Ethical Problems Experienced by Counselors during the University Preference Advising Process

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate ethical problems experienced by counselors who serve during the university preference advising process and their coping strategies in the face of these problems. In this qualitative research study based on phenomenology design, the data were collected via semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was used to analyze the data and the findings were reported by using metaphorical analysis. The sample consisted of 10 participants (80% male, 70% have a bachelor's degree and 70% have taken ethics courses in their undergraduate education) who were selected by using purposive sampling method. The participants who have been providing preference advising for at least four years and were graduated from Department of Psychology or Psychological Counseling and Guidance were included into the study. The findings were reported by using a metaphor of the ships passing through the Bosphorus. Accordingly, the preference process was associated with the passage process of ships through the Bosphorus and the ethical problems experienced during this advising process were associated with the difficulties that the ships may face with during their passage. Students who receive preference advising services were likened to the ships trying to cross the Bosphorus (on which they travel with their family and relatives), and the counselors who provide preference advising to the pilot ships guiding the other ships. In this context, it was observed that ethical problems emerged during the preference process may sometimes be caused by the pilot ship itself or sometimes by other pilot ships performing the same task. According to the findings, ethical problems raised due to pilot ships in areas such as professionalism, competence, confidentiality, respect for student autonomy, dual and multiple relationships, and professional relations with other colleagues. The results also addressed system and family-based problems that may lead to ethical problems in the preference process. It was seen that just as factors such as managerial problems, lack of crew and other resources may cause problems while ships are moving through the

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Bosphorus; in the preference advising process; issues related to school / institution administrators, place, wage, number of students served, the internet and social media and family may lead to ethical problems. Finally, it was seen that when counselors faced ethical problems, just as there were various methods to overcome problems faced by pilot ships, counselors used some strategies such as consulting colleagues, using available technologies, setting boundaries with the administrators, informing, self-improvement, acting for the benefit of society and being proactive. The results indicated that there is a need to develop an ethical perspective in providing career services and to reform the preference process in terms of system related factors.

Introduction

People may need support for their career development and planning through the lifelong development process. In this context, supporting career development of individuals can be stated as services offered to help individuals make any academic, educational and vocational choices and decisions, manage these processes successfully and build their careers, regardless of their age (Watts & Fretwell, 2004). Considering that making a vocational choice is a dynamic process affected by many variables (Kuzgun, 2000), it is obvious that these services require an expertise. It is seen that the services provided for supporting people's career development are called by many names such as career guidance, career education, career counseling (Savickas, 2011), and these names are often used interchangeably. According to the American National Career Development Association, career counseling is defined as a more in-depth and professional relationship of help provided to clients who have difficulties in career and personal development, going beyond the support for career planning (National Career Development Association [NCDA], 2015). Thus, career counseling is considered as the process of helping individuals to discover the meaning in their lives, to construct themselves and their career in accordance with this meaning, and to create career development plan (Savickas, 2011). Career education refers to the services provided to increase the effectiveness of individuals in order to successfully overcome career development tasks (Savickas, 2011). Career education includes some interventions aiming at developing skills, abilities and competencies such as career adaptability, decision-making and planning. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2004) defined career guidance as the help provided to people of any age or at any time in their life to make educational and vocational choices and manage their careers development process. These services aim at enabling individuals to know themselves, as well as to have knowledge and understanding about the labor market and world and education life and to drive their career (Crişan, Pavelea, & Ghimbulut, 2015). In this context, having and presenting accurate, consistent and comprehensive career information is fundamental to provide qualified career guidance services (OECD, 2004).

Based on this classification, career education and guidance services are more prominent in school processes and are offered as a part of education curriculum and programs (Watts & Fretwell, 2004). Although there are different applications in the world, these services are generally provided by school counselors in the schools. However, in different countries, there are people who provide these services other than school counselors and these people can be referred to by different names such as career development specialist, career teacher, career counselor (NCDA, 2015; OECD, 2004). In the OECD's Country Reports (2004), it was underlined that experts who provide this service in schools lack specific and sufficient training on this area. On the other hand, regardless of the types of career services mentioned before, the professionals must be competent and provide services on ethical grounds to manage this process effectively (NCDA, 2015).

In Turkey, career services have been offered by the Turkish Employment Office (TEO), university career centers, private institutions and organizations, non-prophit organizations, Guidance and Research Centers (RAM), and schools (Akkök & Watts, 2003). Especially in schools, it is seen that these services gain more importance during critical periods such as the transition from high school to university (Yeşilyaprak, 2000) and have been mainly provided at the high school level due to the reality of university entrance exam at the end of high school (Korkut, 2007). Thus, through this paper, career guidance was used to address these services in Turkey. The goals of career guidance in secondary education could be listed as helping students to get to know themselves, to be aware of their educational and career alternatives, to realize the importance of their decisions in this process, and to overcome internal and external conflicts in the decision-making process (Kuzgun, 2006; Yeşilyaprak, 2000). Accordingly, the previous studies indicated that career guidance at the high school level, as a part of comprehensive developmental guidance programs, included interventions for self and career exploration (e.g., Akkök & Watts, 2003; Karacan-Ozdemir & Ayaz, 2020; Karacan-Ozdemir, Nassar, Karabay, & Ayaz, 2019). At this point, it can be said that one of the ultimate goals of career guidance at the high school level is to prepare students for university and academic major preferences (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2011). Students choose an university and undergraduate program, depending on the result of the university entrance exam that they enter in their last year of high school. Career guidance provided in this process is referred to as "preference advising" (MoNE, 2018).

Preference advising refers to the services for informing students and their families on how to rank the most appropriate programs, using online resources and preference programs that list the universities and programs corresponding to the scores, taking into account the score students obtained from the university entrance exam and the fields students want to study. For the execution of these services, which could be accepted as specific services to the education and examination system in Turkey, the MoNE established a preference advising commission. The general objectives of this commission are to ensure to provide these services under certain standards in order to help students to choose a career according to their interests, abilities and personality traits. Thus, school counselors are appointed to this duty by the commission as the people who will provide preference advising must have professional competencies (MoNE, 2018). On the other hand, private institutions and organizations (such as private universities etc.) in addition to the MoNE can provide preference-advising services. It is clear that these services should be provided in a professional manner considering the previous findings such as Turkish high school students' need for career maturity (e.g., Çoban, 2005; Hamamcı & Esen Çoban, 2007), career indecision (e.g., Bacanlı, 2012, 2016; Çakır, 2003; Karacan-Ozdemir, 2019; Öztemel, 2012; Tagay, 2015) and the effectiveness of career guidance services offered to overcome the lack of information and irrational beliefs about higher education (Doğan & Kuzgun, 2008). Hence, it can be said that the people who provide preference advising services in Turkey should also act based on ethical principles as proposed by NCDA (2015) for career counselors. Research showed that there is a need to base career services on ethical standards (Chung & Gfroerer, 2003; Stan, Suditu, & Safta, 2011).

Ethical principles and standards, similar to the psychological counseling process, outline sensitivities to be shown and protected on the moral dimension of the helping relationship, and also provide a roadmap for making some difficult decisions for the benefit of the clients (Zunker, 2006). It could be seen that ethical practices were mentioned in the principles and standards developed by various professional associations in different countries around the world for professionals providing career services (e.g., Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners [S&Gs], 2004; International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance [IAEVG], 2018; NCDA, 2015; Career Industry Council of Australia [CICA], 2011; Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Derneği [Türk PDR-Der], 2018; Ulusal Meslek Standartlarına Dair Tebliğ, 2017). These principles and standards underline that career counselors must comply having professional competence, establishing and

maintaining professional relationships with other institutions and organizations, protecting privacy, avoiding dual and multiple relationships, effective use of information and communication technologies, measurement tools, the internet and social media for the benefit of the client, receiving supervision, continuous self-improvement, and taking part in publishing and research processes. In addition, they provide ethical decision-making models regarding the possible ethical dilemmas that career counselors may experience (See NCDA, 2015; S&Gs, 2004).

On the other hand, the relevant literature pointed some ethical difficulties and dilemmas such as dual and multiple relations, confidentiality, and the use of measurement and evaluation tools, which career counselors may face with (e.g., Kidd, 2006; Zunker, 2006). Sultana and Watts (2006) addressed that some issues such as labor market realities, having to direct people to vocations and jobs that do not match their interests, not being able to allocate enough time to the person who comes to get help, not being able to respond to career counseling needs, and the predominance of the expert role instead of a cooperative relationship that should be established on an equal basis with the clients seeking help may create ethical dilemmas. Similarly, Gati (1994) emphasized that career counselors may experience ethical difficulties such as the involvement of their own judgments in the process of giving information, not being able to distinguish between sufficient and necessary information, and not being able to establish the balance between revealing career interests and creating a career plan. Studies on the subject have also demonstrated that career counselors experience ethical difficulties and dilemmas in matters such as neutrality, confidentiality, fidelity and boundaries of roles, respect for autonomy, setting boundaries, power, and the use of social networks (e.g. Anderson & Shore, 2008; Barak, 2003; Cardoso, Taveira, Biscaia, & Santos, 2012; Kettunen, 2017; Kettunen & Makela, 2018; Sampson, 2002; Sampson & Makela, 2014).

Due to the fact that career decision can not only affect the individual's well-being, job and life satisfaction and therefore mental health, but also the productivity, economy and mental health of the society, it is obvious that it is necessary and essential to follow ethical standards while providing career guidance services (Blustein, Masdonati, & Rossier, 2017). In this context, also in Turkey, professionals who provide preference-advising services may affect the lives of students, hence it is extremely important to act within the framework of ethical principles such as beneficence, respecting the autonomy of the client and fidelity (Kitchener, 1984). On the other hand, it can be argued that advisors may encounter ethical difficulties in this process because of the assumptions about that students choose university preferences in a very short time (ÖSYM, 2019), advisors are not able to offer help as they do in a full process of career counseling, and students experience stress and difficulties during this period. Considering that, students have to make very serious decisions that might be difficult for their lives based on their performance in university entrance exams (Özyürek, 2013), the preference advising process becomes even more important. However, there is no research examining this specific help offered in Turkey in the literature. Based on this need, in this study, it is aimed at examining in depth the ethical difficulties experienced by psychological counselors who actively provide preference advising in Turkey, and how they respond in the face of these difficulties. It is with this background that this study *sought* to *answer* the *questions*: (1) What ethical problems do psychological counselors experience in the preference advising process? (2) What kind of strategies do they use when faced with those problems? The findings of this study will be able to identify the ethical problems experienced in the university preference process and reveal the needs for effective provision of these services. Accordingly, it is expected to reveal implications for policy, practice and research areas for the improvement of the process.

Method

This study was based on phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research methods. Phenomenology design is defined as the reflective analysis of different experiences (Given, 2008; Patton, 2014).

Study Sample

In this study, criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used. According to Patton (2014), the criterion sampling method is to sample based on predetermined criteria. The criteria determined for the psychological counselors who will participate in this research were that they have actively worked as preference advisor for at least four years, have been a preference advisor for admission to universities, and have graduated from guidance and psychological counseling and psychology program. Accordingly, the sample consisted of 10 participants. Half of the participants have worked as preference advisor just in public schools affiliated to the MoNE, while the other half also provide preference advising on behalf of private institutions in addition to their work in public schools. All of the participants have worked in Gaziantep.

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of the Study Group

Participant	Gender	Age	Experience	Experience on Preference Advising	Education Level	Ethics Course
P1	F	27	5	4	Bachelor's	Took
P2	M	27	5	5	Master's	Took
P3	M	42	18	18	Bachelor's	Took
P4	M	26	6	4	Bachelor's	Took
P5	M	36	14	12	Mester's	Took
P6	M	40	19	14	Bachelor's	Took
P7	M	33	10	5	Bachelor's	Don't Remember
P8	M	39	20	15	Master's	Took
P9	F	43	18	10	Bachelor's	Took
P10	M	40	19	19	Bachelor's	Didn't Take

As seen in Table 1, eight of the participants were male (80%) and two were female (20%). Ages of the participants ranged from 27 to 43, and their professional experience ranged from five to twenty years. Likewise, the preference advising experience of the participants varies between four and 19 years. Seven of the participants have Bachelor's (70%) and three master's (30%) degree. Finally, seven of participants stated that they took a course on ethics (70%); two stated that they did not take such course (20%), and one do not remember if they took an ethics course (10%).

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with the participants. Demographic information form and semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers were used.

Demographic Information Form: The form included questions about the participants' gender, age, educational level, the program they graduated from, whether they took ethics courses, years of experience, and type of the institution where they provided preference-advising services. Before starting the interview, the participants were asked to fill in this form.

Semi-Structured Interview Form: The interview form was developed for the study to examine the ethical difficulties experienced by the psychological counselors during the preference advising process and their behaviors in the face of those difficulties. While preparing the form, ethical principles and standards developed by various professional associations for the career counseling process (e.g., CICA, 2011; IAEVG, 2018; NCDA, 2015; S&Gs, 2004; Türk PDR-Der, 2018; Ulusal Meslek Standartlarına Dair Tebliğ, 2017) were examined. Based on those principles, each researcher individually prepared

interview questions and added to the question pool. Afterwards, all researchers came together and discussed each question, and first the draft of the form was created with the questions selected in accordance with the purpose and the conceptual framework of the research. This form was sent to two academics working in the field of career counseling and ethics and two specialist school counselors for expert appraisal. The feedback given were discussed in the meetings in that all researchers participated, and the second draft consisting of 12 questions was created. A pilot application was conducted by using this draft form. The pilot application was conducted with a psychological counselor who has been providing preference-advising service for four years in a private room and distractions were minimal. It took approximately 45 minutes to fill in the demographic information form and to answer the interview questions. After the participant was informed about the research process and the team and the informed consent was obtained, an interview was recorded in the pilot application. The transcript of the record was discussed at the meeting held with the participation of all researchers, and the interview form was finalized based on the participant feedback. In the interview form, there are questions such as "What kind of ethical problems and difficulties do you have about ensuring confidentiality in the preference advising process?" "What kind of ethical problems and difficulties do you have about competence in providing preference advising services?", "How do you go about solving (mentioned issue)?"

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, the ethics committee approval was obtained from Hasan Kalyoncu University. Snowball sampling was used to reach the participants selected based on the criteria determined according to the purposeful sampling method. Accordingly, the sample group was expanded by reaching the participants recruited by the participants included in the study. The researchers reached the psychological counselors who met the specified criteria by phone and invited them to the research. Participants who accepted the invitation voluntarily were informed about the research, and interviews were planned to be conducted at the appropriate place and time for the participants. Then, an invitation letter containing information about the research was sent via e-mail to the participants who agreed to participate in the study. The invitation letter included the purpose of the research, the questions to be asked in the interview and a brief information note about the concept of ethics. In addition, the candidate participants were informed that they could give up the study if they did not want to participate in the study after seeing the questions.

Before the interview, in case they did not read the invitation letter, the participants were informed about the study again and they were asked to fill in the demographic information form. In addition, an Informed Consent Form was obtained from the participants, indicating that they voluntarily participate in the study. The interviews took place between December 2018 and January 2019, and lasted between 40-60 minutes, in an environment where the participants could express themselves comfortably in the institutions they work and the interviews would not be interrupted. The researchers deciphered the interviews recorded with the permission of the participants and the texts were sent to the participants via e-mail. After obtaining participant confirmation on the transcripts, the data were made ready for content analysis.

Establishing the Credibility of the Study

The counterpart of validity and reliability concepts in qualitative research is credibility and consistency. In this research, long-term interaction and observation, external evaluation, clarification of researcher bias, confirmation of participant, rich and detailed description methods suggested by Creswell (2012) were used to enhance credibility and consistency. An additional effort was also made by examining and discussing the analyzes one by one at the meetings held with the participation of all researchers after the initial coding was done by two researchers.

Long-term Interaction and Observation: Long-term interaction and observation is stated as spending a long time in the area to be researched (Creswell, 2012). In this study, two members of the research team have three years of field experience in preference advising services for high school students. Additionally, during university promotion activities, the other two researchers had the opportunity to closely observe the psychological counselors working in the preference advising process.

External Evaluation: External evaluation refers to the evaluation of the research by someone who is not directly involved in conducting of the research being evaluated. (Creswell, 2012). In this context, the studies to be carried out during the research process were presented in the "Research Sharing Days" regularly held at the faculty where the researchers are assigned. During Research Sharing Days, researchers share and receive feedback on the research process on a platform where all faculty members can participate. Feedback was received regarding the method of this research and the interview questions. In addition, the steps taken in the research process regularly shared with a faculty member (Prof. Dr.) who have studied on qualitative research methods and lectured at the doctoral level, and his/her evaluation and feedback about the process were received.

Clarification of Researcher Bias: Creswell (2012) defined the clarification of researcher bias as the reflection of how researchers will use and control their own subjectivity in the research process. In this study, the researchers held weekly meetings with the predetermined agenda at the common day and time (Friday, 15.30-17.00). The research team leader announced the agenda items each week for the opinion and approval of other researchers. The process, which provides the flexibility to include additional agenda items suggested by the researchers, has progressed through discussion of the stage reached in the research and realization of the applications. The minutes of these meetings were taken and shared with all researchers in the days following the meeting. The meetings were recorded to prevent the loss of information generated in-group discussions during processes such as discussing the findings and making metaphorical analysis.

Participant Confirmation: Creswell (2012) described participant confirmation as making sure that participants' opinions are represented correctly. In this study, participant confirmation was obtained in two stages. First, participant confirmation was obtained based on the summary made by the interviewer after the interviews. In the second stage, transcripts of the interviews were sent to the participants and their confirmation was received.

Rich and detailed description: Rich and detailed descriptions were explained as the writing style used in the research is such that the reader can easily enter the research context (Creswell, 2012). Accordingly, for internal reliability, the findings of the study were reported using the direct statements of the participants. Regarding external reliability, the steps followed in the research process were reported in detail and clearly (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

In addition, strategies such as involving more than one researcher in the process, conducting data analysis within the framework of the relevant literature, discussing and clarifying the research questions by all researchers in weekly meetings (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were also used.

Data Analysis
For data analysis, the stages of coding data, finding themes, organizing codes and themes, and defining and interpreting the findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016) were followed. Accordingly, interpretive content analysis was performed on the data. Interpretive content analysis refers to the process of meaningful classification of expressions in the text in the process of obtaining important themes and structures (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). In this context, first, the interviews made and recorded with the participants were transcribed. In a meeting attended by all researchers, they coded a randomly selected interview together. By this way, as a result of discussions about which expressions can be classified under which themes and categories, it has been tried to have a common perspective. The coding of the researchers for each line were shared, all of them were noted and then discussed one by

one. In addition, the discussions on which expressions can fall within which themes and categories have been finalized by making use of the relevant literature on the subject. Subsequently, the two researchers worked together and analyzed the remaining nine transcripts. Maxqda 12 Qualitative Data Analysis Program was used for data analysis. Furthermore, in the meetings attended by all researchers, group discussions were held on these analyzes, the codes and themes were reviewed and edited by all researchers and the final codes and themes were obtained.

Finally, findings were interpreted and reported through metaphors (See Akbaba, 1999). Presenting the research findings with metaphor contributes to the concretization of the findings by readers (Schmitt, 2005). The researchers read the transcripts and obtained themes several times independently, and each researcher thought about the metaphors that could represent the results. At that point, the researchers were asked to come to the weekly meeting by determining a metaphor that could be used in interpreting and presenting the findings. In the next meeting, each researcher presented the metaphor to the whole team. They demonstrated it by making drawings on the board and opened it to group discussion. After these meetings, the metaphor that was thought to best represent the presentation of the findings was decided. The preference advising process takes place in a limited time, but is extremely important in terms of the decisions to be made and its results. It also represents an important process, the transition from high school to university. In this respect, the selection process was compared to the passage of ships through the Bosphorus, which is narrow and has unique difficulties, on the other hand, has a strategic role, the transition between continents. Accordingly, students who receive preference advising were compared to ships trying to pass through the Bosphorus, and psychological counselors who provide preference advising to pilot ships that guide them.

Results

In this study, it was aimed at examining in depth the ethical difficulties faced by psychological counselors in the process of preference advising and the strategies they used to overcome them. However, after analyzing the data, it was seen that in addition to this purpose, there were also problems caused by the system that may result in ethical problems in the preference process. The findings were presented by the metaphor of ships passing through the Bosphorus. Accordingly, the preference process was likened to the passage of ships through the Bosphorus and the ethical problems that could arise in the preference process were likened to the difficulties that ships may experience during the passage through the Bosphorus. These problems may sometimes be caused by the pilot ship itself, or sometimes by other pilot ships making the same voyage. First, it was seen that ethical problems were revealed due to pilot ships (psychological counselors) in areas such as professionalism, competence, confidentiality, respect for student autonomy, dual and multiple relations. At the same time, many pilot ships serve on their own routes in the Bosphorus to guide the ships to their destinations. Therefore, sometimes, ethical problems may arise from other pilot ships. Thus, it was seen that there could be conflict between psychological counselors in the preference process.

As the ships navigate the Bosphorus, they may encounter some problems that make the sailing difficult. These factors might be the source of problem such as managerial issues, lack of crew and other resources, and misleading signals from lighthouses. Accordingly, psychological counselors serving in the preference process also experienced system related problems such as expectations of the managers in the institutions where they work, unsuitability of the places where the services are provided (such as shopping malls), low wage policy, high number of students, information pollution in social media and web, and lack of a student follow-up system, which could cause ethical issues. In addition, on the ships passing through the Bosphorus, students and significant others such as their parents travel. Therefore, different expectations from the people on this ship or the conflicts between them might cause difficulties for the pilot ship. Similarly, the factors that cause the psychological counselors to experience ethical problems in the preference process were also be family based.

Finally, pilot ships have to develop some strategies for dealing with the difficulties they encounter during the sailing in order to ensure that the ships they guide can successfully complete the Bosphorus passage. The strategies that psychological counselors, who encounter ethical difficulties and problems in the preference process, use to overcome them can be compared to those of the pilot ships. Linked with this metaphor, the findings were categorized under the themes presented in detail below: consulting with colleagues, making use of available technologies, setting boundaries with the administrators, informing, self-improvement, acting for the benefit of society and being proactive.

Ethical Problems in the Preference Advising Process

Ethical problems under this category were such problems arising from the pilot ship itself and other pilot ships having the same mission. Problems such as having inadequate equipment, lack of knowledge about the strait, lack of information about the features of the ship guided would be the problems arising from the pilot ship. Problems encountered in communication with other pilot ships doing the same mission problems arising from them may also affect the process negatively. In this context, as seen in Figure 1, lack of professionalism, competence and confidentiality, not respecting for student autonomy, establishing dual and multiple relationships, and professional relations with other colleagues were revealed as ethical problems arising from the psychological counselors themselves in the preference advising process.

Professionalism: Among the most frequently encountered problems in the advising process, first, the lack of professionalism of the counselors was emerged. Lack of professionalism refers to the difficulties experienced by the psychological counselor in fulfilling the requirements of his professional identity. P4 stated that s/he shared her/his personal phone number with the students and that students can send a text message to her/him. "We say our phones are on or they can send text message. We warn them not to share it in public places." In addition, P4 stated that students publicly ask questions through their social media. P8 said, "I experience role conflicts, there are differences between what I believe and what I face. I mean, after a while you become a market man, which is that you become someone who acts according to the expectations of the market." Hence, P8 stated that role conflict resulted in not acting professionally. Under the theme of lack of professionalism, it was seen that the psychological counselor's own value judgments were revealed. For example, P6's judgment about private school students reflected in his/her words: "Also, students with a profile trained in private schools become unbearable at all. Because they think that they will achieve the next process as well, as, you know, they acquire many things by money, you know by financial means." P3, on the other hand, seemed to advise families to educate their children in the cities where they reside, in his/her words: "Don't send s/he out, we say if possible. We tell their families that you may have very serious problems in universities."
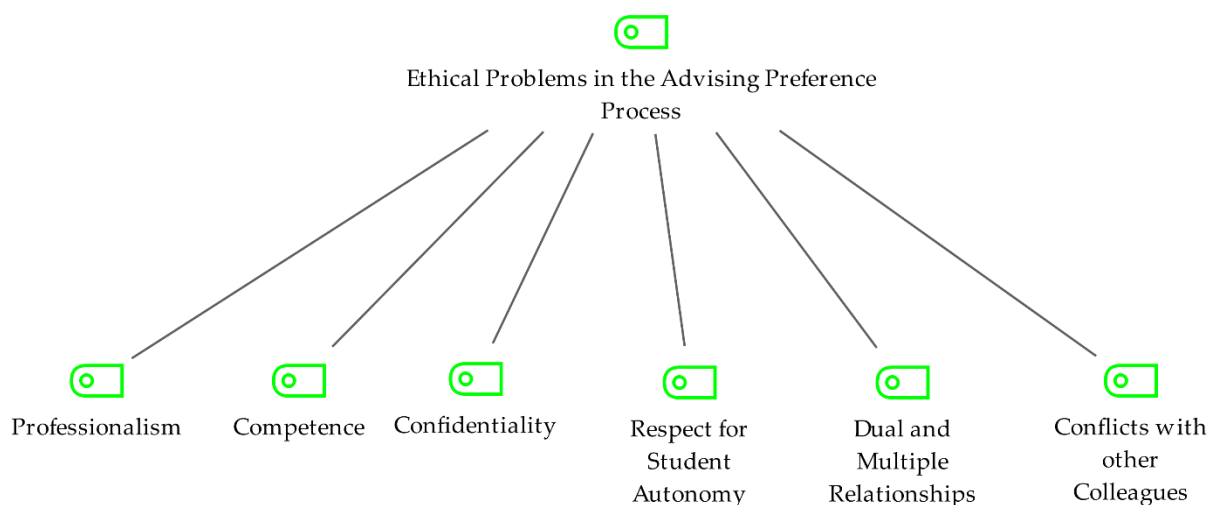

Figure 1. Ethical Problems in the Advising Preference Process

Competence: It was seen that there might be ethical problems arising from the lack of competence of psychological counselors. For example, P9 stated, "Yes, especially in that, you know, the main ethical problem that I have experienced in both high school entrance and higher university entrance exams, we sometimes feel very incompetent. ... the number of universities is changing, fields are changing, required exams and test scores for under graduate programs are changing. So, you are facing something that is always upside down, the system. We have difficulty catching up and being competent. I have such a difficulty." P8 said, "It is not a work that required a lot of privacy." P8's statements referring that confidentiality was an insignificant issue in this process could refer to the lack of competence. Talking about the changes in the system, P2 said, "I mean the system changes every year... Now you think that you have done something in terms of competence ... You worked 10 days, you learned it, than something else changes next year." Thus, P2 stated that s/he could not keep up with rapid changes and it negatively affects her/his competence.

Confidentiality: Ensuring confidentiality is an important ethical rule in providing career services as well as in counseling processes. The findings indicated violations of confidentiality in the preference advising process. For example, P2 stated that s/he shared students' information that should remain confidential with their family: "…Sometimes we have to give the information from the child directly to the family. Thus, we have difficulties in terms of ethics." On the other hand, P1 expressed violation of confidentiality with the sentence "…you share information about the students on web page of the school, at the same time on billboards for promotion..."

Respect for Student Autonomy: Another ethical problem faced by psychological counselors in the preference process was regarding not respecting student autonomy. P3 stated that s/he tried to persuade the student by collaborating with the family, especially if the family was also involved: "First of all, the preferences of the student and those of his/her family do not match with each other. ... so I mean, neither because of something contrary to what the family wants nor because of what the student wants frankly, this is the biggest problem we have. In such cases, we sometimes guide the student together with the family." Similarly, P7 stated that s/he gave advice to students in order to discourage them from the vocation they want to do, and the students insist on their own thoughts, saying, "Actually, you know that vocation is not suitable for the child, but s/he insistently wants to do it, and I have to give advice."

Dual and Multiple Relationships: The relationships that psychological counselors establish with the students they serve, their families or relatives in the preference process also resulted in an ethical problem. For example, P4 stated that "As I mentioned before, because it is a small place, we knew many students from outside." P6, on the other hand, stated that s/he knows people who come for preference advising and this acquaintance causes judgments that may affect the process: "I mean, if I know the student, I say. If I do not know, it is not a problem anyway… I look s/he prefers medicine. I do not think that students choose because they love it. For very ambitious prestige… "

Conflicts with Other Colleagues: According to P1, failure to establish professional relationships with other colleagues causes confusion and misdirection of students. P1 mentioned that "Well, the child comes to me, I tell him/her that this is appropriate, and then s/he goes to a person who is not from our field. S/he goes to someone who graduated from programs other than counseling, and that person says what a silly idea, do not talk nonsense, and then s/he trusts on that person. Then they move to another place, and finally they come to me and share their thoughts, it starts to get complicated ..." Similarly, P7 expressed that "We usually have problems with other friends who do this job… There is false information and incomplete information."

Problems that May Cause Ethical Issues
During the passage through the Bosphorus, problems such as lack of equipment and crew on the pilot ship, false or no signal sent by the lighthouse pointing to the pilot ship result in problems. Similarly, as can be seen in Figure 2, school / institution management, location, wage, number of students served, and the internet and social media were emerged as system-related factors that may be

the source of ethical problems in the preference advising process. In addition, significant other such as parents, voyage with the student in the ship, might be the source of ethical problems.

System based problems

School / Institution Administration: Expectations of school or institution administrators were among the ethical problems stemming from the system. As P3 stated, administrators can directly intervene in the preference process and this creates an ethical problem: "Now, since we are at our own school while advising, the administrators want the number of university winners to be high". P3 mentioned that the administrators asked to direct the students to make a preference if they have a chance to be placed in any department even if they do not would like to study in those. Similarly, P6 implied that administrator asked him/her guide students to select an undergraduate program that had not been preferred so much. As a result, administrator can promote the winner lists that include a broad range of academic programs or universities for advertisement.

Place: One of the sources of ethical problems in the preference advising process was to work at inappropriate places such as shopping malls. It was revealed that the preference advising process carried out in crowded places where confidentiality cannot be protected and open to external intervention was the source of the emergence of many ethical problems. P1 expressed this as follows: "Let's say you were telling the child a vocation, but because the environment was very crowded someone else overheard, s/he said something else..." P2 who provided preference-advising service in shopping centers said, "I don't know how healthy is this? Here is when you do it in shopping malls in public."
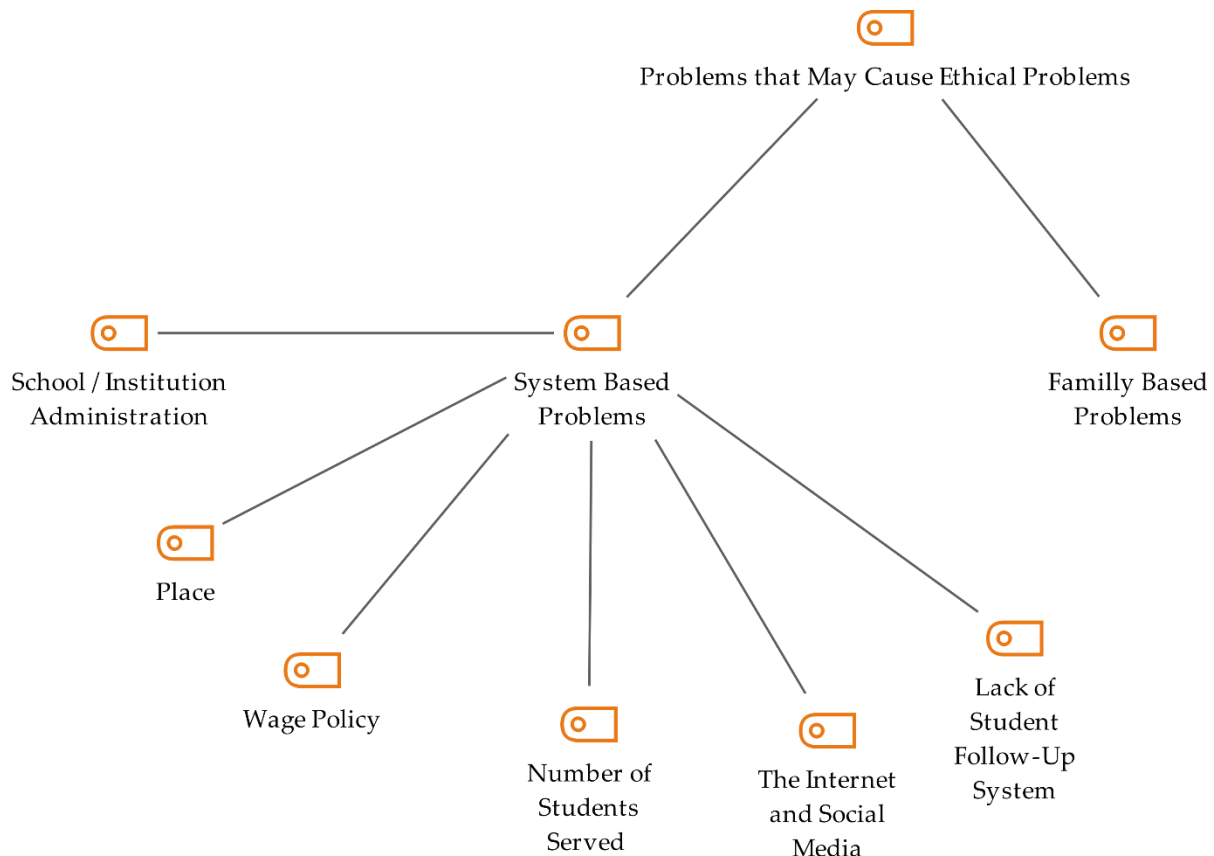

Figure 2. Problems the May Cause Ethical Problems

Wage Policy: It was stated that low wage paid for preference advising services caused psychological counselors to do this job reluctantly. Related to this, P1 said, "…there is an economic problem in the preference advising process. … The preference advising starts at 8 am and ends at 5 pm maybe it lasts until 6 to 7 pm, depending on the number of applicants. The extra payment, the counselors' gets additional payment was just 33 TL, and the counselors do not want to do this because the amount of payment is very low. "

Number of Students Served: It was revealed that high number of students who need preference advising services led to the emergence of many ethical problems. In this regard, P9 said, "…there is a crowd waiting outside." P2 expressed, "... you know, you don't have time to use a test, inventory at that time, the time you can spare for the child is 15-20 minutes." P1 stated that "The child is coming, you can't spend much time with him/her, anyway. S/he says his/her score, you check his/her score from the online system, the rank comes up on the screen. ... if you went to that university, you would work in those areas, if you went to this one, it would be like this. ... you give general specific information. After that, the child makes choice and s/he goes, you cannot meet with the child in any way again." Accordingly, those resulted in some ethical problems such as inability to protect confidentiality, not using any assessment tools or following up the students.

The Internet and Social Media: The internet and social media could be seen as an information resource for psychological counselors, just as lighthouses guide pilot ships. On the other hand, not just, as the wrong signal of lighthouses can cause a disaster, information pollution in the web and social media prevents the selection process from progressing in a healthy way and can be a source of ethical problems. Hence, psychological counselors stated that information pollution in social media affected students negatively. P2 said, "There are a lot of websites like ... offer online preference advising. On these sites, you know, social media, on the other hand, information pollution is something. Apart from that, students can obtain a lot of information from there. ... I have problems with that." P10 expressed that "The children are coming and say that it is written on the internet. The information seems wrong to us. However, it is very difficult to dispute that information. This time you doubt yourself."

Lack of Student Follow-Up System: All of the psychological counselors interviewed stated that they could not follow the students' progress due to system-based problems. For example, P10 mentioned that "It is a bit difficult to evaluate whether we have been good advisors or not. We can communicate with our own students. The rest is missing. Follow up is difficult." P4 said, "We can only do follow-up work related to it with our students at my own school. We don't know much about other schools."

Family based problems

It was seen that conflicts between students and their parents in terms of preferences, even the psychological counselors 'perceiving pressure from parents might be the source of ethical problems in the advising process. P4 summarized this situation: "While families generally want schools or different programs in this region, students want programs or cities according to their own goals. Hence, we may experience the problems." P7 said, "... from the family or close relatives of the student, it may be the child's uncle or aunt, from his close environment, we encountered some problems, for example, they don't let him go out, want him to study here Or, instead of going out, we support him studying here they say, if necessary we do this, we do that." It was seen that this pressure was also put on the psychological counselor. On this subject, P10 said, "to be ethical, you know the skills of the child, you know what the child wants as an occupation, but when you say this is beneficial for you, we see the pressure from his family."

The Coping Strategies that Psychological Counselors Use

Pilot ships resort to different ways to solve the problems they encounter during the passage through the Strait. There are guide ships that anticipate the problems and take measures, as well as ships that improve their problem-solving capacity while having problems. Similarly, it was seen that psychological counselors, who were, literally, the pilot ships of students who wanted to be admitted to universities, used different strategies such as consulting colleagues, making use of existing technologies, setting boundaries with the administrators, informing, self-improvement, acting for the benefit of society or taking measures proactively to handle ethical problems (See Figure. 3).

Consulting Colleagues: About consulting with other colleagues in the face of ethical problems encountered in the preference advising process, P8 said, "So ... We pass information on, for example. We exchange ideas with each other. ... I mean, I can request documents from them, I can request some booklets." P6 stated that s/he supported their colleagues as much as s/he can "… so I am open. Those who want to get information can get information, I talk, I tell what I know, I don't hide it, and I don't do that." Thus, it was inferred that colleagues who encounter ethical difficulties in the preference advising support each other.

Use of Existing Technologies: It was emerged that psychological counselors benefited from existent technologies to behave ethically in the face of challenges. It was seen that psychological counselors preferred to use websites and applications that facilitate the advisory process. For example, P7 stated, "We usually use the internet or the YÖK Atlas. As I said, we use the guide, we generally benefit from technology in this regard." P6 said, "Having internet connection is a great comfort. Our error rate is low while listing and selecting possible options (for universities and/or academic programs)"
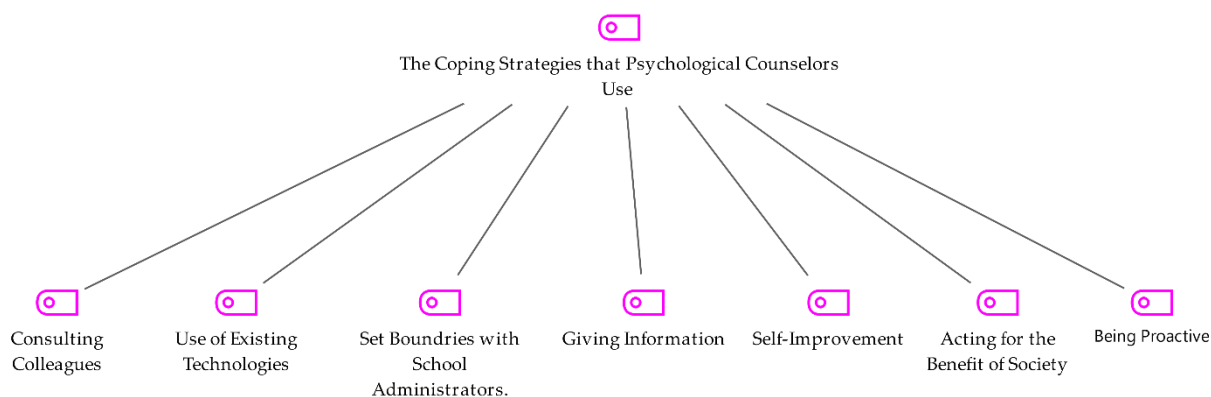

Figure 3. The Coping Strategies that Psychological Counselors Use

Set Boundaries with School Administrators: School administrators, which tried to be involved in the preference process as parents did, were considered as a source of ethical difficulties for psychological counselors. P1 explained his attitude towards this situation as follows: " …I saw that the vice principals would try to persist to be involved, I tried to keep the door closed. I developed an attitude. After that, s/he did not come to the part we work." P4, on the other hand, stated that s/he warned the administrator who tried to send the students who came to her/his school for preference to different institutions, saying, "I warned the administrators at this point..."

Giving Information: Another way that psychological counselors frequently tried to handle the ethical problems was to provide information. Psychological counselors carried out informing activities for both students, parents and the society in general. For example, P7 said, "I try to explain this situation to the students. In other words, we are trying to explain to them what kind of decisions they will make and what kind of negative consequences they will have, we are trying to educate children in this direction." Informing students, who will make university choices, about the importance of this process,

P7 aimed to make students pay attention to this process. P8 shared his/her experiences in informing families: "I inform them. I try to inform as much as possible. I increase time I spent to give information, increase the number of sessions…" Similarly, P4 said, "... in the seminars we hold, we state that especially people over the age of 18 can now make their own decisions, make their own choices, even if they have trouble, they have to experience difficulties as a result of their own decisions. ... Like carrying a drop of water like an ant and extinguishing the fire. There are social norms that have been formed over the years, it is not possible to demolish them, prejudices and thoughts in people's minds, but as I said, we were constantly holding parent seminars and we were allocating some time at every parent meeting."

Self-Improvement: Some psychological counselors preferred to improve themselves, especially in the face of changes in the exam system. P9 stated that s/he especially followed new publications and met this need by doing research: "I generally follow the ministry's publications, for example YÖK Atlas is a very good guide." P4, on the other hand, attended seminars on the subject: "Prior to the preference advising process, the most competent and experienced person gave seminars to eliminate the question marks." P4 also applied to Guidance Research Centers (RAM), "We were getting support from RAM, exactly."

Acting for The Benefit of Society: It was revealed that psychological counselors tried to consider public interest when they encounter ethical problems. For example, P5 emphasized that s/he tried to act within the framework of responsibilities towards the society: "As I said, if our aim is to train a good psychological counselor, medical doctor, engineer etc., we should make a choice in line with the student's interest and ability...." P7 said about this issue: "Responsibilities towards society, in other words, what we do is responsibility towards society. … Since the ideas we say in the decision-making process of people are important, the information we provide is important, so it is also a matter of the society as to which profession people will choose, to what extent they will do this profession, whether they will be happy while doing it."

Being Proactive: It was emerged that psychological counselors tried to prevent possible problems by acting proactively in order to avoid ethical problems. For example, P4 stated that he was doing awareness-raising activities based on the features of domestic culture before the university preference period came: "As I know the society, as I'm from Konya, I started earlier in 12th grade because I knew I would encounter such a thing."

Discussion

In this study, it was aimed at examining in depth the ethical problems faced by psychological counselors in the preference advising process and their coping strategies. In this context, the prominent findings were grouped under three sub-categories: the ethical problems experienced in preference advising, the factors that were the sources of these ethical problems, and coping strategies that psychological counselors use.

Supporting the current findings, Zunker (2006) stated that in the career counseling process, there might be ethical difficulties and violations in areas of setting the boundaries, establishing professional relationships, use of measurement tools, use of the internet in career counseling process, counselor's professional competencies, confidentiality, obtaining an informed consent and responsibilities for other career counselors. Similarly, Cardoso et al. (2012) reported that career counselors had ethical dilemmas regarding neutrality, confidentiality, fidelity and boundaries. As revealed in this study, it was mentioned that the technologies used in career counseling services bring along some ethical difficulties and problems as well as many possible benefits (Makela, 2015). In this context, it was seen that many ethical principles and standards in the field draw attention to behaviors that may harm professionalism, such as providing services via counselors' own phones and social media accounts. For example, IAEVG (2018) states that technology can only be used in career guidance services

provided that such use is supported depending on research and evaluation results; NCDA (2015), on the other hand, underlines the limitations such as protection of professional relations and confidentiality and lack of enough time. On the other hand, it was strongly emphasized that professionals who provide career services should be aware of their own values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, and not impose them on the individuals they serve, and respect their cultural differences for ethical practices (NCDA, 2015; IAEVG, 2018; S&Gs, 2004). In the relevant literature, it was mentioned that cultural, contextual, personal and subjective factors related to clients should be considered, cultural awareness and sensitivity should be purposefully included in all stages of the counseling process (e.g., Arthur, 2017; Collins & Arthur, 2010). Accordingly, it was stated that similar to the counseling process (Corey, Corey, & Callenen, 2011), career counselors should first realize their own values and enhance their competencies to understand the variety of clients' needs (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Flores & Heppner, 2002). As can be seen in the findings of this study, confidentiality could emerge as an ethical problem while providing career guidance services (e.g., Cardoso et al., 2012). On the other hand, it is considered as an ethical violation for career counselors to share confidential information of the people they serve without their permission (NCDA, 2015; CICA, 2011; IAEVG, 2018; S&Gs, 2004). Findings also showed that there might be ethical problems not to respect student autonomy in the preference advising process. At this point, the role and impact of the family and close environment on young people's career decision-making process was indicated in previous research findings (e.g., Hamamcı, Bacanlı, & Doğan, 2013; Karacan-Ozdemir & Yerin Guneri, 2017; Ulaş & Yıldırım, 2015), and this situation was explained as a cultural reality. In this context, it was revealed that the participation of family and other important relatives in the preference process and being active in the decisions about the student, and especially when there were differences between the family and the student's preferences, ethical violations could occur as a result of the psychological counselor's positioning on the family side. In addition, it could be said that dual and multiple relationships that might arise in this process, such as knowing the family or the student before, would affect the judgment ability of the counselor and impair his impartiality (Corey et al., 2011), which will also reduce the effectiveness of the preference process. On the other hand, the ethical problems arising from the individuals provided these services in different institutions and organizations, indicated the requirement of a basic level of interaction between these units and experts as emphasized by Amundson, Parker, and Arthur (2002). In this context, it was suggested by Europanian Center for the Development Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2009) that there should be a communication network and information exchange between potential professionals who may need cooperation.

The second group of findings were regarding the system and family-based ethical problems. In this context, it was revealed that demands of school administrators from psychological counselors who provide preference advising to direct students to certain programs and their interference in the process caused the emergence of ethical problems. In addition, it was seen that the issues such as provision of these services in places where privacy cannot be ensured such as shopping centers, inadequacy of wage paid for preference advising, high number of students served, information pollution in web and social media, and lack of follow-up system were the problems arising from the system itself. Thus, they were also the source of ethical problems encountered by counselors in preference advising process. Furthermore, families' expectations about their children's career, conflicts between families and students, families' expectations from psychological counselors and their pressure on counselors were emerged as another source of ethical issues. Although it was not directly related to career guidance services or more specifically the preference advising process as in this study, the previous studies indicated that expectations and demands of school principals created ethical dilemmas and difficulties for psychological counselors (e.g. Erdur-Baker & Çetinkaya, 2007; Kolay-Akfert, 2012). It can be assumed that this situation might be resulted from the fact that helping process may not be fully understood, especially when considering preference advising. In addition, this situation inferred that there is a need for understanding of the necessity of putting students at the center in preference advising and providing services in a way that takes interests of students into account. As revealed in this study,

the problems such as not being able to allocate enough time to individuals applying for career guidance and considering other career services they may need, have also been emphasized many times in the relevant literature (e.g., Amundson & Borgen, 2000). This situation could cause not being able to establish the therapeutic relationship between the career counselor and the client, which increases the effectiveness of career guidance (Masdonati, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2009; Masdonati, Perdrix, Massoudi, & Rossier, 2014). In the career counseling process, it is an ethical requirement to use measurement tools that are culturally sensitive, valid and reliable, and in line with needs of clients (Flores, Spanierman, & Obasi, 2003; NCDA, 2015; IAEVG, 2018). However, findings indicated that this problem stems from the fact that due to the nature of preference advising process, it was difficult to allocate sufficient time for each students to make use of such tools. Moreover, based on the changes and advancements in the 21st century while emerging a trend of use of the internet and social media in career services it has been seen that various and many information in these environments may also bring new challenges to career counselors (Capuzzi & Stauffer, 2012; O'Halloran, Fahr, & Keller, 2002). As highlighted in previous work, one of those challenges is the excess and pollution of information on the internet (Pelling, 2002). Thus, the need to enhance the competencies of counselors for distinguishing and using the necessary information on the internet was emphasized (Stevens & Lundberg, 1998) and included in ethical codes (e.g., NCDA, 2015; IAEVG, 2018). As aforementioned, due to the role and impact of families on career decisions of students, it was seen that expectations of families in the selection process and the pressure they put on psychological counselors could be the source of ethical problems. Although the relevant literature underlined the right of families to obtain information on issues related to their children, and the potential of this to create ethical dilemmas (Iyer & Baxter-MacGregor, 2010, Erdur-Baker & Çetinkaya, 2007; Kolay-Akfert, 2012), there have been not research findings on career guidance services or preference advising process. Nevertheless, this could be explained by the fact that Turkish society still has collectivist features despite of some individualistic characteristics of Turkish people (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1994), and family and other important adults influence their children's career decision-making (Fouad et al., 2008).

Finally, when faced with ethical challenges in the preference process in Turkey, psychological counselors used some strategies to overcome them: to consult with colleagues, take advantage of existing technologies, to set boundaries with school administrators, inform students and parents, pursue professional development, act for the benefit of the society and be proactive. It could be implied that these strategies were one-step implementations rather than a systematic and hierarchical process as highlighted in ethical decision-making models (e.g., Corey et al., 2011; Ergene, 2004; Forester-Miller & Davis, 1996; Karacan-Ozdemir & Aracı İyiaydın, 2019; S&Gs, 2004). Nevertheless, these steps were consistent with the suggestions of the NCDA (2015), such as nagotiating with parties associated with the ethical problem, getting consultations, and pursuing professional and personal development. At the same time, within the framework of ethical principles approach based on ethical decision-making (Kitchener, 1984), when faced with ethical problems in the preference advisory process, it was seen that ethical standards were applied such as respecting student autonomy, setting boundaries with school administrators, providing information and self-development. Similarly, it can be said that the approach suggested by the social constructivist model to manage the ethical decision-making process by consulting or getting ideas of other people (Cottone, 2001) was applied to a certain extent. According to ethics of values, individuals' own moral understanding and values are more influential in ethical decision making (Garcia, Cariwright, Winston, & Borzuchowska, 2003) and in this context, ethical decision making is related to the counselor's own conscience, values and beliefs (Corey et al., 2011). In this study, it was seen that ethical problems were evaluated considering the benefit of society. The psychological counselors applied to short-term strategies such as referring to principles and values or consulting colleagues in the face of ethical problems encountered in the advising process could be explained the fact of having limited time for the preference advising process and the need to respond immediately.

Conclusion

The preference advising process, in which students decide the programs and universities that they would like to be admitted is a very important stage both in their lives and for the society considering the results of the service provided. For this reason, the quality of services provided in this process becomes so critical. In this context, one of the factors determining the quality is undoubtedly the ethical principles that should be underlie of the services provided. However, there is no research on the preference advising process that has been implemented for years and the ethical problems experienced in this process. Thus, this research is the first study that examined ethical issues for preference advising practices in Turkey.

Findings of this study implied that there is a need for efforts to increase the competencies of psychological counselors who provide these specific services, and a need to develop policies to improve the preference advising process, considering the difficulties arising from the system itself. First of all, findings posited that psychological counselors providing these services should gain an ethical perspective and increase their competencies to deal with ethical problems in order to increase quality the of the services. As could be seen in this study, although most of the participants took ethics courses during their undergraduate education, ethical understanding and approach can be developed by raising awareness of professionals on this issue and providing them with insight rather than a competence that can be acquired through just one course (Gladding, 2009; Kitchener, 1984). Hence, in-service education can be organized throughout the year for the psychological counselors who provide preference advising about ethical principles to be observed in this process and ethical decision-making models that can be followed in the face of ethical dilemmas. In this training, it is recommended to include sub-modules for capacity building such as career development theories, labor market, and measurement tools that can be used in career guidance services.

Another result concluded in this study is the need for a systematic restructuring of preference advising process and a review of existing policies in this context. Career counseling is a field that requires theoretical and methodological knowledge in different disciplines such as psychology, education, sociology and economics. On the other hand, considering the lifelong career development, the science of psychology should be at the center of these services (OECD, 2004). Hence, it is clear that these services should be provided primarily by psychological counselors who have educational background in areas such as developmental psychology, career counseling theories, psychology, and use of measurement tools in education. Similarly, preference advising that is a helping service should be provided professionally. In line with these findings, it can be anticipated that it would be a more professional service if it was provided by school counselors whose development is constantly supported by in-service education, who have known the developmental phases of students for a long time and who can also conduct follow-up studies at the end of the process of making preference at their own schools where the student is educated instead of in places open to public such as shopping malls, municipal buildings, university campuses where the possibility of providing services with the motivation of attracting students to their own institutions, or support courses or private training courses that may act with the motivation to show success rates high by placing students in any program. In this direction, a systematic training process can be planned by developing a curriculum for the training of career counselors, as suggested by Nassar, Al-Qimlass, Karacan-Ozdemir, and Tovar (2019). Similarly, based on relevant examples (Nassar, Al-Qimlass, Tovar, L., & Karacan-Ozdemir, 2017), standards to be followed in planning, presenting and evaluating effective preference advising services can be developed and the quality of these services can be evaluated through these standards each year. In addition, it is recommended to review policies such as working hours and wages regarding the assignment of school counselors who are recommended to provide these services. As pointed out by the International Labour Organisation (2013), humane working hours and a fair wage are indicators of a decent job and affect people's ownership of their work, their full fulfillment of job requirements, job satisfaction, and general well-being (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016).

Finally, this study has some limitations. This study was carried out with psychological counselors who were only working in Gaziantep province and who were graduated from psychological counseling and psychology. In addition, the number of male participants in the study was higher and therefore the study findings cannot be generalized. Another limitation was that data were collected through interview questions to understand the ethical difficulties in preference advising process and the steps taken to overcome. In this respect, it should be considered that the participants might have had social desirability concerns while answering the interview questions. On the other hand, some precautions were taken to reduce these limitation such as formulating interview questions in line with the relevant literature, obtaining expert opinion and external review on the questions and process, conducting a pilot interview, discussing and evaluating possible risks in weekly meetings by the research team. Another limitation was that independent referees were not used in the analysis of data. Considering these limitations, the future research can reach preference advisors working in different institutions in different regions of Turkey to reveal ethical problems in this process in a more comprehensive way through surveys. In addition, the ethical attitudes and decision-making process of psychological counselors may be compared with those advisors who graduated from the programs except for psychology or counseling. Ethical issues in preference advising services offered in different institutions and settings such as shopping malls, preparatory/tutoring institutions, guidance and research centers, campuses, and schools can be examined in more depth. In addition, checklists can be developed to evaluate advisors' own ethical decision-making process, and in this way, a tool can be brought to the field to monitor themselves in the process. Finally, programs to increase ethical competencies can be developed and empirically tested in the preference advising process.

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