Full Length Research Paper

Determination of the needs of university students for psychological counseling and guidance services: The case of Kocaeli University, Turkey

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The purpose of the study is to explain the needs of the students of Kocaeli University (KOU) for psychological counseling and guidance (PCG) services. KOU students constituted the population of the study and 6662 students chosen to represent minimum 10% of the total student number in all academic units from the same population constituted. A survey on the determination of the needs of university students for PCG Services", developed by researchers, was used as a data collection tool. As a result of this study, the survey developed to determine the needs of students attending Kocaeli university for PCG services was evaluated in terms of three parts including expected PCG services, existing status of pupil personnel services and need for individual counseling. It can be stated that students studying at KOU need guidance and psychological counseling services when compared in terms of gender, class levels and studying in or off the campus. It is thought that a guidance and psychological counseling center to be opened for this purpose can provide a systematic assistance for such demands of the students.

Key words: University students, PCG services, pupil personnel services.

INTRODUCTION

University life provides the youth with rich opportunities in terms of gaining independence, discovering their own potentials, self-development, job acquisition, improvement of living conditions and preparation for the next development period (Türküm, 2007). The youth starting university are in adolescence period in terms of development and are treated sometimes as children and sometimes as adults in their environment. Despite this, the most important developmental mission expected from them is to be able to be autonomous. There are two basic needs in priority in terms of guidance services:

(1) Basic needs which are valid in every period of life and required to be constantly satisfied.
(2) Developmental needs specific to different life stages (Yeşilyaprak, 2001).

Being a student at university and university life have the characteristic of an environment that will produce anxiety and stress both in our country and in the other countries. A university student is a person experiencing problems pertinent to his development period. A university student is neither a child nor an adult (İnanç et al., 2004).

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A university environment constitutes a setting creating stress for the youth who are still in identity formation period. It is a known fact that there is a need for qualified human resource. For these reasons, universities, undertaking to train qualified human resource, should also find the source of their problems and seek remedies for the development of their personalities as well as giving their students knowledge, skills, ideals and good habits. A university environment is a setting having demands and expectations a person cannot get through with the values, attitudes and habits he has gained until that day. This situation is even more dramatic for the youth coming from small settlements to big cities.In many researches performed on university students, it is stated that while the needs of students mostly intensify on academic, vocational and psychological problems, the needs may vary depending on the students' socio-economic statuses, genders, socio-cultural trends and the cultures or subcultures they belong to (Papalia et al., 1998).

University students have a lot of daily life difficulties such as; specifically coping with being dilatory, public speaking anxiety, career uncertainty, efficient study skills, lack of motivation, self-confidence issues, exam anxiety, fear of failure, depression, problems experienced in the relationships with the opposite sex and time management. (Gallagher et al., 1992; Nicholas et al., 2012). Similarly, while Nicholas (2002) mentions problems such as; fear of failure, coping with being dilatory, depression, discomfort in social surroundings and coping with loneliness among the university students in South Africa. Arco et al. (2005) state that problems are experienced in academic/ educational PCG issues such as; efficient study skills, focusing attention, time management and exam anxiety among the Spanish university students.

As a result of the examination of the studies conducted by various researchers in the collected work on the problems and needs of the university youth Türküm (2007) carried out, it was concluded that the students had financial difficulties, employment problems, problems related to the adaptation to the university and inability to find the support they needed, problems related to academic achievement, accommodation, education, relationships with the opposite sex, longing for family, career planning, identity seeking and stress.

Guidance and psychological counseling services in higher education first came into force in Turkey in 1973. Under the law, academic advisers are expected to accept students at certain hours at least two days a week and provide the necessary assistance. Students with mental illnesses are given psychotherapeutic help in medicosocial centers established by this law. Coming into force in 1982, The higher education law numbered 2547 stipulated providing students with guidance and psychological counseling services as well as health, cultural and sports services. In the 49th article of the law exists the quote "Universities establish guidance and psychological counseling centers" in order to make it possible for these services to be carried out. Currently, these services are usually carried out at directorates of health, culture and sports, the previous name of which was medico-social centers, in accordance with the long standing understanding (Kuzgun, 2000, p.220).

While there are teaching and management services in traditional education, a third dimension; pupil personnel services have been added to contemporary education (Altıntaş, 2004, p.3). Guidance services in higher education institutions functioning by coming under the units to be created by the name "pupil personnel services" is considered useful for students. Pupil personnel services in higher education provide functional benefits in many aspects such as; matriculation, accommodation, nutrition, exams, academic standing, grades, health, sports, social activities, psychological counseling, etc. (Baysal, 2004, p.52).

The objective in the psychological support given to the students in higher education is not only the relief of disorder and the treatment of disease but it is also to support the healthy identity development. The vocational identity the students will gain through the higher education program they are placed in is also in question in that identity development. In this regard, generally more than half of the students placed in higher education programs state that they are not satisfied with the programs they attend in the first months. The rate of the satisfied ones increases towards the end of the year. However, the number of the students whose dissatisfaction continues and who apply for the exam again to change their fields is not low. It is recognized that the old understanding that a youth enrolled in higher education has chosen his profession, and so no longer needs professional guidance is invalid. The biggest problem of the university students is to be able to find a job related to their fields after completing their studies.

One aspect of vocational counseling is educational counseling. Activities such as orientation, assistance to cope with exam anxiety and development of efficient study skills in educational counseling make it easy for students to know the educational institutions they attend, to see the courses they will study and the practices they will perform as a whole, to get used to the academic setting in a shorter time and to adopt to the environment more. Such educational PCG services provide students with the opportunity to make use of their energy and time more efficiently. When the services to be given to students to contribute to the personality development of individuals and the effectiveness of higher education are assessed as a whole, the following subheadings can be listed:

1. Promoting the university campus and the city, enlightening the students about the functioning of the university,

2. Giving information about efficient study skills,

3. Assisting them to cope with exam anxiety,

4. Dealing with students with current problems and providing individual psychological counseling service if required,

5. Assisting those who are discontent with the program they have started and want to transfer to another program in field selection,

6. Creating opportunities for extracurricular activities and giving information about the existing ones,

7. Providing job seeking skills to senior students to enable them to find a job when they graduate,

8. Organizing group counseling to help them create a healthy identity and values system,

9. Helping them establish clubs and communities,

10. Enabling them to develop a healthy vocational self-concept to make it possible for them to be able to be successful in their fields.

When the body literature related to the changes in the last 2 decades is examined, the findings regarding the facts that interuniversity competition has increased, that there is a dramatic increase in the rate of the students with psychological problems (Simpson and Ferguson, 2012), that a multi-cultural understanding has been started to be needed in PCG services (Patterson, 1996), that the needs of the students for prevention-based group studies as well as individual counseling have increased, that PCG centers with more qualified personnel are required (Kitzrow, 2009; Kraft, 2011), that the needs related to the problems experienced with respect to business ethics, crisis response and career counseling have come to the fore (Fouad et al., 2006; Litoiu and Oproiu, 2012; Gizir, 2010) stand out. In this context, specific determination of the needs of their own students by each university is of great importance. As a matter of fact, Erkan et al. (2011) and Gizir (2010) emphasized the importance of the determination of the PCG services to be given at universities within the needs of the relevant university.

Significant changes occur in the roles and functions of university PCG centers in parallel with the developments mentioned above. Boyd et al. (2003) point out that current university PCG centers have three main roles. The first of these roles is providing psychological coun-seling and psychotherapy services for the university students experiencing academic, vocational and develop-mental difficulties or psychological problems. The second is carrying out preventive studies to provide support to the university students respecting identifying and teaching the basic life skills in order for them to reach their educational, vocational and life purposes effectively. The third role is diversifying and developing consultancy and preventive/developmental programs to support the healthy growth and development of the students.

With this study, it was aimed to determine the needs of the students of Kocaeli University, providing education opportunity to 61,000 students at different locations in the academic year 2012 to 2013, for PCG services in the personal, educational and vocational dimensions. In line with this purpose, the answers to the following questions were searched for:

1. Do the needs expectations of KOU students for PCG services vary according to gender?

2. Do the needs expectations of KOU students for PCG services vary according to class level?

3. Do the needs expectations of KOU students for PCG services vary according to the status of receiving education in or off the campus?

It is thought that the findings obtained as a result of the research questions will particularly help the youth who preferred Kocaeli University to grow as individuals who are beneficial and will contribute to the society and they will make a significant contribution to the preparation of the programs for PCG services. It is also thought that the findings of this study, realized at a state university with a large number of students with different characteristics, will be guiding in the regulations to be carried out in the field of PCG services at the other universities in our country.

METHODOLOGY

A research is a descriptive study. The aim of research is to determine the needs of university students for psychological counseling and guidance services. Therefore comparative study of the relational model types are used.

Collection of data

KOU students constituted the population of the study and 6622 students chosen to represent minimum 10% of the total student number in all academic units from the same population constituted the sample. 43.34% of those students were female (2870 people), 56.65% were male (3752 people), 28.94% were in 17 to 20 age range (1917 people), 58.81% were in 21 to 24 age range (3895 people), 8.63% were in 25 to 28 age range (572 people), 3.59% were 29 and over (238 people). In the scope of the study, minimum 10% of the students studying for associate, bachelor's and master degrees at total 43 academic units of Kocaeli university filled in the questionnaire. As a data collection tool "the survey on the determination of the needs of university students for PCG services", developed by researchers was used.

Body of literature was examined in the first stage of survey development and vocational, educational and personal guidance features in the field of psychological counseling and guidance were determined. 600 students taking pedagogical formation were lectured on vocational, educational and personal guidance in the scope of the counseling course in the separation of the fields of science and social science, where open-ended questions would be asked. Then, three open-ended questions were asked in writing to this group. The questions directed to the students; "What are the things you think are adequate/inadequate at KOU in the name of

Table 1. Average, minimum, maximum and standard deviation values of the needs expectations for pcg services

Dimensions	N	Min.	Max.	M	df
1st Dimension: Expected PCG Services	6622	6.0	30.0	21.20	5,92
2nd Dimension: Status of Pupil Personnel Services	6622	6.0	30.0	11.75	4,57
3rd Dimension: Need for Individual Counseling	6622	6.0	30.0	14.27	5,31

personal guidance and what are your solution suggestions?, What are the things you think are adequate/inadequate at KOU in the name of vocational guidance and what are your solution suggestions?, What are the things you think are adequate/inadequate at KOU in the name of educational guidance and what are your solution suggestions?" were asked open-endedly. In the analysis of the answers to the questions, content analysis method was adopted. As a result of the analysis, the situations stated most frequently for each dimension were grouped under certain headings. Besides, the first form of the survey, including 40 items, was developed in accordance with the findings acquired as a result of the qualitative analysis, which was realized by three researchers, of the audio recordings which were obtained from the focus group discussions for 10 people conducted with students in the academic units of Kocaeli University. Then, corrections were made in some items of the survey by 3 PCG specialists together with 1 program development specialist.

The organized survey was administered to 617 students studying in the 3rd and 4th grades at the faculty of education in order to determine the construct validity of the survey, and explanatory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to the acquired data. In the implementation of EFA, principal components analysis method and Varimax rotation method were used. As a result of EFA, it was determined that the survey reduced to 18 items had three parts including the need for PCG services, the status of pupil personnel services and the need for individual counseling. The 18-item-survey explains the 45.62% of the total variance. It was determined that variance rates explained on the basis of dimensions were 17.57% for "expected PCG services" (1st part), 15.39% for "status of pupil personnel services" (2nd part) and 12.67% for "need for individual counseling" (3rd part). It was determined that the 1st part was represented with 6 items and their factor loads ranged between .607 and .803, the 2nd part included 6 items and their factor loads ranged between .623 and .730, 3rd part also included 6 items and the factor loads of the items ranged between .513 and .710. Expert opinion was received for the content validity of the survey. Cronbach alpha coefficient for the reliability of the survey was calculated as .613 for the whole of the survey, .814 for the 1st dimension, .769 for the 2nd dimension and .769 for the 3rd dimension. The minimum point that can be obtained from each dimension of the scale is 6 and the maximum point is 30. The average point to be obtained from each dimension is 18.

The survey was opened to students through Kocaeli University Student Information System after the Fall semester final exams of the academic year 2012 to 2013 had finished and was closed in the second week of the spring semester. Within this period, total 6622 students representing minimum 10% of each academic unit filled in the survey on voluntary basis.

Analysis of data

In data analysis, percentage and frequency were used for descriptive statistics and independent group t test was used in order to determine whether the answers given to the research questions varied according to some variables. Analyses in the study

were performed using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS 15).

RESULTS

The following findings have been reached in this research carried out to determine the needs of Kocaeli university students for PCG services:

1. What are the needs expectation levels of KOU students for PDR services?

Average, minimum, maximum and standard deviation values of the needs expectations for PCG services are shown in Table 1. In the light of the data in Table 1, it has been concluded that; the students have a positive perception about "expected PCG services" ($\overline{x}$= 21.20), in terms of "status of Pupil Personnel Services", they find the implementations conducted for the pupil personnel services of the university inadequate ($\overline{x}$= 11.75), in terms of "need for individual counseling", their levels of the needs for individual counseling are low ($\overline{x}$=12.27).

2. Do the needs expectations of KOU students for PCG services vary "according to gender"?

The results of the independent group t test for the determination of whether the needs expectations for PCG services vary according to gender or not are shown in Table 2. In the light of the data in Table 2, it is observed that according to gender; there is a significant difference in favor of the females [$t_{(6620)}$ = 7.182, p<.005] in terms of "Expected PCG Services", there is a significant difference in favor of the males [$t_{(6620)}$ = -2.804, p<.005] in terms of "Status of Pupil Personnel Services", there is a significant difference in favor of the males [$t_{(6620)}$ = -3.339, p<.005] in terms of "Need for Individual Counseling".

3. Do the needs expectations of KOU students for PCG services vary "according to class level"?

The results of the independent group t test for the determination of whether the needs expectations for PCG services vary according to class level or not are shown in Table 3. In the light of the data in Table 3, it is observed that according to class level; there is no significant difference [$t_{(1721)}$ = -,374, p>.005] in terms of "expected

Table 2. Independent group t test for the needs expectations for pcg services according to gender

Gender	N	M	SD	df	t	p
1st Dimension: Expected PCG Services						
Female	2870	21.80	5.72	6620	7.182	.000*
Male	3752	20.75	6.03			
2nd Dimension: Status of Pupil Personnel Services						
Female	2870	11.57	4.44	6620	-2.804	.005*
Male	3752	11.89	4.66			
3rd Dimension: Need for Individual Counseling						
Female	2870	14.02	5.20	6620	-3.339	.001*
Male	3752	14.46	5.38			

* p<0.05

Table 3. Independent group t test for the needs expectations for pcg services according to class level

Class Level	N	M	SD	df	t	p
1st Dimension: Expected PCG Services						
1st Grade	632	21,40	5,61	1721	-,374	0,708
4th Grade	1091	21,50	5,80			
2nd Dimension: Status of Pupil Personnel Services						
1st Grade	632	12,60	4,30	1721	4,175	,000*
4th Grade	1091	11,70	4,32			
3rd Dimension: Need for Individual Counseling						
1st Grade	632	14,07	5,11	1721	-0,244	0,807
4th Grade	1091	14,13	5,18			

* p<0.05

PCG services", there is a significant difference in favor of the 1st grade students [$t_{(1721)}$ = 4,175, p<.005] in terms of "status of pupil personnel services", there is no significant difference [$t_{(1721)}$ = -0,244, p>.005] in terms of "need for individual counseling".

4. Do the needs expectations of KOU students for PCG services vary "according to the status of receiving education in or off the campus"?

The results of the independent group t test for the determination of whether the needs expectations for PCG services vary according to the status of receiving education in or off the campus or not are shown in Table 4. In the light of the data in Table 4, it is observed that according to the status of receiving education in or off the

campus; there is a significant difference in favor of the ones receiving education in the campus [$t_{(2545)}$ = 8.875, p<.005] in terms of "expected PCG services", there is a significant difference in favor of the ones receiving education in the campus [$t_{(2545)}$ = 2.065, p<.005] in terms of "status of pupil personnel services", there is no significant difference [$t_{(2545)}$ = 1.531, p>.005] in terms of "need for individual counseling".

DISCUSSION

As a result of the research, it has been determined that the students have positive perceptions about "expected PCG services". These services include career counseling, seminars on personal development and psychological

Table 4. Independent group t test for the needs expectations for PCG services according to the status of receiving education in or off the campus

Campus	N	M	SD	df	t	p
1st Dimension: Expected PCG Services						
Center	4230	21.70	5.70	2545	8.875	.000*
Other	2392	21.33	6.20			
2nd Dimension: Status of Pupil Personnel Services						
Center	4230	11.84	4.20	2545	2.065	.039*
Other	2392	11.59	5.14			
3rd Dimension: Need for Individual Counseling						
Center	4230	14.35	5.15	2545	1.531	.126
Other	2392	14.14	5.57			

* $p < 0.05$

counseling and guidance services for personal and educational questions and problems. In terms of "status of pupil personnel services", it has been determined that the students find the implementations of the university carried out for pupil personnel services inadequate. The areas they are dissatisfied with are recreational facilities, socio-cultural facilities, the inadequacy of the psychological counseling services in the medico-social center, lack of university career center and the inadequacy of the services.

In the study carried out by Kulaksızoğlu (1989) at İstanbul university, it was also concluded that the university students had difficulty in finding a respondent for the solution of problems. In terms of "need for individual counseling", it has been concluded that the levels of the students' needs for individual counseling are low. It has been stated that the needs of students to understand their own feelings and behaviors and their needs for individual counseling to adapt to the social surroundings are also low. As it is understood at the interviews apart from the surveys, university students think that they have the capacity to be able to solve their own problems. In the study carried out by Taşkaya (2010), Kıranşal et al. (2008) and Kutlu (2004), it was also stated that some students tried to solve their problems through different sources rather than through PCG centers and counselors.

With reference to the research findings, it can be concluded that females need more guidance than males in terms of "expected PCG services", on the other hand; males need more guidance than females in terms of "status of pupil personnel services" and "need for individual counseling". When the literature is examined, some differences are observed in the PCG services expectations of female and male students in a similar way to the result of this research. For example, according to Gallagher (1992), the averages of the needs for psychological counseling and guidance stated by female students are always higher than males in almost all PCG fields. According to Tahnan and Eitah (2002) and Gallagher et al. (1992), female students need psychological counseling support in vocational, social, academic, moral and emotional respects. According to Guneri et al. (2003), while male students seek support about their family problems more, female students seek support about their personal problems and self-control more. According to Kacur and Atak (2011), male students have more academic member/instructor related problems, life problems, economic problems, health problems, job acquisition problems, problems related to bad habits, problems related to communication with environment, problems related to family and society, self-expression problems and problems related to psychological support compared to female students. According to Dost (2007), female students' life satisfaction levels are higher than male students'. According to Tuncer (2011), a significant difference is found in favor of female students among the future expectations of vocational high school students in terms of gender variable. On the other hand, Aluede, Imhonde and Eguavoe (2006) state that there is only one difference between male and female students' needs for counseling, which is seeking counseling for financial issues is more common among girls. The rest of the counseling needs do not seem to differ according to gender. Similarly, Kacur and Atak (2011) concluded that there was no significant difference between gender and study and exam related problems, administrative problems, educational problems, problems related to extracurricular activities, socio-cultural problems, problems related to making use of the leisure time, department related problems, family problems, psychosocial problems, psychological problems, interpersonal

communication problems, other problems and inner communication problems.

Although the expected PCG services show some differences according to gender, the intersection of these differences is not clarified in the stated researches. This situation reminds the emphasis of Erkan et al. (2011) and Gizir (2010) on the necessity of the determination of their own students' needs specifically by each university. In other words, although the PCG services expected by female and male students may vary, the necessity to reanalyze the needs of university students in order to plan the PCG services comes into question due to the social, economic and even technological changes.

With reference to the research findings, it can be concluded that the 1st grade students need more guidance than the 4th grade students in terms of "status of pupil personnel services", and guidance needs do not vary according to the status of being in the 1st or 4th grade in terms of "expected PCG services" and "need for individual counseling". In the study of Flisher et al. (2002), it is reported that the 1st grade students consult for psychological counseling more than the 4th grade students do and in the studies of Sher et al. (1996), it is observed that the 1st grade students state they are more suppressed than the other class levels and under more stress than ever before and the higher the class level is, the lower the perceived stress level. However, in the study carried out by Tuncer (2011) in which it was concluded that there was no significant difference among the averages of future expectations of vocational high school students according to the class variable, the result was in favor of the 4th grade students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the students receiving education off the campus need more guidance in terms of "need for individual counseling", and guidance needs do not vary according to the status of receiving education in or off the campus in terms of "expected PCG services" and "status of pupil personnel services". In the study on the accommodation problems of students carried out by Güldiken and Özekicioğlu (2004), it is determined that the students living in flats do not have enough opportunities to study due to crowd and the students living in state dormitories have problems related to cleaning, not being able to watch television or study and check in and out times. In the study of Deniz et al. no significant difference is found between the places the students stay and their psychological symptoms.

According to the findings of this study, it can be stated that the students studying at KOU need guidance and psychological counseling services. Therefore, it is thought that a guidance and psychological counseling center to

be opened can provide a systematic assistance for personal development seminars, educational and vocational guidance studies in the scope of pupil personnel services. Moreover, it is believed that prevention based and personal awareness raising activities to be organized for students in such a center will help students grow up as individuals useful for the society and contributing to it in the students' transition period to adult life and they will make a significant contribution to the preparation of the programs for PCG services. It is also thought that the findings of this research conducted at a state university with a lot of students with different characteristics will be guiding in the regulations to be made in the field of PCG services at the other universities in our country.

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Conflict of Interests

The author(s) have not declared any conflict of interests.

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