RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Counselor Candidates' Perspectives on Online and Face-to-face Supervision in Individual Counseling Practice: A Comparative Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of the present study was to explain the differences between online and face-to-face supervision and explore their benefits, challenges, and potential impact on supervisees' outcomes from counselor candidates' perspectives. The present study used a phenomenological pattern and the qualitative research paradigm. The research participants were counselor candidates for a state university's guidance and psychological counseling program. The study group comprised 24 participants, 20 females and 4 males, aged between 19 and 25. The findings were grouped into four themes: counseling process, supervision process, challenges and limitations, and peer opinions. Sub-themes around the four themes were evaluated, and suggestions for the literature and researchers were provided.

In the realm of professional development and clinical training, supervision stands as an indispensable component, providing a structured framework for the acquisition and refinement of skills essential for effective practice (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). The mode of supervision, whether conducted in person or through online platforms, has emerged as a topic of significant discourse within the counseling field. For counselors, supervision involves the mastery process of an apprentice with a minimum level of knowledge and skills, working with an individual who has successfully fulfilled the competencies in the field (McAdams & Wyatt, 2010). This process is achieved by integrating feedback and sharing knowledge and skills to support the professional development of psychological counselors, increase their self-efficacy, and promote creativity and flexibility when working with their clients (Crockett & Hays, 2015). However, knowledge and skills cannot be quickly developed in supervision, and thus, different supervision models have been proposed to foster students' clinical skills. Supervisors contribute to developing the supervisee's intervention, conceptualization, and personalization skills by assuming the roles of teacher, counselor, and consultant (Atik et al., 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2019).

Models and approaches have been developed to facilitate supervision. Supervision models provide structures and guidelines to supervisors, help supervisors serve cohesive supervision, and address supervisee's needs (Perry, 2012; Tarlow et al., 2020). Three broad categories of counseling supervision models exist, namely: (a) psychotherapy-based models, (b) developmental models, and (c) process models. These models can be carried out face-to-face, online, or live (Myers & Smith, 1995). Drawing from supervision models, face-to-face

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supervision emphasizes the significance of the therapeutic relationship in clinical work and the supervisory process (Tarlow et al., 2020). Thus, face-to-face clinical supervision is deeply rooted in relational and experiential learning theories. Because the face-to-face supervision method provides for the unique needs and preferences of both supervisors and supervisees (e.g., personal connection, enhanced rapport, and flexibility in communication), supervisee competence, self-efficacy, and overall therapeutic effectiveness increase accordingly (Butler & Constantine, 2006; Chen & Bernstein, 2000; Crockett & Hays, 2015). Moreover, face-to-face supervision improves client outcomes and enhances clinical skills development with real-time demonstrations (Tan, 2009). However, the demands of supervisors and supervisees and the opportunities afforded by technological advancements result in a transition from face-to-face to online supervision (Eman, 2021).

Over the last century, technology has become an integral part of counseling, successfully integrated into curriculums (Woo et al., 2020). The emergence of online supervision as a viable alternative, prompted by unexpected situations like pandemics and natural disasters, has further solidified this trend. This adaptability of online supervision, made possible by technology, has reassured counseling students who had to complete their individual counseling practices and supervision processes in online environments. Traditionally, face-to-face supervision dominated, epitomizing the mentorship model characterized by physical proximity and immediate, unmediated feedback (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). However, online supervision has proven its effectiveness in fostering students' development by allowing geographically dispersed individuals to engage in supervisory relationships without the constraints of physical proximity (Bengtsen & Jensen, 2015). Supervision relationships are structured similarly to face-to-face supervision, supported by advances in video conferencing, virtual meeting platforms, and synchronous communication tools (De Beer & Mason, 2009).

Recent research has investigated the effectiveness of both online and face-to-face supervision and their impact on supervisee development, revealing mixed findings. Some studies report comparable outcomes between online and face-to-face supervision (Bender & Dykeman, 2016; Chapman et al., 2011; Dickens, 2009; Lahey, 2008; Reese et al., 2009; Sørlie et al., 1999; Tarlow et al., 2020), while others identify significant differences influenced by variables, such as supervisee learning styles (Bender et al., 2018; Bernhard & Camins, 2021), technological issues (Bernhard & Camins, 2021; Schmittel et al., 2023) and the nature of the supervisory relationship (Carlisle, 2015; Frye et al., 2022).

The most common benefits of online supervision are access to supervisors' expertise and diverse perspectives, heightened flexibility in scheduling, and accommodating supervisees with demanding professional commitments or those residing in remote or underserved areas (Twist et al., 2016). Additionally, research posits that online supervision may engender a sense of enhanced autonomy and self-efficacy as supervisees navigate the virtual landscape (Butler & Constantine, 2006). In comparative studies, it has been found that supervisors spend more time on their students because online supervision is more flexible than face-to-face supervision (Bender & Dykeman, 2016). Students can study different cases due to their location in other places than their school environment in online supervision (Sorlie et al., 1999). Regardless of the supervisory roles adopted in online supervision, students stated that a better working relationship developed with their supervisors. Students who cannot reveal themselves much due to the increased defensive features in face-to-face supervision can express themselves quickly by forming a sense of trust, a facilitating component in online supervision (Clark, 2004).

However, online supervision also has several drawbacks from the counseling perspective. The absence of physical proximity potentially hinders the establishment of rapport and non-verbal cues, which are integral but crucial components of the supervisory relationship (Schmittel et al., 2023). Technological glitches, ranging from connectivity issues to software malfunctions, impede the seamless flow of communication (Reese et al., 2009). Also, the potential for distractions and lack of controlled environments compromise the depth and quality of supervision sessions (Amanvermez et al., 2020).

Counseling students state that face-to-face training consists of more authentic and concrete interactions with faster and spontaneous discussions (Sorlie et al., 1999), whereas in online supervision, attention can be easily distracted, and internet problems negatively affect the process (Eman, 2021). The supervisors additionally

affirmed that students exhibited comparable performance levels in face-to-face and online supervision modalities, with no discernible disparity (Chapman et al., 2011). Supervisors indicated that acquainting oneself with students and establishing efficient communication channels in online supervision demanded a more extended timeframe than face-to-face interactions. Coker and Schooley (2009) observed that technical complications, such as student challenges, adversely influenced the supervision process. Voice intonations, non-verbal cues, and facial expressions are lacking or difficult to interpret in online supervision, potentially leading to misunderstandings or breakdowns in communication (Maples & Han, 2008).

Some researchers have studied the effectiveness of supervision on supervisees' academic success, sense of belonging, and self-esteem. Since the development of a sense of belonging is affected by supervision, it is stated that the student's academic success, thoughts about the supervision process, and self-esteem can be enhanced in the online supervision process (Lundgren-Resenterra & Crosta, 2019; Peacock et al., 2020).

The Present Study

Clinical supervision and educational technology development speed is increasing (Rousmaniere et al., 2014). With the increasing use of technology in higher education, online supervision has started to be used in counselor education programs, but there is little information about it (Bender & Dykeman, 2016). Digital natives, who have become an increasing percentage of the counseling profession (Perry, 2012), and the rapid transition of clinical supervision to online supervision (Tarlow et al., 2020) revealed the need to examine these processes to improve the supervision processes of counselor candidates. As stated in the "Guide to Best Practices in Individual Psychological Counseling Practice and Supervision" published by the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association (2023, p. 15), there is a growing recognition of the need for effective delivery of individual psychological counseling practice and supervision at the undergraduate level in Türkiye. The present study differentiates itself from previous research by providing a comprehensive, phenomenological analysis of online and face-to-face supervision, explicitly focusing on counselor candidates' perspectives. Previous studies have often addressed either the benefits or drawbacks of these supervision modalities in isolation or within specific contexts (Aladağ, 2014; Erbaş et al., 2020; Günlü & Uz-Baş, 2023; Özteke-Kozan, 2018; Koçyiğit-Özyiğit & Atik, 2021), this study compares online and face-to-face supervision methods by analyzing evaluations from students with experience in both types of supervision, thereby providing a more nuanced perspective. By examining students' experiences and perceptions, this research fills a gap in understanding how these supervision methods affect supervisee outcomes and comprehensively highlights both positive and negative dimensions.

In addition, this study is necessary due to the rapid evolution in supervision practices driven by technological advancements and recent global events that have accelerated the shift to online platforms. Despite existing research highlighting various advantages and challenges of online supervision (Günlü & Uz-Baş, 2023; Yüksel-Şahin, 2021), there is a lack of in-depth qualitative analysis from the counselor candidates' viewpoint for both supervision models. Thus, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What are counselor candidates' perceptions of online and face-to-face supervision? (2) What aspects of online supervision do counselor candidates find most advantageous or limiting, and how do they compare to their experiences with face-to-face supervision? (3) How do counselor candidates' experiences with online and face-to-face supervision influence their preferences for supervision modality and their overall learning outcomes? By addressing these questions, this study aims to clarify the impact of face-to-face and online supervision modalities, providing insights to improve current practices and guide future research in counselor education.

Method

Research Design

This study aims to reveal counselor candidates' online and face-to-face supervision experiences. For this purpose, it was conducted using a phenomenological design. Phenomenology studies aim to reveal the experiences of individuals who experience the phenomenon that researchers focus on (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017) regarding the basic structure of the experience and its meaning (Merriam, 2013). This research tried to reveal what the experiences related to the online and face-to-face supervision process were in line with the experiences of the counselor candidates.

Study Group

In qualitative research, selecting participants aims to identify participants who will help understand the research problem best (Creswell, 2017). Accordingly, in this study, a purposive sampling method based on selecting participants who meet specific criteria was used (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017). While forming the study group, (a) to be a 4th-grade student in the guidance and psychological counseling program in Türkiye, (b) to have taken the counseling practices with individuals' course both face-to-face (Fall 2023) and online (Spring 2023), (c) to have conducted at least six counseling sessions each semester within the scope of this course, and (d) to have completed this course. Online supervisions were conducted via Google Meet for 14 weeks, lasting four hours per week. Face-to-face supervisions were held in a group room for the same duration, totaling four hours per week over 14 weeks. Students who met these conditions and volunteered to participate in this study were included in the research group. The questionnaires were administered at the end of the fall semester after grades were entered into the system not to affect students' performances. All supervisors were full-time faculty members with over ten years of experience in supervision. A total of 24 undergraduate students (20 female, four male) from the guidance and psychological counseling department at a state university participated in this study. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 25, with a mean age of 22.29 years. In the autumn semester, 18 participants completed six sessions, four completed seven sessions, and two completed eight sessions. In addition, 12 counselor candidates applied for CBT/CT/REBT, and one candidate applied for Adlerian, positive psychotherapy, gestalt, person-centered therapy, existential, and reality therapy. At the same time, six of them did not prefer therapy. In the spring semester, 16 participants completed six sessions; two completed five sessions, four completed seven sessions, and two completed eight sessions. Moreover, 16 counselor candidates applied CBT/CT/REBT, three eclectic and one person-centered therapy, while four did not have therapy.

Data Collection Instruments

In the scope of this study, "Form for Assessing the Opinions of Counselor Candidates on In-Person and Online Supervision" was developed by the researchers. While creating the data collection instruments, a literature review was conducted, and factors related to the supervision process, psychological counseling practices, personal characteristics, supervisor characteristics, and peers were determined as dimensions. The researchers evaluated the prepared questions regarding the study's scope, comprehensibility, and suitability. After the necessary arrangements, the interview form was finalized. The first part of the form included questions about the participant's age, gender, the number of sessions they conducted in the fall and spring semesters, and the theoretical approach they adopted in these semesters. The second and third parts of the form included ten questions about the online and face-to-face supervision process. These questions were designed to reveal the participants' expectations about the online /face-to-face supervision process, their professional development, the development of their peers, their experiences with the psychological help process, their evaluations of the relationship with the supervisor and feedback, their assessment of the relationship with their groupmates and feedback, the challenges encountered, the contributions of the process and the level of meeting expectations, the limitations of the process and unmet expectations, and their general opinions.

Data Collection

First, the ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University (22/11/2023, 2023/338). Then, the form for assessing the opinions of counselor candidates on face-to-face and online supervision was transferred to Google Forms. The transferred document included information about the purpose and scope of this research and the use of data. In addition, the consent of the participants was obtained. The interview form was sent to the counselor candidates using e-mail by the researchers. Twenty-four out of a total of 26 candidate participants voluntarily participated in this study, and the documents they filled in constitute the data of this study. The data obtained from Google Forms were analyzed.

Data Analysis

The steps suggested by Creswell (2017) were followed in the data analysis. First, each participant's answers were organized and prepared by transferring them to the computer environment for analysis. Then, all the data were read and analyzed. Then, the data were coded, and themes, sub-themes, and codes were created. Finally,

it was determined how the themes would be presented in the qualitative narrative. MAXQDA 2020 program was used to analyze the responses to open-ended questions descriptively. The findings were presented as percentages and frequencies. Finally, the findings were interpreted.

Validity and Reliability

Merriam (2013) suggests using triangulation, participant verification, appropriate and adequate participation in the data collection phase, researcher's position and reflectivity, expert evaluation, audit technique, intensive description, and maximum diversity strategies to solve the validity and reliability problem. In this study, in terms of validity and reliability, more than one researcher checked the accuracy and validity of the findings. In addition, the data were obtained in written form through a structured interview based on the direct statements of the participants in a way that did not leave room for ambiguous interpretations. This also prevented the researcher from including personal assumptions in the data collection. Care was taken to select participants who took courses from different supervisors to ensure that other views were revealed. The findings were presented with direct quotations to reduce the researcher's bias regarding the findings.

Findings

As a result of the analyses, counselor candidates' opinions on online and face-to-face supervision were grouped under four themes: counseling process, supervision process, challenges and limitations, and peer opinions (see Figure 1). The sub-themes, categories, percentages, and frequency values related to the themes are below (Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4).

Figure 1. Themes of the Present Study
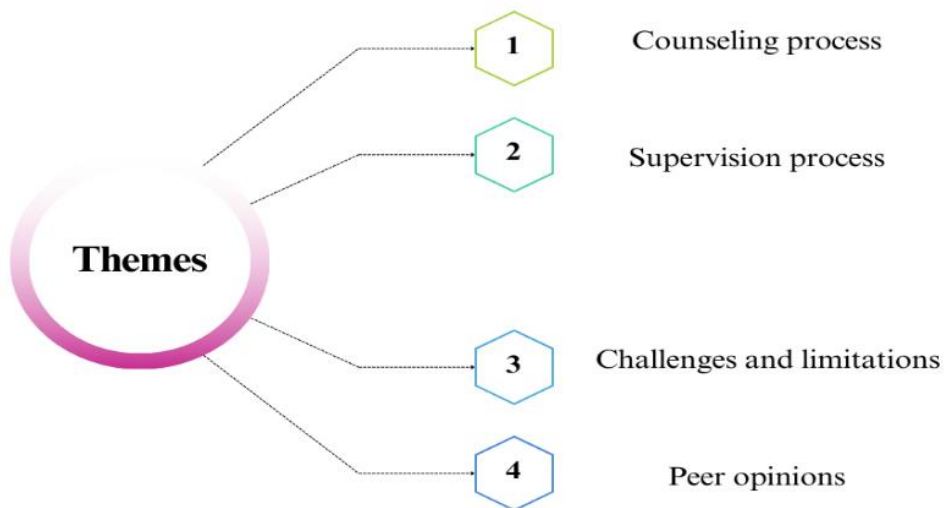
Counseling Process

When the participants' views on the online and face-to-face supervision process were analyzed, one of the themes that emerged was the counseling process. The opinions on this theme were divided into two sub-themes: professional factors and personal factors. Significant codes related to both sub-themes were revealed and given in Table 1.

Table 1. Sub-themes and Codes, Frequency, and Percentage Values related to the Theme of the Counseling Process

	Online Supervision	Frequency	Percentage	Face-to-face supervision	Frequency	Percentage
Professional factors	Increased perceived competency	16	42.11%	Increased perceived competency	23	46.94%
	Underdevelopment of counseling skills	6	15.79%	Underdevelopment of counseling skills	5	10.20%
	Non-therapeutic alliance	4	10.53%			
Personal factors	Emotional dysregulation	3	7.89%	Emotional dysregulation	10	20.41%
	Self-control	9	23.68%	Self-control	11	22.45%

In the professional factors sub-theme, the codes increased perceived competency, and the underdevelopment of counseling skills came to the fore in online and face-to-face supervision. Looking at both experiences, it was seen that the code of non-therapeutic alliance was prominent in the online supervision process in terms of professional factors. Participants expressed opinions about the lack of therapeutic context in the online supervision. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

> P17: "During the face-to-face supervision process, I received more feedback and corrected my mistakes because I could experience uninterrupted communication with my peers and our teacher."

> P 5: "Online supervision was more efficient than face-to-face. I received detailed information and good feedback under all circumstances. The feedback, whether my mistakes or my rights and wrongs, was efficient in correcting myself and improving myself."

> P 8: "I do not think I can put too much on it in online supervision; I think this is due to the lack of face-to-face interaction."

> P5: "Face-to-face supervision is an inefficient experience, but I believe it will be more productive with really caring supervision."

> P 1: "During the online supervision process, I could not provide the conditions required for the counseling environment."

> P 22: "During the online supervision process, we had to take audio recordings, we could not find a place for counseling, and our clients went home because the courses were online."

When the participants' statements about professional processes were examined, it was seen that both supervision processes provided increased professional competence but did not contribute to adequate development for some participants. On the other hand, the lack of therapeutic conditions in the online supervision process emerged as an essential problem. Another sub-theme of the Counseling Process theme was personal factors. In this sub-theme, emotional dysregulation and self-control codes came to the fore in the participants' statements for both supervision processes. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

> P 22: "It was difficult to record on the phone during face-to-face supervision. Sometimes, the phone was turned off, which caused stress, and I had to show a video recording to our supervisor. Also, not knowing anything caused stress. I want to finish the process by being more beneficial to my client without harming her."

> P 6: "The feedback and advice from online supervision was beneficial. In my sessions, finding a client and arranging a place for counseling was quite difficult because it was online. On the other hand, there were times when I observed that I was quite excited and stressed during the sessions."

> P 14: "I had difficulty focusing and participating in online supervision. It is already an ordeal for us students

to open audio and video. It is not easy to find a proper environment. We must wear headphones for confidentiality, but when we turn on the microphone and talk, we may have problems with confidentiality again. That is why I always wanted to attend face-to-face meetings."

P 17: "Online, the focus gets distracted quickly, so close is always better."

P 3: "In face-to-face supervision, I could evaluate more clearly; we could watch and evaluate the videos more concentrated."

When the participant statements related to personal factors were analyzed, the codes about the participants' self-control and emotion regulation problems came to the fore in both supervision processes. In both methods, the participants stated that they had difficulty regulating their negative emotions related to the counseling process and that they similarly had problems with self-control.

Supervision Process

One of the themes that emerged when the participant's views on the online and face-to-face supervision process were analyzed was the supervision process. The opinions on this theme were divided into Characteristics and Roles. Significant codes related to both sub-themes are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Sub-themes and Codes, Frequency and Percentage Values related to the Supervision Process Theme

	Online Supervision	Frequency	Percentage	Face-to-face supervision	Frequency	Percentage
Characteristics	Positive attitude	8	20%	Positive attitude	17	29.31%
	Approachable	7	17.5%	Approachable	8	13.79%
	Inaccessible	4	10%	Inaccessible	7	12.07%
Roles	Teacher	9	22.5%	Teacher	9	15.52%
	Motivator	5	12.5%	Motivator	6	10.35%
	Inspirational	6	15%	Inspirational	8	13.79%
	Contrarian	1	2.5%	Contrarian	3	5.17%

In the characteristics theme, positive attitude and approachability came to the fore for both types of supervision, while in face-to-face supervision, the code inaccessible was also included. Participants stated they did not receive enough support from their supervisors during the face-to-face supervision process. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

P 6: "I evaluate my supervisor positively in face-to-face supervision. Nothing happened in the criticism dimension, and the aspects that could be improved were always mentioned. At this point, the feedback was very supportive for improvement."

P 23: "In online supervision, my relationship with my supervisor was at the level it should be. Giving feedback for each video was an important factor that contributed to me."

P 19: "In online supervision, my supervisor always emphasized our positive qualities with nonjudgmental language. She expressed what she saw as negative in beautiful language. Her communication style made us feel more comfortable, and I was not afraid of my mistakes or telling my mistakes. My relationship with my supervisor and her feedback was perfect."

P 8: "In face-to-face supervision, first of all, I think I was fortunate because of my supervisor's interest in us, his evaluation while watching the video, telling us what we did well without offending us and communicating our mistakes, then asking us first how to do it right and then answering it himself, eliminating our deficiencies was a useful process for me. When she gave feedback, she gave it in the best way I could get. I am grateful for what he contributed to me."

P 1: "During the face-to-face supervision process, my supervisor's feedback was limited and not forward-looking. There was only criticism about the skills in the session. We were told what we should not do, but the part of what we should do was skipped. Since there were no suggestions for the next session, I can say that I had many difficulties, but I improved with my efforts and the support of my peers."

When the statements related to supervisor characteristics were examined, it was seen that the participants could establish positive and positive relationships with their supervisors in both supervision processes. However, they also had experiences that were not effective enough regarding the supervisor's feedback in face-to-face supervision. Thus, they evaluated the supervisor as unreachable in face-to-face supervision. Another sub-theme of the Supervision Process theme was roles. In this sub-theme, the codes teacher, motivator, inspirational, and contrarian came to the fore in both supervision processes. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

P 22: "In face-to-face supervision, my supervisor gave me useful information about my client's problem. Her feedback improved me more. Even if I did something wrong, I was stressed."

P 24: "In online supervision, my supervisor was caring and generous in her feedback. It helped me to realize my improvable aspects and to see the points I could change. It helped me learn different techniques."

P 15: "In face-to-face supervision, my supervisor approached everyone equally. Her aim was only for us to be good counselors. Although her feedback was harsh, it was motivating regarding what we should do."

P 6: "In online supervision, I consider it very positive that our supervisor was caring, accessible, gave motivational speeches, and made the necessary recommendations."

P 21: "I think online supervision is very productive. We see what we need to improve and our strengths and act accordingly."

P 11: "I learned the points where I was wrong in my feedback or where I need to improve."

P 20: "Not being able to see my supervisor's gestures and movements in online supervision bothers me, but I do not have any limitations in verbal feedback."

P 14: "Although our supervisor did her best in online meetings, I had difficulty focusing. Later, when we started face-to-face meetings, I think I was able to explain and express myself better."

When the dimensions related to the supervisor's roles were examined, it was seen that the frequencies of the codes related to the supervisor's roles were higher in the face-to-face supervision process. However, the same codes came to the fore in both supervision processes.

Challenges and Limitations

One of the themes that emerged from the participant's views on the online and face-to-face supervision process was challenges and limitations. The opinions on this theme were divided into technical and process-related problems. The significant codes related to both sub-themes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Sub-themes, Codes, Frequency, and Percentage Values Related to Challenges and Limitations Theme

	Online Supervision	Frequency	Percentage	Face-to-face supervision	Frequency	Percentage
Technical issues	Connection issue	7	13.46%	Technical failures	4	7.27%
	Technical failures	5	9.62%	Limited access to resources	4	7.27%
	Limited access to resources	10	19.23%	Time management	9	16.36%
	Time management	3	5.77%			
Process-related problems	Poor feedback	4	7.69%	Poor feedback	13	23.64%
	Less interaction	14	26.92%	Hands-on experience	10	18.18%
	Performance anxiety	6	11.54%	Performance anxiety	14	25.46%
	Screen fatigue	3	5.77%	Limited experience	1	1.82%

The technical issue's theme emphasized technical failures and limited access to resources for both types of supervision, while the online supervision also included the connection issue code. Participants stated that they experienced intense connection problems during the online supervision process. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

> P 5: "There may be problems in connecting to the Internet. In addition, time is also a problem we face."

> P 24: "In face-to-face supervision, I had problems with timing and finding a place in counseling rooms to record sessions with my client."

> P 11: "In online supervision, I had difficulty participating because I did not turn on the microphone too much in the lesson. Other than that, I did not have much difficulty."

> P 6: "Finding clients in online supervision was my first difficulty. I know very few people here, and I could not find a client in my environment suitable for this situation. My second challenge was the appropriate environment. It was impossible because I always had family members and nieces and nephews in my own home, and going to and from the client's home was never a suitable option, so the environment I found for this was sometimes not suitable. Apart from that, another difficulty I experienced was that my client spoke little and was very indecisive. It was a process in which I could not exchange information and get advice from my peers."

> P 2: "Since no students were in the semester, I had difficulty finding clients. I had to start my sessions late."

When the statements related to technical issues were analyzed, it was seen that the participants experienced similar problems in both supervision processes. In online supervision, in addition to the challenges in the face-to-face supervision process, it was seen that the internet connection required for lessons and sessions was among the problems created by the three stakeholders of the supervision process. It was also observed that access to resources, such as finding clients, counseling rooms, and contacting the supervisor, could frequently create problems in online supervision. Another sub-theme of the challenges and limitation theme was process-related problems. In this sub-theme, the codes of poor feedback, less interaction, performance anxiety, and screen fatigue came to the fore for online supervision. In the face-to-face supervision process, the codes of poor feedback and performance anxiety were also standard. At the same time, the codes of hands-on experience and limited experience also emerged in this sub-theme. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

> P 19: "While it was expected to be more productive face-to-face, it was not met, but I think this is not because it is face-to-face, etc., but because of the supervision instructor."

> P 2: "It may be that not all our videos were watched due to the duration."

> P 23: "I can say that the biggest difficulty was meeting my supervisor face to face. It was difficult to find a suitable time for me and my teacher."

> Pt 8: "I had difficulty in online supervision due to the anxiety of being evaluated and not being able to convey myself and the session adequately."

> Pt 6: "In face-to-face supervision, only inexperience, excitement control, problems with sentences while applying techniques, and the biggest problem for me in the counseling process, which I experienced the most during the counseling process, maybe that I went with some expectations and the excitement I experienced when the counseling did not develop as I expected."

> P 20: "In some meetings, my eyes could get tired from looking at the screen, and in the same way, looking fixedly at one place could bore me."

> P 19: "The limitation of online supervision was that there could be communication breakdowns from time to time just because we were not in the same environment. The internet causes it."

> P 17: "Due to my inexperience in face-to-face supervision, I had difficulties approaching my client, and I was a little worried about what to do, but I overcame them thanks to the supervisor."

> P 1: "I suddenly found myself in the middle of the process like a fish out of water. Not knowing what to do in

this direction was very difficult for me. My supervisor's feedback was also not encouraging. Rather, I was discouraged. However, this changed in the other sessions. I think it was all about my performance. However, I still would have preferred my supervisor to be more encouraging."

The codes that emerged under the sub-theme of problems related to the process showed that online supervision was less prominent in the dimensions of interaction and poor feedback. In contrast, in the face-to-face supervision process, the codes of performance anxiety and hands-on experience were predominantly prominent, in addition to the theme of poor feedback.

Peer Opinions

One of the themes that emerged when the participant's views on the online and face-to-face supervision process were analyzed was peer opinions. The opinions on this theme were divided into two sub-themes: peer evaluations and peer feedback-relationship. Significant codes related to both sub-themes are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Sub-themes and Codes, Frequency, and Percentage Values related to the Theme of Peer Opinions

	Online Supervision	Frequency	Percentage	Face-to-face supervision	Frequency	Percentage
Peer Evaluations	Increased professional qualifications	19	35.18%	Increased professional qualifications	17	26.56%
	Inadequate professional development	4	7.41%	Inadequate professional development	6	9.38%
Peer Feedback-Relationship	Proactive	5	9.26%	Proactive	29	45.31%
	Inadequate	9	16.67%	Inadequate	12	18.75%
	Poor communication	17	31.48%			

In the peer-evaluations sub-theme, the codes increased professional qualifications, and inadequate professional development came to the fore for both types of supervision. Participants stated that they experienced intense connection problems during the online supervision process. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

P 20: "My peers in my online supervision group ended the process by adding knowledge to their professional knowledge."

P 21: "Of course, my peers also improved face-to-face supervision. Each session added a lot to us."

P 14: "In online supervision, some of my peers tried very hard to give themselves. I saw their development, but some of them could not show interest in the lesson when they participated online, and I do not think they showed the necessary development."

P 1: "Some of my peers did not improve; they did not take the process and the lesson seriously. However, this was a minority of the group. In general, all my peers who cared about the feedback and worked and made an effort made progress."

When the statements related to peer evaluations were examined, it was seen that the participants showed professional development and insufficient development in both supervision processes. Another sub-theme of the peer opinion theme was peer feedback-relationship. In this sub-theme, proactive, inadequate, and poor communication codes came to the fore for both supervisions. Some of the answers given by the participants are as follows:

P 4: "In face-to-face supervision, we had the opportunity to talk about each other's strengths and areas for improvement."

P 19: "In online supervision, due to our supervisor's attitude, we talked with our groupmates without judging each other. We always focused on what could be improved and did not make hurtful comments. We had a good relationship where we expressed ourselves comfortably."

P 19: "My groupmates and I did not make comments to each other, etc. Everyone talked about their individual experiences, and we finished the process."

P 6: "I cannot evaluate it very positively. There was no peer feedback, and I attribute this to the fact that we had to proceed completely online, and there was no bonding."

P 14: "I do not think we had proper communication with our friends who attended the meetings online because we could not be face-to-face."

P 20: " I did not get active feedback from my peers who were bored of looking at the screen and did not turn on the camera."

When the dimensions related to peer ideas were examined, it was seen that although the same codes came to the fore in both supervision processes, face-to-face supervision was handled from a more positive perspective regarding peer development and effective communication processes.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current research aimed to reveal counselor candidates' online and face-to-face supervision experiences. The findings showed that four main themes emerged from the experiences of the counselor candidates who experienced the online and face-to-face supervision process: counseling process, supervision process, challenges and limitations, and peer opinions.

The first theme was labeled as the counseling process. This theme included two sub-themes: professional factors and personal factors. In the professional factors sub-theme, it was seen that counselor candidates' perceived competencies increased in both types of supervision. On the other hand, some candidates did not find the increase in their counseling skills sufficient. For this sub-theme, opinions regarding the lack of therapeutic alliance in online supervision were reported. In addition, when the frequencies of the codes were analyzed, it was seen that face-to-face supervision had a higher frequency for the code of increasing competence. In the personal factors sub-theme, emotional dysregulation and self-control codes emerged. When the frequencies of the codes for both supervision groups were examined, it can be stated that counselor candidates reported more emotional dysregulation and increased self-control in the face-to-face supervision process. When the findings obtained for this theme were compared with the findings of the studies in the literature, it was seen that some similar results were obtained. For example, Gainor and Constantine (2002) stated that participants had higher professional competence scores in face-to-face peer supervision groups than in web-based supervision. In addition, qualitative and quantitative findings have shown an equivalence between tele-supervision and face-to-face supervision regarding clinical goals and tasks (Jordan & Shearer, 2019). Moreover, despite increased competence, there are some problems in counseling skills for both supervision processes. That is, the development of some counseling skills was weak in both face-to-face and online supervision. Moreover, unlike face-to-face supervision, online supervision involves non-therapeutic collaboration. Tarlow et al. (2020) also stated that the working alliance in tele-supervision was lower than face-to-face supervision, although not statistically significant. Jordan and Shearer (2019) noted that the differences between both types of supervision may be related to the individual factors of the supervisor or supervisee. One of the themes obtained in this study was personal factors. According to the findings obtained in this respect, although individual factors affecting the supervision process have been confirmed, it can be concluded that these factors are more effective in face-to-face supervision. As a result, our findings are consistent with the literature showing that both supervision processes are perceived similarly regarding the counseling process (Amanvermez et al., 2020; Bender & Dykeman, 2016; Perry, 2012; Tarlow et al., 2020). However, like the literature, the findings that face-to-face supervision makes more meaningful contributions to professional learning and development needs (Jordan & Shearer, 2019; Tarlow et al., 2020) provide additional evidence that face-to-face supervision is more prominent in terms of increased competence.

The second theme was the Supervision Process, which included two sub-themes: characteristics and roles, mainly statements related to the supervisor. In the characteristics sub-theme, the counselor candidates' positive attitude and access to face-to-face and online supervision drew attention. A positive attitude was highly emphasized during face-to-face supervision. Contrary to expectations, there were statements that the supervisor was inaccessible for both processes. Candidates reported more problems related to this situation in face-to-face supervision. In the sub-theme of roles, similar codes emerged for the supervisor roles for both processes: teacher, motivator, inspirer, and contrarian. The findings indicated that there were no significant differences in terms of supervisors for online supervision or face-to-face supervision. The most crucial difference was that the positive attitude of the supervisor was observed more in face-to-face supervision. Gainor and Constantine (2002) state that an appropriate level of professional closeness is necessary for adequate supervision, and therefore more intimate interactions occur in face-to-face supervision. A positive relationship with the supervisor is essential for the quality and effectiveness of supervision (Ratcliffe & Kaluzeviciute-Moreton, 2024). However, the findings show that students use the internet more creatively and comfortably in developing professional identity. At the same time, supervisors prefer face-to-face communication (Perry, 2012), indicating that the finding that emerged in the reflection of positive attitude, which has a vital position in affecting the quality of supervision in the online supervision process, may be related to the way the supervisor and the supervisee use the internet and their competencies in the supervision process. The findings show that the lack of perceptual relationships among the stakeholders of the supervision process is associated with a more positive evaluation of face-to-face supervision (Gainor & Constantine, 2002), which is compatible with the findings obtained in this study. In addition, teacher, motivator, inspirational, and contrarian roles emerged in both supervision processes. Among these roles, teacher and inspirational roles were the most frequently observed codes in both groups. In the study by Amanvermez et al. (2020), counselors who received online supervision reported that the supervisor's role as both a teacher and counselor had positive effects and the benefits gained from the supervisor's experiences. When the findings of the studies are taken together, the face-to-face or online supervision process is similar in supervisor roles, and the instructive role of supervisors comes to the fore.

Different process-related codes emerged in the second sub-theme (process-related problems) in face-to-face and online supervision. In particular, the lack of practical experience in online and face-to-face supervision was striking. Moreover, it was noteworthy that process-related problems increased performance anxiety in face-to-face supervision but less in online supervision. This sub-theme characterized the online supervision process by less interaction and performance anxiety. In face-to-face supervision, on the other hand, unexpectedly poor feedback and performance anxiety came to the fore, while high frequencies were observed in terms of hands-on experience.

The online supervision process lacks real-time communication in all its dimensions. Therefore, it is less likely to replicate the interaction in a face-to-face group experience (Rosenfield, 2012). Rosenfield (2012) interprets the success of web-based group supervision partly because of the strong bonds of trust and friendship that the practice members established during face-to-face contact in a different period. As seen in our findings, face-to-face supervision is likely to offer more opportunities for interaction. The limitations of the virtual environment and the deficiencies arising from the fact that individuals are not physically close to each other in this process can be considered factors that increase the quality of interaction in face-to-face supervision.

Another finding is that the participants with higher performance anxiety defined the face-to-face supervision process. Although supervision is rewarding for many supervisors and counselors, it can create tension or dissatisfaction, negatively affecting the supervision process. This anxiety may be related to hierarchy, authority, power, evaluation and feedback, or confidentiality (Pepper, 1996). In our findings, the increased performance anxiety found in the face-to-face supervision process is attributed to the fact that the online supervision process was not the first supervision experience of the students. Students who had previously experienced face-to-face supervision may have reported less anxiety because they switched to the online supervision process after overcoming the anxiety caused by supervision. Therefore, considering that anxiety is acceptable in the first stages of supervision regardless of the cause of anxiety (Meydan & Koçyiğit-Özyiğit,

2016), the source of decreased performance anxiety in the online supervision process can be considered more in this context.

In the literature, to our knowledge, no studies focused on the online and face-to-face supervision process in terms of feedback. However, Koçyiğit-Özyiğit and Erkan Atik (2021), in their research conducted during COVID-19, found that the supervisor did not allocate enough time to the students in the online supervision process based on student opinions. They attributed this situation to the increasing workload of the supervisor with distance education. In addition, another study conducted in Türkiye revealed that the most challenging factors for supervisors were related to the execution of supervision and evaluation. According to this study, supervisors stated that they had problems with giving timely feedback (Koçyiğit-Özyiğit, 2022). Online supervision allows access to the supervisor (Bender & Dykeman, 2016) and increases the potential of participants to access the service (Tarlow et al., 2020). When the findings are considered, it can be thought that the existing feedback problems were less accessible due to the limited hours of the face-to-face supervision process. However, with online supervision, the feedback received became sufficient with the elimination of time limitations. Findings show supervisors and counselors can communicate successfully and asynchronously in online supervision (Chapman et al., 2011). This may create an opportunity to receive more feedback in online supervision. On the other hand, the findings also show that supervisors' feedback is affected by factors related to the supervisor, the counselor candidate, and the supervision process (Pamukçu et al., 2023). Therefore, the emerging difference needs to be empirically evaluated.

As an unexpected finding, in the process-related problem's sub-theme of the challenges and limitations theme, it was found that face-to-face supervision offered the opportunity for hands-on experience. However, no such code emerged for online supervision. Supervision in counselor education is based on the practical experience of theoretical knowledge under the supervision of the supervisor (Yılmaz & Voltan Acar, 2015). Consistent with the theory that counselors learn and develop as they gain experience (Worthington, 1987), it is theoretically consistent that face-to-face supervision provides more practical experience. In addition, the fact that such a theme did not emerge in online supervision may be because students were not proactive about the counseling experience. Jordan and Shearer (2019) state that since online supervision is a process that requires counselor candidates to be proactive about how they will benefit from supervision, it may be more challenging for candidates who have difficulty taking the initiative. From this point of view, it is thought that counselor candidates who directly experience the supervisor's encouragement and guidance in face-to-face supervision practices can evaluate their practice experiences as increased without their initiative. On the other hand, in online supervision, counselor candidates may not have improved in the online supervision process in terms of practical experience, as they are more likely to proceed in line with their initiatives and act proactively in this process.

The fourth theme was peer opinions, which provided two sub-themes: peer evaluations and peer feedback-relationship. Both groups commonly had increased professional qualifications and insufficient professional development in the peer evaluation sub-theme. In addition, the frequency rates of these codes were similar. This finding was consistent with the findings of the literature, which showed no significant difference between the two processes (Bender & Dykeman, 2016; Jordan & Shearer, 2019; Tarlow et al., 2020). In the second sub-theme, the code of inadequate emerged in both processes regarding peer feedback and relationships, and the frequencies of these codes are similar. On the other hand, counselor candidates stated that their peers were more proactive in the face-to-face supervision process. They also frequently noted that peer communication was weak in the online supervision process. Amanvermez et al. (2020) showed that peers helped each other during peer supervision and contributed to their professional development. However, there were some problems in the online environment; they stated they had positive experiences with online and peer supervision. The inadequate code that emerged in both processes in the findings of this study shows that the other group members did not receive the expectations of the group members well in terms of their participation in the process and their feedback. However, the similar rates of this code in both types were interpreted as this situation may be related to the participants' characteristics rather than the process. The finding that counselor candidates were more proactive in the face-to-face supervision process is consistent with the literature. As emphasized before, candidates may be more suitable for online supervision if they do not have competence concerns, exhibit flexibility and ability to express their needs, and want to work more autonomously. However,

online supervision is not recommended for counselors with difficulty being proactive (Jordan & Shearer, 2019). Studies have shown that in online supervision, not all group members respond to every case; two or three people can work as a team for response and feedback (Myrick & Sabella, 1995). Therefore, the findings were interpreted that a real-time and direct group interaction in face-to-face supervision may produce more effective results in participation and activism in the process. Finally, online supervision emphasized poor communication at a very high rate. Online supervision is appropriate to meet remote needs, as an adjunct to supervision, and when comfort and confidentiality in the relationship are ensured (Twist et al., 2016). In online supervision, nonverbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, or tone of voice, is absent (Myrick & Sabella, 1995).

When the findings were evaluated in general, no significant differences were observed regarding the two types of supervision. However, it is seen that the face-to-face supervision process stands out in terms of increased professional competence, more reflection of the positive attitude of the supervisor, providing the opportunity for practical experience, and more proactive peer attitudes. On the other hand, online supervision is characterized by a lack of therapeutic collaboration, less reflection of the supervisor's positive attitude to the process, technical problems related to the process, difficulties in accessing resources, and lower interaction and communication. The challenges encountered in accessing supervision have led to using online tools. However, additional measures are needed to address the limitations of existing platforms (Deane et al., 2015). Findings from both supervisors and students suggest that online supervision is effective in supporting professional development (Perry, 2012). Despite the findings showing that no significant difference was observed between the two supervision processes, the findings revealed a tendency of candidates to prefer face-to-face supervision in line with their learning and development needs (Jordan & Shearer, 2019). In addition, the study found that face-to-face supervision was more effective than web-based supervision (Gainor & Constantine, 2002). In one study, participants stated that it would be appropriate to utilize online supervision but that it should be "mixed with face-to-face meetings" for "effective supervision" (Twist et al., 2016). Although online supervision has been used in counselor education with the increasing use of technology in higher education, little is known about it (Bender & Dykeman, 2016). Therefore, in line with the findings that underline the supervision relationship regardless of the supervision format (Tarlow et al., 2020), it should be considered that how the training program and technology system are set up also affect the supervision results (Jordan & Shearer, 2019), the results of this study can be said that both supervision processes are effective. However, face-to-face supervision in counselor education has significant advantages regarding skills, communication, and process.

In recent years, there has been an increasing shift to online applications in education. These changes allow supervision to be conducted online, thanks to the progress in online communication (Deane et al., 2015). While this has the potential to eliminate the problems of face-to-face supervision in terms of access, it also has some limitations in terms of process. This study compared the online supervision process, which has tended to increase in recent years, with the traditional face-to-face supervision process. The emerging themes provided information about counselor candidates' experiences with face-to-face and online supervision processes. Advantages and disadvantages were identified for both supervision processes. For example, it was observed that it was more challenging to ensure therapeutic cooperation in online supervision; the positive attitudes of the supervisor were reflected more in face-to-face supervision. At the same time, challenges in accessing resources came to the fore in online supervision, and poorer communication could be established. On the other hand, some of the emerging themes depend on the online environment, the candidate counselor's personal characteristics, or the supervisor's role. This study addresses the critical points related to both supervision processes and includes suggestions for organizing the supervision process to conduct effective counselor education. Although the study's design makes it possible for variables unrelated to supervision to affect the results, the fact that the findings obtained overlap with the literature shows that the study's results contribute to the field. The findings reveal the differences and strengths of face-to-face and online supervision processes and shed light on the points to be considered in these processes in counselor education.

Limitations and Recommendations

Although this study has essential contributions, some limitations should be considered when evaluating the findings. First, this study is based on the findings obtained from a relatively small study group studying at a state university. Another limitation of the study is that the data obtained are based on self-report. The third limitation of the study is the problems related to participant diversity. Although the participants in the study received training in both types of supervision, the supervisors differed in this process. Therefore, the differences in terms of the supervisor may also be reflected in the process evaluations in the findings obtained. Fifth, the present form was not submitted for expert opinion in this study. Furthermore, participant confirmation was not applied to the findings, and inter-coder reliability was not calculated. The last limitation of this study is that the supervision process within the scope of counseling practices with individual courses was first conducted face-to-face in the fall semester and then online in the spring semester. From this point of view, the effect of the supervision order was not considered in this study.

Considering the findings obtained and the study's limitations, some suggestions are presented for educational programs, educators, and researchers. Firstly, repeating the research study group on larger samples can provide a broader view of the findings obtained in terms of generalizability. In addition, this study was conducted using a qualitative research design. It may be recommended to replicate the research findings within the scope of quantitative designs and measure whether there is a significant difference between the two types of supervision. Although a similar lesson flow was applied in both supervision processes in this study, the changes that emerged regarding supervisors were not controlled. Therefore, in further studies, standard supervisor protocols can be created when comparing the types of supervision, and studies in which the supervisor variable is kept under control can be conducted. In addition, online supervision was found to have various problems compared to face-to-face supervision. In this direction, empirical studies can be designed to increase the effectiveness of online supervision. Supervision models are changing rapidly in line with the opportunities brought by technology. Given these opportunities and developments, studies focusing on supervisor roles in the online process and aiming to determine effective online supervision processes should be designed. Finally, the findings show that online supervision has some disadvantages regarding technical problems, interactional problems, or factors related to professional development. However, in line with the digital transformation in education in recent years, online supervision processes must be improved. In this direction, measures should be taken to eliminate the identified disadvantages while designing training programs and creating technological infrastructures for training processes.

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