



Risky Behaviours of High School Students and School Counsellors' Interventions

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Risky behaviors (substance abuse, obesity, suicide, bullying, and others), many of which are indeed preventable, are common among high school students. The most important task in detecting, preventing, and intervening in risky behaviors in schools falls to the school guidance service and school psychological counselor. The main objective of this study is to determine the types and prevalence of risky behaviors observed among high school students and to analyze the practices performed by the school guidance service for such behaviors. This study was organized in accordance with the mixed research design for which qualitative and quantitative approaches were used together. In this context, quantitative (N1=566) and qualitative (N2=21) data collection processes were carried out with psychological counselors working in different types of high schools in 12 provinces. While statistical procedures were included for the quantitative data of the research, content analysis techniques were used for the qualitative data. The results showed smoking, peer bullying, cyberbullying, school dropout, obesity, delinquency, abuse, suicidal tendency and attempt, alcohol use, cannabis use, and other substance use as risky behaviors in high schools. The levels and frequency of these behaviors vary across school types. The preventive activities in the schools were generally based on informative seminars, and practical studies were limited. The research results also indicated that studies of risky behaviors were not sufficiently included in Ministry or school guidance framework programs. Furthermore, it was found that parents, teachers, and administrators gave limited support to the studies carried out within the scope of education and intervention for risky behaviors in schools. These results demonstrate that school psychological counselors encountered several personal, institutional, or legal obstacles in their studies on risky behaviors.

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Introduction

Experiences that may lead to a possible injury or death and that endanger the life, health, and future of the individual fall into the category of risky behavior (Bingham & Shope, 2004). These behaviors, which directly or indirectly affect the mental and physical health of individuals, can be observed in different types, from drug use to violent behavior (Jessor, 1998). Thus, the mortality and morbidity rates observed among adolescents stems from behaviors related to some preventable environmental and social factors rather than normal health problems (Wild et al., 2004). Risky behaviors are usually related to the individual's physical development (e.g., obesity), social life (e.g., abuse, peer victimisation) or the institution they are educated in (e.g. school dropout) (Day et al., 2013).

It is emphasized in many national and international reports on the prevalence and frequency of risky behaviors observed in high school students that adolescents are at great risk due to these behaviors (Alikaşifoğlu & Ercan, 2009; Averett et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2012; Ergene et al., 2013; Gençtanırım-Kuru, 2010; Jessor, 2016; Kann et al., 2015, 2018; Ögel, 2007; Siyez, 2013; UBİM, 2017, 2019). For example, the prevalences of smoking (6%), alcohol use (29.2%), obesity or being overweight (15.7%), cyberbullying (15.7), bullying at school (19.5), cannabis and similar substances' use (21%) behaviors among high school students are remarkable in the international literature (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020). Moreover, in America that one out of every 5 people seriously think about suicide (18.8%), 15.7% plan to commit suicide, and 8.9% of them attempt suicide (Ivey-Stephenson et al., 2020). In Turkey, it was determined that the rate of smoking was 15.8%, use of addictive substances other than cigarettes was 5% (Metem et al., 2020), and suicide attempt was 10% (Tatlı et al., 2020). Although exposure to cyberbullying varies according to the type of exposure (6.1% in virtual environments, 5.9% on mobile phones, 4% in chat rooms), the incidence of these behaviors increases significantly (Efe et al., 2021). In addition, the information about students' being overweight (20.6%) and being obese (19.1%) (Küçük-Bicer & Bağcı-Bosi, 2021) can be interpreted as a sign of the danger posed by risky behavior on adolescents.

Prevalence-related information of risky behaviours covers a crucial portion of the academic studies conducted by national and international organizations. (Averett et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2012; Ergene et al., 2013; Gençtanırım-Kuru, 2010; Jessor, 2016; Kann et al., 2015, 2018; Ministry of Health, 2016; TUBİM, 2017, 2019; TÜİK, 2016, 2020; UNİCEF, 2010; WHO, 2017, 2019). However, there are many variables that affect the emergence, maintenance, prevention or elimination of risky behaviours. Such a picture shows that a multidimensional approach should be adopted in the studies on risky behaviours and that different disciplines have roles and functions in this process (Önal et al., 2013). Psychological Counseling and Guidance (PCG) services provided in educational institutions represent one of the mental health aspects of the multidisciplinary approach.

The fact that the competencies of school counselors for risky behaviors are not mentioned in the literature (Bektaş, 2006; Kağnıcı, 2013; Taytaş & Tanhan, 2021) shows that there is limited scientific data to discuss their competencies regarding these behaviors. For example, it was determined that the rate of those who received help from the school's guidance service among those who were abused was 10.9%, while the rate of those who asked for help from another teacher was 8.8% (İpek, 2010). While the rate of children who declared that talking with the guidance counselor was beneficial was 85.4%, the rate of those who stated that talking with the other teachers was beneficial was 14.6%. When these rates were taken into account, it was seen that the majority (80.3%) didn't receive any help. These findings also emphasized the high rate of interpreting the support received from the guidance service as helpful. In a study on



delinquent children, it was observed that only 12.7% of these children benefited from the school guidance service, and 85.5% of them did not receive any support. While half of children receiving support stated that the support they received from the guidance service was effective, the other four expressed that counselors “did not understand their psychology at all” (İpek, 2010, pp. 118).

When the literature is reviewed, it is noteworthy that the activities carried out in the guidance and psychological counseling services in high schools are mostly seminars and informative-based preventive studies (Camadan & Sezgin, 2012; Özmen & Kubanç, 2013; Özteke-Kozan, 2020). In this context, it is observed that mainly vocational guidance, educational guidance, and guidance for information purposes are carried out in guidance services (Can & Nikolayidis, 2021; Tagay & Savi-Çakar, 2017). In the literature, it is seen that there are studies with different characteristics (eg, psychoeducational group studies, etc.) to be conducted at the point of intervention with risky behaviors (Aditya & Wilding, 2011; Erkan & Kaya, 2017; Olweus, 2005). Information about the activities performed by teachers, parents, and other relevant stakeholders (Gürkan, 2020; Ögel, 2007), who have duties and responsibilities within the scope of risky behaviors, is quite limited. Some researchers attribute this situation to the efficacy perceptions (Uzbaş, 2009) of psychological counselors and assert that such studies do not reach students (Güvendi, 2000). In this research, it was aimed to determine the early triggers for risky behaviors observed in high school students, to measure the frequency of these behaviors and to determine studies on intervening in these behaviors within the framework of the experiences of the psychological counselors. Considering the opinion of identifying early triggers (Loeber et al., 2003), which is considered as one of the most effective ways to combat risky behaviors, the contribution of the study to the field is obvious.

Risky behaviors may differ culturally as they include physical and psychosocial processes of individuals (Gençtanirim-Kuru, 2010; Hurrelmann & Richter, 2006). For example, while risky behaviors such as fast driving are frequently seen in the international literature, such behaviors are not frequently encountered among high school students due to factors such as legal regulations (age to obtain a driver's license) in Turkey. It can be said that the research findings on the type, quality, and frequency of studies on risky behaviors in school guidance and psychological counseling services are quite limited. Therefore, it is clear that the research has an important place in terms of examining the knowledge, attitudes and skills of school psychological counselors about risky behaviors, whose types are increasing gradually, and identifying existing strategies for risky behaviors. This study has originality with respect to eliminating this limitation and using different research designs together. With the mixed research method, it is aimed to determine the status of risky behaviors (quantitative-qualitative dimension), to understand possible intervention methods, and to obtain comprehensive and more in-depth information (qualitative dimension) on the causes of these behaviors. Furthermore, it is thought that this study will make an additional contribution to determine the levels and frequencies of risky behaviors, which have become a social problem with increasing prevalence and threatening results, according to school types, based on observations of psychological counselors. The fact that the school stakeholder who is the first to encounter risky behaviors in schools and who works the hardest is psychological counselors makes these observations valuable. Finally, it is evaluated that the study is important in terms of guiding researchers in the future studies, policy makers in the regulation of educational policies, universities, and professionals in psychological counselor education.

Method

Design of the Study

Mixed methods research, which is considered to be suitable for the nature of multidimensional facts and events, was used in this study. Mixed research allows a better explanation of the relationship between variables by providing researchers with the opportunity to examine events holistically and multidimensionally (Creswell, 2017, pp. 2-3; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, pp. 351-360). In this study, the data collected from multiple quantitative and qualitative data collection tools were analyzed without prioritization. This analysis provides the researcher with the opportunity to gain in-depth information and provides the researcher with a broader perspective (Fraenkel cd., 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Krippendorff, 2018). The research was carried out with the parallel pattern type converging from mixed approaches. In this mixed design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously or closely (Creswell, 2017).

Participants

This study has two different study groups as quantitative and qualitative. Purposive sampling method was used to ensure appropriate representativeness and variety (Creswell, 2017; Fraenkel et al., 2012; Patton, 2002; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013) in the selection of the qualitative research group. The qualitative group of the study consists of 21 psychological counselors (*Male=12, Female=9*) working in high schools in 12 different provinces. Data about the qualitative research group is summarized in

Table 1. Data of the qualitative research group

Variables	Psychological counselor (N=21)	
	f	%
Type of school worked in currently		
Anatolian High School	4	19.07
Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School	6	28.57
Science High School	2	9.52
Sports and Fine Arts High School	2	9.52
Vocational Religious High School	3	14.28
Social Sciences High School	2	9.52
Science and Art Center	2	9.52
Program graduated		
PCG Undergraduate Program	17	80.95
Appointed as Out of the Field	3	14.28
Psychology	1	4.77

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) criteria were taken into account in determining the quantitative research groups (Türkyılmaz et al., 2003).

Appointed as Out of the Field

The sample of the questionnaires applied within the scope of the study consisted of 566 psychological counselors ($M=304$, $F=262$) working in Anatolian High School (38%), Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (31.3%), Science High School (5.1%), Sports and Fine Arts High School (2.8%), Vocational Religious High School (16.4%), Social Sciences High School (3.9%), and Science and Art Center (2.5%). Majority of the participants in the



study had bachelor's degree (83.9%). Those with a doctorate degree represent the lowest rate (0.70%). While 42.8% of the psychological counselors participating in the study worked with two counselors, the number of psychological counselors working as the only psychological counselor in their school was 41.9%. Psychological counselors have an average of 12 years of professional experience, only 8.5% of psychological counselors worked as administrators and most of them worked in public schools (94%).

Collection Tools

Psychological Counselor (Guidance Teacher) Form

The Psychological Counselor (Guidance Teacher) Form, which was applied to determine the opinions of psychological counselors, consisted of five different parts and 11 open-ended questions. Through the questions in the form, it was aimed to define the opinions of the psychological counselors about the practices towards risky behaviors observed among high school students. The form was prepared by focusing on the opinions of academicians, scientific studies on risky behaviors (Alikasıfoğlu & Ercan, 2009; Averett et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2012; Ergene et al., 2013; Gençtanırım-Kuru, 2010; Jessor, 2016; Kann et al., 2018; Ögel, 2007; Siyez, 2013) and in-service training studies of the Ministry of National Education on risky behaviors.

Interview form

The interview consisted of semi-structured questions. With the interview form, which had similar content with the question lists in the questionnaire, it was aimed to analyze the type, quality, priority, and prevalence of studies conducted in high schools on risky behaviors. The content of the interview form was prepared by literature review (Alikasıfoğlu & Ercan, 2009; Averett et al., 2011; Ellis et al., 2012; Ergene et al., 2013; Gençtanırım-Kuru, 2010; Jessor, 2016; Kann et al., 2018; Ögel, 2007; Siyez, 2013) on risky behaviors. A total of 11 open-ended questions, which were prepared in a way to provide in-depth information about the subjects and themes not mentioned in the quantitative step of the study, were examined by two experts in the field in terms of content validity. While preparing the interview form, principles (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, pp. 156-160) such as the comprehensibility of the questions, being arranged in a logical way, being focused (specific) and open-ended, avoiding directing and multidimensionality were taken into consideration.

Procedure

For the ethics and permission procedures of the study, the General Secretariat of Karadeniz Technical University was applied, and the necessary permissions were obtained for the conduct of the study with the decision dated 27.12.2016 and numbered 1890. After these procedures, the data collection process was started. In this context, the quantitative data of the study were collected through e-mail, WhatsApp and face-to-face meetings based on volunteerism. The forms used in the quantitative part of the study were prepared within the framework of a structure consistent with the risky behavior literature, research hypotheses and the question statements in the risky behavior scales in the literature. Moreover, the quantitative research form contained a similar structure to the question items in the semi-structured interview form used in the interview process. In this respect, qualitative research forms supported the validity and reliability of quantitative data collection tools.

In the qualitative phase of the research, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 21

volunteer counselors working only in high schools, accompanied by voice recording. During the interview process, all the opinions that the participants wanted to express were given the opportunity. When it was evaluated that data saturation was reached within the scope of the study, the interview process was terminated (Baltacı, 2018; Creswell, 2017).

Various strategies such as credibility, transferability, consistency, and confirmability, which were suitable for the nature of qualitative research, were used in the data obtained from the interview (Denscombe, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002; Shenton, 2004). To increase the credibility of the research, the researcher with 16 years of professional experience used different data collection techniques and member checking (re-sent the data obtained from the interview to the participants to confirm the data). Again, the expert review method was used to increase the credibility of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this method, the codes, themes and categories generated within the scope of the researcher and the codes, themes and categories from the expert review were compared and it was preferred that the match was 80% or higher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The similarity rate (88%) obtained in the analysis draws attention to the confirmability of the study.

Within the framework of credibility procedures, the concept of consistency, one of the qualitative research strategies, was considered. In line with this strategy, the researcher clearly stated what was done during the research process and gave the readers the opportunity to follow the procedures followed in the research in a transparent manner (Denscombe, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The concept of confirmability, on the other hand, is a concept used instead of the objective criterion in quantitative research. In this process, the researcher aimed to show that the findings reflected the thoughts and experiences of the participants, not their own preferences and predictions (Shenton, 2004; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The concept of transferability is used instead of the term generalizability in quantitative research. With this concept, the researcher aimed to reach imprecise judgments about the applicability of qualitative research results and to create certain hypotheses (Denscombe, 2007; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Then, the quantitative data obtained were presented by simultaneous analysis with the qualitative data obtained from the interview form.

Analysis

The quantitative data of the study, which was analyzed using SPSS 23.0 package program, were analyzed as a comparison by considering variables such as seniority, type of school worked, graduate education, and so on, and were described using descriptive statistical techniques. The qualitative design of the research constitutes the basic qualitative research. In basic qualitative research, the data; is collected through observation, interview, and document review (Merriam, 2013). In this research, the data for which content analysis was carried out were collected through interviews and analyzed by following the inductive path. With the inductive approach, it was aimed to reveal the patterns, codes, categories, and themes in the data set of the study (Patton, 2002; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). During the research process, the stages of extracting the codes, identifying the themes, organizing the codes and themes, evaluating, and interpreting the findings were carried out within the framework of a certain system. Later, the findings were supported by direct quotations. Finally, the findings were reported and presented in the context of the principles of plausibility, experientialism, credibility, and importance (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, pp. 273-274).

Results

Findings Regarding the Most Commonly Observed Risky Behaviors in High School Students

Within the scope of the study, qualitative and quantitative data on the type and prevalence of risky behaviors observed among high school students were firstly presented. Opinions about risky behaviors observed among high school students were gathered under the category named “Prevalence of risky behaviors” and when these opinions were examined, it was determined that the type and prevalence of risky behaviors changed according to school types. Moreover, psychological counselors working in high schools stated that risky behaviors increased every year, and they had a wide range of behaviors including smoking, cyberbullying and peer victimisation, obesity, school dropout, delinquency, abuse, suicide, alcohol use and drug use. The psychological counselor's opinions regarding the quality and prevalence of risky behaviors according to high school types were given below.

K1: “I think risky behaviors are increasing each passing day. Since our school is in a science high school, the best students of the province are here. In my opinion, behaviors such as smoking, peer bullying and obesity, especially cyber bullying, are common in our school. There is no school dropout. I also came across a suicide attempt. The reason for this is that the child cannot meet the high academic success expectation of the family.”

K9: “Considering the type of high school I work in, students in high school encounter these behaviors intensely. I can say that smoking behavior is observed the most, followed by school dropout due to absenteeism, peer abuse, cyberbullying, obesity, alcohol use and other behaviors.”

K15: “In our school, cyberbullying is at the forefront, followed by school dropout. Because students come here very reluctantly, they want to leave school immediately when they have problems in difficult lessons. We have encountered two or three suicide attempt-related behaviors at our school. Our students can easily become victims of cyberbullying, peer bullying or abuse, as they tend to bottle their troubles away. Because students do not share their situation even with their families.”

Quantitative findings related to this theme are summarized in Table 2. Considering the information in Table 2, it is observed that the most frequently observed risky behavior is smoking behavior (49.8%). This is followed by risky behaviors such as peer abuse (33.4%), cyberbullying (20.5%), and school dropout (19.6%). Behaviors of using bonsai and other substances are the least observed behaviors. It is understood that the general ranking of risky behaviors seen among high school students is smoking, peer victimization, cyberbullying, school dropout, obesity, committing a crime, abuse, suicide attempt and experience, alcohol use, bonsai use and other substances' use. All risky behaviors in high school are presented in Table 1 in order of their observation

Table 2. Findings Regarding the General Ranking of Risky Behaviors

Risky behaviors		Smoking	Alcohol use	Bonsai use	Other substances' use	Obesity	Peer victimization	Cyberbullying	Committing crime	School dropout	Abuse	Suicide attempt and experience
Ranking												
1	f	282	32	65	57	28	95	102	29	35	36	43
	%	49.8	5.7	11.5	10.1	4.9	16.8	18	5	6.2	6.4	7.6
2	f	63	55	22	26	56	189	110	48	47	48	32
	%	11.1	9.7	3.9	4.6	10	33.4	19.4	8.5	8.3	8.5	5.7
3	f	98	39	15	20	48	110	116	56	71	39	24
	%	17.3	6.9	2.7	3.5	8.5	19.4	20.5	10	12.5	6.9	4.2
4	f	44	19	7	25	74	46	54	83	111	53	52
	%	7.8	3.4	1.2	4.4	13	8.1	9.5	14.7	19.6	9.4	9.2
5	f	27	29	8	15	103	20	43	62	55	63	38
	%	4.8	5.1	1.4	2.7	18.2	3.5	7.6	11	9.7	11	6.7
6	f	14	34	6	12	82	30	36	96	55	69	63
	%	2.5	6	1.1	2.1	14.5	5.3	6.4	17	9.7	12.2	11.
7	f	17	31	9	27	62	20	31	51	44	87	79
	%	3	5.5	1.6	4.8	11	3.5	5.5	9	7.8	15.4	14
8	f	12	56	18	42	48	12	20	67	69	80	46
	%	2.1	10	3.2	7.4	8.5	2.1	3.5	11.7	12.2	14.1	8.1
9	f	5	180	52	48	19	12	24	21	27	25	42
	%	.9	31.8	9.2	8.5	3.4	2.1	4.2	3.7	4.8	4.4	7.4
10	f	1	44	208	67	15	12	12	17	11	30	36
	%	0.	7.8	36.7	11.8	2.7	2.1	2.1	3	1.9	5.3	6.4
11	f	3	6	110	182	13	14	3	3	19	12	75
	%	.5	1.1	19.4	32.2	2.3	2.5	.5	.5	3.4	2.1	13.2
Total	n	566	525	520	521	548	560	551	533	544	542	532

Findings Regarding the Priority and Prevalence of Studies on Risky Behaviors in Schools

Within this theme, qualitative and quantitative data were evaluated together in order to determine the level of priority given by the psychological counselors to the studies on risky behaviors while carrying out the guidance activities for which they were responsible, and to determine the prevalence of these studies related to risky behaviors. Firstly, the opinions in the "Work Process" category, which were obtained from the qualitative data of the study, were presented in this process. Psychological counselors working in high schools stated that although the priority of studies on risky behaviors varies according to the type of school they worked in, there was not much interest in studies with such behaviors and no priority was given. Furthermore, they expressed that many studies on risky behaviors were shown as if they were based on reports. Finally, they underlined that studies on risky behaviors in high schools are not primarily addressed. On the other hand, psychological counselors also emphasized that risky behaviors should be prioritized because they have negative effects on students.

K1: "I don't think enough attention is given. I think risky behaviors should be addressed as a priority. But since our school is a school that accepts students through exams, there was not much place for guidance studies. But in recent years, there have been studies of addiction and abuse. But everything is on paper."

K9: “When we evaluate our own school, we give priority to studies on risky behaviors. However, we do these studies more as case-based studies. For example, we work on a case if a cyberbullying or a suicide attempt occurs. When we look at the framework plan sent by the Ministry of National Education, I see vocational guidance studies more. Maybe at first glance there seems to be such studies, but I think they are absent or missing in practice.”

K15: I think schools should prioritize these behaviors. Because if precautions are not taken, it can evolve into death. But these studies are only done for the sake of being done, and I think they are just for show. However, the needs of schools are also very important. Since the types of behavior seen in industrial vocational high schools are not the same in our school and in science high schools, studies should be carried out in line with needs of schools.”

According to the findings regarding the qualitative data on the priority and prevalence of risky behaviors in schools, nearly half of the psychological counselors (44%) stated that they strongly agreed the studies on risky behaviors are one of the top priority problems of school counseling services. On the other hand, only 1.2% of the psychological counselors expressed that they did not agree with this view. Of the other participants, 3.2% stated to agree very little, 14% stated to agree partially and 37.6% stated to agree highly. According to the findings of this study, it can be said that there are many opinions expressing studies on risky behaviors should be the priority in school counseling services. In parallel with the priority of risky behaviors, it also gives us important information about the prevalence of these behaviors.

Findings Regarding the Type and Quality of Studies on Risky Behaviors in Schools

Considering what kind of studies were conducted on risky behaviors in high schools, and the quality and effectiveness of these studies, psychological counselors expressed that while they were working in high schools, they mostly carried out preventive-based studies and studies directly related to risky behaviors remained at a limited level. It is seen that when psychological counselors work in high schools, priority is given to educational and vocational guidance-based studies. They mentioned that the existing studies on risky behaviors were mostly preventive studies such as holding seminars and organizing a board, and that such studies did not create the expected positive effect on student behaviors. Psychological counselors stated that it was more important to have interviews with students instead of such studies and that individual interviews with students were extremely effective. Moreover, psychological counselors express that their strongest strengths are their ability to provide counseling, but they are not used much. They suggested that it would be beneficial to conduct awareness-based prevention studies mostly in primary and secondary schools. It is observed that the most common studies conducted by psychological counselors on risky behaviors while working in high schools are seminars, boards and information activities aimed at raising awareness. The opinions of the psychological counselors participating in the study on the type and quality of their studies on risky behaviors in the schools where they work are presented below.

K1: “In our school, we generally carry out awareness and consciousness-raising activities. We provide basic training within the scope of Addiction Prevention Training Program of Turkey (TBM) on addiction. For example, there may be preventive-based panel studies. Family-related educational activities are more focused.”

K2: “We mostly perform educational and vocational guidance-based studies for

students. Moreover, we try to include studies that will prevent cyberbullying and internet-based negative behaviors. But I cannot say that risky behavior has a special priority in our study plan.”

K20: “We try to reveal the risk maps of the students in our school, starting with the life window studies at our school. But even if you do these, the activities do not reach their exact purpose. I'm doing it so you can say it's done. It is not very effective because most students are not interested in the clipboard. Only very good students come, read, and examine, and very good students have little relation with such behaviors. Instead, I try to put effort into negotiations and consultation processes. That's why our real weapon is interviewing and counseling. Other teachers can do everything other than this, but I think our real strength lies here.”

Quantitative findings on the type and quality of studies performed on the subject of risky behaviors are summarized in Table 3. According to the aforementioned findings, it is observed that a significant part of psychological counselors conducts studies such as conferences and courses for students (88.7%) and parents (84.8%) related to risky behaviors during their professional life. On the other hand, it is seen that a significant portion of psychological counselors (67.8%) do not conduct conferences and courses for their colleagues. At the same time, most of the participants (76.7%) stated that they practiced psychological counseling with students about risky behaviors. However, it is detected that this finding does not agree with the interview findings regarding the counseling process. The situation is the opposite of this finding in group applications. Half of the psychological counselors (54.2%) expressed that they did not do group practice with students who showed risky behavior. Besides, almost all of the psychological counselors (91.8%) mentioned that they interviewed the parents of students who showed risky behaviors. After all, it is seen that a significant part of psychological counselors (73.1%) carries out studies such as referring students who exhibit risky behavior to different institutions.

Table 3. Opinions of Psychological Counselors on Risky Behavior Practices

Psychological counselors' opinions on practices for risky behaviors	Yes		No	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
During your professional life, did you give lectures, courses, etc. to students on risky behaviors?	502	88.7	64	11.3
During your professional life, did you give conferences, courses, etc. to parents on risky behaviors?	480	84.8	86	15.2
During your professional life, have you given conferences, courses, etc. to your colleagues (guidance teachers) on risky behaviors? (Including educators who teaches sexuality in schools)	185	32.7	381	67.3
Have you done individual counseling with a student who has any or most of the risky behaviors?	434	76.7	132	23.3
Have you done group practice with students who have any or most of the above-mentioned risky behaviors?	259	45.8	307	54.2
Have you ever interviewed parents of students with risky behaviors?	514	91.8	52	9.2
Have you ever referred students with risky behaviors to different institutions (e.g., hospital)?	414	73.1	152	26.9

When the quantitative and qualitative findings on the type and quality of the studies on risky behaviors observed in high schools are evaluated together, it has been observed that risky behaviors are mostly combated by conducting preventive studies such as seminars and courses.



These studies are followed by parent interviews and referrals to different institutions. Similarly, it is detected that they limited individual counseling and group practices within the scope of combating risky behaviors. Psychological counselors participating in the interview attribute this to the difficulty of performing psychological counseling practices with risky behaviors during the working process.

Another finding related to the type and quality of the studies on risky behaviors in high schools is related to the inadequacy of the psychological counselors' cooperation efforts on risky behaviors. According to psychological counselors, since parents see risky behaviors observed in their children as disciplinary offenses, they hide these behaviors and, in this case, this creates an obstacle to cooperation efforts. Likewise, they claimed that the efforts of cooperation with teachers on risky behaviors were generally not positive. Psychological counselors participated in the interview thought that this situation was related to the attitude of teachers not to see risky behaviors in their own area of responsibility. On the other hand, there are opinions that the administrators partially support the studies on risky behaviors. Examples of the opinions of psychological counselors working in schools on cooperation and coordination studies on risky behaviors are given below.

K5: " At my school, we have no relationship with the parents, and they don't show any interest in school stuff. They always either have jobs or have patients. School administrators, on the other hand, provide us with the necessary support. Teachers generally help behaviors in terms of discipline. But most teachers don't even react when they see this kind of behavior anymore. I do not think that there is an understanding of eliminating these behaviors, reducing them, or detecting them beforehand. I have never come across an instruction, suggestion or a counseling system that says it would be better if you did the following about a student who went to the hospital, or it would be better if you provided help resources as follows about a student who committed suicide. "

K6: " In general, teachers throw trouble on us in all matters. Especially, if a student has a special situation, they share it with us to pass the buck to us or reduce their obligations. In our school, parents do not show any interest in this issue and do not offer any support. They don't even come to interview. They only deal with you if there is a legal situation. If we give an example of hospitals from institutions related to risky behaviors, we refer them. Only the medicine is given, the student is sent back and there is no more. "

K16: " Because parents, teachers and administrators see risky behaviors as a problem, they stay away from them. They don't want to try too hard because they see this kind of work as a burden. When there are situations related to their child, they go to the way of hiding. Teachers, on the other hand, think that only counselors are responsible for these behaviors towards these events. Administrators also see it as a waste of time and effort, and they do not want to get into such issues. "

According to the findings obtained from the quantitative data on the studies conducted within the scope of risky behaviors observed among high school students, only 14.3% of parents, teachers and administrators show the necessary sensitivity in studies on risky behaviors. Besides, psychological counselors claimed that 30% of parents, teachers and administrators show little sensitivity to the studies on risky behaviors and 44.2% of them partially have the necessary sensitivity. In line with these findings, it can be said that most of the parents, teachers

and administrators do not show the necessary sensitivity about risky behaviors. Moreover, it is observed that the cooperation efforts of the stakeholders remained at a limited level in the process of working on risky behaviors.

When the cooperation efforts of institutions related to risky behaviors seen in schools are examined, it is observed that there is no systematic cooperation structure, and each institution handles risky events only within the framework of its own duties and responsibilities. Psychological counselors stated that this uncoordinated working format disrupted the process of recognizing early stimuli for risky behaviors, preventing, and intervening in these behaviors. Similarly, psychological counselors assert that recruiting all stakeholders within a systematic program will strengthen the working process for risky behaviors. According to the quantitative data on the same theme, it is observed that there are slightly different results. When the views on cooperating with the police department or similar organizations on risky behaviors were analyzed, only 29.7% of the participants stated that they did not cooperate while 70.3% mentioned that they cooperated with the police or similar institution or organization in the process of working on risky behaviors. However, psychological counselors expressed in the interview that social services, police department or similar institutions only look at risky events in line with their own responsibility and do not show the necessary pedagogical sensitivity when meeting with students.

Findings Concerning the Risks and Barriers Counselors Face While Conducting Studies on Risky Behaviors in Schools

Another important factor related to the type and quality of studies on risky behaviors seen in high schools is what are the risks and barriers to the work carried out by psychological counselors within the scope of risky behaviors. The majority of the psychological counselors participating in the study stated that the obstacles were generally legal and personal. Psychological counselors perceive the absence of a legal structure to protect them while working with risky behaviors as a preventive factor. Moreover, parents' perspectives on risky behaviors and their attitudes towards risky behaviors are also considered as preventive factors. However, some psychological counselors have asserted that there is no preventive situation when working with risky behaviors. They even claimed that studies on risky behaviors are very crucial. It can be said that these obstacles are generally related to personal, institutional, and legal matters. The risks and barriers expressed by psychological counselors regarding the working process are exemplified below.

K5: "Counselors do not feel safe in this regard, and they say that there are situations that may pose a danger to them. In particular, I think that the procedures related to juvenile delinquency work very slowly through official authorities. This can be considered as an institutional obstacle. The tendency of parents to hide information in case their children will be named or take disciplinary action can be evaluated within the scope of personal obstacles."

K10: "There are 2000 students in the school, but only 2 counselors are on duty. One of the most important obstacles here is the lack of time and the inadequacy of the guidance counselor. We can hardly meet with 3 students per day. Due to the low student level of our school, risky behaviors are very common. Sometimes we must spare a week for a case such as risky behavior. In this process, we ignore all our other fields of work and other cases. But teachers don't pay enough attention to this issue. Everything is evaluated in terms of additional lessons. I think these

are major obstacles.”

K21: “We become irritated and afraid because of some risky behaviors. Because we must report certain behaviors and we do. But the culture you live in, your family structure, the pressure of the neighborhood can also threaten the counselors at this point. At this point, it seems to me that there is no basis, no legal dimension that protects the guidance counselor.”

Quantitative data on the obstacles faced in risky behaviors and qualitative data obtained from the interview were processed simultaneously. According to the quantitative data, 18.4% of the psychological counselors stated that they strongly agree that there were laws or regulations that prevent working on some risky behaviors at school, while 20% of them strongly agree with it. On the other hand, only 8.5% of them mentioned that they did not agree that there were factors preventing them from working on risky behaviors.

Discussion

The present study was aimed to evaluate the type, quality, priority, and prevalence of the studies conducted by psychological counselors on risky behaviors in high schools. In this context, information about the type and prevalence of risky behaviors observed among high school students draws attention for the first. Ranking by considering the types and prevalence of risky behaviors is as follow: smoking, cyberbullying, peer victimization, school dropout, obesity, abuse, delinquency, suicidal tendency and attempt, alcohol use, bonsai use and other substances' use. The similarity of the findings obtained from the questionnaire and the interview confirms the consistency of the ranking. The information in the article on the types, prevalences and frequencies of risky behaviors clearly demonstrates the accuracy of the results in terms of types, qualities, and prevalence levels of risky behaviors (Kann et al., 2018; Kurt & Ergene, 2017; Mayer, 2001; Ögel, 2007; Savi-Çakar et al., 2015). The prevalence observed in risky behaviors prioritizes the formation of a strong research background in this field and its reflection on theoretical and applied studies. At this point, the relationship and adequacy of the guidance studies carried out in schools with risky behaviors gain importance.

Studies on risky behaviors are not sufficiently included in the annual work plans of the Ministry of National Education and the guidance service in high schools. The fact that psychological counselors carry out only preventive studies, such as courses and seminars, for risky behaviors indicates the nature of this inadequacy (Özmen & Kubanç, 2013; Wango, 2006). Moreover, many studies on risky behaviors are only on paper draws attention to the limitations of applied studies. Similarly, the number of psychological counselors who perform group practices related to risky behaviors is quite low according to the survey is a supportive situation. In contrast, the questionnaire finding that the number of psychological counselors who conduct individual interviews/psychological counseling is high conflicts with this opinion. However, interview data show that application-based individual studies such as psychological counseling and interviews cannot be conducted sufficiently due to the number of students in high schools, the intensity of work and time constraints. Literature information represents those psychological counselors cannot spare enough time for individual counseling and such applied studies are in the last place in terms of service delivery (Korkut-Owen & Owen, 2008; Wango, 2006; Yüksel-Şahin, 2008). It is obvious that not prioritizing of such applied studies negatively affects the applicability of the psychological counseling process (Heriansyah, 2018). From this point of view, it is considered that the lack of supportive studies on intervention and coping processes such as psychological counseling in the guidance services in high schools will prevent the

studies on these behaviors from reaching their goals.

It is understood that psychological counselors also carry out studies such as referral procedures and parent interviews on risky behaviors observed among high school students. These studies are important in terms of the participation of different stakeholders in the fight against risky behaviors (Kempf et al., 2017) that show an interdisciplinary structure. However, psychological counselors have doubts about the effectiveness of parent studies and referral procedures. Because it has been mentioned that parents do not provide sufficient support to psychological counselors while carrying out studies on risky behaviors and even create obstacles. The attitude of parents towards the tendency to hide risky behaviors observed in children is an important indicator of this. While the positive effect of parental supervision on risky behaviors is known (Reynoso & Rossi, 2019), it is clear that these attitudes of parents will complicate the process. Psychological counselors attribute this to parents' efforts to protect children from disciplinary action. Parental involvement in schoolwork not only contributes to the psychoeducational development of students, but also increases the efficiency of guidance and psychological counseling services (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Mills & Gale, 2004; Parmaksız & Gök, 2019). Considering that the determination of early stimuli for risky behaviors constitutes the first step of studies on risky behaviors (Loeber et al., 2003), undoubtedly, these tendencies of parents will negatively affect the working process of risky behaviors. For this reason, the cooperation between the counselor-parent is of great importance in the process of working on risky behaviors.

Another factor affecting the studies on risky behaviors is teachers. According to psychological counselors, teachers think that they do not have any role in the studies related to the process of early noticing, preventing, and intervening risky behaviors in advance. It is understood that teachers do not provide sufficient support to the cooperation process due to their perception of such duties in the process of working on risky behaviors. However, it is obvious that teachers' observations are very crucial in the early detection and struggle of risky behaviors. Contrary to teachers, it is observed that administrators support the studies on risky behaviors, albeit partially. Psychological counselors attribute this support to the fact that administrators see work on risky behaviors as a disciplinary event. In this context, it is understood that administrators aim to reduce these behaviors through disciplinary attitudes. Psychological counselors, on the other hand, think that these attitudes will remain limited. This information shows that there is no cooperation between teachers, administrators, parents, and psychological counselors while working with risky behaviors observed in high schools. However, it is apparent that the understanding of cooperation established between the relevant stakeholders will increase the effectiveness of these studies (Heriansyah, 2018; Mills & Gale, 2004; Ögel, 2007; Özmen & Kubanç, 2013).

Considering the scope of risky behaviors, it is clear that these studies will not be only about the school. The out-of-school part of the studies on these behaviors consists of institutions and organizations such as the police department and the hospital, which have job descriptions for risky behaviors (Ögel, 2007). Psychological counselors participating in the study mentioned that there is no systematic structure and coordination in inter-institutional studies on risky behaviors. Psychological counselors attribute this to the fact that each stakeholder in the process of working on risky behaviors conducts the process only in terms of his/her field of duty. These attitudes of institutions show that they have an understanding far from cooperating. It is a known fact that the desired results will not be achieved in cases where there is no unity of work and purpose. It is of great importance for all stakeholders to work in coordination within a systematic program on risky behaviors, to detect risky behaviors early, to prevent them and to

intervene in them (Kann et al., 2015, 2018; Kempf et al., 2017; Ögel, 2007). It is considered that the current situation in schools is far from making a positive contribution to the early detection, prevention and intervention of risky behaviors.

It has become necessary to investigate the scope and quality of the studies on risky behaviors as well as the priority of these studies within the guidance and psychological counseling services. For this purpose, it has been tried to determine how much priority psychological counselors give to the studies on risky behaviors. According to the psychological counselors who participated in the study, studies on risky behaviors are not given enough priority in high schools. However, psychological counselors emphasize that intervention studies related to risky behaviors are at the top of the issues that need to be addressed. Despite the high prevalence of risky behaviors in high schools (Alikasıfoğlu & Ercan, 2009; Aras et al., 2007; Gençtanırım-Kuru, 2010; Kann et al., 2018), it is thought-provoking that studies on risky behaviors are not primarily addressed. Moreover, it is known by everyone that risky behaviors negatively affect students' social, psychological, and physical development areas. Even, risky behaviors cause students to move away from protective factors such as school (Jessor, 2016; Özer et al., 2011; Yorğun, 2014). From this point of view, it can be said that it is important for psychological counselors to prioritize activities related to risk behaviors. In contrast, a limited number of psychological counselors point out that the guidance needs of the school are more important than risky behaviors. However, when the opinions of the counselors participating in the study and the literature information (Gençtanırım-Kuru, 2010; Jessor, 2016; Özer et al., 2011; Pekel-Uludağlı & Uçanok, 2005) are evaluated together, it is seen as a necessity to prioritize the studies on risky behaviors.

It is seen that the obstacles encountered by psychological counselors during the process of working on risky behaviors include personal, institutional, and legal dimensions. For example, psychological counselors consider the limited legal regulations protecting them while performing their duties regarding some risky behaviors as an obstacle (Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012). The idea of having a broad psychological counselor perspective to work on issues where social reactions are high (Keklik, 2010) supports this result. Again, it is seen that psychological counselors are reluctant to report especially in cases of abuse, and this situation is similar with the literature (Akgül, 2015; Kenny, 2001; Walsh et al., 2010). Furthermore, psychological counselors consider parents' perspectives and attitudes towards risky behaviors among the preventive factors. Although it is limited, it is understood that some psychological counselors do not encounter any restrictive situation while working with risky behaviors and that such studies are of sufficient importance. Literature (Akgül, 2015; Tuzgöl-Dost & Keklik, 2012) and questionnaire findings also support the knowledge that psychological counselors encounter some constraints while working with these behaviors. Encountered obstacles negatively affect the motivation and working process of psychological counselors (Ekşi et al., 2015). It is obvious that such obstacles will create limitations in detection of early stimulants about risky behaviors and intervening. It is thought that the positive change in the institutional structures of all stakeholders and their attitudes towards cooperation in the context of risky behaviors will contribute significantly to the studies of high school students on such problematic behaviors.

Conclusion

According to the results of this study, it was determined that risky behaviors observed among high school students were listed as smoking, cyberbullying, peer victimization, school dropout, obesity, abuse, delinquency, suicidal tendency and attempt, alcohol use, bonsai use and other substances' use. Moreover, although these behaviors are common in high schools, it

has been revealed that studies on risky behaviors are not sufficiently included in the guidance framework programs of the Ministry of National Education and schools. It is understood that the limited studies conducted in the context of risky behaviors are mostly only preventive studies such as courses and seminars. Furthermore, it has been determined that psychological counselors do not give sufficient place to psychological counseling practices while working with risky behaviors. It has been observed that these studies are generally shown as if they were made on paper and reports. Considering the dangers that risky behaviors pose for students' mental, social, and physical health, it is suggested that more studies on risky behaviors should be included in the guidance framework programs prepared by the Ministry of National Education and schools.

It has been revealed that parents, who are an important stakeholder of risky behaviors, exhibit attitudes that can be considered as not providing support and even hindering them from time to time in studies on risky behaviors. In this context, parents can be encouraged to raise awareness and provide the necessary support regarding the prevention and elimination of risky behaviors. Considering the results of the study, it was detected that parents, administrators and teachers contributed to these studies at a limited level and that they did not cooperate at a sufficient level between the stakeholders related to risky behaviors. It has also been determined that psychological counselors encounter various obstacles in personal, institutional, and legal dimensions while working within the scope of risky behaviors. In this direction, it is necessary to develop policies to remove the institutional and legal barriers that prevent psychological counselors' working on risky behaviors. In addition, effective cooperation and coordination with other institutions will contribute to the individual and social solutions of these problems.

It is seen as a limitation that this study only covers psychological counselors working in high schools. Considering the reasons for the emergence of risky behaviors and their initial levels, it is considered that studies on psychological counselors working at different levels can be conducted. Moreover, considering that the type and quality of the studies conducted by psychological counselors on risky behaviors are related to their competencies, courses and training contents that increase the competency of psychological counselors on risky behaviors should be given more place in GPC undergraduate programs in universities and in-service trainings of the Ministry of National Education.

Note

This study is an updated part of the doctoral thesis named “The Investigation of Risky Behaviors Among High School Students in the Context of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Undergraduate Program Contents and Psychological Counselor Qualifications” and conducted under the supervision of the first author Prof. Dr. Hikmet Yazıcı.

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