Applicability of Solution-Focused Brief Counseling in Turkish Culture: A Contextual Perspective

İsa Özgür ÖZERª (iD)

ªÇukurova University, Adana, Turkey

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the applicability of solution-oriented brief counseling in Turkish culture. To this end, I discuss the theoretical framework and therapeutic process of solution-focused counseling and the predispositions of counselors to provide solution-focused counseling from a contextual perspective. An important implication from this investigation is that traits such as authoritativeness, approval for power inequalities, and external locus of control may harm the applicability of this approach in Turkey. However, it is possible to say that the solution-oriented approach is compatible with the Turkish people in many ways. In this respect, solution-focused counselors may need different methods to work more harmoniously with Turkish clients. In conclusion, considering the cultural features of Turkish society, I make recommendations about what these methods might be and how solution-focused counseling adapted better.

Culturally sensitive psychological counseling, which aims to provide a more effective counseling process by considering individuals' different cultural characteristics and contexts, is gaining increasing importance in today's world (Sue, Sue, Neville, & Smith, 2019). One of the topics encompassed by culturally sensitive psychological counseling is the adaptation of counseling theories, considering factors such as individuals' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and values (Pedersen, 2008). This is believed to lead to a more sensitive and effective counseling process, providing clients with better opportunities to express themselves and facilitating the establishment of a therapeutic relationship (Erdur-Baker, 2007). Therefore, considering the applicability of psychological counseling approaches developed in different cultural (Mostly in Western) contexts in another culture becomes a necessity to offer culturally sensitive psychological counseling.

In recent times, studies examining the applicability of such Western approaches in Turkish culture have also started to emerge in the field literature in Turkey. There have been studies on the applicability of transactional analysis (Gultekin & Voltan-Acar, 2004), positive psychotherapy (Sari, 2015), reality therapy (Yorgun & Voltan-Acar, 2014), and logotherapy (Tagay et al., 2016) in Turkish culture. The commencement of discussions on these topics in Turkey is an important development because psychological counseling education and practices in Turkey are largely influenced by approaches developed in Western culture (Poyrazli, 2012). For example, among these, Carl Rogers' client-centered approach, which is most widely adopted, entirely reflects the individualistic, liberal, and values autonomy and freedom of American culture (Erdur-Baker, 2007). This aspect has been criticized for potentially encountering significant cultural barriers in practice within Turkish culture (Mocan-Aydin, 2000; Poyrazli, 2000). Such critiques and examinations are indeed valuable for mitigating the cultural barriers that may arise when implementing Western-based psychological counseling approaches in Turkish culture.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR İsa Özgür ÖZER, isaozgur1994@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000 0000-0001-6215-3385, Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey.

Alongside the psychological counseling approaches mentioned above, in recent years, solution-focused brief counseling has become increasingly popular in Turkey (Meydan, 2013). Solution-focused approach is extremely pragmatic and applicable in schools (Sklare, 1997). As such an approach, it is quickly adopted by Turkish psychological counselors, most of whom work in schools and are responsible for dealing with large numbers of students in a short time (Dost & Keklik, 2012). However, there is no study evaluating the applicability of this approach in Turkish culture. Therefore, I found it necessary to explore the strengths and weaknesses that may be encountered when implementing the solution-focused psychological counseling in the Turkish population. In this article, I first provide a general overview of the theoretical foundations and therapeutic process of the solution-focused approach. Then, I will discuss the applicability of this approach, taking into account the cultural characteristics of clients and helpers in Turkey.

An Overview of Solution-Focused Counseling

Solution-focused counseling has initiated when a team of therapists, led by de Shazer and Kim Berg, asked families what they wanted to keep the same rather than what they wanted to change. Initially, this team attempted to understand the causes of the families' problems and intervene as soon as possible. (Lipchick, 2014). Not long afterward, the premise that there must be a relationship between the problem and solution is invalid because this team understood that the clients were more inclined to change when they started to talk about what they wanted to keep the same in their lives. In this model, the therapist team has explored how it would be possible to construct a solution without regarding the details of the problem (de Shazer, 1988). As will be discussed later, this model paved the way for unique techniques such as examining exceptions, miracle questions, and scaling questions (Ratner et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework. The theoretical foundations of the solution-focused approach originally come from social constructivism, which is one of the products of the scientific paradigm known as postmodernism, which began to spread in the 70s (Berg & de Shazer, 2012). In line with this perspective, there are no objective realities. Knowledge is not discovered by an outside observer who is entirely objective. Instead, truths are socially constructed by people who interact through language (Gergen, 1985). Hence, one of the most radical features of the solution-focused approach is to reject all normative ideas that attempt to explain human nature, including pathology (De Jong & Berg, 2013). Correspondingly, solution-focused counseling limited the "expertise of the counselor" to the therapeutic process only. The counselor is not a therapeutic dynamic who is an expert on the nature of clients' problems, but who knows how the client's change process should be organized (Gutterman, 2006).

The limitation, placed to the counselor's expertise, brought the views that clients are the main actors of change, the expert of their own lives, and thus can determine what will be best for themselves (De Jong ve Berg, 2013). As Corey (2017) claims, solution-focused counseling gives clients a mission to educate counselors about their own lives. But, when clients use their expertise to talk about problems, they make conversations that may have nothing to do with the solution but make the situation worse than it is (Walter & Peller, 1992). Change may occur quickly when the counselor encourages clients to focus on solutions by tapping their shoulders (Berg & de Shazer, 2012).

The solution-focused helping process is based on several principles that synthesize the Mental Research Institute's brief therapy model, Milton Erickson's early practices, Wittgensteinian philosophy, and Buddhism (de Shazer et al., 2021). The first three of them are directives, while the others give an idea about how the solution-focused approach is placed on a therapeutic basis:

<div align="center">

If it's not broken, don't fix it.
If something works, do more.
If something isn't working, do something else.
Small steps make big changes.
The solution is necessarily directly related to the problem.
The solution language is different from the one needed to describe the problem.
Exceptions are always available.
Change is possible when you are future oriented.

</div>

(Connie & Metcalf, 2009; de Shazer et al., 2021; Ratner et al., 2012; Walter & Peller, 1992).

Therapeutic Relationship. The theoretical framework of the solution-focused approach manifests itself in an unusual implementation style in the counseling room. Bertolino and O'Hanlon (2002) see a collaborative relationship as a prerequisite for helping. They recommend some unique communication techniques to establish such a rapport with clients quickly by considering the counseling process is time-limited. Some of these techniques are attempts such as using the words used by the client, complying with the speaking speed of the client, mirroring the body language of clients (Macdonald, 2011). Various attitudes, such as the not-knowing stance of the counselor, deliberately pretending to be incompetent, directing the client to tell more with curiosity, cheerleading the client up using praise and compliments, also support this relationship (Ratner et al., 2012).

Therapeutic Process. De Jong and Berg (2013) suggest that the solution-focused help process includes two crucial actions: Developing well-structured goals based on the reference frame of the client and developing solutions based on exceptional situations. Therefore, counseling is about as much of a problem-free moment as possible. Although clients describe their problems, its only function is to allow the counselor to engage with the client and think about how to move on to the next stage, where they will start discussing solutions (Walter & Peller, 1992). As Corey (2017) asserts, the key to the solution is to set out hypothetical goals through questions such as the miracle question then structure these goals by examining exceptional situations. In the figure below, de Shazer's (1988) roadmap summarizing a solution-focused counseling session is presented by Walter & Peller (1992):

Figure 1. The Roadmap of A Solution-Focused Counseling Session
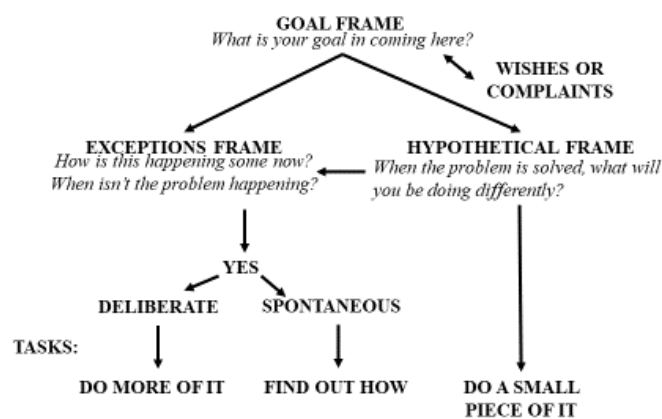
Note. From *Becoming Solution-Focused in Brief Therapy* (p. 64), by J. L. Walter & J. E. Peller, 1992, Taylor & Francis (https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203776919). Copyright 1992 by Taylor & Francis.

Solution-Focused Brief Counseling in Turkish Context

In this section, the compatibility of solution-focused principles with the dominant Turkish culture, the advantages & disadvantages of providing solution-focused help in the Turkish context, and the predisposition of Turkish psychological counselors to provide solution-focused help will be discussed, respectively.

The Compatibility of Solution-Focused Theoretical Framework with Turkish Culture. Turkey has a high diversity of ethnic origin, religious belief, lifestyle, and socio-economic characteristics. Thus, it is challenging to discuss a typical Turkish culture. The majority of Turkish people are in a transition period from Eastern lifestyles, values, and attitudes toward Western ones. Erguder et al. (1991) report that 60% of Turkey's population lives in big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, and Adana, where Western values are more common. Even so, Turkish society is still mostly collectivist and strives for individualism. For example, Hofstede (1980, 1986, 1991) stated that Turkish society consists of individuals who accept authoritarian values, inequalities of power and status, avoid uncertainty by adhering to religious rules, and feel dependent

on the authorities. On the other hand, A minority group values individualism, independence, autonomy, assertiveness, and self-actualization (as cited in Mocan-Aydın, 2000). Especially in the last two decades in Turkey, the political climate has been increasingly oppressive and created a culture in which ideological differences and individualistic values are considered equivalent to treason by the authorities (Deustshce Welle Turkish, 2021).

A counseling approach based on postmodernist ideas will be difficult to implement in a society where criticism of power holders such as authority, religion, doctors, experts, and parents is not welcome. By its nature, the solution-focused approach opposes authority, expertise, objectivity, and all kinds of normative assumptions. In addition, it relies on the ability of people to create constructive changes in their own life (De Jong & Berg, 2013). On the contrary, Turkish society tends to be externally controlled and expects anything good for themselves coming from more knowledgeable others (God, authorities, experts, etc.), according to Mocan-Aydin (2000). Erguder et al. (1991) showed that obedience to authority and understanding of fatalism are among the characteristic features of Turkish society. It reveals the difficulty of casting aside the objective knowledge and language created by the "experts" (physicians, academics, psychologists, counseling psychologists, etc.) who hold power in the mental health field in Turkey. For example, Frankl (2006) mentions that a client who is a victim of sexual abuse, who reads on traditional psychotherapy, is stuck in the thought of when she will pay the price for her experiences. Because this woman, through her readings on the dominant psychotherapy school of that era, learned that if a person does not have a good first six years of life, there will be negative consequences in the subsequent years. The dominant language of psychiatry can also influence the Turkish people. For example, in such a society, individuals may be inclined to talk about themselves in a problem-oriented way, evaluating their personalities or psychological well-being not according to their internal standards but based on the standards created by recognized individuals (Nichols, 2014). Faller (2001) also states that overconfidence and dependence on the knowledge of experts will lead clients to use analytical, past, and problem-focused language instead of using a life-changing, future, and solution-focused language about themselves.

Considering Turkish society reacts to events, Koydemir et al. (2014) express that Turkish culture is pathological and reactive. Features such as external locus of control and short-term focus to avoid uncertainty feed this aspect of Turkish society. Turkish people are used to taking action when faced with a problem rather than taking action before the problems occur (Gercik, 2020). In this regard, Turkish reactivity is consistent with the philosophy of the solution-focused approach. Furthermore, according to Connie and Metcalf (2009), unlike traditional counseling schools, the solution-focused approach is not a model that encourages therapy to meet needs such as personal development, growth, reaching deeper meanings in life, or prevention. One of the most important principles of solution-focused psychological counseling is the concept of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." In this regard, the solution-focused approach works when it is necessary to solve an existing problem rather than achieving therapeutic goals such as personal development or gaining insight (De Jong & Berg, 2013). This is consistent with the general tendency to seek psychological help in Turkish society. As stated by Kagnici (2013), almost all clients in Turkish society start to seek professional help when they have a problem that they cannot solve on their own, and it is rare to encounter people who come to seek advice with expectations such as awareness and personal development.

Another characteristic of Turkish society is that it tends to attribute the causes and solutions of problems to people, institutions, events, and other external conditions outside of itself, instead of taking a responsible attitude (Toktamisoglu, 2004). Therefore, they are more concerned with what others should do than trying to change themselves. This attitude, which reduces the influence of individuals on their own lives, is related to the fact that Turkish society shows a pessimistic and emotionally dominant approach to negative situations rather than being optimistic, hopeful, and constructive. Moreover, according to Toktamisoglu (2004), Turkish people primarily think about why something cannot be done instead of how it can be done. Thus, they are more likely to focus on weaknesses and failures than strengths, opportunities, and competencies. These features of Turkish society conflict with the solution-focused approach, which makes the individuals extremely active in constructing their own solutions. Walter and Peller (1992) and de Shazer et al. (2021) state that well-structured goals are action-oriented and under the control of the client. Not assuming responsibility and expecting change from others may lead to being stuck in non-functional solutions, which Sklare (1997) defines as negative or unknown goals. Also, Instead of thinking about how it can be solved, focusing on why any problem cannot be

solved also contradicts the solution-focused approach, which does not see the causes of the problem as related to the solution (Ratner et al., 2012). In this respect, it may be easier for Turkish clients to explain what they don't want than what they like when clients come to counseling. They may also be prone to complainant and visitor types of relationships (de Shazer, 1988).

Solution-Focused Counseling Practices in the Turkish Context. The first and most essential element of the solution-focused helping process is to build a rapport based on genuine equality, trust, and cooperation (Bertolino & O'Hanlon, 2002). Dialogues between the counselor and the client take place under the guidance of two understandings about the parties to this relationship. The first is the idea of "client as an expert," which implies that clients should educate the counselor about their own lives (Corey, 2017). For this reason, unlike the reader-oriented dialogue seen in traditional approaches, text-oriented dialogue is essential in the solution-focused helping process (de Shazer, 1994). Accordingly, the counselor does not expect narratives of the client to conform to his knowledge as a reader. The narratives are the knowledge itself. Similarly, the second understanding that guides the interview is the not-knowing stance of the counselor. Therefore, counselors try to stay a step behind, deliberately pretending to be ignorant or incompetent.

Considering the applicability of the views of "the client as an expert" and "the counselor who comes one step behind" in Turkey, the tendency of Turkish society to external control and its dependence on authority figures come to mind. As Atkinson and Lowe (1995) argue, the members of such collectivist cultures may need more directive and authoritative counselors. According to this, an active and instructive counselor who does not hesitate to use his professional power for the client may be more suitable for the expectations of the Turkish people (Mocan-Aydin, 2000). Hence, in Turkey, the not-knowing stance of the counselor may be perceived by clients as a real lack of knowledge and inexpertness, and it may damage the therapeutic relationship and lead to early termination.

It is possible to say that the cinema of a society reflects that culture. Gencoglu (2019) has revealed the perceptions of counseling in Turkish cinema. One of these perceptions is that mental health counselors shown in films are portrayed differently from other members of society appearance, attitude, behavior, speech, and style, alienated from the culture they live in and extraordinary. In addition, Gencoglu (2019) mentioned that mental health professionals are criticized and caricatured by filmmakers because of these characteristics. It may show that Turkish people want mental health professionals to be more like them. In this regard, attitudes such as using clients' languages, speaking like them, sitting like them, and dressing like them, which Macdonald (2011) states as specific to solution-focused counseling, could better respond to this expectation in Turkish society. It can also help clients establish a sincere and collaborative relationship with their counselor. The other issue revealed by Gencoglu (2019) is that mental health services are perceived as excessively expensive by clients. This result shows that solution-focused counseling could be more advantageous than traditional approaches in terms of applicability in Turkey. It is a well-known fact that solution-focused counseling is a shorter intervention even when compared to the short-term models of other traditional approaches (de Shazer, 1991). Therefore, solution-focused counseling seems to be more accessible in Turkey.

De Jong and Berg (2013) outlined the steps of solution-focused help as follows: Problem defining, developing well-structured goals, identifying exceptions, and offering end-of-session feedback. As previously noted, Turkish people may be culturally more prone to problem-focused thinking (Toktamisoglu, 2004). In this context, allowing clients to talk about the problem and express their feelings could positively affect the therapeutic relationship. But, solution-focused help, by its nature, requires a process that focuses on a single issue at a time (Macdonald, 2011). For example, when the client may suffer from depression and alcoholism, the counselor should agree with the client on which one to address first. This criterion may cause Turkish clients to experience some difficulties during the problem identification stage of solution-focused practices. Because, in the Turkish context, clients delay getting help for reasons such as social stigma, gender, cost, and motivation, or they see counseling as a last resort (Arslantas et al., 2011; Kizildag et al., 2012). Therefore, clients rarely come to counseling with a single issue. They usually seek counseling after struggling with multiple problems. So, they may be unable to decide where to start.

There are some open-ended questions to develop well-structured goals in solution-focused counseling. These are: What will you do instead? (positive orientation), "How will you do this?" (action-oriented), "What will

you do differently as soon as you leave here?" (here and now), "How will you know you can do that?" (clearly), "What will you be doing when that thing happens?" (under the control of the client) (De Jong & Berg, 2013). It is possible to say that "to do" is the keyword of solution-focused goal setting. According to this, the solutions to be constructed should be immediately realizable, concrete, and behavioral (Walter & Peller, 1992).

A distinctive feature of Turkish society is practical intelligence. Turkish people are good at producing instant solutions, escaping the easy way, finding cheap and easy ways in seemingly desperate situations, and solving problems using existing facilities (Gercik, 2020; Tekinalp, 2015). According to Gercik (2020), these abilities usually lead to cheating, deception, avoiding work, theft, corruption, and gaining profit. However, these could also be advantages to structure goals in the solution-focused helping process. The Turkish clients' ability to find easy ways and use the available opportunities can make it easier for them to propose functional solutions that will be realized by them immediately.

As previously indicated, de Shazer (1988) has mentioned that solutions come from two frameworks, which he calls the hypothetical and the exceptions. The hypothetical framework includes clients' assumptions about what they will do differently in their lives once their problems are gone (The answer to miracle question). On the other hand, The exceptions framework includes clients' past experiences when they did not experience the problem or were less severe. In the Turkish context, it is probable to say that examining exceptional situations can be more advantageous. Because answering the miracle question is like creating a future scenario where things go better for the client (Walter & Peller, 1992). On the contrary, Turkish clients may wait for the counselor to know what would be beneficial for them, they may have difficulty creating a hypothetical solution universe, and they may answer the miracle question with "I don't know." Besides, the past-oriented thinking style of these clients can make it easier to remember and describe exceptional situations in the past. While there may not be empirical findings regarding the limitations encountered by solution-focused psychological counselors in Turkey, Baygül (2015) mentions the possibility of receiving responses such as non-specific miracles and impossible miracles. Expressions like "I don't know, I would feel more peaceful, I would feel happier, I wouldn't get angry anymore" can also be cited as examples of such responses.

An anonymous idiom known in Turkey says: Start like a Turk, continue like a German, and end like an English. It means that Turkish people are initially passionate and ambitious but not so good at maintaining and finishing work when their expectations of quick results are not met (Tekinalp, 2015). Tekinalp (2015) also argued that Turkish society is prone to polarized thinking. In Turkey, these features can lead to seeking help with the expectation of "full recovery in a very short time" and leaving the counseling process early when this expectation is not satisfied (Tryon, 1999). However, scaling questions in the solution-focused approach can help Turkish clients understand that change can happen not with a single behavior but by taking a series of small steps within a fixed time (de Shazer et al., 2021). Hence, scaling questions can be instructive and motivating in this culture whose members are impetuous and polarized in their thinking.

The final step of solution-focused helping is feedback from the counselor to the client, which includes compliments, strengths, goals, exceptions, helpful behaviors, and homework (Walter & Peller, 1992). While formulating the content of this feedback, solution-focused experts working with Turkish clients may need to pay attention to some cultural characteristics, especially in compliments and homework. For example, in Turkish culture, praise and compliments are rarely communicated directly, but mostly indirectly or through physical means such as back-patting; members of society have difficulty expressing positive impressions and feelings about one another (Gultekin & Voltan-Acar, 2004). Even today, in some families, paternal praise only occurs at truly private moments, and it could make Turkish clients perceive the compliments of authority figures as extremely valuable. So, when the solution-focused helpers prioritize compliments that directly express clients' strengths, they could be helpful as a model and highly therapeutic (De Jong & Berg, 2013). For homework, the best way suggested by Berg and Reuss (1998) is to create opportunities for the clients to apply more the workable behaviors they are already doing. As I previously stated, this seems more appropriate for Turkish society, which tends to maintain what works rather than try new things (Toktamisoglu, 2004). When homework focuses on hypothetical solutions and unattempted actions, Turkish clients may not implement them, and their commitment to the plan may decrease. Finally, although it is widely recommended to make a written agreement to increase clients' commitment to this plan (Macdonald, 2011), Yorgun and Voltan-Acar (2014) emphasize that "promising" would be more meaningful for Turkish clients than an

agreement on paper. As a matter of fact, even in commercial activities in Turkey, the phrase "my word is a bond," which emphasizes the importance of the word, has an obligatory agreement function between the parties.

The Predisposition of Turkish Counselors to Solution-Focused Helping. Counselors study and work in the community they interact with, not in an isolated jar. As a result, it might be misleading to assume that mental health professionals will differ from the public because of their education (Gergen, 1985). It might be challenging to say that while the society in which they live is externally controlled, dependent on authority, collectivist, problem-oriented, and cunning, counselors are controlled internally, individualistic, solution-focused, and don't care about hierarchical structures (Erdur-Baker, 2007). In this respect, it is probably critical to consider the cultural predisposition of helpers to provide solution-focused help.

Turkish Counselors and Expertise. The Turkish proverb "Whoever has the seal, he is Solomon" means that whoever holds the authority is the strongest. It reflects a social culture in which people adopt positions and titles as symbols of supreme superiority. This superiority extends not only to corporate life but also to social life; the titles of people determine their human worth in the eyes of society (Tezcan, 1997). For this reason, dominating others, becoming an authority, gaining position and power has become a natural need for almost everyone in Turkish culture (Gercik, 2020). Mental health professionals may also be in this group. In Turkey, while the mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors) are making efforts for the mental health law, they also engage in title and competency debates (Ozyurek, 2019). I usually experience that my colleagues display their diplomas and certificates in a counseling room rather than a waiting room. Gencoglu (2019) has also pointed out that in media representations of psychotherapy scenes, diplomas and certificates are often displayed in the room. In addition, my students introduce themselves as counselors on their social media accounts when they are still students or use the title of "expert" when they continue their graduate studies. Many clinical psychologists are not content with this title and introduce themselves as "expert clinical psychologists" (Cirakoglu, 2021).

In sum, mental health practitioners in Turkey may need their expertise to be known and respected by the public. This need may make it difficult for counselors to internalize some basic solution-focused principles such as "the client as an expert." Therefore, the counseling process may turn into an intervention in which techniques such as miracle questions are applied mechanically by the counselor. Lipchick (2002) warns that when solution-focused counseling practitioners fail to internalize the underlying assumptions and principles of the techniques, the solution-focused approach will become increasingly formulaic in style and essential elements like rapport will be overlooked. Similarly, Ratner et al. (2012) have stated that moving beyond formulaic miracle question-like patterns and being able to provide genuine and spontaneous responses is one of the conditions for being an effective solution-focused practitioner. When practitioners unintentionally or subconsciously assume the role of an expert, they often receive responses like 'I don't know' in response to miracle question-like techniques (Sklare, 1997). In such cases, Sklare (1997) suggests using the pattern 'If you knew...' However, under conditions where the therapist is perceived as an authority or expert, practitioners may be directed to design future plans recommended by the therapist and approved by clients, before fully reaching the narrative preferred by the client.

Turkish Counselors and Culturel Confinement. It is a controversial issue to what extent the counselors in Turkey can adopt the social constructivist and multicultural perspective demanded by the solution-focused approach. Kagnici (2013) expressed her concerns about whether Turkish society maintains the cultural heritage left by the well-known Turkish philosopher Mevlana, who said, "Come, whoever you are, come.". For example, terrorism in Turkey causes racist attitudes towards the citizens living in the southeast of the country, and children from the north grow by learning not to like the people of the southeast. During Ramadan, it is possible to see a lot of news about people being attacked for eating on the street. It includes hate crimes against sexual orientation. In summary, in the general population in Turkey, there is a prevalent tendency to revere one's own cultural characteristics and values while displaying a hostile attitude towards different cultural traits, religions, sexual orientations, or values. It can be said that discrimination is instilled from childhood. This is expected to increase the ethnocentrism of psychological counselors while undermining their multicultural competence (Demirel, 2016). In this regard, there is a risk of training counselors in Turkey who view their cultural assumptions, stereotypes, and personal beliefs as legitimate truths. Pedersen (2008)

refers to this as "cultural confinement." From the perspective of solution-focused psychological counseling, which is one of the products of the social constructivist paradigm that posits that reality is socially constructed and dominant narratives can be deconstructed, such confinement is constraining (Berg & de Shazer, 2012). This is because solution-focused psychological counseling encourages setting aside what one knows from academic training to cultural teachings and emphasizes learning from the client (Anderson & Goolishian, 1992). However, the stronger a person's belief in the correctness and truthfulness of what they already know and hold, the more biased they will be against the existence of any other truths (Kağnıcı, 2013).

The Outcome Expectations of Turkish Counselors. Cormier and Cormier (1991) mention that empathy, unconditional positive acceptance, and sincerity should be fixed on the therapeutic ground of all contemporary counseling approaches, but providing these conditions alone may be insufficient to respond to clients from different cultures. Mocan-Aydin (2000) also emphasizes that insight-oriented help models may be helpful but insufficient for Turkish clients' outcome expectations. Conceivably, the same situation applies to individuals who give help. For example, Sahin, Togay, and Atici (2019) found that counselor candidates expect the counseling process to solve their clients' problems, make a positive difference in their lives, and match their expectations. These are the self-evaluation criteria for counselor candidates. Turkish counselors may feel comfortable with such a well-structured approach, as solution-focused counseling provides the opportunity for concrete, behavioral, and measurable results (Mocan-Aydin, 2000).

Turkish Counselors' Competencies in Brief Interventions. As Corey (2017) pointed out, solution-focused counseling requires establishing rapport, setting goals, producing solutions, and reaching a result, sometimes in a single session. As a result, practitioners should be skilled in brief interventions. On the other hand, counselor education programs in Turkey do not offer education in the application of solution-focused brief counseling. Theoretical solution-focused brief counseling education is part of the counseling theories course at graduate programs, and it takes place as a course at graduate and doctoral programs (The Council of Higher Education, 2018). It can enable counselors educated in Turkey to become familiar with the theoretical framework of solution-focused counseling. But, counseling practices education in Turkey is limited to the client-centered approach (Mocan-Aydin, 2000). Generally, counselor candidates develop their skills in brief interventions through personal efforts (books, informal education, etc.).

The majority of counselors in Turkey work at schools. Dost and Keklik (2012) revealed that these school counselors have problems such as paying attention to too many students, handling tasks other than their job description, attending too many commissions, and wasting time on administrative matters. As a result of these working conditions, Dogan (2000) further argued that school counselors have difficulty applying the models that require long-term practice. From this point, school counselors in Turkey may need orientation to a solution-focused approach that is short, pragmatic, and easier to apply at schools (Sklare, 1997).

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

It is hard to discuss the shared social characteristics of Turkish society, which has a complex cultural diversity. Notwithstanding, several sociological studies (Koydemir et al., 2014; Erguder et al., 1991; Gercik, 2020; Tekinalp, 2015; Tezcan, 1997; Toktamisoglu, 2004) indicate that Turkish people mostly have the following attributes: Authoritativeness, external locus of control, approval for power inequalities, scapegoating, impetuosity, the capability of finding cheap and simple ways, and of producing instant solutions. Because of these features, it may be more difficult for some solution-focused assumptions to be adopted by the public in the Turkish context. For example, as mentioned before, Turkish society expects anything good for themselves coming from more knowledgeable others such as god, authorities, and experts (Mocan-Aydin, 2000). Because of Turkish people tend to authoritarianism (Gercik, 2020; Tezcan, 1997), they might challenge to cast aside the dominant problem terminology created by experts and authorities. External control and placing responsibility on others can keep them from building their own solutions. On the other hand, their ability to find practical solutions may allow them to think that the resolution may sometimes be less complex than it seems.

Clients' expectations in Turkish society that the counselor should be authoritative and directing may lead to the "not-knowing stance of counselors" being misinterpreted as true ignorance. At the same time, the general population complains that mental health professionals are outsiders to the community in terms of their

appearance, attitudes, behaviors, and jargon (Gencoglu, 2019). In other words, in such a context, individuals may prefer helpers who guide with their knowledge but does so by using the client's language. Hence, solution-focused counseling may become a more culturally appropriate helping model if a more directive but empathic counselor style is adopted, specific to the Turkish context. In this way, it may be possible for clients to establish a more collaborative relationship with their counselors while also increasing their confidence in the counseling process.

Turkish people rarely seek counseling with a clear problem definition, even though solution-focused counseling requires clients to focus on a single problem at a time (Macdonald, 2011). As indicated previously, in Turkey, factors such as social stigma, sex-role stereotypes, cost, and lack of motivation lead to seeing psychological help as a last resort (Arslantas et al., 2011; Kagnici, 2013; Kizildag et al., 2012). It usually causes clients to bring their long-standing difficulties to counseling. It may be crucial for counselors to prioritize the clients' emotional experiences and not rush to move on to solution talk while working with Turkish clients by considering this. To facilitate these clients' getting into solution talk, using past-focused questions and examining exceptional situations may be more advantageous than using the miracle question. Clients with long-standing difficulties may be eager to discuss how they have coped with them so far rather than imagining a future without them (de Shazer, 1988; De Jong & Berg, 2013;Mocan-Aydin, 2000).

It is reasonable to conclude that Turkish counselors are under cultural influences that both impede and facilitate their implementation, considering the predisposition of practitioners to the solution-focused approach. For instance, like the general population, counselors may attach particular importance to expertise, authority, superiority, status, and title. For this reason, it may be challenging for them to adopt a "not-knowing," egalitarian, and collaborative stance, and it can give rise to a mechanical style (Corey, 2017). Besides, in Turkey, counselors' sensitivity to cultures and differences is a disputable issue, according to Kagnici (2013), because they may tend to see their views as realities. These potential pitfalls may inhibit the applicability of solution-focused counseling in Turkey.

Another obstacle that limits the ability of psychological counselors in Turkey to offer solution-focused help is that training programs focus on long-term help models such as individual-centered counseling (Mocan-Aydin, 2000). According to Dogan (2000), this situation is incongruent because most counselors work in schools, where long-term interventions are impossible to implement. On the other hand, this difficulty may increase their interest in the solution-focused approach by encouraging counselors to seek shorter, more pragmatic interventions. There is also evidence that counselor candidates would appreciate providing such interventions (Sahin, Togay, & Atici, 2019). Accordingly, they could be more willing to work on concrete solutions rather than therapeutic goals such as gaining insight and personal development.

Thus far, I have attempted to provide a perspective on the applicability of solution-focused counseling in the Turkish context, taking into account both the counselors' and the general population's cultural realities. The main weakness of this study is that it contains generalizations continuously. Considerably more work will need to be done to investigate differences across-local cultures. Unfortunately, since the study was limited to an investigation of literature, it did not include data collection and analysis from the field. Notwithstanding its limitations, this endeavor, I believe, recommends certain practice modifications for both the solution-focused counselors in Turkey and the multicultural counselors who counsel clients from collectivist cultures. Also, the implications of the current study would be a fruitful area for further research.

An important practical implication is that Turkish clients' trust and commitment to the knowledge of experts can be utilized to facilitate solution-focused work. For instance, if they teach clients about solution-focused counseling before the sessions begin or provide psychoeducation about a solution-focused approach during the counseling process, clients will be more willing to collaborate with counselors. Furthermore, counselors will need to be more directive and active than expected. A take-charge counselor, especially in problem and goal-setting steps, can make Turkish clients feel in safe hands. Accordingly, in the Turkish context, it may be therapeutic for counselors to step a little away from the "not-knowing stance" unless they move into the "all-knowing stance." If counselors go one step ahead by maintaining their ordinary appearance, they may be regarded by clients as authoritative but sincere. Another practical implication is that counselors may need to modify some techniques to facilitate working with Turkish clients. For example, when asking the miracle

question in the goal-setting step, they should ask the clients to imagine their "perfect" moments in the past instead of a miracle that will happen the following day. By this means, they may be less likely to hear "I don't know" answers. In parallel, if counselors adjust homework to encourage clients to use solutions that have worked before, clients will commit to the change plan better.

An important issue that I cannot address in this study is the linguistic adaptation of solution-focused counseling. Future research in this field would be of great help in determining the applicability of solution-focused counseling in Turkey. Also, further work is required to establish the therapeutic efficiency of the above practical implications. For example, what is now needed is an experimental study that investigates how providing psychoeducation to clients about solution-focused counseling will affect the counseling process. Finally, Postmodernist education policies are required to protect counselors from cultural confinement. These policies should serve to help counselors to overcome their cultural barriers, as well as to improve their brief helping skills.

Author Note: Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Isa Ozgur Ozer, Department of Guidance and Counseling, Ufuk University, Bouvelard of Incek Sehit Savci Mehmet Selim Kiraz, No: 129, Incek – Golbasi – Ankara – Turkey. Email: ozgur.ozer@ufuk.edu.tr

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