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## The Impact of Solution-Focused Brief Group Psychological Counseling on University Students' Burnout Levels

AZMI BAYRAM ILBAY and AHMET AKIN

### Abstract

This research was done to analyze the effects of Coping with Burnout Program, developed on the basis of Solution-Focused Brief Therapy on the burnout levels of university students. To select the subjects that would participate in the research, Maslach Burnout Inventory–Student Survey was applied on 461 university students from the University of Sakarya. As a result of pre-interviews, 24 students who had experienced student burnout voluntarily participated in a Coping with Burnout Program. The students were randomly appointed to one of the experimental and control groups. At this stage, a six-session Coping with Burnout Program developed by the researcher was applied on the students from the experimental group. No application was performed on the students from the control group. A 2x3 design (experimental/ control groups X pretest/ posttest/ follow up) was used in the research. The scores from the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Student Survey formed the dependent variable of the research, and the application of Coping with Burnout Program formed the independent variable of the research. The scale used in the research was applied on the groups as pretest two weeks before the sessions started, and as posttest two weeks after the sessions ended, and as follow-up two months after the posttest in order to determine the resistance of the experimental process. In the analysis of the data obtained through these processes, two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between groups and the survey. The data obtained through the research proved that the Coping with Burnout Program decreased the burnout levels of the students in the experimental group as were determined with the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Student Survey, and follow up tests showed that the situation remained the same. It was seen that there was no significant difference between the scores of the participants of the control group from pretest, posttest and follow up test.

**Keywords:** solution-focused brief therapy, coping with burnout program, student burnout.

## Introduction

Every change both provides opportunity and it lays a burden. Fulfillment of responsibilities caused by change and ability of taking opportunity can be maintained through education in a swift and effective way. Being able to reach to a better life is related to success in the steps taking place in the process of education. Even if this process highlights individual's responsibilities, it transforms into different dimensions in relation with the expectations coming from community and family. School life and responsibilities accompanying it could be the reasons for emotional problems. Examinations and responsibilities from academic life make students prone to stress. On the other hand, academic responsibilities can lay a heavy academic burden on the individual.

Freudenberger was the first to mention the concept of "burnout". According to him, burnout is "the state of depletion as a result of excessive expectations towards energy, power and supplies" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Burnout was reconsidered by Maslach and Jackson. From their point of view, burnout is a syndrome with physical, emotional and mental aspects which involves negative attitudes towards work, life and other people with the effects of long-lasting fatigue, despair, hopelessness feelings and negative self-concept (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). It is the state of physical, emotional and mental fatigue lived through intensive feelings caused by relationships (Pines & Aronson, 1988). Burnout includes failure of being content with life and the feeling of being worn-out. By becoming clear with psychosomatic symptoms; it affects individual's functions in all areas of life (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). Cherniss defines burnout as giving up responsibility as a reaction to excessive stress. It is an individual's feeling under pressure with phenomenon's such as loss of interest, exhaustion, disappointment, pessimism, lack of motivation and efforts towards work, accusations and exiguity of dependence and creativity (Cherniss, 1980).

Students' activities of studentship can be used in the same meaning with the concept of "work" that belongs to business life (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). School and responsibilities related to school can be considered as work and workload (Salmela-Aro, Savolainen, & Holopainen, 2009). Levinson (1996) emphasizes that stress, which is caused by workload accompanying educational life, transforms into burnout. McCranie and Brandsma (1988) emphasize that burnout is the syndrome brought by excessive stress in educational life. It is observed that students bear considerable workload, both in class and out of class, examinations, academic responsibilities, and obligations of attending activities in connection with structured aims (Salanova, Schaufeli, Martinez, & Bresó, 2009). Pursuit of academic career steps is dependent on examinations. Therefore, stress caused by examinations is one of the foremost problems students live through. Burnout in students can cause resulting occurrences like absenteeism, loss of interest and desire, and/or dropping out of education (Yang & Farn, 2005). It causes reacting against gaining desired behavior (Laursen et al., 2010). In medical students, 50% suffer burnout, and 10% of these students contemplate suicide (Dyrbye et al., 2009). This situation can be associated with students' internship practices and intensive workload (Gunduz, Capri, & Gokcakan, 2012).

Burnout can cause feeling of inadequacy, lack of interest, reluctance, scornful and contemptuous attitudes towards school responsibilities (Aypay & Eryilmaz, 2011; Lee et al., 2010). According to Kutsal (2009), indications of burnout are; academic failure, school

absenteeism, being late for classes, behaviors violating school and student discipline, asocial attitudes, difficulty of remembering, medicine and alcohol consumption, feeling of unsuccessfulness, truancy or desire for truancy, blaming others, and scornful and contemptuous behaviors towards academic subjects.

University period is the term when students are face-to-face with challenging developmental tasks (Dyson & Renk, 2006; Ceyhan & Ceyhan, 2008; Yılmaz, 2013; Ceyhan, 2009). At the end of a tiring examination marathon, they have to deal with challenging developmental tasks and a lot of problems peculiar to university life. Tukaiev, Piskorska, Natalya, and Tatyana (2011) emphasize that university students can experience emotional burnout from the very first year. When weekly class hours are taken into consideration together with workload, it is seen that workload is in positive association with student burnout (Sever, 1997). According to Gunduz et al. (2012), as well as Oren and Turkoglu (2006), as class levels and age increase, burnout increases for all students. This case can be explained with the fact that as education level increases, the situations and responsibilities causing stress increase (Maslach et al., 2001).

With the qualities of actualizing targets in a short time and providing for fast change by focusing on solutions without concentrating on the problem and psychodynamics of the problem, Solution-Focused Brief Psychological Counseling (SFBPC) can be effective in dealing with and decreasing student burnout. SFBPC is one of postmodern psychological counseling approaches. It is the model that suggests point of view focusing on solution (De Shazer, 1985). SFBPC gives importance to develop collaboration for the solution of the problem (Selekman, 2005). Taking steps towards a solution by not focusing on the problem itself, but focusing on the strong sides that would offer solution is one of important qualities of this theory (Corey, 2008). By taking the counselee into the center, enhancing his beliefs related to his being understood accelerates the change. Featuring the counselee's individualistic sides, inclining to specific phenomenon's and catching concreteness enhance focusing on solutions (Sklare, 2010).

There are some principles increasing the effectiveness of the theory of SFBPC. Initially, if there are effective ways for a solution, then such a solution shouldn't be changed. Another one is that; behaviors forming solutions should be inferred from the speech of the counselee who is the expert of his/her own life, and that their repetition should be maintained. Thirdly; give up the phenomenon of "try again insistently". Instead of this, different strategies of solution should be developed (De Shazer, 1987; Walter & Peller, 1992). SFBPC is able to satisfy the expectations of producing solutions for the counselee's problems in a short period (Sklare, 2010). Actualizing the counselee's targets approximately in the fourth session shows that the theory could produce swift solutions which are effective to the state of wellbeing (Berg & Steiner, 2003).

Although there are lots of studies being carried out in the educational environment, research considering burnout syndrome are limited (Friedman, 2002). When we look at their way of dealing with burnout syndrome, it is seen that these are researches based on relational screening model (Fimian & Blanton, 1987; Meier & Schmeck, 1985). National research in the literature are also relational (Aypay & Eryilmaz, 2011; Bas, 2013; Balkis, 2013; Capulcuoglu & Gunduz, 2013; Erturgut & Soyseker, 2010; Gunduz et al., 2012; Guduk et al., 2005; Oren & Turkoglu, 2006; Saricam, 2012; Saricam & Sakiz, 2014; Saricam, Gulbahce, & Gulbahce, 2012). It is the privilege of this study that it has experimental quality by suggesting

a program for dealing with student burnout. The program for dealing with burnout was developed based on the theoretical fundamentals of SFBPC. Lazarus (2000) determined burnout-reducing effects of coping programs. Basoren (2005) mentions about the utility of using coping programs related to emotional problems. The present study has two goals. The first goal is; to develop a program of coping with student burnout based on SFBPC theory. The second goal is; to examine the effect and durability of the program developed on university students' burnout levels. The basic hypothesis of this research to reach to these goals is: "There will be a significant decrease in burnout levels of the students participating in the Program of Coping Burnout (PCB) based on SFBPC in comparison with the control group students, and this decrease will continue in the monitoring measurement that will be performed two months after the research is completed." The sub hypotheses of the research are;

- H<sub>a</sub>: Pretest score averages of the students participating in the treatment of PCB will be significantly higher than their post-test score averages.
- H<sub>b</sub>: For the students participating in PCB; pretest score averages will be significantly higher than monitoring test score averages.
- H<sub>c</sub>: For the students participating in PCB; there won't be a significant difference between post-test score averages and monitoring test score averages.
- H<sub>d</sub>: Post-test score averages of the students participating in PCB will be significantly lower than post-test score averages of the control group students.
- H<sub>e</sub>: Monitoring test score averages of the students participating in PCB will be significantly low in comparison with monitoring test score averages of the control group students.
- H<sub>f</sub>: There won't be a significant difference between pretest, post-test and monitoring test score averages of the control group students.

## Methodology

This study is a semi-experimental research in which the effects of PCB treatment on student burnout were examined. 2x3 split-plot experimental patterns were used in the research with the experimental-control groups, pretest, post-test and monitoring test measurements. Study group consisted of 24 university students; 12 students in each control and experimental group as six male and six female.

Data-collecting tools utilized in this research are personal information form and MBS-SF. MBS-SF is a measurement tool which was developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker (2002), adapted by Capri, Gunduz, and Gocakan (2011). Correlations between scores of sub-factors obtained from the scale range between .32 and .83. Item total test correlations were calculated as an evidence for item-validity and correlation values of sub-factors were confirmed between .32 and .69. Cronbach Alpha inner-consistency co-efficient was found .76, .74 and .61 respectively in order to confirm the reliability of the scale, and test-retest reliability scores were determined as .76, .74 and .73 respectively.

The independent variable of the research is PCB treatment and the dependent variable of the research is student burnout levels determined with the scores obtained from Maslach Burnout Scale–Student Form (MBS-SF). MBS-SF was applied to the students of the control

and experimental groups as pretest two weeks before the beginning of the sessions. Two weeks after this treatment PCB based on SFBPC developed by the researcher was applied to the experimental group. During this period of time no treatment was applied to the control group students. Two weeks after the sessions were completed, scales were applied to the experimental and control groups as post-test. With the aim of testing whether or not the effects of PCB, based on SFBPC on student burnout, are time independent and permanent, monitoring measurements were carried out with the two groups of students two months after post-tests were performed. Experimental pattern and study steps of this research are shown in Table 1.

**Table1.** Steps of Experimental Study

	MEASUREMENTS			
	Pretest	Treatment	Post-test	Monitoring
Experimental	MBS-SF	PCB	MBS-SF	MBS-SF
Control	MBS-SF	-	MBS-SF	MBS-SF

In this research, PCB treatment, consisting of six sessions, each of which took about 60-70 minutes, was performed to the individuals of the experimental group. Sessions were designed as one session per week. "Solution Focused Brief Psychological Counseling" (Sklare, 2010) and "Solution is undercover inside me" (Guner, 2011) works were utilized for development of PCB. The steps and sessions of PCB:

**Step I:** Developing therapeutic relationship based on confidence

Session 1: Introduction, structuring, developing feelings of confidence among group individuals

**Step II:** Identifying goals related to solution

Session 2: Focusing on the feeling of burnout and solutions

Session 3: Focusing on the feeling of depersonalization and solutions

Session 4: Focusing on the feeling of inadequacy and solutions related to competence

**Step III:** Identifying and structuring solution-focused behaviors

Session 5: Being aware of student burnout and relevant solutions

**Step IV:** Combining parts of solution-focused behaviors for the solution of burnout

Session 6: Collecting solutions related to student burnout, encouragement, finishing and restarting.

During PCB treatment, materials and activities that would contribute were utilized. The treatment steps, principles and methods were acknowledged in the Program of Coping with Burnout in some detail (Ilbay, 2014).

In the process of analyzing data, whether or not parametric tests meet the basic hypotheses, based on the analysis of the results obtained from homogeneity and normality tests, should be taken into consideration. 2x3 two-factor ANOVA technique can be used for repeated measurements in split-plot patterns. Where significant difference is observed, Scheffe test - one of multiple comparison tests - can be utilized to test the source of the

difference. If group and mutual effect test result is meaningful, then one can conclude that experimental treatment is effective on the dependent variable (Buyukozturk, 2011).

## Results

### *Pre-analysis*

The use of parametric tests depends on homogeneity of variances and normal distribution of data (Ergun, 1995). Findings regarding homogeneity test are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** MBS-SF Levene's Homogeneity Test Related to Pretest Scores

Variable	Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	<i>p</i>
Pretest MBS-SF	.107	1	22	.747

According to Table 2, the results ( $F_{1-22}=.107$ ,  $p>.05$ ), which were obtained from homogeneity test based on pretest measurements of the individuals who took place in the experimental and control groups, indicate that the data related to pretest of the scale demonstrates homogeneous distribution and confirms the basic hypothesis of parametric tests. Parametric tests can be preferred by confirming normality case of data using Shapiro-Wilks test (Buyukozturk, 2011). The results of Shapiro-Wilks test are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** MBS-SF Shapiro-Wilks Normality Test Results of Pretest Scores

Groups	Shapiro-Wilks		
	Statistics	df	<i>p</i>
Experimental PT	.160	12	.200
Control PT	.222	12	.106

It is seen that the data indicates normal distribution with regard to Shapiro-Wilks normality test results in Table 3. Mode, median, arithmetic average, kurtosis and skewness values related to pretest measurement scores of the research are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** MBS-SF Mode, Median, Arithmetic Average, Kurtosis and Skewness Values of Pretest Scores

	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>	Median	Mode	Skewness	Kurtosis
Experimental (PT)	37.91	4.85	38.0	38	.433	-.578
Control (PT)	38.75	5.39	37.5	37	.637	.283

Mode, median, arithmetic averages of experimental and control groups are quite close to each other and kurtosis and skewness values are inside expected values. When the data sets of the experimental and control groups are examined, it can be said to demonstrate both homogeneous and normal distribution. For this reason, it was decided to use parametric analysis techniques in order to compare scores of the experimental and control groups. T-test was implemented for independent samples and the results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** MBS-SF Independent Samples t-test Analysis Results of Pretest Scores

	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Experimental group	12	37.91	4.85	-.398	.695
Control Group	12	38.75	5.39		

It was determined that there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups ( $t_{22}=-.398$ ,  $p=.695$ ).

### Findings

Before testing the basic hypothesis of the research, arithmetic averages and standard deviations of student burnout scores of the individuals of the experimental and control groups, regarding pre-treatment, post-treatment and two months after the treatment was finished, and the results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Arithmetic Averages and Standard Deviation Values of Pretest, Post-test and Monitoring Test Scores

	Pre-test		Post-test		Monitoring test	
	$\bar{X}$	<i>S</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>S</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>S</i>
Experimental N=12	37.91	4.85	29.08	4.46	27.33	5.19
Control N=12	38.75	5.39	39.66	5.22	39.25	4.39

According to Table 6, PCB treatments have reduced student burnout levels in comparison with the individuals in the control group. In monitoring measurement, the decrease in student burnout levels has remained durable.

With the aim of testing the basic hypothesis of the research, it will be examined whether or not there is a statistically significant difference by using two-factor variance analysis (ANOVA) for repeated measurements; the findings of which are given in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Variance Analysis Results of Pretest, Post-test and Monitoring Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Sum of Squares	F	p	Eta Square
<b>Inter-groups</b>						
Groups (Experiment-Control)	1088.889	1	1088.889	18.615	.001	.62
Error	643.444	11	58.495			
<b>In groups (Subjects)</b>						
Measurement (Pre-Post-Mon.)	338.083	2	169.042	18.388	.000	.77
Error	202.250	22	9.193			
<b>Group*Measurement</b>						
Error	439.361	2	219.681	28.715	.000	.82
Error	168.306	22	7.650			



As can be seen from Table 7, as a result of variance analysis of pretest, post-test and monitoring test measurement score averages of the individuals from the experimental and control groups, it was found that group effect was significant ( $F_{(1-11)} = 18.61$ ;  $p < .01$ ). The difference between pretest, post-test and monitoring test score averages of the individuals is significant without making group discrimination ( $F_{(2-22)} = 18.388$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This finding indicated that the individuals' student burnout levels changed based on the experimental treatment when group discrimination wasn't made. It was seen that the value which was obtained as a result of examining mutual effect (group\*measurement effect) was significant ( $F_{(2-22)} = 28.71$ ;  $p < .01$ ). The change observed between groups regarding student burnout during measurements can be explained with the effect of experimental treatment ( $\eta^2 = .72$ ). The findings demonstrated that there was a significant difference between groups in terms of measurements ( $F_{(2-22)} = 28.71$ ;  $p < .01$ ). When the findings are taken into consideration, it can be stated that the basic hypothesis of the research was confirmed. The results of Scheffe test, which was used for determining the source of difference, are shown in Table 8.

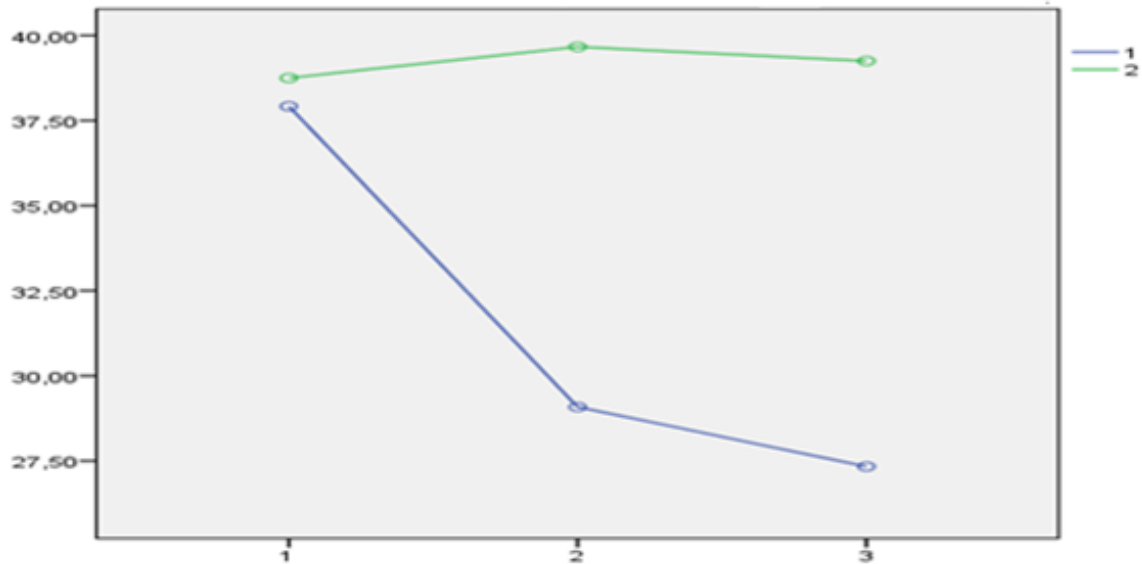
**Table 8.** Scheffe Test Results Regarding Differences between Groups and Between Measurements

		Experimental Group			Control Group		
		Pretest	Post-test	Monitoring	Pretest	Post-test	Monitoring
Experimental	Pretest	-	8.91**	10.81**	-		
	Post-test		-	1.90	-9.75**	-10.66**	-10.25**
	Monitoring			-	-11.65**	-12.56**	-12.15**
Control	Pretest				-	-.91	-.50
	Post-test					-	.41
	Monitoring						-

\*\* $p < .01$

When the results of Scheffe test were examined, it was seen that MBS-SF pretest average was ( $\bar{X} = 37.91$ ), post-test score average was ( $\bar{X} = 29.08$ ), monitoring test score average was ( $\bar{X} = 27.33$ ) and reduced significantly. For this reason, it can be said that sub-hypotheses  $H_a$  and  $H_b$  were confirmed. The difference between monitoring test score ( $\bar{X} = 27.33$ ) and post-test score average ( $\bar{X} = 29.08$ ) of the experimental group wasn't significant ( $p > .05$ ). Based on this, it can be stated that sub-hypothesis  $H_c$  was confirmed. Post-test score average of the experimental group ( $\bar{X} = 29.08$ ) was significantly different from and lower than post-test score average of the control group ( $\bar{X} = 39.66$ ). Based on this reason, it can be stated that sub-hypothesis  $H_d$  was confirmed. It was determined that monitoring test score average of the experimental group ( $\bar{X} = 27.33$ ) differentiated significantly and was lower than the monitoring test score average of the control group ( $\bar{X} = 39.25$ ). Based on this reason, it can be stated that sub-hypothesis  $H_e$  was confirmed. No significant difference was found between pretest score average of the experimental group ( $\bar{X} = 37.91$ ) and pretest score average of the control group ( $\bar{X} = 38.75$ ). It was found that there was no significant difference between pretest average ( $\bar{X} = 38.75$ ), post-test score average ( $\bar{X} = 39.66$ ) and the monitoring test ( $\bar{X} = 39.25$ ) of the control group. Based on this conclusion, it can be stated

that sub-hypothesis  $H_f$  was confirmed. The line chart of the change regarding scores, which the experimental and control groups obtained from pretest, post-test and monitoring test, is presented as Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Line Chart of Pretest, Post-test and Monitoring Test Change of Experimental and Control Groups.

When Figure 1 is examined, it is seen that the green line belonging to the control group doesn't indicate a significant differentiation and reaches a plateau. Yet, it is seen that the blue line belonging to the experimental group demonstrates a significant decline from pretest practice up to post-test practice, and that this decline is durable. PCB can be said to be the reason for the decline of student burnout levels. It is seen that the lines aren't cyclical in the chart. Consequently, it can be asserted that F-value, which was found as a result of variance analysis regarding mutual effect, reflects significant differences.

## Conclusion and Discussion

The results below were obtained regarding the basic hypothesis of the research:

- The difference between the experimental and control groups' pretest, post-test and monitoring test measurements is significant.
- Without making group discrimination, the difference between the individuals' pretest, post-test and monitoring test measurements is significant. Student burnout levels change based on experimental treatment.
- As a result of examining mutual effect (group\*measurement effect), the value obtained is significant. Average scores of MBS-SF measurement change in pretest, post-test and monitoring test measurements.

The basic hypothesis of the research and sub-hypotheses were confirmed as a result of inter-groups and inter-measurements comparisons based on the experimental and control groups' pretest, post-test and monitoring test measurements. In conclusion, PCB was determined to be an effective program for reducing student burnout levels. The findings shown in Table 8 indicate that the difference between groups can be explained with experimental treatment effect.

Corcoron and Stephenson (2000) emphasized that SFBPC reduces students' behavioral problems. Littrel, Malia, and Vanderwood (1995) asserted that SFBPC had the advantage of using time economically by reaching goals with a lower number of sessions. Research has shown that individuals are in search of quick solutions to their problems. Additionally, it was determined that individuals avoided taking support by resisting emotional and behavioral reactions' being discussed through long sessions and for a long period of time. De Shazer (1985) determined that SFBPC was effective over a short period and through fewer sessions. It was emphasized that SFBPC was effective for solutions of emotional and behavioral problems of the counselees (Newsome, 2004; Atkinson, 2007; Franklin, Streeter, Kim, & Tripodi, 2007). The theoretical principles of SFBPC are determiners which form coping components of PCB. PCB supported breaking of resistance by enhancing the desire for change in the counselees by means of suggesting to them the privilege of focusing on the positive sides and working solution ways, and reaching goals in a short period of time. These qualities of PCB can be considered to support its effectiveness.

Researches heading for reducing burnout levels are advised to focus on coping skills (Basoren, 2005; Esen Coban & Demir, 2007). These practices are stated to be able to prevent burnout (Bilgin & Gozum, 2009; Gunduz, Tunc, & Inandi, 2013). The success of PCB in reducing student burnout can be associated to its qualities such as focusing on coping skills stated in researches, involving psychological counseling sessions.

Coping and giving support were determined in the research to form differences in reducing occupational burnout (Tunc & Gunduz, 2010). Burnout levels reduce for those individuals who use coping method focused on the active and positive (Gunduz, 2000; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001; Ebrinc, Acikel, Basoglu, Cetin, & Celikoz, 2002; McManus, Winder, & Paice, 2002; Duygun & Sezgin, 2003; Kennedy, 2005; Topkaya, 2013; Kaya et al., 2007; Coban & Hamamci, 2008). Accordingly, PCB meets the expectations stated in researches by focusing on development and functionalizing of coping skills based on the theoretical principles of SFBPC. It was observed that the techniques used on account of PCB, which was prepared based on the theoretical principles of SFBPC, reduced student burnout levels together with environment of psychological counseling with group, dynamics of group, and activities performed.

PCB dealt with basic components of student burnout syndrome through sessions in the context of the theoretical principles. Coping skills highlighted in the program were developed in harmony with the theoretical grounds of SFBPC. In the development process of the program, the focus was on acquiring coping skills, which were coherent to the components of the theoretical principles of student burnout and intervening in its sub-dimensions. The individual was evaluated as a whole with his/her feelings, ideas and behaviors. Forming group counseling experience, which would provide transfer of skills into new occasions and reveal coping potential that an individual uses for solving his/her problems, enhances therapeutic effect (Voltan-Acar, 2012). Especially, sessions 2, 3 and 4 of PCB contribute to the development of coping skills by focusing on the sub-dimensions of burnout. These qualities of the program can be considered among the facilitators of reaching the results confirming the hypotheses of the research.

De Shazer (1987) emphasizes that focusing on the abilities of individuals helps finding the solution. De Jong and Berg (1998) assert that counselee's changing process starts with his/her asking for an appointment. The change, which starts with the process of deciding,

accelerates the process of change. Using solution-focused change providing techniques such as focusing on the moments when the solution emerges and featuring these moments by reinforcing with complimenting technique, can contribute to actualizing the change by transforming an individuals' burnout feelings into feelings of competence. With this respect, it can be considered that the decline in student burnout levels, which is indicated by the results of the research, isn't surprising.

It is emphasized that social support is the most effective factor that enhances an individual's efficiencies in terms of preventing burnout and coping (Jenkins & Elliot, 2004; Kalimo, Pahkin, Mutanen, & Toppinen-Tanner, 2003). Positive communications in social environment and solution-focused communication are among the factors that affect coping (Torun, 1997; Ari & Bal, 2008). Individuals are influenced more by social support coming from friends and people resembling themselves (Taormina & Law, 2000; Jenkins & Elliott, 2004). Support groups consisting of peers have an effect of reducing burnout by providing support. These groups provide individual with emotional relief, gaining insights, optimism, courage, awareness, sharing, and positive change of behavior (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). During the sessions of PCB, group members expressed that the group had provided them with social support and that participating in a group had been a source of support. The dynamics of psychological group counseling could have facilitated the change by strengthening social support ties among group members and developing close relations with strong social ties. The group, in which PCB performed with these qualities, enhanced its effectiveness by providing social support.

Social support perceived in interpersonal relations develops the feeling of self-competence (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to research, the relationship between the feeling of competence and burnout level is negative (Akin et al., 2013; Kubiacko & Arik, 2014; Topkaya, 2012). It is emphasized that competence feeling of the individual, who lives through burnout, would be hurt (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). It is anticipated that students should have competence that would make contributions in cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions (Bandura, 1986). It can be considered that the practices of PCB reduce student burnout by providing individuals with social support and by enhancing their belief of self-competence. Especially in Session-4 of PCB, strengthening the belief of self-competence by focusing on enhancing belief of competence, could be seen as the factor of significant difference in the subjects of the experimental group.

Individuals should develop strategies to regain his/her pre-burnout functional state (Woolfolk & Allen, 2007; Papadopoulou & Yirci, 2013). Lazarus (2000) expresses that the individual who is under the effect of stressors needs coping skills so as to redress the balance. Sears, Urizar, and Evans, (2000) emphasize that the individual can regain his/her functionality lost by solving their burnout. The state of inability to overcome the problem of burnout can add new problems to their mood. PCB could support functional harmony by transforming the strategies obtained from the theoretical substructure of SFBPC into coping skills and by focusing on individuals' developing solution-focused coping skills.

The World Health Organization (Dunya Saglik Orgutu [World Health Organization], 1988) deals with burnout as a syndrome which deteriorates individual's functionality belonging to general life. The findings of the research show that PCB caused a decline in student burnout levels of the individuals who took part in PCB treatment. This finding can be considered as an indicator of PCB's being an actor that develops coping skills. It is emphasized by Somerfield

and McCrae (2000) that coping skills contribute to subjective wellbeing and it is emphasized by Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) that coping skills make contributions to general psychological health. It can be considered that PCB makes contributions to general psychological health by constructing the coping skills gained.

In conclusion, it is seen that PCB has the effect of reducing university students' burnout. Student burnout levels of the experimental group in post-test and monitoring measurements demonstrate decline, whereas this change doesn't occur in the control group, and this fact indicates that the change derives from the program performed. As a result of this, the effectiveness of PCB in reducing student burnout levels was confirmed. It can be said that PCB has the quality that implementers can easily apply.

In the direction of the findings obtained from this study, some suggestions can be made for future research, psychological counselors and other experts: By adapting PCB, it can be used easily for solving problems that are experienced in the process of education and training. When this program is wanted to be used in the context of sub-components of student burnout syndrome, Sessions 2, 3 and 4 of PCB can be used with this regard. Since the practices of PCB program reinforce coping skills, they can be utilized in the context of preventive guidance services. With adaptation, PCB can be used in other steps of education beside university level. SFBPC have made contributions to individuals living through student burnout, developing coping skills regarding student burnout while continuing their academic responsibilities. The effect of SFBPC was confirmed in breaking the resistance of students regarding having support on the grounds that it was time lost. Therefore, SFBPC can be the primary choice for researchers. The lack of experimental studies on account of coping with burnout in national and international literature is remarkable. PCB can provide students with sustainable contributions. By adapting PCB, its fields of application can be extended for different sample groups; especially for individuals in different developmental periods. The comparison of psychological group counseling programs developed based on theoretical grounds of different psychological counseling approaches with PCB can be made, and advantages or disadvantages can be revealed.

## Notes

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