






# The Examination of the Counseling Supervision Effect on Personal and Professional Development of First-Time Supervisees

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated how clinical supervision affects the personal and professional development of first-time supervisees. The explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was employed in the study. Quantitative data was collected using a single group pretest-posttest experimental design to evaluate the impact of supervision on the personal and professional development of counselors in training. Individual interviews were conducted with 51 volunteer participants who were counselors in training at a state university in western Türkiye. Paired-sample t-tests were used to analyze the quantitative data, while content analysis was employed for the qualitative data. The findings showed that supervision significantly enhanced the counselors in training's effective counselor characteristics and self-awareness management strategies. However, there were no significant differences in hindering self-awareness and professional disposition. The qualitative analysis revealed that counselors in training who participated in supervision gained a deeper understanding of counseling procedures and techniques, increased trust in the profession, and improved self-efficacy. Counselors in training also highlighted the positive impact of their supervisor and group supervision format on their development. The results of the study suggest the significance of supervision in counselor education. It is recommended that the variables included in the current research and the effect of supervision should be examined in more studies.

### Keywords:

Clinical supervision, first-time supervisee, personal development, professional development, supervisor

## 1. Introduction

In counselor training, counselors need to gain practical skills as well as theoretical knowledge to provide effective help. For counselor candidates to become qualified practitioners, they must not only possess theoretical knowledge but also gain hands-on experience by undertaking counseling sessions. In this regard, supervision is an indispensable component of counselor education to ensure that counselor candidates can effectively apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired in practice (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Hiatt, 2022; Koçyiğit, 2020). Supervision, which is underpinned by the guidance of a more experienced and competent professional (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019), plays a critical role in the personal and professional development of the counselor candidates (Ladany et al., 2013; Sabella et al., 2022).

The three main objectives of supervision are a) contributing to the personal and professional development of counselors, b) ensuring that they are competent; and c) increasing their counseling skills (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Borders & Brown, 2005; Bradley & Boyd, 1989). In addition to these main objectives, supervision also

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ensures the ethical appropriateness of counseling practices (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). It is essential to accomplish these objectives of supervision in order to generate qualified counselors and enhance the quality of counseling services. In the literature, some commonly accepted characteristics of effective counselors are noted. The characteristics of an effective counselor can be listed as being able to balance interpersonal and technical competencies (Cormier & Cormier, 1991); having a good command of basic and advanced counseling skills, being able to work with client populations whose needs vary; being empathetic and having effective communication skills (Larson & Daniels, 1998); being sensitive to diversity, competent, and reliable (Hackney & Cormier, 2008). Studies related to the characteristics of an effective counselor have shown that counseling conducted by counselors possessing high confidence, communication skills, psychological resilience, and self-efficacy is most likely to be effective (Anderson et al., 2016; de Jong et al., 2012; Pereira et al., 2017; Yayla & İkiz, 2017). Therefore, it can be argued that the quality of counseling services can be enhanced by training counselors with the necessary characteristics of an effective counselor. In Türkiye, research related to the characteristics of an effective counselor has been an area of increasing interest in recent times, yet with limited studies (İkiz & Totan, 2014; Korkut Owen & Dost, 2020). This highlights the need for more research on effective counselor characteristics in Türkiye.

In recent years, there has been a strong emphasis in counseling literature on both academic and non-academic personal and professional characteristics as requisites of effective practitioners. It thus becomes apparent that counselors must not only possess certain specific knowledge and skills but must also be equipped with non-academic attributes as part of their training (Korkut-Owen, 2021). The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) defines these non-academic characteristics of counselors as professional dispositions (CACREP, 2015). Among the professional dispositions of counselors are traits such as responsibility, respect, honesty, and self-awareness (Korkut-Owen, 2021). Even though strides have been taken to incorporate these qualities, which are of immense importance to the growth of counselors-in-training, into counseling education, the amount of research into the impact of supervision on counselors' professional dispositions is still limited (Pompeo & Levitt, 2014; Sabella et al., 2020). Studies have examined the effect of supervision on counselors' professional dispositions such as their empathy level (Birk, 1972), cognitions (Borders et al., 1996), well-being (Ohrt et al., 2015; Steinhelber et al., 1984), self-efficacy (Brooks, 2014; Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Meola et al., 2022), and self-awareness (Borders, 1990; Raichelson et al., 1997). The findings of these studies showed that supervision has a positive effect on counselors' professional dispositions such as self-efficacy, self-awareness, and empathy level (Birk, 1972; Borders, 1990; Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Landon et al., 2021; Sabella et al., 2020). However, studies on professional dispositions are almost nonexistent in Türkiye (Korkut-Owen, 2021). Thus, it can be argued that this remains a subject in need of further investigation within the context of Türkiye.

It is essential to set apart self-awareness among the professional dispositions of counselors. Rogers (1957) asserted that self-awareness is necessary for basic counseling conditions such as empathy and congruence and is a vital component in the development of counselor candidates. Rogers (1957) underlined the notion of self-awareness, which is essential for counselors to recognize their feelings, cognitions, and behaviors, as well as to gain insight into the counseling relationship (Pompeo & Levitt, 2014). However, despite the acknowledged significance of self-awareness, recent research highlights that heightened self-awareness during sessions may, paradoxically, hinder rather than help, leading to what is termed 'hindering self-awareness' (Fauth & Williams, 2005). Momentary self-awareness can cause counselors to become overwhelmed by negative thoughts and heightened anxiety, ultimately impairing the counseling process. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as hindering self-awareness (Williams, 2008; Williams et al., 1997). Van Wagoner et al. (1991) suggest that it is crucial for counselors to manage this anxiety and control hindering self-awareness during sessions. To manage hindering self-awareness, the literature suggests several strategies, including keeping the focus on the client, returning to basic counseling skills, and utilizing techniques such as positive self-talk, thought stopping, and deep breathing (Wei et al., 2017; Williams et al., 1997). Supervisors play a pivotal role in supporting counselors to implement these strategies and in guiding counselor candidates to develop insight and manage hindering self-awareness effectively. By emphasizing the concept of hindering self-awareness, this study highlights the crucial role of supervisors and aims to bring greater attention to this issue in future research within the context of Türkiye.

Consequently, for a considerable amount of time, the scholarly community has highlighted the need for counselors to acquire academic knowledge, skills, and qualifications through counselor education (Hiatt, 2022). It has been noted that besides academic skills, non-academic attributes should also be developed in counselor training (CACREP, 2015; Pompeo & Levitt, 2014). This is also an emerging focus in Türkiye (Daşçı et al., 2017; İkiz & Totan, 2014). Nevertheless, despite the proliferation of studies conducted on supervision in Türkiye over the past two decades (Aladağ, 2014; Denizli et al., 2009; Koçyiğit, 2022; Meydan, 2015; Pamukçu et al., 2023), the number of studies that simultaneously address both supervision and the personal and professional capacities of counseling candidates is comparatively scant. Bearing in mind that the primary aim of supervision is to facilitate the individual and professional growth of counselors, additional research is warranted to explore the effects of supervision on the personal and professional development of counseling candidates. From this perspective, this investigation sought to examine the effect of supervision on the personal and professional growth of counseling candidates. Accordingly, the research questions were posed as follows: For the quantitative part: *'What is the effect of supervision on the counselor candidates' level of gaining effective counselor characteristics, hindering self-awareness and their professional dispositions?'* and for the qualitative part: *'What are the opinions of counselor candidates on the contribution of supervision to their personal and professional development?'* The variables addressed in the current study have been examined together for the first time. Moreover, to thoroughly comprehend the effect of supervision on these aspects, a mixed approach was adopted in which qualitative and quantitative methods were combined. All things considered, it is perceived that the current research is an original study and will make an impact on the literature of supervision and training of counselors in Türkiye.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research Model

In this study, the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was used. As it is known, the explanatory sequential design consists of two stages. Initially, quantitative data was extracted from the participants, and then this data was supplemented, elucidated, and exemplified by the data generated from qualitative methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In the present study, quantitative data was initially obtained through a single group pretest-posttest experimental design to elucidate the impact of supervision on the personal and professional development of counselor candidates. Subsequently, individual interviews were conducted with the volunteer participants. With the collection of qualitative data, quantitative data was supplemented and expounded.

### 2.2. Research Sample

The participants in the quantitative portion of the inquiry were 51 counseling candidates enrolled in the Faculty of Education of a state university in Türkiye, each of whom was receiving their first supervision. The selection criteria for participants were that they were receiving clinical supervision for the first time and had voluntarily agreed to take part in the research. Counselor candidates conducted their counseling sessions and supervision within the scope of the Individual Counseling Practice course in Psychological Counseling and Guidance undergraduate program in Türkiye. Of the participants, 37 (72.5%) were female and 14 (27.5%) were male. The age of the individuals enrolled in the study varied from 21 to 24 ( $M = 22.27$ ,  $sd = .75$ ). During the supervision process, 76.5% of the participants conducted counseling with one client, 21.5% with two clients, and 2% with three clients. The total number of counseling sessions conducted by the counselor candidates ranged from 6 to 12 ( $M = 9.19$ ,  $sd = 1.61$ ), and the total number of supervision sessions ranged from 8 to 14 ( $M = 11.63$ ,  $sd = 1.98$ ). Afterward, quantitative research was followed up with qualitative interviews of 11 individuals who volunteered among the counselor candidates.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

In the study, the Effective Counselor Characteristics Assessment Scale (İkiz & Totan, 2014), Self-Awareness and Management Strategies Scales for Counselor Candidates (Daşçı et al., 2017), and Professional Disposition Scale for Counselor Candidates (Korkut Owen et al., 2018) were used to collect quantitative data. The Semi-structured Interview Form developed by the researchers was utilized in the qualitative study undertaken to investigate the experiences of the participants concerning the supervisory process. Lastly, a Demographic Information Form was employed to acquire demographic data concerning the participants.

*Effective Counselor Characteristics Assessment Scale (ECCAS):* ECCAS was developed by İkiz and Totan (2014) to measure the counselors' perception of how effective they find themselves in the profession. ECCAS includes a total of 26 items and six sub-dimensions (intellectual competency, energy, flexibility, support, goodwill, and self-awareness). The items on the scale are answered on a 5-point Likert scale. In the scale, score calculations can be made for both sub-dimensions and the whole scale. In this study, the total score calculation of the ECCAS was used. Total scores for ECCAS range from 26 to 130; higher scores reflect a higher perception of being an effective counselor. İkiz and Totan (2014) reported the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of ECCAS as .90 and the test-retest reliability coefficient as .74. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the ECCAS for pretest and posttest scores were .91 and .92, respectively.

*Self-awareness and Management Strategies (SAMS) Scales for Counselor Candidates:* SAMS was developed by Williams et al. (2003) and adapted into Turkish by Daşçı et al. (2017) to evaluate the strategies used by the counselor to manage the hindering self-awareness and the factors that reduce or distribute self-awareness. There are a total of 25 items on the scale. Respondents are asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale. In the original study (Williams et al., 2003), Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the were reported as .76 and .73 for self-awareness and management subscales, respectively. Daşçı et al. (2017) reported strong psychometric properties in the Turkish adaptation study. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of self-awareness and management subscales for pretest scores were .85 and .81, respectively. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of self-awareness and management subscales for posttest scores were .79 and .74, respectively.

*Professional Disposition Scale For Counselor Candidates (PDSCC):* PDSCC was developed by Korkut-Owen et al. (2018) to measure the professional disposition of counselor candidates. PDSCC includes a total of 40 items and six sub-dimensions (diversity tolerance, compassionate communication with clients, prosocial tendency, positive attitude toward life, self-awareness/self-control, and openness to new experiences). The items on the scale are answered on a 5-point Likert scale. In the scale, score calculations can be made for both sub-dimensions and the whole scale. In this study, the total score of the PDSCC was used. The total scores for PDSCC range from 40 to 200; higher scores reflect how closely the professional disposition traits align with the desired traits. Korkut-Owen et al. (2018) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficient of PDSCC as .89 and the test-retest reliability coefficient as .81. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the PDSCC for pretest and posttest scores were .94 and .92, respectively.

*Semi-structured Interview Form:* In order to explore the effect of supervision on the counselor candidates' level of gaining effective counselor characteristics, hindering self-awareness, self-awareness management strategies, as well as their professional dispositions, a semi-structured interview form was developed by the researchers. The form consists of five open-ended questions. 'Can you explain the effects of the supervision (not practice) you received this semester on your professional development (the profession of counseling and the process of becoming a counselor) by giving examples?', 'How would your development be affected if you did not receive supervision for counseling sessions?', 'Can you explain the effects of the supervision (not practice) you received this semester on your counselor characteristics?', 'Can you explain the effects of the supervision (not practice) you received this semester on your self-awareness and management strategies?', 'Can you explain the effects of the supervision (not practice) you received this semester on your professional dispositions (attitude towards the profession)?' are examples of the questions in the interview form. Theoretical explanations and empirical findings were employed in the construction of the interview form, and after the interview form was prepared, feedback was received from two experts with qualitative research experience and a PhD in counseling. The interview form was revised within the framework of the expert views, and a pilot study was conducted with a volunteer participant prior to applications. After the pilot study, the interview form was finalized and used in the main study.

*Demographic Information Form:* The researchers developed the form to get socio-demographic information regarding the participants. The form contained queries regarding gender, age, the number of counseling sessions, the number of weeks under supervision, and the number of clients served.

#### **2.4. Procedure**

This research was conducted within the framework of the decision numbered 2022/17-1 taken at Aydın Adnan Menderes University Educational Research Ethics Committee meeting. After obtaining the ethical committee's authorization, the data collection process was initiated from the predetermined sample. Before the first

supervision session, counselor candidates were apprised of the aim of the study, and their verbal consent for involvement was solicited. Participants filled out the scales before the first supervision session and after the last supervision session. Participants were asked to designate a pseudonym in order to impede any potential discrepancies in matching the pre-post test data. In the succeeding phase, after the supervision process ended, individual interviews were conducted with the volunteer participants. All interviews were led by the second author, and, preceding the interviews, written informed consent was procured from the participants.

*Supervision:* The counselor candidates received supervision for 14 weeks as part of the Individual Counseling Practice (ICP) course. Before the commencement of the supervision process within this course, the candidates were randomly assigned to one of four groups. Consequently, each supervision group comprised approximately 12-13 counselor candidates. Throughout the experimental procedure, the candidates were allowed to conduct counseling sessions with only one client at a time. For each session, they received both written and verbal feedback from their supervisors during designated supervision times, after which they proceeded to the next session. No feedback was provided outside of these designated supervision periods.

In addition to the counseling processes outlined above, the supervision process was structured through preliminary meetings with supervisors before the experimental procedure. The supervising faculty members (three women and one man) were selected based on their doctoral degrees in the field of counseling and a minimum of three years of experience supervising undergraduate counseling students. This ensured a basic level of comparable experience among the supervisors. Each supervisor conducted the supervision in a group format to mitigate any potential effects of the supervision format on the experimental process. The structure of the supervision process within the ICP course was designed to follow a consistent weekly routine. Each week, counselor candidates recorded their sessions and submitted written summaries to their supervisors by using a session summary form no later than one day before the supervision session. Supervisors provided written feedback on these summary forms before the supervision sessions. The session summary form was a structured form and consisted of certain sections to keep supervision in a certain format for experimental processes. These certain sections were general information about client and his/her issues/problems, session specific goals determined in supervision meeting, session summary written by counselor candidates, counseling skills and interventions used by counselor candidate in the counseling session, client's specific thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that counselor candidate's observed in the session, counselor candidate's thoughts and observations about client, effective sides of the session and what counselor candidate did to make them effective, difficult sides of the sessions and what counselor candidate did to cope with them, plans for next session and topics counselor candidate want to focus on in next supervision meeting. Briefly, the session summary form included both sections regarding counseling skills and interventions and sections regarding the internalized self-awareness (not hindering self-awareness). Through filling in each section of the session summary form, counselor candidates worked on their own personal and professional self-awareness and theoretical knowledge before supervision meetings. Then, they continued to work on their internalized self-awareness and theoretical knowledge during supervision by receiving feedback about the same sections from their supervisors and peers. Clearly, some sections of the session summary form pertain to counseling skills and interventions, while others relate to the counselor candidates' observations, thoughts, and feelings, in other words, their self-awareness. This approach ensures that both theoretical knowledge and self-awareness are addressed when working with counselor candidates, both before and during supervision. Thus, the aim of the supervision process in this study was to increase the effective counselor characteristics of counselor candidates, to make their hindering self-awareness manageable, and to increase their professional dispositions. For this purpose, throughout the supervision, supervisors employed methods such as Q&A, modeling, discussion, and role playing. At the end of each weekly supervision session, candidates had the opportunity to ask questions within the group setting and receive answers.

## **2.5. Data Analysis**

Before surveying the quantitative data, the precision of the data entries was established, and it was confirmed that no data was missing from the data set. Percentage, frequency, mean, range, and standard deviation values were calculated to report descriptive information about the participants. As the  $p$  values of the pretest and posttest scores were above .05, the assumption of normally distributed was accepted. Then, paired samples  $t$ -test was employed to assess the impact of supervision on counselor candidates' level of effective counselor characteristics, hindering self-awareness, self-awareness management strategies, and professional disposition.

Cohen's *d* coefficient (small = .20; medium = .50; large = .80) was calculated to determine the magnitude of the effect of supervision on each of the variables considered in the study (Cohen, 1988).

In the study, the qualitative data obtained from individual interviews were subjected to content analysis. Initially, interviews conducted with a total of 11 counselor candidates from four groups were transcribed. The written data were read twice by the authors, who then developed a code list based on the supervision literature and identified themes and sub-themes. Following this process, the first and second authors, both of whom hold doctoral degrees in counseling and have experience in qualitative research, independently performed the coding. To maintain confidentiality as well as to ensure validity and reliability, the candidates were assigned code names prior to the coding process. The researchers then compared their code lists and reached consensus. Finally, the findings were written within the framework of the themes, sub-themes, and codes and were supported by direct quotations.

## 2.6. Risk of Bias

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, certain precautions were taken by the researchers. Expert opinion was consulted during the analysis procedure of the research data. Confirmation was obtained from the participants to avoid misinterpretation of the data. Furthermore, while composing qualitative findings, participant statements were incorporated as direct quotations. To ensure consistency, the forms containing quantitative data and the transcribed interview records were preserved. For the sake of transferability, the research process is delineated in detail in the methods section (Gasson, 2004). The researchers hold a PhD degree in counseling and guidance and have several years of experience in the counseling profession. The researchers behaved carefully in the research in terms of methodology and ethics. The researchers also used a rigorous scientific framework to be accountable.

## 2.7. Ethical

Necessary approval for the use of scales in the study was obtained from the Educational Research Ethics Committee at Aydın Adnan Menderes University (Document Number: 2022/17-I).

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Quantitative Results

In the study, a single-group pretest-posttest experimental design was used to examine the effect of supervision on the level of effective counselor characteristics, hindering self-awareness, self-awareness management strategies, and professional dispositions among counselor candidates. To test the research hypothesis, a paired samples *t*-test was employed in the data analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of the Paired Samples *t*-test

Variables	<i>n</i>	Pre-test		Post-test		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Effect Size
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			Cohen's <i>d</i>
Effective counselor characteristics	51	101.84	11.50	107.21	11.47	-4.905	.000*	.47
Hindering self-awareness	51	30.57	5.97	29.84	5.45	.945	.349	.13
Self-awareness management strategies	51	47.36	7.13	52.67	6.55	5.302	.000*	.78
Professional disposition	51	149.84	17.33	149.67	8.46	.061	.951	.01

\*  $p < .001$ , Cohen's *d* effect size = .20 small, .50 medium, .80 large.

As displayed in Table 1, there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean scores in the variables of effective counselor characteristics and self-awareness management strategies. The analysis results suggested that supervision considerably enhanced counselor candidates' level of effective counselor characteristics ( $t_{(50)} = -4.905, p < .001$ ), and self-awareness management strategies ( $t_{(50)} = 5.302, p < .001$ ). Cohen's *d* values indicate that the magnitude of change in effective counselor characteristics from pretest to posttest is small while the magnitude of change in self-awareness management strategies from pretest to posttest is

medium (Cohen, 1988). However, no significant change was observed in terms of pretest-posttest mean scores in the variables of hindering self-awareness ( $t_{(50)} = .945, p > .05$ ) and professional disposition ( $t_{(50)} = .061, p > .05$ ).

### 3.2. Qualitative Results

The themes, sub-themes, and codes that emerged as a result of the content analysis of the qualitative data are detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Themes, sub-themes, and codes

Themes	Sub-themes and codes
Professional development	Knowledge
	<i>Counseling theories</i>
	<i>Techniques and interventions</i>
	<i>Ethical issues</i>
	Counseling skills & techniques
	<i>Basic and advanced skills</i>
	<i>Intervention methods</i>
	Awareness
	<i>Theoretical orientation</i>
	<i>Shortcomings in implementation</i>
<i>Recognizing own level</i>	
Identity of counselor	<i>Faith in the profession</i>
	<i>Gaining a counselor identity</i>
	Counselor self-efficacy
	<i>Self-confidence</i>
Personal development	Self-care
	<i>Increased level of self-care</i>
	<i>Development of verbal responses</i>
	Awareness
	<i>Self-knowledge</i>
<i>Focusing on feelings</i>	
Factors affecting development	Group supervision
	<i>Learning from peers</i>
	<i>Different perspectives</i>
	<i>Developing friendships</i>
	<i>Following other processes</i>
	<i>Peer feedback</i>
	<i>Personal issues</i>
	<i>Time</i>
	Supervisors
	<i>Informative</i>
<i>Encouraging</i>	
<i>Role model</i>	

**Professional Development:** The effect of supervision on the professional development of counselor candidates was explored in five sub-themes. The findings obtained in the initial category of these, which pertained to knowledge, revealed that counselor candidates asserted that their understanding of counseling theories heightened during the supervision process. For instance, a counselor trainee expressed her sentiment as follows: *“My knowledge of counseling theories has grown. You know, when exploring CBT, it is also beneficial to investigate other theories to gain insight into how I can best assist the client and decide on suitable approaches. (Participant 1- P1)”*

During the supervision period, the competency of counselor candidates in terms of counseling techniques and interventions was augmented. One participant highlighted this impact, emphasizing that, *“When I was not feeling up to par, it was highly beneficial to practice a different technique and exercise it with the guidance of the supervisor. (P2)”* Additionally, the participants' proficiency concerning ethical matters was also elevated. One participant remarked that, *“Professionally, I noticed its effects the most in the area of ethics. I was able to learn how to incorporate an ethical perspective into my practice. (P9)”*

One more area in which counselor candidates demonstrated professional development during the supervision process was counseling skills. Counselor candidates showed improvement in both basic and advanced skills. The perspectives of some participants included:

*For example, self-disclosure... I noticed that I had never used this. I realized that I could help more by making more emotional and sincere reflections. Professionally, this was a great advantage for me. (P5)*  
*I was very afraid of confrontation. But I learned that confrontation can be done gently. When I watched those videos during my confrontations, I realized that it was very useful to the client. (P11)*

Counselor candidates have developed in terms of basic and advanced skills as well as the variety of intervention methods they use:

*I have encountered numerous intervention approaches. Specifically, through group supervision, I learned more than one different intervention method thanks to the theories that our supervisor demonstrated to the other students and the diversity in the theories she showed me. This was likely the greatest contribution to my professional development. (P9)*

The supervision process enabled the counselor candidates to cultivate their professional awareness. Theoretical orientation is an example of this.

*I realized what I was professionally predisposed to. Because what I had in mind at first was the cognitive approach. You know, it is easier, and it was my first experience, but I realized that professionally, my true approach was the emotional one, and I could be of better assistance this way. (P7)*

Counselor candidates reported that they realized their deficiencies in practice during the supervision process: *"I realized that I was never able to provide negative feedback... For instance, this was the clearest professional insight I gained during supervision. Moving forward, I will focus on improving this aspect. (P4)"* Furthermore, they affirmed that they were cognizant of their professional standing thanks to supervision: *"I received supervision along with my classmates, with whom I have been studying for four years. In a way, this allowed me to see where I stand, providing an opportunity for comparison. (P10)"*

The supervision process proved to be a beneficial experience for counselor candidates to acquire the identity of a counselor. Moreover, supervision had a critical role in fostering the counselor candidates' belief in the profession. The following statement exemplifies one trainee's compliment of these developments: *"Supervision had a profound impact on my identity as a counselor. The personality of the counselor can have a significant influence on the sessions. I learned that this is an innate process. (P8)"*

According to the findings, supervision also contributed to counselor candidates' self-confidence and self-efficacy. Illustrative participant statements regarding this contribution are as follows:

*Had I not been provided with such assistance as supervision, perhaps my professional competence and self-efficacy may well have been diminished. Even the notion of this being an unsuitable vocation could have crossed my mind. (P2)*

*It was a counseling journey that I navigated from start to finish, granting me immense self-assurance. To put it another way, it revealed to me that I can comfortably carry out this vocation. (P4)*

**Personal Development:** The effect of supervision on counselor candidates' personal development was explored through two distinct sub-themes. In the first instance, it was found that supervision had a beneficial effect on the participants' self-care. They began to devote greater amounts of time to themselves, and in turn, were better able to manage their time. This was illustrated in the words of the participants, such as *"The supervision changed me. I started to take more time for myself and focused on my problems, which made it easier to tackle them in the sessions afterward. (P4)"* Another participant remarked: *"There have been significant changes in my daily life, particularly in terms of my sleep schedule, study times, and how I manage these activities. I have noticed a considerable positive impact from these changes. (P9)"*

There was an augmentation in the verbal responses of the counselor candidates after supervision. Illustrative participant declarations concerning this are exhibited below:



*I used to frequently begin sentences with phrases like "Okay, I understand, you know." However, I have started paying attention to this habit in my daily life. I have refrained from using such phrases during conversations, and I have also stopped giving advice when speaking with someone. (P6)*

*I already have difficulty expressing myself articulately. When you listen to the audio recording, the abundance of "Uh, well, actually" becomes quite evident. I mean, when I transcribed a session, I said "actually" 82 times. This was very taxing for me. For instance, I began to amend it later; however, had I not received supervision, it may have remained in that same state. (P8)*

Supervision enabled the candidates to gain greater awareness. Considering the importance of gaining insight for counselor candidates in supervision, it becomes evident that this subtheme highlights supervision's contribution to self-awareness, one of the key professional dispositions. A counselor candidate expressed her recognition of personal growth in the following manner: *"My supervisor noticed, for example, that I had difficulties in taking initiative. She recognized that I was inhibited in expressing emotion. I was highly conscious of myself. I made remarkable progress in terms of personal development. (P1)"*

Counselor candidates began to prioritize their emotional awareness under supervision. One participant expressed her viewpoint as follows: *"Upon the advice of my supervisor, who suggested 'Understand your own emotions first, then engage in the process of helping others,' I turned my attention to my own emotions. I realized how beneficial it is to express my feelings. (P7)"*

**Factors Affecting Development:** According to the research findings, during the supervision process, two factors play an important role in the development of counselor candidates: The supervisor's characteristics and the use of group supervision have significantly contributed to the development of counselor candidates, particularly enhancing their professional growth.

Group supervision was the most highlighted topic in the interviews, with participants noting that it allowed them to learn from their peers and gain a variety of perspectives. Some participants stated the following:

*In supervision sessions with our group, I learned a lot from my peers. Because everyone listens to each other's clients and is able to offer suggestions like, 'Maybe you could do this.' discussing what could be done differently or providing insights, it was really beneficial to have a group dynamic. (P1)*

*I noted the various ways I could respond in various situations. This was not only pertinent to the client I worked with. As we are in group supervision, I am making this comment based on the feedback given to other students. (P9)*

Another contribution of group supervision to the counselor candidates was the opportunity to follow other counseling processes. Furthermore, counselor candidates reported that they received constructive feedback from their peers:

*Some clients were quite dissimilar to my own. Therefore, even when I encountered a single client, I was able to gain insight into the different issues of many clients and observe how counselor candidates handled the process. This was also very effective. (P2)*

*The best thing about the group was witnessing the increase in examples. This was certainly a great contribution. Apart from that, the feedback we offered one another was immensely beneficial because we attained an array of diverse views. (P3)*

In addition to these contributions, group supervision also aided the trainees in strengthening their relationships: *"Personally, it also strengthened our friendships. We got to know each other better, saw what kind of person each of us is, and what we are capable of during the sessions. (P1)"* Conversely, trainees perceived the inclusion of personal matters in supervision as well as the limited amount of time devoted to themselves as unhelpful aspects of group supervision.

*Sometimes personal issues can become a distraction, potentially resulting in a delay or lack of focus on the task at hand. She should have gone and discussed it privately. (P2)*

*For instance, our supervisor would likely have been more engaged with me had there not been group supervision, thus I would have gained a variety of different skills. (P5)*

Counselor candidates highlighted the importance of their supervisor in their growth. The supervisors' guidance, providing information, and offering encouragement were essential in this regard.

*My supervisor's approach was very effective. I mean very encouraging and motivating. She was able to make me realize my mistake without breaking my self-efficacy. In other words, it was a great example of how supervisors should handle difficult situations. I suppose, had the situation been reversed, my self-confidence might have been shattered. (P2)*

According to the candidates, the supervisors served as role models during the process. One participant stated:

*There was also a case of taking the supervisor as a role model. Her approach to the clients, her attitude, and her point of view were exemplary. She had a reassuring presence, which helped to bolster my confidence while allowing me to observe her closely. Had it not been for this supervision, I would have missed out on such a valuable role model. (P10)*

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

One of the findings of the study was that supervision significantly increased counselor candidates' level of acquiring effective counselor characteristics. In accord with this, the qualitative findings of the study demonstrated that the counselor candidates' professional knowledge, basic and advanced counseling skills, and awareness and self-efficacy all increased following supervision. Thus, the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study demonstrate that supervision augmented the participants' characteristics of effective counselors. On reviewing the literature, no other study was found to address the characteristics of an effective counselor in the same way as the present study. Previous studies have examined the effect of supervision on a range of counselor qualities. These studies highlight that supervision enhances counselors' cognitive flexibility (Wedeking & Scott, 1976) and levels of self-efficacy (Rakovshik et al., 2016; Tan & Chou, 2018), improves their intervention skills (Worthen & McNeill, 1996), and contributes to their theoretical orientation (Guest & Beutler, 1988).

In Türkiye, three studies were found to examine the effect of supervision on effective counselor characteristics. In these studies, it is stated that supervision is effective in improving counselor candidates' self-efficacy levels (Bakalım et al., 2018) and counseling skills (Meydan, 2015; Saki & Şahin, 2021). The results of these studies are in agreement, thereby bolstering the findings of the current study. Consequently, it can be established that the supervision received by counselor candidates has a constructive effect on their acquisition of effective counseling characteristics. To be able to deliver successful counseling services, it is essential to have a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Counselor candidates who partake in supervision gain experience through practice, are supported by more competent individuals, and go through an evaluation process. Through this process, counselor candidates assess their counseling capabilities and become aware of them. In addition, supervisors act as role models, demonstrating examples of effective counseling characteristics (Erkan Atik et al., 2014). Taking this into account, it is reasonable to infer that supervision contributes to the acquisition of effective counselor characteristics.

According to the study's further findings, there was no change in the level of hindering self-awareness of counselor candidates following the supervision they received, while their self-awareness management strategies increased significantly. In terms of this discovery, counselor candidates stated in qualitative data that their self-awareness augmented, and they began to know themselves better and focus more on their emotions. In the relevant literature, there is no other examination into the effect of supervision on the variables of hindering self-awareness and self-awareness management strategies as in the present study. Research on hindering self-awareness mainly focuses on counselors' experiences during sessions. Studies show that counselors with hindering self-awareness experience increased anxiety (Dollinger et al., 1987; Ellis et al., 2002) and have difficulty concentrating on the client issues (Ellis et al., 2002; Van Wagoner et al., 1991). Moreover, counselors' hindering self-awareness negatively affects clients' views of them (Nutt-Williams & Hill, 1996) and decreases clients' satisfaction (Negd et al., 2011). Another study found that counselors who used basic counseling skills as part of management strategies did not experience hindering self-awareness (Wei et al., 2017).

Williams (2003) posited that self-awareness is generally known as gaining insight into one's inner realm, but it is also applicable to momentary contexts, and its extensive perception in the counseling process may become an inhibiting factor. According to Williams (2003), as counselors who possess acute momentary self-awareness tend to demonstrate higher levels of anxiety, their helping methods may be impeded by this state of affairs.

The participants of the present research, being counselor candidates, are going through a period of intense anxiety developmentally. It is plausible that the counselor candidates' hindering self-awareness at a point when they are anxious may augment their anxiousness even further. Although the participants of the current study were in a period of heightened anxiety, the findings indicate that there was no increase in their level of hindering self-awareness. The literature discusses the effectiveness of basic counseling skills and techniques in managing hindering self-awareness (Wei et al., 2017). During the supervision process of the current study, supervisors paid careful attention to the use of basic counseling skills and provided feedback aimed at enhancing the candidates' self-awareness. Thus, it is posited that the intervention was effective in preventing an increase in counselor candidates' hindering self-awareness.

In addition to the interventions they used, the characteristics of the supervisors and the use of group supervision formats have been effective in the development of counselor candidates. Indeed, similar research in the literature also highlights the contribution of supervisors to the professional development of counselor candidates (Landon et al., 2021; Putney et al., 1992). Furthermore, group supervision has been noted to positively affect counselors' supervision satisfaction (Kruger et al., 1988), facilitate exposure to diverse perspectives and increased feedback (Atik & Erkan Atik, 2019), and enhance supervisory working alliances through peer interaction within the group (Chui et al., 2021).

The last finding of the study demonstrates that supervision has no discernible impact on the professional dispositions of counselor candidates. In other words, there was no significant change in counselor candidates' professional dispositions resulting from the supervision they received. Despite this, the qualitative findings indicated that counselor candidates experienced positive changes in this area. Counselor candidates stated that following supervision, their belief in the profession, level of self-efficacy, and self-care increased. Also, their counselor identity strengthened as well as their self-awareness increased.

In the current study, a total score was used to examine the professional dispositions of counselor candidates. When the studies in the literature were examined, no other study was found in which professional dispositions were addressed together. In these studies, the effect of supervision on one or more of the professional dispositions was mostly examined. In the aforementioned research findings, it was revealed that supervision improved counselors' empathy levels (Birk, 1972), increased their self-efficacy (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Meola et al., 2022) and self-awareness levels (Andujar, 2002; Borders, 1990; Del Moro, 2012; Oden, 2003; Tryon, 1996; Vallance, 2004), and had no significant effect on well-being (Ohrt et al., 2015). In Türkiye, only one study was found on the effect of supervision on professional dispositions. Bakalim et al. (2018) found that supervision increased the self-efficacy levels of counselor candidates. It is thought that the differentiation of supervision processes in counselor education is effective in reaching different results in the studies. Supervision processes can differ between countries, even between different institutions in the same country. For example, in Türkiye, where the current research was conducted, counselor candidates do not undergo a standardized supervision process, and the supervision process varies across institutions. At the same time, it is seen that academic subjects, especially counseling skills and interventions, are in the focus of supervision processes in Türkiye (Aladağ & Kemer, 2016). For this reason, it is thought that the lack of a significant increase in counselor candidates' professional dispositions in the current study is due to the fact that these dispositions are not sufficiently included in supervision. Thus, in addition to academic issues, it is suggested that professional dispositions should be included more in counseling supervision processes in Türkiye.

## **5. Limitations and Recommendations**

Some limitations should be taken into consideration in interpreting the results obtained in this study. Firstly, in the quantitative part of the study, a single-group pretest-posttest design was utilized. In this design, it is not possible to attribute the change in participants' scores solely to the intervention. Since the participants of the current study are undergraduate students in Counseling and Guidance in Türkiye, placebo and control groups could not be established as all counseling candidates in the same developmental stage (fourth year of undergraduate studies) undergo the same educational process. It is recommended to include placebo and control groups in research conducted under different conditions. Secondly, the supervision process in this study was conducted by four different supervisors. Although the supervisors had similar experiences and structured their supervision processes similarly, the fact that supervision was delivered by different individuals may have influenced the research findings. Therefore, future research might try to account for the

effects of supervisors on the rate of change in experimental studies. Reporting clustering effects related to supervisors and estimating supervisor-level variance components seem to be crucial in future studies. Furthermore, the variables included in the current study were examined in a limited number of studies. Additionally, the number of studies examining the impact of the supervision process, which holds significant importance in counseling education in Türkiye, is quite limited. Therefore, it is suggested that the variables and the effect of supervision included in this study be further investigated in future research.

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