

The Effect of Group Counseling Program on Dealing with School Exhaustion of 7th Grade Students

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Abstract

In this research, the effect of Group Counseling Program on coping with school exhaustion was investigated. The study was conducted with 7th grade students attending Private Bogazici Educational Center in Bakirkoy, Istanbul during 2016-2017 academic year. “the School Burnout Scale for the Second Level of Primary Education”, which was developed by Aypay (2011) was used to assess school exhaustion levels. Sixteen (8 males and 8 females) out of 96 students with high school exhaustion levels and willing to participate in the study was selected randomly. 8 of them were randomly assigned as experimental group (4 males and 4 females) and the other 8 students were randomly assigned as control group. In this research, pre-test post-test control group design was used. In the study, group counseling was applied to the experimental group for 8 weeks and no treatment was given to the control group. For the analysis of the data, Mann-Whitney-U test was used for intra-group comparison; and Wilcoxon test was used for inter-group comparison. As a result, it was found that group counseling program was effective in decreasing school exhaustion; however, it was not effective in family originated exhaustion and school inadequacy, which are sub-dimensions of school exhaustion. The results showed that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of total exhaustion scores. Obtained data was interpreted and recommendations were given in the scope of the literature.

Keywords: school exhaustion, group counseling, 7th grade students

1. Introduction

1.1. The Concept of Exhaustion

The concept of exhaustion (Burnout) is a syndrome in psychology which had first been raised in 1974 by Freudenberger. Freudenberger defines burnout as failure, attrition and exhaustion due to intensive and excessive use of power, energy and other individual resources (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Seidman & Zager, 1991; Aypay, 2011). In another study, burnout is defined as follows: “Burnout is defined as a subjective state that results from working for a long time in environments that make strong emotional demands, accompanied by physical exhaustion, feelings of desperation, hopelessness, and disappointment, and the development of a negative self-concept” (Pines, 1993 & Altay, 2007).

Extreme demands of school and education causes students exhaustion which is called school burnout syndrome. In the education process, stress resulting from courses, the course-load or other sources of psychological pressure may lead to emotional exhaustion, desensitization and feelings of low achievement. School burnout can result in absenteeism, low motivation to study, and high dropout rates, among others (McCarthy & et al., 1990; Yang & Farn, 2005 & Aypay, 2011). Laursen et al. (2010) argue that school culture is crucial in understanding the burnout syndrome and report that peer groups who experience school burnout end up being low-achievers, and what is more, they develop some sort of an antipathy toward high-achievers. Peer groups who are successful in school and experience less burnout, in turn, dislike peer groups who experience more burnout and resist school culture. Findings of Dyrbye et al. (2009) provide clues as to the size of the problems that can be caused by school burnout. They found that about 50% of medical school students developed the burnout syndrome; 10% of this group had suicidal thoughts, and some even made suicide plans (Aypay, 2011).

Because the burnout syndrome was initially defined as a work-related phenomenon, there has been some debate on whether students can also experience burnout. Even though studying is not an occupation, basic student activities such as attending classes, performing course-related tasks, succeeding in exams and developing professional decision-making skills can be defined as “work” and are equivalent to “work” (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005; Çapri, & Gunduz & Gokcakan, 2011). Studies on school burnout can be divided into two groups. In the first group are studies that adapt instruments initially developed for use in the context of work life to school environments (Hu & schaufeli, 2009; Salmela-Aro, Kiuru, Leskinen & Nurmi, 2009; Gunduz, Capri, Gokcakan, 2009). The second group consists of studies that use instruments that were developed to measure the burnout syndrome in the context of schools (Aypay, 2011). Dimensions of school burnout in the first group of studies are the same as dimensions of occupational burnout. These dimensions are emotional exhaustion, desensitization, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment. Studies in the second group were conducted using separate instruments developed for the second level of primary education and for secondary education. In these studies,

dimensions of burnout for the second level of primary education were identified as burnout due to school activities, burnout due to family-related reasons, inadequacy at school, and lack of interest in school. Dimensions of burnout for secondary education, on the other hand, were identified as burnout due to studying, burnout due to family-related reasons, homework burnout, feeling bored and oppressed by teachers' attitudes, the need for entertainment and taking breaks, and inadequacy at school (Aypay & Eryılmaz, 2011).

Dimensions used to evaluate school burnout are explained as follows (Aypay, 2011):

"Burnout Due to School Activities" (BSA) refers to feelings of exhaustion, weariness and boredom felt by students due to school-related activities such as studying, doing homework and taking exams, and the feeling of futility toward these activities. "Burnout Due to Family-Related Reasons" (BFR) refers to feelings of lethargy, stress, weariness and psychological exhaustion felt by students due to family attitudes toward school-related issues. "Inadequacy at School" (IS) refers to the feeling of inadequacy felt by students concerning school and school-related activities (doing homework and studying). "Lack of Interest in School" (LIS) refers to feelings of dislike, indifference, boredom and unhappiness felt by students toward school. Negative feelings about school prevent students from spending their time at school in an efficient and effective manner (Oztan, 2014).

1.2. Group Counseling

Counseling can be provided both on an individual basis and in groups. Group counseling provides assistance to group members in achieving their individual goals. Group counseling can be performed with divorced couples, people with eating disorders, alcoholics, and people with anxiety disorders, among others. Group counseling can take the form of assertiveness training groups or self-help groups. In group counseling, groups usually consist of members with similar issues. In group counseling, providing general information to group members about "group counseling" is very useful for the process of counseling (De Jong & Berg, 1998; Ates, 2014).

In group counseling, the psychological counselor is not positioned as an expert that knows all; to the contrary, based on the principle of "not knowing," every group member is seen as an expert on their own lives. The counselor values small changes in group members, and believes that they have the required skills and resources to reach their goals (Proudlock & Wellman, 2011; Koptuna, 2007).

O'Connell (2001) described group counseling as the following (Ates, 2014):

1. Group psychological counseling is a kind of counseling which mostly pay attention on the clients' strengths and successes not on the clients' weaknesses and fails. Each individual is encouraged to discover his or her capability in this counseling model.
2. In group psychological counseling, the clients instead to focus on their problems, the counselor makes them to concentrate on their positive behaviors and successful consequences.
3. Group psychological counseling provides clients the possibility to fulfill their individual objectives and recognize their subtle changes.
4. In group psychological counseling, seeking solution means the clients borrow solution from each other, because this model of counseling gives its members the opportunity of borrowing solution from each other.
5. In the process of group psychological counseling, the members' views and thoughts are accepted instead of analyzing them. Therefore, the members identify that there is no true or false answer, there are only different recognitions and perceptions.

In sum, students can experience desensitization, emotional exhaustion and a sense of lack of accomplishment, the typical symptoms of burnout, as a result of the stress and pressure they feel due to school and school-related tasks and responsibilities. This, in turn, can lead to a decline in their motivation to study and lack of interest in school, and as a result, absenteeism and even dropouts. Moreover, routine practices in classes are also known to exhaust students and lead, over time, to burnout. Student burnout results in absenteeism, low motivation to study, and high dropout rates, among others. In the education process, stress resulting from courses, the course-load or other sources of psychological pressure may lead to emotional exhaustion, desensitization and feelings of low achievement (Yang & Farn, 2005; Bas, 2012). Given these negative consequences, school burnout constitutes an important area of study. Studies to examine the reasons why students develop the burnout syndrome and its effects on students, to be conducted with student groups at different levels of education and taking previous findings into account, are expected to contribute to a better and more successful academic future for students. Yet, there is a serious lack of studies on burnout among primary education and secondary education students (Erturgut & Soyseker, 2010). A literature review conducted shows that there are very few studies on school burnout among students at the second level of primary education. Given the direct negative effects of burnout on students and indirect effects on teachers and parents, this topic needs further studies and attempts to develop solutions. Reducing school burnout via solution-focused group counseling is one such attempt. It is expected to contribute to the literature on the topic and further studies to be conducted.

The overall aim of this study is to examine the effects of a solution-based group counseling program designed to reduce school burnout on levels of school burnout (burnout due to school, burnout due to family, inadequacy at school, and lack of interest in school) among 7th grade secondary school students. Given the

dimension of school burnout, burnout may be attributed to reasons such as the disciplinary approach and physical conditions of the school, teachers' attitudes, parents' attitudes, intra-family communication and feelings of inadequacy. This study aims to reduce the feeling of burnout among students by developing their problem-solving skills in these areas.

2. Hypotheses of the study

Within the scope of the study, four hypotheses below were tested.

1. There will be no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group.
2. There will be a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group.
3. There will be no significant difference between the pretest scores of the experimental group and control group.
4. There will be a significant difference between the posttest scores of the experimental group and control group.

3. Method

This research was an experimental study with pre-test and post-test control group design. In this research, group counseling was conducted to the experimental group for 8 sessions. No treatment was given to the control group. Pre-test and post-test were given to both groups.

3.1. Study Group

The study was conducted with 7th grade students attending Private Bogazici Educational Center in Bakirkoy, Istanbul during 2016-2017 academic year. 16 out of 96 students with high school exhaustion levels and willing to participate in the study was selected randomly; 8 (4 males and 4 female) of them were randomly assigned as experimental group and the other 8 was randomly assigned as control group.

3.2. Data Collection

In this study "the School Burnout Scale for the Second Level of Primary Education" (SBSPE) was used as a tool to collect the data.

3.2.1. The School Burnout Scale for the Second Level of Primary Education (SBSPE):

The scale used in the study was developed by Aypay (2011) to measure school burnout. The scale has four dimensions, and consists of 26 four-point Likert-type items. Dimensions are burnout due to school (12 items), burnout due to family (5 items), inadequacy at school (4 items), and lack of interest in school (5 items). The School Burnout Scale for the Second Level of Primary Education (SBSPE) is an original scale (Aypay,2011).

To examine the construct validity of the scale, first, data on 691 participants was divided into two equal parts. The first part, consisting of data on 345 participants, was examined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with Varimax rotation. The factor structure of the scale was identified using EFA, and the second part of the data, on 346 participants, was examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to see whether this factor structure would be confirmed. The criterion validity of the scale was examined by looking at the correlations between factor scores for the dimensions of the scale, on the one hand, and the total score and sub-scale scores for Academic Expectations Stress Inventory (AESI), on the other. Reliability of the scale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (for the entire scale and individual dimensions) and the split-half reliability method (Oztan, 2014).

The KMO value for the School Burnout Index for Primary Education Students was found to be 0.93, and the Bartlett's test result was significant ($\chi^2(946) = 3831,155, p < .01$). To collect further evidence on how well the four-factor structure of the scale, identified using EFA, fits the data, the second part of the data with 346 observations was examined using CFA. Goodness of fit indexes, chi-square (χ^2) value and levels of statistical significance were calculated for the confirmatory factor analysis reported in Table 3. The chi-square value for model-data fit was found to be significant [$\chi^2 = 787.6, df = 293, p < .01$]. Chi-square degrees of freedom, which is calculated by taking sample size into account, was found to be very low ($787.6 / 293 = 2.68$). Table 3 also reports additional goodness of fit indexes. Standardized coefficients in CFA, which show the relationship between factors and items, varied between 0.54 and 0.83. Other goodness of fit indexes for the model [$GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.91, PGFI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.07, CFI = 0.91$] also indicate a good fit between model and data (Oztan, 2014). Reliability of the SBSPE was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the split-half reliability method. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients for the BSA, BF, IS and LIS dimensions of SBSPE were .92, .83, .76 and .81, respectively. Split-half reliability coefficients for the dimensions of SBSPE were, respectively, .81, .72, .65 and .65 (Oztan, 2014).

3.2.2. Group Counseling Program on Dealing with School Burnout

The main purpose of this program is to help students with high school burnout levels to realize some entertaining and beautiful sides of the school with the perception of positive psychology approach which focuses on positive sides; furthermore, it can be expressed that as the students feel successful at school, their attitude towards school begins to be positive.

The program based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and the sub-goals of the “Group Counseling Program on Dealing with School Burnout” was generally prepared according to the following objectives:

1. Making the students to be aware of what school burnout is about and what causes it.
2. Making the students gain awareness about their emotions and thoughts when they feel school burnout, and helping them to express this within the group.
3. Helping them to trust the group and share their problems with the group and encourage them to recommend solutions for the other group members.
4. Helping them to recognize that they are not the only ones experiencing school burnout, others also have similar thoughts and lack of skills to handle with the problem and they are not alone.
5. Helping them to become aware of their irrational thoughts.
6. Making the students to be aware of what group counseling is about, and how they can encounter their problems through the program.
7. Helping the students to gain the skills of coping with the causes of school burnout.
8. Helping the students to develop positive relations towards their family and friends and also having positive regards towards their school responsibilities.
9. Enable to develop the skills to think positively towards the school.
10. To encourage the group members to change their attitude towards school and succession.
11. Making the students to be aware of their strangeness.
12. Thinking and designing the future positively and enjoying school activities much.
13. Clarifying the problems related to school burnout.
14. Helping them to understand that they can be able to be successful and competent when they overcome their school burnout.
15. To encourage them to consider that how they could successfully solve their problems and deal with their burnout emotions in the past.
16. To determine their level of coping with their burnout, failure, inadequacy emotions.
17. To determine concrete objectives for improvement.
18. Helping them to be aware of the negative consequences of their inadequacy emotions and how they can be able to increase their resistance towards these emotions and also find effective solutions.
19. To encourage them to apply the solutions which they find and reinforce this courage.
20. To be able to assess their own achievements on identified objectives.
21. Making the students to develop alternative solutions against problems and burnout, enlarge the solutions and find different required resources.

4. Findings and Interpretation

In the findings, the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the pretest and posttest scores of the control group and the experimental group were calculated. Also, in order to see if inter-group differences and intra-group differences affected data in a significant level, the Mann-Whitney U test was used for the comparison of inter-group difference, and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used for the comparison of intra-group difference.

The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control group are included in Table 1.

Table 1. The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the pretest and posttest scores of the control group.

	N	Control Group Pretest		Control Group Posttest	
		X	Sd.	X	Sd.
School Originated Exhaustion	8	30.88	7.13	28.88	6.96
Family Originated Exhaustion	8	12.02	4.50	10.98	3.01
School Inadequacy	8	8.16	1.58	9.57	1.68
Loss of Interest for School	8	10.83	2.53	11.15	2.99
Total Exhaustion Score	8	61.89	10.91	60.58	10.19

In Table 1, as it is seen, there was only a small difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control group. The arithmetic average and standard deviation for the pretest scores of the control group for school originated exhaustion sub-dimension (X=30.88, Sd.= 7.13), family originated exhaustion sub-dimension (X=12.02, Sd.=4.50), school inadequacy sub-dimension (X=8.16, Sd.=1.58), loss of interest for school sub-dimension (X=10.83, Sd.=2.53), and the total exhaustion score for the scale (X=61.89, Sd.=10.91) were found and also the arithmetic average and standard deviation for the posttest scores of the control group for school originated exhaustion sub-dimension (X=28.88, Sd.= 6.96), family originated exhaustion sub-dimension (X=10.98, Sd.=3.01), school inadequacy sub-dimension (X=9.57, Sd.=1.68), loss of interest for school sub-

dimension ($X=11.15$, $Sd.=2.99$), and the total exhaustion score for the scale ($X=60.58$, $Sd.=10.19$) were found. **The first hypothesis of the study indicates that there will be no significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group.**

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group or not, Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was conducted in table 2.

Table 2. Comparison the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the control group.

Control Group Pretest-Posttest		N	Ranking Average	Ranking Sum	Z	P
School Originated Exhaustion	Negative	5	3.92	5.79	-1.13	.87
	Positive	3		19.00		
	No Difference	0		18.00		
Family Originated Exhaustion	Negative	3	2.69		-1.14	.88
	Positive	2	3.58	9.00		
	No Difference	3		8.00		
School Inadequacy	Negative	2	4.01		-1.09	.31
	Positive	5	4.08	9.00		
	No Difference	1		20.00		
Loss of Interest for School	Negative	3	2.63		-.78	.44
	Positive	3	4.76	8.00		
	No Difference	2		14.00		
Total Exhaustion Score	Negative	3	5.19		-.37	.76
	Positive	5	4.15	15.58		
	No Difference	0		20.62		

Comparison of the pretest and posttest scores of the control group are depicted in Table 2. When the comparison of the pretest and posttest scores of the control group are analyzed, school originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($z= -.13$, $p>.05$), family originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($z= -.14$, $p>.05$), school inadequacy sub-dimension ($z= -1.09$, $p>.05$), loss of interest for school sub-dimension ($z= -.78$, $p>.05$), and the total exhaustion score for the scale ($z= -.37$, $p>.05$) were found. As a result, no significant difference has been found between the pretest and posttest scores of the control group. As the control group didn't expose to any treatment, this result had been expected before and so it confirms the third hypothesis of the study.

The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the experimental group are included in Table 3.

Table 3. Arithmetic average and standard deviation of the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group.

	N	Experimental Group Pretest		Experimental Group Posttest	
		X	Sd.	X	Sd.
School Originated Exhaustion	8	29.03	9.78	21.93	4.48
Family Originated Exhaustion	8	10.98	1.68	11.02	2.25
School Inadequacy	8	7.99	1.97	7.68	2.04
Loss of Interest for School	8	11.03	2.98	7.81	1.08
Total Exhaustion Score	8	59.03	13.99	48.44	9.17

In Table 3, the arithmetic average and standard deviation for the pretest scores of the experimental group for school originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($X=29.03$, $Sd.= 9.78$), family originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($X=10.98$, $Sd.=1.68$), school inadequacy sub-dimension ($X=7.99$, $Sd.=1.97$), loss of interest for school sub-dimension ($X=11.03$, $Sd.=2.98$), and the total exhaustion score for the scale ($X=59.03$, $Sd.=13.99$) were found and also the arithmetic average and standard deviation for the posttest scores of the control group for school originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($X=21.93$, $Sd.= 4.48$), family originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($X=11.02$, $Sd.=2.25$), school inadequacy sub-dimension ($X=7.81$, $Sd.=2.04$), loss of interest for school sub-dimension ($X=7.81$, $Sd.=1.08$), and the total exhaustion score for the scale ($X=48.44$, $Sd.=9.17$) were found.

The second hypothesis of the study indicates that there will be a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group.

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was conducted in table 4.

Table 4. Comparison the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the experimental group.

Experimental Group Pretest-Posttest		N	Ranking Average	Ranking Sum	Z	P
School Originated Exhaustion	Negative	7	4.36	33.00	-2.28	.03
	Positive	1	2.04	3.00		
	No Difference	0				
Family Originated Exhaustion	Negative	2	2.59	6.00	-.82	.47
	Positive	3	3.63	11.00		
	No Difference	3				
School Inadequacy	Negative	3	3.95	10,97	-1.08	.29
	Positive	2	1.58	3,59		
	No Difference	3				
Loss of Interest for School	Negative	6	4.53	26.97	-2.32	.02
	Positive	1	1.02	1.00		
	No Difference	1				
Total Exhaustion Score	Negative	7	5.04	35.03	-2.49	.03
	Positive	1	1.02	1.12		
	No Difference	0				

Comparison of the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group according to Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test are depicted in Table 4. When the comparison of the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group are analyzed, School Originated Exhaustion sub-dimension ($z = -2.28, p < .05$), Loss of Interest for School sub-dimension ($z = -2.32, p < .05$), and the total Exhaustion Score for the scale ($z = -2.49, p < .05$) were found, however the other two sub-dimensions; family originated exhaustion ($z = -.82, p > .05$), school inadequacy ($z = -1.08, p > .05$) were found.

According to these obtained findings, a significant difference has been found between the pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group for “total school exhaustion” and also for two sub-dimensions; “school originated exhaustion” and “loss of interest for school”. However, there is no significant difference between pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group for the other two dimensions; “family originated exhaustion”, and “school inadequacy”

The third hypothesis of the study indicates that there will be no significant difference between the pretest scores of the experimental group and control group.

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the pretest scores of experimental group and pretest scores of the control group or not, Mann Whitney U-Test was conducted in table 5.

Table 5. Comparison the pretest scores of the students in the experimental and control groups.

Pretest		N	Ranking Average	Ranking Sum	U	P
School Originated Exhaustion	Experimental Group	8	8.42	67.03	30.59	.87
	Control Group	8	8.76	69.96		
Family Originated Exhaustion	Experimental Group	8	8.65	70.05	30.02	.84
	Control Group	8	8.29	65.95		
School Inadequacy	Experimental Group	8	8.31	66.10	30.00	.83
	Control Group	8	8.65	70.09		
Loss of Interest for School	Experimental Group	8	8.69	68.07	31.01	.91
	Control Group	8	8.41	66.88		
Total Exhaustion Score	Experimental Group	8	8.35	66.04	30.04	.84
	Control Group	8	8.63	69.08		

Comparison of the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups are depicted in Table 5. When the comparison of the pretest scores of the two groups are analyzed by Mann Whitney U-Test, it is seen that, there is no significant difference between pretest scores of the experimental and control group for school originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($U = 30.59, p > .05$), family originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($U = 30.02, p > .05$), school inadequacy sub-dimension ($U = 30.00, p > .05$), Loss of Interest for School sub-dimension ($U = 31.01, p > .05$), and also no significant difference was found for the total school exhaustion scores of the whole scale ($U = 30.04, p > .05$). These findings indicate that in the beginning of the study the students were randomly selected for the experimental and control group, so they had the same scores level of school exhaustion. As expected statistically, there is a homogeneous structure between the two groups, that is, at the beginning there is no significant difference between the two groups.

The fourth hypothesis of the study indicates that there will be a significant difference between the posttest scores of the experimental group and control group.

In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the posttest scores of the experimental group and the control group or not, Mann Whitney U-Test was conducted in table 6.

Table 6. Comparison of the posttest scores of the students in the experimental and control groups.

Posttest		N	Ranking Average	Ranking Sum	U	P
School Originated Exhaustion	Experimental Group	8	6.99	5.53	13.54	.05
	Control Group	8	10.43	82.61		
Family Originated Exhaustion	Experimental Group	8	8.79	69.59	30.48	.88
	Control Group	8	8.55	66.56		
School Inadequacy	Experimental Group	8	7.33	58.02	22.02	.27
	Control Group	8	9.88	78.11		
Loss of Interest in School	Experimental Group	8	5.45	46.04	10.06	.03
	Control Group	8	11.36	90.01		
Total Exhaustion Score	Experimental Group	8	6.12	48.53	12.55	.04
	Control Group	8	11.01	87.53		

Results about the comparison of the posttest scores of the two groups according to Mann-Whitney U test are depicted in Table 6. When the comparison of the posttest scores of the two groups are analyzed, it is seen that, there is a significant difference between posttest scores of the experimental and control group for school originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($U=13.54$, $p<.05$), and Loss of Interest for School sub-dimension ($U=10.06$, $p<.05$). Also a significant difference is found for the total school exhaustion scores of the whole scale ($U=12.55$, $p<.05$). However, there is no significant difference for family originated exhaustion sub-dimension ($U=30.48$, $p>.05$), and school inadequacy sub-dimension ($U=22.02$, $p>.05$).

According to these findings, a significant difference has been found between the posttest scores of the experimental and control group for “total school exhaustion” and also for two sub-dimensions; “school originated exhaustion” and “loss of interest for school”. However, there is no significant difference between posttest scores of the experimental and control group for the other two dimensions; “family originated exhaustion”, and “school inadequacy.”

CONSEQUENCE, DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

Consequence

The conclusions based on the findings of the study are included below:

It was found that Group Counseling Program was generally effective in dealing with school exhaustion of secondary school 7th grade students.

1. It was found that Group Counseling Program was effective in dealing with school originated exhaustion, which is one of the sub-dimensions of school exhaustion.
2. It was found that Group Counseling Program was not effective at a significant level in dealing with family originated exhaustion, which is another sub-dimension of school exhaustion.
3. It was found that Group Counseling Program was not effective at a significant level in dealing with school inadequacy, which is a sub-dimension of school exhaustion.
4. It was found that Group Counseling Program was effective at a significant level in dealing with loss of interest in school, which is also a sub-dimension of school exhaustion.

The findings obtained from this study indicate that Group Counseling Program is effective in decreasing school exhaustion levels and dealing with the feeling of exhaustion.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

This study aims to examine the effect of group counseling in helping secondary school students cope with school burnout. In this context, hypotheses were formed about the effectiveness of group counseling in helping secondary school students cope with school burnout, and research findings were discussed and interpreted.

The literature review conducted suggested that group counseling would be an effective method for coping with school burnout. Based on the literature review, hypotheses were formed about the effectiveness of group counseling in coping with school burnout, and these hypotheses were confirmed by the findings. The hypotheses were probably confirmed for the following reasons: Given that one main reason behind feelings of burnout is a focus on inadequacy, failure and weaknesses, the group counseling may have been effective because it emphasizes and helps participants realize their strengths and achievements instead of their weaknesses, inadequacies or deficiencies. Moreover, techniques used in counseling, such as scaling questions, miracle questions and praise, may also have played an important role. Group counseling was found to be effective in

coping with burnout due to school activities, a dimension of school burnout. This can be explained as follows: Students probably focus on their weaknesses when they have trouble dealing with problems encountered at school and fail to come up with solutions, and they experience burnout when they are unable to figure out what to do when they cannot complete school activities or homework. The Cognitive Behavioral Therapy technique helps develop students' skills to cope with these and similar situations and encourages them, via praises, to practice the solutions they develop. However, group counseling was not found to be significantly effective in coping with burnout due to family, another dimension of school burnout. Because parents play a role by miscommunication, perfectionist expectations far exceeding children's performance, focus on weaknesses, and misguided comparisons, working with only the kids and changing their perceptions were probably not sufficient by themselves. Conducting complementary work with parents in parallel with students would be effective in reducing feelings of burnout due to family. Group counseling was found to make a difference on inadequacy at school, a dimension of school burnout, but this difference was not statistically significant. This can be attributed to the fact that the sessions lasted only eight weeks, a relatively short period of time, and parents were not involved. A comprehensive program that also involves parents is expected to make a significant difference on the dimension of inadequacy at school. Also data analysis showed that group counseling was effective in coping with lack of interest in school, another dimension of school burnout. It can be argued that the group counseling with its focus on positive aspects, helped students recognize some of the fun and beautiful aspects of school environment, and as they came to feel more successful at school, their attitudes toward school changed for the better.

In conclusion, group counseling was found to be effective in coping with school burnout. Based on these findings, it is recommended that class teachers should be informed about school burnout. Teachers should also be reminded that comparing students with one another can lead to feelings of inadequacy, expecting achievement levels exceeding student capabilities can cause anxiety, and too much homework can lead to burnout, whereas a solution-focused approach that emphasizes strengths of the students can prevent feelings of burnout and improve students' self-efficacy. Within the same framework, parents should also be informed about these issues. This information can be provided to parents via written documents or a seminar. Another cause of feelings of burnout is that students enjoy non-school activities and find school activities, classes and homework to be boring or pointless. Opportunities provided by technological gadgets play an important role in this phenomenon. When there are no limits on the use of gadgets (such as TV, tablets, computers, phones, etc.) or they are used improperly, this lowers the enjoyment students get out of school and decreases their motivation. Taking action to inform parents about these issues can be another way of preventing school burnout. Given that teachers and school administrations also play a role in school burnout, studies on these actors can contribute to the literature on coping with burnout. The present study has provided group counseling in order to cope with school burnout, and the findings were encouraging. Such counseling can also be provided on an individual basis. The review of the literature on solution-focused group counseling showed that group counseling is effective in the solution of many problems. This points to the importance of the adoption and use of the group counseling approach by psychological counsellors. In this context, efforts to improve psychological counsellors' knowledge and skills concerning the group counseling approach can help solve problems more effectively and in a shorter period of time. Studies on maintenance should be conducted to see whether the effects of group counseling are permanent.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

The concept of exhaustion (Burnout) is a syndrome in psychology which had first been raised in 1974 by Freudenberg. Freudenberg defines burnout as failure, attrition and exhaustion due to intensive and excessive use of power, energy and other individual resources (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Seidman & Zager, 1991; Aypay, 2011). In another study, burnout is defined as follows: "Burnout is defined as a subjective state that results from working for a long time in environments that make strong emotional demands, accompanied by physical exhaustion, feelings of desperation, hopelessness, and disappointment, and the development of a negative self-concept" (Pines,1993 & Altay, 2007).

Extreme demands of school and education causes students exhaustion which is called school burnout syndrome. In the education process, stress resulting from courses, the course-load or other sources of psychological pressure may lead to emotional exhaustion, desensitization and feelings of low achievement. School burnout can result in absenteeism, low motivation to study, and high dropout rates, among others (McCarthy & et al., 1990; Yang & Farn, 2005 & Aypay, 2011). Laursen et al. (2010) argue that school culture is crucial in understanding the burnout syndrome and report that peer groups who experience school burnout end up being low-achievers, and what is more, they develop some sort of an antipathy toward high-achievers.

In this research, the effect of group counseling program on coping with school exhaustion was investigated. The study was conducted with 7th grade students attending Private Bogazici Educational Center in Bakirkoy, Istanbul during 2016-2017 academic year. "the School Burnout Scale for the Second Level of Primary Education", which was developed by Aypay (2011) was used to assess school exhaustion levels. 16 out of 96 students with high school exhaustion levels and willing to participate in the study was selected randomly; 8 (4 males and 4 females) of them were randomly assigned as experimental group and the other 8 was randomly assigned as control group. In this research, pre-test post-test control group design was used. In the study, group counseling was applied to the experimental group for 8 weeks and no treatment was given to the control group. Mann Whitney U test and Wilcoxon test were used to assess the difference between school exhaustion pre-test and post-test scores. As a result, it was found that group counseling was effective in decreasing school exhaustion; however, it was found there is no significant difference in family originated exhaustion and school inadequacy, which are sub-dimensions of school exhaustion. It was found that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of total exhaustion scores. Obtained data was interpreted and

recommendations were made in the scope of literature.

METHOD

This research was an experimental study with pre-test and post-test control group design. In this research, group counseling was conducted to the experimental group for 8 sessions. No treatment was given to the control group. Pre-test and post-test were given to both groups. The study was conducted with 7th grade students attending Private Bogazici Educational Center in Bakirkoy in Istanbul during 2016-2017 academic year. 16 students with high school exhaustion levels and willing to participate in the study was selected randomly; 8 of them were randomly assigned as experimental group and the other 8 was randomly assigned as control group. In this research, “the School Burnout Scale for the Second Level of Primary Education” was used as data collection tool.

FINDINGS

The conclusions based on the findings of the study are included below.

1. It was found that Group Counseling Program was effective in dealing with school exhaustion of secondary school students.
2. It was found that Group Counseling Program was effective in dealing with school originated exhaustion, which is a sub-dimension of school exhaustion.
3. It was found that Group Counseling Program was not effective at a significant level in dealing with family originated exhaustion, which is a sub-dimension of school exhaustion.
4. It was found that Group Counseling Program was not effective at a significant level in dealing with school inadequacy, which is a sub-dimension of school exhaustion.
5. It was found that Group Counseling Program was effective at a significant level in dealing with loss of interest, which is a sub-dimension of school exhaustion.

The findings obtained from this study indicate that Group Counseling Program is generally effective in decreasing school exhaustion levels and dealing with the feeling of exhaustion.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

In this research, the effect of group counseling program on coping with school exhaustion was investigated. As a result of the study, some differences were found in respect of school inadequacy factor, but it is not statistically significant. This can be explained by the fact that the sessions lasted for only eight weeks and the families of the students were not included in the study. It is thought that a comprehensive study including the family will make a significant difference in school inadequacy factor. As a result of the analyses, it was found that group counseling program was effective in dealing with loss of interest for school, which is a sub-dimension of school exhaustion. It can be said that the students have begun to realize some entertaining and beautiful sides of the school with the perception of group counseling program which focuses on positive sides; furthermore, it can be expressed that as the students feel successful at school, their attitude towards school begins to be positive. As a result of the study it can be concluded that group counseling program is effective in dealing with school exhaustion.