

Comparison of Attitudes of School Administrators and Counselors towards Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to compare the attitudes of Turkish school administrators and school counselors towards the mandatory reporting of suspected child sexual abuse and to determine their main support needs in relation to their reporting obligations. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in this study.

This article, along with the relevant regulations and legal sources (Eren, Gumus & Gumus, 2013; Koca, 2012; Unver, 2012), requires all school personnel to report all suspected CSA to legal authorities (i.e., to the office of the chief prosecutor or law enforcement) immediately, and, in cases where there is a failure to report, school personnel will be sentenced to imprisonment.

The Attitudes of School Administrators and Counselors towards Mandatory Reporting of Suspected CSA

Even in the USA, the leading country in terms of regulations on reporting CSA (Erbaş, 2015), many school counselors fail to report due to uncertainties regarding the process and other problems that are a source of great concern for them (Lambie, 2005). Hermann (2002) reported that the second most common legal problem faced by school counselors is deciding when to report CSA. Goldman and Padayachi (2005) found that the majority of 122 school counselors had a general knowledge of the laws on reporting suspected cases of CSA, but only a minority knew what the laws required them to do. Goldman and Padayachi (2002a, 2002b, 2005) also found that there was a tendency for school counselors not to report CSA. Furthermore, outcomes of various studies conducted with school counselors have indicated that decisions to report cases of suspected CSA are primarily affected by the laws in place and concerns related to student safety (Bryant, 2009; Bryant & Milsom, 2005), and that

In addition, Akgul (2015) found that many of the preschool teachers had the misconception that the school principal was the person to be notified of suspected cases of CSA. Cetinkaya (2014) reported that 21% of participating school counselors had experienced an ethical dilemma in relation to their obligation to report CSA cases, and that 40% of the cases were not reported. A qualitative study of 26 school counselors who had reported CSA (Cetinkaya, 2015) found that school principals were the most commonly cited barrier to reporting (mention

$\chi^2/df = 2.45, p < .01$; RMSEA = 0.06, GFI = .94, AGFI = .90, CFI = .89) were acceptable, with the exception of the CFI (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006). Values of Cronbach's alpha for the subscales were as follows, confidence: .63; commitment: .70; concern: .68.

Questionnaire on opinions about reporting suspected CSA. This questionnaire consisted of the following open

Table 1. Analysis of TRAS-CSA Scores by Group

		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i> -test	<i>p</i>
Duty	Commitment					
	Sch. Admin.	113	4.68	0.37	2.20	0.28
	Sch. Counsel.	253	4.58	0.43		
	Confidence					
	Sch. Admin.	113	3.58	0.89	3.01	0.03*
	Sch. Counsel.	253	3.28	0.87		
	Concerns					
	Sch. Admin.	113	3.93			
	Sch. Counsel.	253				

Two of the sub-themes under this theme have negative content. Three of the statements under the sub-theme *no knowledge about the relevant laws* was made by counselors

The sub-theme *information regarding the legal characteristics and process of reporting* was derived from the statements of three participants.

Theme 2. Finding a basis for reporting. Three codes were defined under this theme.

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