most parents, the traumatic experience their child goes through is also traumatic for them. From this point of view, before parents can help their children cope with traumatic experiences, they need to get help themselves. Furthermore, family dynamics may need to be supported when parents and children face traumatic experiences. Salloum et al. (2015) emphasize the benefits of sharing these experiences by including all family members. That is why the traumatic experience of the child can be successfully ameliorated when

family members get involved. For families who provide effective parenting to their child, this may become difficult to sustain after the child's traumatic experience because parents may experience guilt and distress regarding the child's traumatic experience (Thoresen et al., 2016). In other words, due to the child's traumatic experience, it is helpful to ensure that effective parenting is maintained and to provide additional support to the child. Separation from the family to institutional care may be considered after parental neglect or abuse or a severe traumatic event experienced by the child, but in Türkiye, like most countries, the priority is always to support the child to live with the family (Aykul, 2019; Erdal, 2014). Thus, the issue of supporting the child staying with the family has been an important issue from the past to the present.

Since 1989, Türkiye has been a state party to the "Convention on the Rights of the Child", which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (Akdağ, 2023, p. 153). In the field of child welfare, child protection policies adopted by countries to protect children are planned at the local level in the light of universal principles. In this sense, with the Child Protection Law adopted in Türkiye in 2005, more specific definitions were made in the field of child protection, and new measures, including Consultancy Measures, were introduced (Bilgin & Erdem, 2019, p. 51-53). As a result, Türkiye has become a party to international texts for the child's best interest, but it has also applied its laws and practices, such as the Consultancy Measure.

Taken all together, there is a clear need to support families with ineffective parenting and families with children who have had severe traumatic experiences. At this point, countries prioritizing the child's development and the integrity of the family where the child is located are taking legal measures. In this regard, Consultancy Measure is a functional application that has been developed and widely used in Türkiye. The need for the Consultancy Measure is decided in courts according to children's current status and behaviors. The Consultancy Measure application, which has a legal basis in Türkiye, first emerged with the Child Protection Law No. 5395. After that, "Regulation on the Implementation of Protective and Supportive Measure Decisions Issued According to the Child Protection Law" was published in 2006. Lastly, "Communicatory on the Implementation Procedures and Principles of Consultancy Measure Decisions" in Türkiye was determined in the Official Gazette published in 2008.

The data published by the Turkish Statistical Institute on August 2, 2024, indicates that a significant number of children were either victims of crime or involved in criminal activities in 2023. According to this data, 242,875 children became victims of crime, while 178,834 children were dragged into crime. Since these children and their families need support, the Consultancy Measure emerges as a crucial protective and preventive measure. The fact that there are more Consultancy Measures than Care Measures in Türkiye shows the importance of this measure (Karataş et al., 2020, p. 125). In 2016, the number of children entering penal institutions as convicts was 161,512, but this figure rose to 294,991 in 2023 (Ministry of Justice, 2024). On the other hand, the number of children who were detained and subsequently released without conviction is unknown. This highlights the

importance of the Consultancy Measure, which is one of the protective and preventive strategies essential for promoting child welfare.

The holistic investigation of the Consultancy Measure, which has been implemented for nearly 20 years but whose research results have not been presented in a review study, can contribute to the local and foreign literature as an application suggestion regarding child welfare. Almost all of the studies on the Consultancy Measure application in Türkiye have been conducted in the Turkish language and addressed at the local level. These studies, which do not provide information flow to foreign literature, also do not allow for a holistic evaluation due to the absence of any review study. There are various examples of applications related to child welfare around the world, and revealing the advantages and disadvantages of the Consultancy Measure applied in Türkiye will be helpful for the advancement of applications in the field of child welfare. The Consultancy Measure, which has similarities and differences to applications in the field of child welfare around the world, will reveal significant implications by examining and discussing its effects on children, parents, and family dynamics in Turkish culture. Therefore, this study aims to investigate Consultancy Measure application based on the current literature and legal regulations in Türkiye. In the scope of this aim, the study addresses the following questions: What are the primary challenges in implementing the Consultancy Measure? What solutions are needed to address the difficulties faced by those responsible for its implementation? How can Türkiye's experience with the Consultancy Measure serve as a model for similar initiatives in other countries?

METHOD

This review study aims to examine in detail the Consultancy Measure widely implemented in Türkiye based on laws and discuss the problems and suggestions for solutions. For the Turkish legal regulations review, firstly, all texts that constitute the legal basis for the Consultancy Measure were reached by scanning the relevant issues of the Official Gazette, which publishes all legal regulations in Türkiye. As a result of this investigation, the Child Protection Law No. 2005, "Regulation on the Implementation of Protective and Supportive Measure Decisions Issued According to the Child Protection Law" published in 2006 and "Communicatory on the Implementation Procedures and Principles of Consultancy Measure Decisions" published in 2008 were reached and used in this study. One strength of this study is that the authors are practitioners of Consultancy Measure, which effectively evaluates literature findings alongside the real-life practices of Consultancy Measure.

The literature search was carried out in the "Scopus", "Science Direct", "Google Scholar" and "Yöktez" databases between 24.07.2024-08.08.2024. All articles with the specified keyword in the title, abstract, or content section were examined. There were no restrictions on article type or year. For the Turkish literature review, the keyword "Danışmanlık Tedbiri" was used because it was the specific and unique name of the application, and 346 studies were obtained. Similarly, the keyword "Consultancy Measure" was used for the English literature review, and 25 studies were obtained. Since the application of Consultancy Measure started in Türkiye with the Child Protection Law in

2005, it was found that all studies on this subject were carried out after 2005. It was determined that there were a limited number of studies in Turkish and English literature in the field of Consultancy Measure (Bağdat, 2018; Bayoğlu, 2013). In order to reach data saturation and reflect the universe by covering relevant literature, all studies reached were examined, and appropriate ones were included in the review study. 371 studies were examined by two researchers, and studies that did not provide information about the implementation of Consultancy Measure in Türkiye were excluded. In order to present the findings in general and focused categories, the studies were evaluated collectively, and the following headings were determined to be used in the findings section by authors' thematic analysis of the data obtained from studies: The Framework of Consultancy Measure in Türkiye, Consultancy Measure and Children, Consultancy Measure and Parents, Consultancy Measure and Family Functioning, Consultancy Measure and Practitioners.

Ecological systems theory provides a framework for understanding human development, emphasizing various elements' interconnectedness and the context's significance (Bronfenbrenner, 2000, p. 129). According to this theory, the passive presence of children at the center of systems, which are microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystems, and macrosystems, shapes children's development (Darling, 2007, p. 204). The Consultancy Measure's initiative to comprehensively address children's microsystems and mesosystems, including information collection through interviews with parents, schools, and neighborhoods, is crucial for understanding the impact of various systems. The consultancy measure also involves ensuring that child-related factors achieve optimal levels by addressing and supporting elements within the child's egzosystem. This includes aspects such as the work environment and the neighborhood where family members interact, even if they are not directly related to the child. In improving the child's environment, the systems that are directly and indirectly effective in the child's development should be addressed through guidance to the family. This is where The Consultancy Measure comes into play. Living conditions have an important place in the protection of children's rights (Öztürk et al., 2021, p. 264). The Consultancy Measure not only deals directly with the child but also indirectly guides other systems to improve the child's living conditions.

FINDINGS

In Türkiye, the Regulation on the Implementation of Protective and Supportive Measure Decisions Issued According to the Child Protection Law was published in 2006. According to Article 12 of this Regulation, the institutions that implement the Consultancy Measure are referred to as the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Family and Social Services, and local governments (Official Gazette, 2006). Based on this, Consultancy Measure is a system in which more than one ministry carries out the implementation, rather than a single ministry's single-handed execution. Considering that similar professional groups work within different ministries and the Consultancy Measure is carried out by a single professional consultant, it is not surprising that different ministries are involved in the implementation of the Consultancy Measure. Consultancy Measure practices where more than

one ministry is involved in the implementation of the process are a common system applied throughout Türkiye. Discussing the place and importance of the Consultancy Measure application in Türkiye, the legal basis of which is explained above, separately for the child, parent, family, and practitioner, will enable more focused findings to emerge.

Consultancy Measure and Children

The protection of children and their rights is one of the most critical issues worldwide. Discussions about children at risk of committing crimes, those who have committed crimes, and those who have become victims of crimes remain a major focus for both developed and developing countries (Zorbaz & Bilge, 2019, p. 795). Furthermore, in every period of history, children have been subjected to neglect and abuse in every country and culture, but with the development of societies, these issues have begun to be talked about more and perceived as a significant problem. These issues are a common problem for countries around the world (Aktay, 2020, p. 170). In many countries of the world, juvenile delinquency has increased, and the age at which children commit crimes has decreased (Kuruca & Işıklı, 2022, p. 52). States have tried to protect children who are victims of crime and those who have committed crimes through some legal frameworks on a national and international scale (Tunçer, 2018, p. 170). The most decisive text of child welfare policy, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted on 20 November 1989, is a macro variable related to children's rights and, therefore, to prevent children from being dragged into crime. In the approach of this Convention to children, the concepts of non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life and development, and the right to participation are at the forefront. In summary, the Convention conveys to the party states that children need protection until adulthood and that this needs to be met in line with the child's best interests and rights (Erbay et al., 2015, p. 32).

Today, childhood is accepted as a different period from adulthood, and various branches of science (sociology, psychology, pedagogy, social work, etc.) constitute a research subject (Aka & Güngör, 2018, p. 188). There are numerous definitions of childhood in different research areas. Nonetheless, according to the age range in which childhood is defined, every individual under the age of 18 is defined as a child (Parlak & Çelebi, 2018, p. 164). As a disadvantaged group, children need of protection. In this sense, Kılıç and Tekin (2019, p. 845) indicate that the number of children who are victims of neglect and abuse increases every year in Türkiye. For instance, official statistical data in Türkiye shows that there are approximately 110 thousand children coming to or brought to security units annually (Bilginer et al., 2021, p. 218). Each of these children is evaluated individually. The decisions to be made about them affect their entire lives. They may be completely separated from their families and placed in institutional care, or they may continue to live with their families. At this point, the Child Protection Law in Türkiye includes measures to ensure that children are protected primarily within their own families. Within the scope of the Consultancy Measure, while child caregivers are provided with consultancy on child rearing, children are also provided with informative and problem-solving professional studies regarding their education and development (Tekin, 2021,

p. 183). From this point of view, a Consultancy Measure is an essential measure in order to prevent the separation of the child from the family. It may seem easier and safer to take a child with impaired daily functionality into institutional care, but even if it is difficult, if the conditions are favorable, supporting the child with the family may be beneficial in terms of optimal development and ensuring a secure attachment with the parents. However, if a child who has come to the security forces once or has been given a Consultancy Measure due to a report experiences a similar incident again, the possibility of being taken into institutional care is higher; therefore, the Consultancy Measure should improve the child's outcomes effectively and in a short time in order to regain the child within the family.

According to the literature, the most widely applied protective and preventive measure in Türkiye is Consultancy Measure. For example, a thesis study conducted with 100 juvenile delinquents in Türkiye, it was determined that 57 of them received only Consultancy Measure, 26 received Consultancy Measure and Health Measure, and 17 received Consultancy Measure and Education Measure (Tuncel, 2016, p. 24). In similar studies, it was found that in a large part of the children who were given the Health Measure, the Consultancy Measure was also given by the court at the same time (Durduran et al., 2024, p. 50). The Education Measure and the Health Measure can be said to be directly related to the improvement of the child's education and health outcomes, but the Consultancy Measure stands out as a measure that is quite comprehensive and has abstract targets in this sense. Children's well-being may increase as their education and health outcomes improve. Nonetheless, there is a need for more complex and comprehensive support for family integration. At this point, Consultancy Measure focuses on the psychological and social aspects of both the child and the family (Bolat & Özkoçak, 2020, p. 598). Merely meeting children's care and protection needs is not enough for their healthy development (Özcan, 2023, p. 65). A child who has a traumatic history, who is involved in crime, or who is a victim of crime needs to adapt to the changing conditions within the family. Even if the child's outcomes are improved, there is a need for counseling regarding the family's acceptance of the child and the attitude and behavior they will show towards the child. The practitioner of Consultancy Measure is expected to manage many dynamics directly related to the child and family. For example, a Consultancy Measure can be applied to the family of a child who is a victim of sexual abuse because there is a possibility that this child, whose psychology may be negatively affected, will later engage in similar actions (Tekeli & Çetli, 2019, p. 244-245). Similarly, the Consultancy Measure can be assigned to children who have been dragged into crime, and within the scope of this measure, in addition to adaptation to their family and social environment, issues such as anger management support is also requested (Ünal, 2019, p. 216).

The literature findings show that boys are more likely to commit crimes than girls and, therefore, receive more Consultancy Measures (Karakuş & Tekin, 2012, p. 37; Pelit & Alkan, 2022, p. 61). In parallel, a study conducted with all children receiving Consultancy Measure in Erzurum province of Türkiye reported that 82% were boys and 17% were girls (Bayoğlu, 2013, p. 50-51). On the other

hand, a study conducted by Günaydın (2022, p. 49) with children receiving Consultancy Measure in Burdur province found that 24 of the children were girls and 16 were boys. Günaydın claims that this difference is due to the pressure exerted on girls by the traditional structure of Burdur province of Türkiye. The fact that children receiving Consultancy Measure and children dragged into crime are more likely to be boys in Türkiye necessitates further gender-specific studies on this issue. The reason why girls in provinces with traditional family structures like Burdur need more Consultancy Measures can be explained by the patriarchal system. It can be thought that as the pressure on girls in these cities increases, children may become more open to influence from their surroundings and have difficulty finding a balance. Lack of experience can make it difficult for children to perceive and adapt to new experiences. Pressure and lack of control create negativity in the same way, and balance is needed. The measure given by the court for this purpose is Consultancy Measure. In addition to the efforts of policymakers to develop a nationwide standard and take measures on this issue, it would be beneficial to make decisions on Consultancy Measures according to the cultural characteristics specific to cities.

Some theories defend the view that individuals' psychological health in continuing their adult lives depends on their childhood experiences (Erdoğan & Tuncer, 2018, p. 475). However, children cannot overcome every experience on their own because children are defined as individuals who are not sufficiently mature in social, psychological, cultural, and mental senses and are still in the maturation process (Kuruca & Işıklı, 2022, p. 49). In this sense, the main difference that separates children who are dragged into crime from criminal adults is that their personality development is not fully formed due to various reasons (Pelit & Alkan, 2022, p. 54). In this regard, the characteristics of children that distinguish them from adults need to be considered when practitioners apply Consultancy Measure. Children's immature personalities are much more open to change (Riyadi et al., 2023, p. 21). For example, it is claimed that children with a low perception of success may become involved in crime because they cannot show themselves academically (Bayoğlu, 2013, p. 52). Contrary to the beliefs and personality structure established in adults, children try different ways. Criminal behavior may seem like the only way for a child without options and guidance. In this sense, the literature indicates that family members are not always supportive and sometimes even harmful, which is why the Consultancy Measure is needed. For example, looking at a thesis study demonstrating the situations that caused Consultancy Measure to be given to children in Ankara province of Türkiye in 2016, 44.3% of them are family neglect, 29.3% are family or close circle abuse, 8.4% are children dragged into crime, 10.3% are children who are victims of crime, 8.7% are children whose Care Measure had just been lifted (Mutluoğlu, 2019, p. 113). When the protective and supportive nature of the family begins to decrease, Consultancy Measure is an application that can boost the child and family. Children can acquire false beliefs by being exposed to too many stimuli in the absence of control. For instance, the fact that a child who received Consultancy Measure defined the crime the child committed as a crime but not a bad crime shows the belief that crime has different dimensions according to that child (Tekgöz-Obuz, 2019, p. 152). This perception of the child

necessitates improving awareness and professional work regarding false beliefs of the child. Furthermore, Yeni Yol (2019, p. 100) reported in a study examining children who received Consultancy Measure that 72% of these children were found to have various levels of depression. For these children who are likely to have mental health problems, receiving Advisory Measure support from a mental health specialist who is a social worker, psychologist, or psychological counselor in coordination with the hospital can significantly reduce the child's health problems. In this sense, some studies report that Consultancy Measure is effective for children. In a study examining the effects of Consultancy Measure decisions on adolescents, 55% reported that it was beneficial, 25% reported that it had no effect, and 20% were undecided (Günaydın, 2022, p. 42). At this point, it should not be forgotten that Consultancy Measure is not a magic wand because if support from parents is not received and parental outcomes are not improved at the same rate, the improvement in child outcomes may be very short-term and ineffective. Thus, parents are the most fundamental pillar of the children's development process in order to increase the impact of the Advisory Measure on children and to provide permanent support after the Advisory Measure ends.

According to Çifci (2009, p. 59), child welfare services worldwide have evolved through three distinct stages. Initially, children were placed in large group homes. Over time, the adverse effects of these large institutions became apparent, leading to a shift towards smaller group care settings. Finally, it has been recognized that caring for children within their biological families is the preferred approach. In Türkiye, a new understanding of the world has emerged, and the Consultancy Measure has been implemented as a crucial protective and preventive tool for supporting at-risk children within their families. The US Family First Preventive Services Act can be put forward as a similar practice in America. This practice aims to support the family in order to keep the child with their family as much as possible (Testa & Kelly, 2020, p. 70). In America, the aim is to integrate the child into the family (Erükçü-Akbaş & Öztürk, 2022, p. 89). According to the basis of the Family First Preventive Services Act, the most basic systems in the child's life are addressed and improved (Swenson & Schaeffer, 2019, s. 144). It is important to consider the effects of various systems, such as schools and neighborhoods, on the child and to consider the child within these systems. This perspective is valuable in that it takes into account the context emphasized by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The Consultancy Measure, similar to the practice in the United States, considers the child within the family system and is encouraged to work with other systems.

Consultancy Measure and Parents

Parents' attitudes and behaviors are crucial for children's development (Tösten et al., 2017, p. 171). According to social control theory, risky behaviors likely emerge in children who lack control and connection (Tekgöz-Obuz, 2019, p. 200). A parent's abusive attitude as well as neglectful attitude can negatively affect the child's outcomes. A thesis study conducted with 100 adolescents who received Consultancy Measure in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul province of Türkiye determined that 45 of them developed a dismissive attachment, and the majority perceived their parents as

neglectful (Özgen, 2015, p. 90). In parallel, parents of children who received Consultancy Measure stated that their own indifference was influential in the crime incidents experienced by their children (Tekgöz-Obuz, 2019, p. 122). In a social environment where parents are ineffective in protecting children, and there are negative role models, children need to be monitored and supported (İzci & Mazman, 2021, p. 167). At this point, Consultancy Measure comes into play. In a sensitive case like child victims of abuse, Consultancy Measure improves outcomes for both the child and the parent by regulating the parents' attitudes and behaviors towards the child (Türk et al., 2021, p. 242). In the case study of Türkmen and Erükçü-Akbaş (2021), a counseling measure was decided as a result of the sexual abuse of a fifteen-year-old girl by an adult man. The intervention phase was aimed at overcoming the crisis that the child and the family were in, minimizing the effects of the trauma, restoring social functionality, and returning to the normal course of life. As part of the intervention, interviews were conducted with the child, the family, and the school system. The course of a traumatized child is also affected by the parent's response to the child's trauma (Ünver & Karakaya, 2019, p. 302). Therefore, any information, guidance, and support provided to the parent directly affects the child. In the absence of parental support or unsuccessful parenting, the child's educational and health outcomes are also negatively affected (Avcı & Can, 2020, p. 10; Bayrak & Ekici, 2021, p. 438). That is why when Education and Health Measures are decided, Consultancy Measure is also often given according to the parent's current needs.

The literacy levels of parents of children receiving Consultancy Measure have been discussed frequently in the literature. The parent's education levels of these children are pretty low (Mutluoğlu, 2019, p. 109). As a result of the low level of education, these parents who cannot provide proper and sufficient guidance to their children also have low employment status and income levels, which increases the risk status of the children (Arıkan, 2021, p. 257). Similarly, in a different study, it was found that half of the parents of children receiving Consultancy Measure were divorced, in addition to having a low education level (Durduran et al., 2024, p. 50). In cases such as arguments, fights, and contentious divorce processes between parents, Consultancy Measure is essential because children are damaged (Akdağ, 2023, p. 157). Parents generally state that the Consultancy Measure has improved them in terms of psychological support, spiritual well-being, getting rid of negative behaviors, gaining awareness about raising children, gaining awareness about themselves, enhancing communication between spouses, guidance, and becoming aware of the institution's different services (Mutluoğlu, 2019, p. 123). Considering that the parents of children are at risk of crime generally have low education levels and are in adverse conditions, improving the outcomes of the parents is essential in contributing to the long-term development of the child. In addition to counseling the child, the child's outcomes can be improved by informing and guiding parents on issues such as education, health, and employment. The complex structure of the family reveals the need to support all members of the family, as well as the child. Nonetheless, its functionality also needs to be supported as it accommodates different dynamics within the family system. In this sense, Consultancy Measure, which has a broad scope and prioritizes support for the whole family, targets

not only the child and parent but also the family dynamics. Therefore, family support is essential for reinforcing a child's progress during counseling and sustaining those improvements afterward.

Home visits with The Consultancy Measure are not a practice specific to Türkiye. Home visit programs have become increasingly popular in the United States because supporting children with different characteristics in their living spaces is considered a valuable and effective strategy (Tunçer, 2019, p. 140). It is also important to consider at-risk children within various ecological systems and assess how their environment's elements impact the child's development. In this sense, family group conferencing in the United States is an intervention that encourages collaboration by including different individuals, such as extended family members, in addition to social workers and parents (Olson, 2009, p. 53). Unlike family group conferencing, the Consultancy Measure involves separate sessions with the child and parent. It uses collaboration when deemed necessary.

Consultancy Measure and Family Functioning

Family functioning is a term that indicates how well family members get along with each other and work together (Bagherabadi et al., 2020, p. 2). When a family experiences a crisis and family functioning is affected, Consultancy Measure steps in to resolve this crisis, restore functionality to the family, and ensure that the child grows up in a functional family (Bağdat, 2018, p. 63). Family is an institution that protects the child from all kinds of risks and dangers (İzci, 2020, p. 141). Since children have a sensitive structure, they can be guided correctly about the difficulties in their lives in a family environment where they are approached with love and tolerance (Avcı & Can, 2020, p. 11). Günaydın (2022, p. 63) found that if family functionality is high for adolescents who receive Consultancy Measures, the social support they receive from their friends and teachers is also high. For these reasons, the decision made by the judge about the child prioritizes the child being supported while living with the family. In this sense, the most applied decision by the court in Türkiye is the Consultancy Measure (Arıkan, 2022, p. 140-141). It is vital for the family institution to survive by improving family functionality and for the child to benefit from this family institution at the maximum level. With this consciousness, Türkiye has a ministry directly supporting families and child welfare. In this regard, The Ministry of Family and Social Services is one of the most significant stakeholder institutions supporting families and children in Türkiye and is among the executors of Consultancy Measure (Aktay, 2020, p. 78). Thus, family functionality, as one of the predictors of child well-being, is among the critical targets of the Consultancy Measure.

Many studies in the literature emphasize that children in families with impaired family functioning are more in need of Consultancy Measure and that the child's involvement in crime arises from this impaired functioning. In this regard, Tekgöz-Obuz (2019, p. 254) put forward that, according to the child's perception, the lack of a positive family environment is associated with being dragged into crime. Similarly, it is reported that the probability of the child experiencing abuse increases as a result of risk factors related to family dynamics (Bayrak & Ekici, 2021, p. 443). In this sense, Karakuş

and Tekin (2012, p. 42) claim that children whose physiological and psychological needs are not met by the family will look for new environments to satisfy these needs and make many mistakes when they cannot return to the family as a safe haven. From this point of view, a functional family reduces the child's exposure to outside risk factors by reducing dependency on others while meeting the child's needs. If the family begins to lose functionality or does not know how to help the child with this functionality, Consultancy Measure comes into play (Dursun & Atamtürk, 2023, p. 173; Öztürk et al., 2024, p. 169). When the practitioner contacts the family and child together, they can regain their healthy functioning during Consultancy Measure (İzci & Mazman, 2021, p. 161). In addition, it would be helpful to include individuals with whom the child is directly related, such as teachers, in the studies within the scope of the Consultancy Measure. (Bolat & Özkoçak, 2020, p. 601). The teacher, who observes the child in school, can provide new information to the family. Within the scope of the Consultancy Measure, family dynamics can be strengthened thanks to the different systems that the practitioner brings together and makes a holistic evaluation (Bağdat, 2018, p. 45). Thanks to family-focused planned meetings, Consultancy Measure increases functionality by solving family problems (Bilgin, 2020, p. 33).

Various countries worldwide seek to enhance child welfare by improving the functionality of family systems. For example, social workers collaborate with families in Italy to enhance their functionality in promoting child welfare (Segatto et al., 2023, p. 343). Similarly, in Ireland, social services that aim to improve child welfare are attempting to increase family functionality in order to provide an optimal living place for the child (Devaney & Gregor, 2017, p. 1259). In parallel with the practices in the world, importance is given to considering the child within the family system in Türkiye. Even if family functionality is not always at the forefront in the child and parent sessions structured with the Consultancy Measure, practitioners who notice poor family functioning prioritize improving this situation.

Consultancy Measure and Practitioners

In Türkiye, the legal framework of Consultancy Measure is defined with sharp boundaries. The Consultancy Measure is regulated in detail by whom and within what framework it is implemented. The institutions that take responsibility for the implementation of the Consultancy Measure in Türkiye are the Ministry of Family and Social Services, the Ministry of National Education, and the Ministry of Justice (Elmacı, 2021, p. 416). The officers implementing the Consultancy Measure are professionals who graduated from institutions providing education in the fields of psychological counseling and guidance, psychology, sociology, child development, education, family and consumer sciences, and social work in accordance with Article 3/1-e of the Child Protection Law No. 5395 (Saruç & Güneş, 2014, p. 116). In terms of different practices around the world, the dual practitioner model, consisting of a psychology specialist focusing on the child and a social services specialist focusing on the family, is applied in Chile (de-Toro Consuagra et al., 2024, p. 57). On the contrary, in Türkiye, the Consultancy Measure is applied by a single practitioner and is expected to

continue both child and family interviews. Compared to Chile, in Türkiye, the Consultancy Measure practitioner, who has to manage the case alone, may need consultation and supervision support to progress effectively.

The Consultancy Measure decided by the judge to be applied to the child begins as soon as it is notified to the practitioner (Bolat & Özkoçak, 2020, p. 601). After the first meeting with the family, the Consultancy Measure is notified to the practitioner, the individual and family goals to be achieved are decided, and the "Implementation Plan" is prepared (Official Gazette, 2006). After a few individual and family goals are determined, the work to be done and who will be involved in these works are identified. The "Implementation Plan" prepared within the first 10 days for the notified Consultancy Measure is sent to the relevant court with the signatures of the practitioner, the child, and the parent. All these procedures are mandatory; if they are not carried out, the practitioners are considered not to have performed their duties as civil servants.

Consultancy Measure, subject to sanctions, has a strict working procedure. In the Consultancy Measure, the practitioner must meet with the child every week and with the family at least once every two weeks and provide the family with the necessary guidance on how to raise the child and cope with other problems encountered (Hopancı et al., 2019, p. 16-17). Every three months, a report about the Consultancy Measure is sent to the court by the practitioner (Dursun & Atamtürk, p. 178). This report, called the "Implementation Evaluation Report", reports how much of the "Implementation Plan" targets have been achieved. Unlike the Consultancy Measure carried out in Türkiye, there are differences in practices worldwide. Lin and Lee (2016, p. 1136) indicate that in the United States, family preservation program workers are expected to spend at least 5-12 hours per week, but they have fewer than 6 cases so that they can do intensive work with a low workload. On the contrary, they add that in similar practices in Taiwan, social workers cannot allocate enough time because they have caseloads of more than 50. In Türkiye, the Consultancy Measure is applied by officials in different ministries with different workloads, making it difficult to assess their workload and how much it affects the services they provide. Based on the example of the United States and Taiwan, employing a sufficient number of practitioners and optimizing their workload is a critical issue in order to work intensively on their Consultancy Measures.

The complete and accurate implementation of the Consultancy Measure is crucial. If the Consultancy Measure is insufficient and inconclusive, the implementation of the Care Measure comes to the fore (Tokuç & Duyan, 2021, p. 53). In other words, if the practitioner concludes that the Consultancy Measure is no longer functional and the child's outcomes are deteriorating, the child may be removed from the family and placed in institutional care as a last resort. Since this situation is undesirable, it is critical that the practitioner should effectively support the child within the scope of the Consultancy Measure in the family. In this regard, Öztürk et al. (2024, p. 183) claim that practitioners experience difficulties in achieving their goals in Consultancy Measure decisions. Likewise, Aldemir (2011, p. 101) indicates that there are problems in the Consultancy Measure application, such as workload,

lack of personnel, lack of support from other public institutions, and lack of continuity of meetings. These findings, obtained in the thesis published by Aldemir in 2011, were also emphasized in other studies conducted in the following years. In the study of Mutluoğlu (2019, p. 125-126), it was found that practitioners who applied Consultancy Measures in addition to their work in their own institution could not carry out effective Consultancy Measures due to lack of time and workload. In this study, it is suggested that it would be more beneficial to establish a unit that will only deal with Consultancy Measure files and their implementation. More importantly, Akay et al. (2019, p. 910) indicate that the Consultancy Measure sometimes seems to be done as a formality on paper due to the mandatory assignment rather than volunteering and the workload. Many studies report that the Consultancy Measure should be communicated to the practitioner voluntarily to avoid being perceived as additional work (Başar, 2023, p. 41). Furthermore, there is a need to establish a unit that specializes solely in implementing Consultancy Measure decisions and does not have any other additional work (Bağdat, 2018, p. 1; Bayoğlu, 2013, p. 32). Although the Consultancy Measure was put into practice with the Child Protection Law in 2005 and has been researched in very few studies, most of which have mentioned the workload in practice. The psychological counselors working in the Ministry of National Education are expected to implement the Consultancy Measure decision while continuing their work with students in school during working hours. Similarly, officers from various professions working at the Ministry of Family and Social Services are expected to implement Consultancy Measures in addition to the entire workload they do in their workplaces. Apart from the fee given for the first application, no extra payment is provided for other Consultancy Measure applications, and each application expected after the first file is expected to be done free of charge as the institution's work. All studies addressing the flaw in practice only emphasize the need to establish a particular unit that implements only Consultancy Measure decisions, but it is noticeable that this request has not been realized for many years. The thorough implementation of the theoretical idea of the Consultancy Measure, which is quite essential, can further improve the progress made in the development of the child welfare field in Türkiye.

The practitioner in the field of social work needs to have a holistic view (Sağlam, 2024, p. 97). The Consultancy Measure practitioner should consider the child and the systems, such as the family and school in which the child is involved (Karadağ & Kolbüken, 2022, p. 98). From this point of view, Consultancy Measure is an application area that is more comprehensive than other measures and includes others (İzci & Mazman, 2021, p. 161). Families also mention that practitioners should involve other systems during the Consultancy Measure (Tekgöz-Obuz, 2019, p. 248). Taken all together, Consultancy Measure creates an intensive process that requires frequent meetings and is expected to involve many systems in practice. Nevertheless, practitioners clearly need time, energy, and motivation to carry out the Consultancy Measure process effectively. However, there is no unit specialized in this field in Türkiye yet. Moreover, there is currently no feedback mechanism to measure whether the Consultancy Measure is carried out effectively and to what extent the expert works successfully with the cases (Bağdat, 2018, p. 103). Even if feedback mechanisms are

currently established, It can be predicted that practitioners may benefit less from feedback with low effort due to high workload. That is why specialized units are needed. If specialized units are established for Consultancy Measure decisions in Türkiye, a more effective application can be achieved by changing practitioners' perceptions. Since it envisages therapeutic and informative meetings with individuals who have experienced traumatic life events, it would be beneficial for Consultancy Measure practitioners to receive more training and be supported to carry out more effective work. Currently, Consultancy Measure practitioners receive payment for their first application, continue the application using the institution's facilities, communicate with the court through the institution, and proceed in coordination with stakeholder institutions. If practitioners carry out their practices with less workload, more feedback, and on a voluntary basis, the efficiency of the practices will increase exponentially.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Child welfare is on the agenda all over the world. In this regard, countries implement numerous child welfare policies. Since children are a disadvantaged group, countries prioritize this area specifically. The fact that children are a vulnerable group necessitates their protection. The greatest protector and supporter of children is their families. However, families may not always be able to provide sufficient support to their children or may themselves be in need of support. In this case, it is wrong to separate the children directly from their families and take them into institutional care because the optimal environment for the development of children is the healthy family. With this awareness, countries like the United States take various precautions and implement support programs before institutional care. Since Türkiye is aware of this need, it enacted the Child Protection Law No. 5395 in 2005 and initiated the Consultancy Measure application, which aims to support the children and their families. The practices of countries worldwide focus on evaluating the child within the family system and shed light on the factors that impact the child, including other ecological systems. Since the most basic system is the family, family functionality is the main target of the countries for the optimal development of the child. At this point, The Consultancy Measure in Türkiye considers the child within the family system and aims to eliminate the risk situation within different systems. Unlike models in other countries where more than one practitioner acts in coordination, the Consultancy Measure requires consultation and supervision support since it involves a single practitioner. While it is sufficient for mild cases to be handled by a single practitioner within the scope of The Consultancy Measure, it may be beneficial to appoint more than one practitioner for cases that are considered to be a serious risk for the child.

Consultancy Measure, whose legal framework is clearly defined, has been widely applied in Türkiye from the past to the present but has remained barren regarding research. There are a small number of theses and research articles on Consultancy Measure, with almost no resources in English. It is

thought that this study is crucial in terms of introducing the Consultancy Measure practice, which is unique to Türkiye, to foreign literature. Being the first review on this subject that is written in English, the study makes a great contribution to the field. Another strength of this study is that the authors are practitioners of Consultancy Measure, so they can effectively evaluate the literature findings with real-life practices of Consultancy Measure. Consultancy Measures applied in line with the legal framework do not differ in practice, but there are long-standing, agreed-upon suggestions in the literature to increase its effectiveness. In this sense, literature findings have reported similar results for many years, but the fact that this parallel change has not been achieved in practice is a significant handicap. Several thesis and research articles suggest that establishing a specialized unit for the Consultancy Measure may be beneficial in order to regulate the workload and strengthen the feedback mechanism. Since the Consultancy Measure is critical for children and their families, there is a need for immediate changes regarding this application. Gender-specific studies should be conducted in Turkish literature on this subject because some findings suggest the significance of gender as a variable.

The current situation of the parents, as well as the practitioners, has a considerable impact on the child. Since children are with their families more than the practitioners, their families are strengthened through Consultancy Measure. Family members guided by the practitioner provide the child with information and support they could not provide before. It is claimed that a dysfunctional family is at the root of child problems such as involvement in crime, abuse, withdrawal from education, and mental health problems. That is why the practitioner supports the child and family members by interviewing them together and examining the family dynamics in detail. If parents are supported with their children and family functionality is restored, the Consultancy Measure is terminated, and the family is expected to become a protective factor for the child. Taken all together, the desired change of the child is not possible only with the child's own efforts and the work of the practitioner; at this point, the well-being of the parents must be improved by ensuring family functionality. Thus, the four pillars of the Consultancy Measure are children, parents, family functioning, and practitioners.

Ministries and relevant stakeholders in Türkiye are making great efforts to carry out the Consultancy Measure. It is obvious that the benefits of the Consultancy Measure will increase due to a few adjustments made in light of the findings of the literature. Consultancy Measure, developed and implemented specifically for Türkiye, is trying to be an important and successful policy proposal that can be implemented in the field of child welfare for all countries.

CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCHERS

The authors contributed equally to the study.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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