Theoretical Orientations of Turkish Counselor Trainees: The Role of Thinking Styles, Epistemology and Curiosity

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Counselors vary in personality traits, worldviews, epistemic values, cognitive styles, and developmental influences, and these variations in return effect their choice of a guiding theory. This study addresses the variables associated with the theoretical orientations of Turkish psychological counseling students. Participants completed measures of curiosity, thinking styles, epistemological beliefs and a questionnaire on their theoretical choices. Three separate discriminant analysis were conducted to understand which variables differentiate between theoretical orientations. Results of the discriminant analysis revealed that conservative and liberal thinking styles and absorption dimension of curiosity differentiated between theoretical orientations.

Keywords: Psychological Counseling; Theoretical Orientations; Psychological Counseling in Turkey; Counseling Orientations in Turkey

Introduction

The term theoretical orientation refers to a set of assumptions, providing a framework to the counselor for formulating hypotheses about a client's experience, creating specific treatment interventions, and looking over the evolving therapeutic process (Poznanski & McLennan, 1995). Every theoretical orientation act to guide counselors in helping and conceptualizing their clients (Coleman, 2004; Norcross, 1985; Poznanski & McLennan, 1995). Thus, a theoretical viewpoint provides the most appropriate techniques to deal with a given client. One of the major tasks a counseling student should achieve is to decide on a theoretical orientation. Researchers agree that focusing on a single theory is essential in counselor development and training (Corey, 2012; Schmidt, 2001; Watts, 1993; Young, 1993). According to Freeman Hayes, Kuch and Taub (2007), a counseling student should develop a coherent theoretical perspective for a better understanding of human nature. Likewise, many researchers (e.g. Baruth & Huber, 1985; Capuzzi & Gross, 1999; Sharf, 2000) suggest that mastering in a single theory contribute to the students' vocational efficacy. Counselors vary in personality traits, worldviews, epistemic values, cognitive styles, and developmental influences (Conway, 1988; Zachar & Leong, 1992) and these variations in return effect their choice of a guiding theory. Some of the researchers emphasize the importance of education, supervision, economic conditions and clinical experience in selecting a theory (Cummings & Lucchese, 1978; Schwartz, 1978), while others emphasize personality, thinking and learning styles, epistemological beliefs and values (Arthur, 2000, 2001; Bitar, Bean, & Bermudez, 2007; Murdock, Banta, Stromseth, Viene, & Brown, 1998; Poznanski & McLennan, 2003; Tremblay, Herron, & Schultz, 1986; Vasco, Garcia-Marques, & Dryden, 1993; Worthington & Dillon, 2003).

Different theoretical orientations show differences in evaluating, processing, and reacting to knowledge (Corey, 2012).

Thus, students' conceptualization of knowledge (epistemological beliefs), their preferred ways to react to different situations (thinking styles) and their search for knowledge (curiosity) are thought to be important factors in determining their theoretical orientations. Schommer (1990) defines epistemological beliefs as a system of considerably independent beliefs about the nature of knowledge and learning. These beliefs consist of "ability to learn" which proposes that learning is be innate or gradually develops with experience, "speed of learning" which proposes that learning is quick or not-at all, "stability of knowledge" which proposes that knowledge is either permanent or tentative, "structure of knowledge" which proposes that knowledge is simple or complex and "source of knowledge" which proposes that knowledge is handed down by authority versus learner's construction of knowledge through reason. Beliefs about knowledge and learning have a great deal of influence on the learner's approach in dealing with and constructing theoretical information. In a study by Lyddon (1989), a mechanistic epistemology has found to be associated with the choice of Freudian theory and behaviorism, while an organistic epistemology has found to be associated with the choice of humanistic and transpersonal movements. Similar results were obtained from other studies (e.g., Lyddon & Adamson, 1992; Neimeyer, Prichard, Lyddon, & Sherrard, 1993). In another study Rationalist cognitive therapies have found to be associated with a basic thinking style, while constructivist approaches have found to be associated with complicated thinking style (Mahoney & Gabriel, 1987). Finally, therapists with rational epistemic commitments are primarily characterized by their belief in a-priori truths (Mahoney, Lyddon, & Alford, 1989). Given these results, in this study behavioral and psychodynamic approaches are expected to be associated with epistemological rigidity, while cognitive, humanistic, existential and solution focused approaches are expected to be associated with epistemological flexibility.

Another construct, hypothesed to be associated with theo-

retical orientations of counseling students is thinking styles. According to Sternberg (1997) thinking style is an interface between ability and personality. He proposed thirteen thinking styles as applied to individuals. Among them, legislative style enjoys being engaged in tasks that require creative strategies, executive style is concerned with implementation of tasks with prescribed guidelines, and judicial style emphasizes evaluating others' work. Internal style enjoys working independently, while external style enjoys collaborative tasks. Finally, liberal style prefers to engage in tasks involving novelty and ambiguity, while conservative style enjoys adhering to the existing rules and procedures. To date we found no studies, which directly address Sternberg's thinking styles and theoretical orientations. However, a number of studies are conducted using similar constructs. Accordingly, psychodynamic oriented counselors found to be more introverted, critical and intuitive; behavioral oriented counselors are found to be more conventional, orderly, cognitive oriented counselors found to be more traditional, rational, directive, conformist and conservative while humanistic/existential oriented counselors are found to be open to experience, open-minded, non-directive and idealistic (e.g., Arthur, 2000, 2001; Ogunfowora & Drapeau, 2008; Vasco et al., 1993). Given these results, we expect psychodynamic orientation to be associated with internal and judicial styles, humanistic/existential orientations to be associated with external, liberal and judicial styles, behavioral, cognitive behavioral and reality therapy orientations to be associated with legislative, executive and conservative styles.

Finally, we hypothesed that theoretical orientations may vary in terms of curiosity. Curiosity can be defined as the recognition, pursuit, and intense desire to explore novel, challenging, and uncertain events (Kashdan, Rose, & Fincham, 2004). Thus, curiosity motivates people to try to learn, understand and explore knowledge (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002). Curiosity is theorized to have two components: diversive curiosity (exploration) means to actively looking for various sources of knowledge and specific curiosity (absorption) means to actively looking for depth and became fully engaged in one's knowledge (Kashdan et al., 2004: p. 293). While the dimension of exploration may not have a specific influence on the choice of theoretical orientation, we hypothesed that high levels of absorption may be associated with the choice of highly investigative, analytic, profound approaches, such as psychodynamic, experiential and humanistic/existential approaches.

Hummel (2009) points out that in the US, the emphasis in undergraduate courses is on learning and using basic helping skills and learning theories about helping, rather than on becoming a professional counselor or therapist. His statement holds true also for the Turkish context. It is not possible to present theoretical knowledge integrated with supervised practice within Turkish undergraduate counselor education. Thus, in most cases undergraduate students are exposed to a limited range of supervised practices. As a result, theoretical orientations, which constitute a major theme outside the Turkish context, have not gained enough attention from Turkish counseling scholars (see Oztep, 1998). Studying factors effecting theoretical choice among Turkish counseling students may provide valuable information on values and assumptions of student counselors with diverse orientations, and contribute to our understanding of their theoretical decision making process. Given these, current study aims to examine theoretical choices of counseling students and to understand the roles of epistemological beliefs, thinking styles and curiosity in discriminating between theoretical orientations.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 207 undergraduate students from Istanbul and Marmara universities, who were enrolled in the third and fourth grades of guidance and psychological counseling programme during the spring semester of 2011. The rationale for selecting 3rd and 4th graders was to recruit participants, who completed a course on counseling theories, and have a basic knowledge on major counseling theories. Preliminary analysis of the data revealed that of the total 207 participants, 68 selected cognitive/cognitive-behavioral approach as their major theoretical orientation, while 44 selected solution focused, 47 selected humanistic/existential approaches and the remaining 41 selected behavioral (9), Gestalt (11), Psychodynamic (7), Reality Therapy (6) and Transactional Analysis (8). Of the 207, six of the participants chosen more than one theoretical orientation. The results of the preliminary analysis also signaled 3 cases with extreme values and 3 cases with a large number of missing data. Given these results, 12 cases with extreme values, missing data were deleted from the analysis. Likewise, 41 cases, which selected behavioral, gestalt, psychodynamic, reality therapy and transactional analysis were deleted from the analysis because, in order to run a discriminant analysis the minimum sample size in each categorical group should exceed the number of predictors (see Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Thus, only the top three ranking theoretical orientations (namely, cognitive/cognitive behavioral, humanistic/existential, and solution focused) were included in the final analysis. After the modifications in the data, the final sample consisted of 154 undergraduate students (Female n = 109; Male n = 45) from Istanbul (n = 85; 55.2%) and Marmara universities (n = 69; 44.8%), who were enrolled in the third (n = 76; 49.4%) and fourth grades (n = 78; 50.6%) of guidance and psychological counseling programme during the spring semester of 2011.

Participants' age ranged from 19 to 25 (M = 21.89; SD = 1.25).

Instruments

The Epistemological Belief Scale (Deryakulu & Buyukozturk, 2002; Schommer, 1990), Thinking Styles Inventory (Buluş, 2006; Sternberg & Wagner, 1992), Curiosity and Exploration scale (Demir & Ismen Gazioglu, 2011; Kashdan, Rose, & Fincham, 2004) and a demographic information form prepared by the researchers were utilized for the study.

Demographic information form prepared by the researchers was utilized for the study. Along with providing information about their age, sex, school and grade, participants were asked which theoretical orientation they would have chosen if they were given a chance to specialize in a counseling theory. Participants were asked to choose one primary theoretical orientation from a list that included eight choices namely, psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive/cognitive behavioral, humanistic/existential, Gestalt, Reality, Solution Focused and Transactional Analysis. Eclectic/Integrative approach was not included for theoretical choice because most of the undergraduate students were predicted to select it, if included. However, in order to understand their theoretical orientations more clearly,

in a separate question students were asked whether they would select eclectic approach if included among theoretical approaches.

The Epistemological Belief Scale (EBS; Schommer, 1990) EBS is a 5 point likert type instrument and item responses range from 1 (never describes me) to 5 (always describes me). The instrument is scored by adding up the responses to all the items in each dimension, providing four distinct scores for each individual. Higher scores in each scale indicate higher levels of characteristics represented by the scale. The test, re-test coefficient of the original scale is 0.74, and the reliability coefficients of the subscales are between 0.85 and 0.63 (Schommer, 1993). The Turkish validation of the scale was done by Deryakulu and Buyukozturk (2002). Turkish validation revealed three factors namely, "belief that learning requires effort" (18 items, α = .83), "belief that learning requires talent" (9 items, α = .62) and "belief in a single truth" (8 items, α = .59) (Deryakulu & Buyukozturk, 2002). The Cronbach Alpha coefficients in this study are calculated as .78 for "belief that learning requires effort", .73 for "belief that learning requires talent" and .64 for "belief in a single truth".

Thinking Styles Inventory (TSI; Sternberg & Wagner, 1992) This is a 7 point likert type instrument that consists of 5 factors and 104 items; 8 for each 13 subscales (legislative, executive, judicial, monarchic, hierarchic, oligarchic, anarchic, global, local, internal, external, liberal and conservative). The instrument is scored by adding up the responses to all the items in each dimension, providing thirteen distinct scores for each individual. Higher scores in each scale indicate higher levels of characteristics represented by the scale. The original reliability coefficients of the subscales were reported to range from .88 to .42 (Zhang & Sternberg, 2000). Turkish validation of the instrument was done by Fer (2005). Turkish validation revealed that reliability of subscales varies between .50 (monarchic) and .89 (conservative) and the test-retest reliability of subscales ranged from .63 (oligarchic) to .78 (external) (Fer, 2005). The Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the subscales utilized in this study are calculated as .83 for legislative style, .80 for executive style, .88 for judicial style, .84 for internal style, .84 for external style, .89 for liberal style and .91 for conservative style.

Curiosity and Exploration Inventory (CEI; Kashdan et al., 2004) The original scale consists of two factors namely, "Exploration" and "Absorption". CEI is a 7 item-7 point likert type instrument and item responses range from 1 (never describes me) to 7 (always describes me). The instrument is scored by adding up the responses to all the items in each dimension, providing four distinct scores for each individual. Higher scores in each scale indicate higher levels of characteristics represented by the scale. CFA of the original scale is reported to fit the data well [$\chi^2(13, N = 213) = 18.00, p > .15; \chi^2/df = 1.38$; GFI = .98, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .04]. The original scale accounted for 61% of the total variance, with factor loadings ranging from .51 to .82. Turkish adaptation of the instrument was done by the researchers for this study. For the Turkish adaptation, scale was administered to 96 undergraduate students enrolled in Istanbul University Faculty of Education (69 females, 27 males). KMO (.72) and Bartlett ($\chi^2 = 188.78$; $p < .000$) scores were found to be adequate for factor analysis. Factor analysis revealed two factors with eigen values higher than 1. The factor loadings ranged from .90 to .55 and the first factor (exploration) consisted of 4 items explaining 41.4% of

the total variance, while the second factor (absorption) consisted of 3 items explaining the 19.5% of the total variance. Overall, the instrument explained the 61% of the total variance. The reliability analysis of the Turkish CEI revealed .68 alpha coefficient for exploration and .76 for absorption. In conclusion, retaining its original item and factor structure, Turkish CEI have proven to be a valid tool to utilize in the Turkish context.

Data Analysis

First, Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the whole data for extreme values and missing values. Cases with such anomalies were deleted from the analysis. Second, frequency analysis was done to examine the distribution of data according to theoretical orientations. Finally, three separate discriminant analysis were conducted in order to determine the variables, which differentiate among the three theoretical orientations. We used discriminant analysis to analyze the data, because we were mainly interested in determining which variables differentiated among the various orientations. Analyses were done using SPSS 16.00, an alpha level of .05 was used to determine statistical significance.

Results

The findings regarding the theoretical orientations of the students revealed that 42% of the participants chose Cognitive/Cognitive Behavioral approach (N= 65), 30% of them chose Humanistic/Existential approach (N= 46) and 28% chose Solution Focused approach (N= 43) as their major theoretical orientations. In addition, 74% of the participants indicated that they would choose "eclectic/integrative approaches" if it was included among the options. Three separate discriminant analysis were conducted in order to explore the relative contribution of epistemological beliefs, thinking styles and curiosity in discriminating three theoretical orientations. The reason for conducting three separate discriminant analysis was to avoid possible multicolinarity and masking within the data. In all three analysis Box's Ms were not statistically significant.

The first analysis was done to explore the discriminative role of seven thinking styles namely, Legislative, Executive, Judicial; Internal, External; and Liberal, Conservative subscales. The results of the first analysis revealed that the first function had significant effects in discriminating participants' theoretical orientations ($\Lambda = .84$, $\chi^2(14, N = 154) = 25.77$, $p < .01$), while the second function had no significant effects ($\Lambda = .96$, $\chi^2(6, N = 154) = 5.35$, $p > .05$). The first function had an eigen value of .148, and accounted for 80% of the variance in the model. **Table 1** (Structure matrix) shows that high conservative thinking scores and low liberal thinking scores significantly contribute to the first function in discriminating between theoretical orientations. **Table 2** (Group centroids) show that the function discriminated between humanistic/existential groups and solution focused-cognitive/cognitive behavioral groups. This result indicates that, Humanistic/Existential group prefers a more liberal and less conservative thinking style than solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral groups. In other words, Humanistic/Existential oriented students differ from solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral oriented students by higher liberal thinking scores and lower conservative thinking scores. **Overall 52% of the cases were correctly classified.**

The second analysis was done to explore the discriminative role of two curiosity dimensions, namely exploration and absorption. The results of the second analysis revealed that the first function had significant effects in discriminating participants' theoretical orientations ($\Lambda = .88$, $\chi^2(4, N = 154) = 18.56$, $p < .001$), while the second function had no significant effects ($\Lambda = .99$, $\chi^2(1, N = 154) = .614$, $p > .05$). The first function had an eigen value of .127, and accounted for 97 % of the variance in the model. **Table 3** (Structure matrix) shows that high absorption scores significantly contribute to the first function in discriminating between theoretical orientations. **Table 4** (Group centroids) show that the function discriminated between humanistic/existential groups and solution focused-cognitive/cognitive behavioral groups. This result indicates that, Humanistic/Existential group score higher on absorption than solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral groups. In other words, Humanistic/Existential oriented students differ from solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral oriented students by higher absorption scores. **Overall 51% of the cases were correctly classified.**

The third analysis was done to explore the discriminative role of three epistemological belief factors, namely belief that

Table 1.
Structure matrix for thinking styles dimensions.

Styles	Function
Conservative	.655[*]
Liberal	−.581[*]
Judicial	−.324
Legislative	.192
Executive	.232
Internal	−.182
External	−.136

Table 2.
Group centroids for thinking styles dimensions.

Groups	Function
Humanistic/Existential	−.541
Solution Focused	.440
Cognitive/Cognitive Behavioral	.091

Table 3.
Structure matrix for curiosity dimensions.

Curiosity Dimensions	Function
Absorption	.999*
Exploration	.381

Table 4.
Group centroids for curiosity dimensions.

Groups	Function
Humanistic/Existential	.535
Solution Focused	−.300
Cognitive/Cognitive Behavioral	−.180

learning requires effort, belief that learning requires talent, and belief in a single truth. The results of the second analysis revealed no significant effects for neither the first ($\Lambda = .97$, $\chi^2(6, N = 154) = 3.16$, $p > .05$), nor the second function ($\Lambda = .99$, $\chi^2(2, N = 154) = .216$, $p > .05$) in discriminating participants' theoretical orientations. Accordingly, epistemological belief scores did not significantly discriminate between theoretical orientations.

Discussion

Theoretical Orientations

This study revealed that, if listed among the options, the majority of the third and fourth grade counseling undergraduates of the two Turkish universities preferred eclectic approach as their primary theoretical orientation. In addition students highly preferred cognitive/cognitive behavioral approaches, humanistic/existential approaches and solution focused approaches respectively. These results show much resemblance with the worldwide trends in theoretical orientations (e.g., Ivey, D'Andrea, & Ivey, 2012). Studies in this area show that increasing number of counselors are preferring eclectic/integrative approaches (Rigazio-DiGilio, 2001). In addition, cognitive behavioral approaches became the most preferred theoretical approach among counselors in the last decade. Although humanistic approach remains a highly preferred orientation, it relatively lost some popularity in the last decade and fell behind cognitive approaches. On the contrary, solution focused approaches are gaining increasing popularity due to practical/functional considerations (Garfield & Bergin, 1994; Warner, 1991). On the other hand, this study shows that, unlike in the European and North American context, psychodynamic approaches are not preferred much among counseling students in Turkey. Gulerce (2008) remarks cultural issues and scarcity of training and supervision opportunities as two major underlying reasons of this tendency. Besides, in Turkey psychological counseling undergraduates are commonly employed in schools. Thus, psychoanalysis is less preferred among Turkish undergraduates due to the practical limitations of the application of psychoanalytic approaches in school settings. Overall, this study suggests that the majority of the students adhere to a narrow range of orientations and their theoretical preferences reflect the counseling trends in the broader context, to a large extend.

Thinking Styles

Our first discriminant analysis revealed that Humanistic/Existential oriented students differ from solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral oriented students by higher liberal thinking scores and lower conservative thinking scores. Although there are no studies that directly associate theoretical orientations and thinking styles, a great deal of researches relates theoretical orientations with different kinds of cognitive and personal characteristics. One of the results that consistently appear in those studies is that humanistic oriented individuals tend to be more open to change and new experiences (e.g., Scandell, Wlazelek, & Scandell 1997; Scragg, Bor, & Watts, 1999; Tremblay et al., 1986). They also found to be more flexible, idealist, and imaginative (Scandell et al., 1997; Tremblay, et al., 1986). Furthermore, humanistic counselors feel more comfortable in uncertain situations, and perceive the world as

an ever-changing and dynamic place. Humanistic and existential oriented individuals especially found to score higher in openness to experience than cognitive behavioral oriented counselors (e.g., Babbage & Ronan, 2000; Ogunfowora & Drapeau, 2008; Scandell et al., 1997; Scragg et al., 1999; Tremblay et al., 1986; Vasco et al., 1993). In line with these results, cognitive behavioral oriented individuals found to be more traditional, realistic and prescriptive (Arthur, 2000, 2001; Heffler & Sandler, 2009; Scragg et al., 1999). In addition, they tend to feel uncomfortable when faced with uncertainty, give more importance to conformity and deal more with the practical results of theoretical approaches than their underlying philosophies (Arthur, 2000, 2001; Poznanski & McLennan, 2003; Scragg et al., 1999). On the other hand, every single orientation adopts unique roles, intervention styles and assumptions guiding the counselor. However, some of the approaches have a richer set of inscribed and well defined techniques and tools compared to the others. Given this, both solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral approaches offer a more clearly defined, detailed and approved framework, which include tools, techniques and strategies in every stage (see Corey, 2012; Miller, Hubbel, & Duncan, 1996; Murdock, 2007; Seligman & Reichenberg, 2010). Thus, students preferring conservative thinking characterized by an orderly, realistic, and traditional style would more likely to adopt these two orientations offering well defined stepwise strategies and prescribed tools. It is possible that humanistic/existential orientation, which challenges traditional beliefs about human nature, attracts "unconventional" and "open-minded" individuals (Ogunfowora & Drapeau, 2008). There is not much research on the choice of solution focused approaches, since it is a relatively new approach and is not considered among the traditional approaches. Solution focused approach is one of the major postmodern approaches in counseling and adopt a client centered, innovative and dynamic stance (Miller, Hubbel, & Duncan, 1996). On the other hand, solution focused approach also share similarities with cognitive approaches with its emphasis on cognitive elements and behavior change.

Curiosity

Our second discriminant analysis revealed that Humanistic/Existential oriented students differ from solution focused and cognitive/cognitive behavioral oriented students by higher absorption scores. No differences were found in terms of exploration scores. In his study, Arthur (2001) found that cognitive behaviorists tend to focus on the external, rather than internal world. In addition, they value quantitative over qualitative information, and thinking over feeling. Walton (1978) asserts that cognitive oriented counselors are less interested with deconstructing and delving into the complex nature of issues, rather they are interested in taking different perspectives about the issues. Similarly, in solution focused therapy the focus is always on what is said by the client, rather than what is unsaid or implied or unrealized. De Shazer (1994) calls this "to stay on the surface". Accordingly, solution focused approach emphasize the importance of practical and goal-oriented information, rather than in-depth analysis of information (Miller, et al., 1996). Given these, we assume that individuals, who score low in absorption, are more likely to prefer cognitive and solution focused approaches. On the other hand, humanistic/existential approaches emphasize the importance of delving into the client's phenomenological worlds (Corey, 2012; Rogers, 1980). These approaches value the analysis of the themes of self, anxiety, freedom, authenticity and the meanings of life and death within the clients' universes (Corey, 2012; Seligman & Reichenberg, 2010). Thus, we propose that their emphasis on such an in-depth phenomenological exploration might have attracted individuals who scored higher on absorption.

Epistemological Beliefs

Our third discriminant analysis revealed no significant differences between theoretical orientations in terms of epistemological beliefs. We believe that the major rationale for this result is the relative similarity of the three theoretical orientations' beliefs on relativity of the truth and their beliefs on effort as a source of change. Different theoretical orientations perceive and process knowledge in different ways; however some of them share more similar premises than the others. Fear and Woolfe (1999) claim that personal philosophy is reflected in a counselor's theoretical approach. Counselors, in general, share similar values (Consoli & Williams, 1999; Kelly, 1995), and those with similar values tend to share similar theoretical approaches as well (Mahalik, 1995). For example, according to Vasco et al. (1993) behavioral and psychodynamic approaches contrast humanistic/existential approaches in epistemological beliefs, while cognitive approaches fall in between. Studies also suggest that cognitive, humanistic, existential and postmodern approaches share similar attitudes towards knowledge, such as relativity of the truth, and distrust in innate, stable characteristics (Brabeck & Welfel, 1985; Consoli & Williams, 1999; Kelly, 1995). Thus, in their evaluation of knowledge, solution focused approaches adopt a postmodern perspective, humanistic/existential approaches adopt a Heiddegerian person centered perspective, and cognitive approaches adopt a "diverse realities" perspective, which altogether lead to similar epistemological standpoints.

There are a few limitations that should be addressed for this study. First, due to the lack of structured self report scales on theoretical choices in Turkey, we merely relied on participants' self reports about their theoretical choices. Further research is needed to employ reliable assessment tools in order to understand theoretical preferences. Second, study participants were psychological counseling undergraduates who completed a course on counseling theories. In order to obtain a more detailed picture of theoretical orientations in Turkey, further research should also address psychological counselors in clinical, community and school settings. Third, because of the limited sample size, some of the major theoretical orientations could not be represented within this study. With larger samples, a diverse range of theoretical orientations can be represented in the following studies. Last but not the least, we think that practical considerations such as, training opportunities, financial resources and participants' intended work settings effect their theoretical preferences. These issues should also be addressed in further research.

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