
Measuring Occupational Burnout levels of Teachers in Public Primary Schools at North Cyprus

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Abstract – In recent years, the concept of burnout is being experienced, especially in vocational groups that have very close relations with people like teachers and health system workers. Burnout manifests itself in many ways, such as the feeling of self-exhaustion, diminished willingness to go to work, negative attitudes towards people, feeling self-worth, and not being appreciated. When the burnout syndrome is not taken into consideration, it can cause many negative results and has the potential to affect many people in undesired levels. Therefore, it is important to measure it regularly with scientific methods. In this way, it will be possible to take necessary measures before reaching uncontrollable levels. The aim of this study is to measure burnout levels of teachers working in public primary schools of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Besides, it will be investigated whether burnout levels differ according to teachers' gender, school type and seniority. In order to collect data, a personal information form and Maslach Burnout Inventory developed by Maslach was used to measure burnout levels of teachers. The population of the study consists of 1353 teachers working in the public primary schools during 2017-2018 academic year in North Cyprus. The sample consists of 1200 teachers selected using the stratified sampling method. A total of 922 questionnaires was collected. Due to missing or incomplete information 26 of them were not taken into consideration and as a result, 896 questionnaires were used for statistical data analysis. In the light of the data obtained as a result of the statistical analyzes, suggestions were presented to guide the authorities and policy makers who are responsible for improving the working conditions of teachers working in primary schools.

Keywords – Public Primary Schools, Teachers, Burnout, North Cyprus.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching profession is very important because it is a profession that gives people knowledge, skills, feelings, values and behavior. The burnout of teachers is important not only for themselves, but also for the educational institution they work for, and therefore for the whole community. Due to the burnout levels that teachers experience; the quality of the educational service they provide and the effectiveness of the school they work for, indirectly, the realization of the educational system and the objectives of the school, and the education and training environment will affect with all dimensions. Therefore, it is important to measure and know the burnout levels of teachers.

The satisfaction of the employees in the schools reflects this efficiency and makes their work more efficient. Effect of burnout is more intense in specific occupations such as teachers, doctors, nurses, etc. Burnout is a phenomenon that can be seen as a result of intensive workload, not meeting expectations and experiencing stress intensely. People with burnout in their profession reflect this in family life, their colleagues and their issues. People who have experienced burnout were more nervous, had absenteeism, were inefficient in working hours and had longer breaks.

Teachers are of great importance in primary education. In order to provide effective and modern education, teachers' job satisfaction should be high and burnout levels should be low. For this reason, it is important to plan

regularly to measure burnout levels and to make the necessary improvements.

Teachers spend a large part of their lives at work. According to their work, many adult individuals try to continue their lives by working about one third of their lives and contributing to the institution or organization they work for. From time to time in business life depending on business conditions and many factors to experience stress is a natural and cannot be avoided. There are many factors in the modern world where the competition is rapidly increasing and information technologies become an indispensable part of business life.

Stress causes serious personal and organizational problems. Stress is rooted in many problems that affect the health and work efficiency of the employees [1].

Today, the constraints that individuals are exposed to in every field, by disrupting their psychological balance, reveal the energy necessary for the continuation of life and on the other hand, they can leave them helpless, defenseless and weak with a contradiction that can destroy all their energies [2].

People are helpless if they do not know how to behave when facing of various stresses [3].

Recent changes and developments in information technologies and social areas affect people's business life and cause them to face many problems and cause them to be exposed to burnout syndrome, which is a personal, social and professional concept. In recent years, the physical, mental and emotional pressure on human life and the concept of burnout, which is its upper dimension, has been a common research topic in the literature [4].

Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low sense of personal accomplishment seen in individuals who have intense relationships with people due to their job [5].

The phenomenon of burnout has started to be perceived as a problem, but it has attracted the attention of researchers and has been a research topic which is frequently discussed in social sciences [6].

II. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

This research is a descriptive study aiming to measure burnout levels of teachers who are working in public primary schools of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. As a result of the extensive literature survey, it was found that studies measuring burnout levels of teachers in North Cyprus, especially including all teachers and schools are limited [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13] [14]. This study consists of two main parts, first one is aimed at measuring of burnout levels of teachers working in primary schools in TRNC and the second part focuses on the comparison of burnout levels of teachers based on different demographic characteristics of participants. As a result, it was checked whether teachers were experiencing low, average or high level of burnout and suggestions are determined for the authorities who are responsible for primary education in North Cyprus.

III. METHOD

Participants

The research is carried out with relational screening techniques. Due to its suitability for the research, participants were provided with a random sampling method to represent the universe from each school. The population of the research consists of 1353 teachers working in TRNC primary schools in the 2017-2018 academic year. The sample consists of 1200 teachers selected using the stratified sampling method [15]. A total

of 922 questionnaires was collected. Due to missing or incomplete information 26 of them were not taken into consideration and as a result, 896 questionnaires were used for statistical data analysis.

Materials and Procedure

The questionnaire form was used to reach the objectives stated in the research. In relation to the survey, previous researches, books, articles, etc. It was decided to use one of the common scales, namely, The Maslach Burnout Inventory, Education Survey, in order to measure the levels of occupational burnout of teachers [16]. In addition to this scale, a section of teachers' personal information is included in the questionnaire.

Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey:

The MBI-ES consists of 22 items and is a version of the original MBI for use by educators. It was designed for teachers, administrators, other staff members and volunteers working in any educational setting. The MBI-ES has three scales, namely, Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment.

Emotional exhaustion (EE) is feeling tired and fatigued at work (it can result in absence from work), consist of 9 items.

Depersonalization (DP) is developing a callous/uncaring feeling, even hostility, toward others (either clients or colleagues), consists of 5 items.

Personal accomplishment (PA) is feeling you (the employee) are not accomplishing anything worthwhile at work. This can lead to a lack of motivation and poor performance, consist of 8 items.

Each item in MBI-ES consist of Likert scale with five option changing from 1 to 5. With each statement participants are asked to specify how often they are experiencing the stated status. For this, a 5-digit scale extending from "never" to "always" is given. Point 1 means "Never", point 2 means " very rare", point 3 means "sometimes", point 4 means "most of the time", and point 5 means "always". The total scores of each scale in MBI-ES part specifies the degree of burnout level in the corresponding dimension ranging in low, average and high [16].

Table 1. Scoring guide used in this research.

Burnout dimensions	low level	Average level	High level
EE	0 – 16	17 – 26	27+
DP	0 – 6	7 – 12	13+
PA	39+	32 – 38	0 – 31

Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal Accomplishment dimensions of the inventory are scored separately. Higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization scores indicate that the individual has a high level of burnout. Lower scores on personal Accomplishment indicate that the person feels insufficient due to excessive demands and high levels of burnout.

In order to approve the usage of MBI-ES in schools, the authors applied to the Ethics Committee of Girne American University, and upon completion of the approval process, a second application was made to the TRNC Ministry of National Education and Culture, the Directorate of Education and Development to get permission for the surveys to be carried out in state primary schools throughout the TRNC. Following the appro-

-val of the Department of Education and Training, a pilot study was conducted by selecting a school from each district in TRNC. After the pilot study, statements that were not understood or asked to be clarified were reviewed and the questionnaire form was finalized. The last form of the questionnaires was distributed and data were collected.

Data Analysis

The data collected by means of questionnaires were analyzed by using SPSS software Version 22.

The statistical tests used in this study are as follows:

1. The frequency and percentage values of personal information about teachers are calculated and summarized in tables.
2. The answers given to the items related to burnout levels in the second part of the questionnaire were grouped under 3 dimensions and a table was formed according to average and standard deviation values.
3. The relationship between teachers' burnout levels and demographic characteristics such as gender, school type and seniority are analyzed by using T test and ANOVA test.

The significance level was taken as 5% for all statistical analyzes.

IV. RESULTS

Findings about Demographic Characteristics:

The frequency and percentage values of personal information about teachers are obtained as a result of statistical analysis. The demographic statistics about the gender, type of school, seniority, last graduated school that teachers are working are summarized in the following tables.

Table 2. Gender of the Teachers

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percent
		(%)
Female	640	71.4
Male	256	28.6
Total	896	100

Table 2 indicates that the majority of the teachers (71.4%) participated in the survey were women and 28.6% were men.

Table 3. Distribution of teachers according to type of school

School Type	Frequency (f)	Percent
		(%)
Primary School	786	87.7
Pre-School	110	12.3
Total	896	100

87.7% of the teachers participating in the survey work in primary schools and 12.3% in pre-school education.

Table 4. Distribution of the Teachers According to the Last Graduated School.

Last Graduated School	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Two Years High School	11	1.2
Three Years High School	32	3.6
Four Years High School or Faculty	754	84.2
Other	99	11.0
Total	896	100

Table 4 shows that a relatively small percentage of teachers (1.2%) is a two-year college graduate, while the majority (84.2%) is a four-year undergraduate. A group of 11% has a master's or doctoral degree.

Table 5. Seniority of the Teachers.

Seniority	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
5 years or less	97	10.8
6-10 years	171	19.1
11-15 years	120	13.4
16-20 years	152	17.0
21-25 years	192	21.7
26-30 years	127	14.3
31 years or more	25	3.9
Total	896	100

Table 5 shows the distribution of teachers according to their seniority in the schools they work in. 3.9% of teachers have 31 years or more and 10.8% have 5 years or less seniority. The percentage of the teachers with the highest level is 21.7% and these teachers have the seniority between 21 and 25 years.

Findings about Burnout Levels of Teachers According to the Sub-Scales

Table 6 summarizes the burnout levels of teachers in three dimensions. As it can be seen from Table 6, it is observed that teachers are experiencing an average level of burnout for emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. The most important finding and needs to be mentioned here is the high level of burnout for personal accomplishment. Table 6 also shows important statistical information about the variance of three scales of burnout. Compared to the DP and PA dimensions, EE has a higher variation of burnout level among teachers.

Table 6. Burnout Levels of Teachers.

Burnout dimensions	N	Mean	Standard deviation level
EE	896	19.55	6.12
DP	896	9.07	3.33
PA	896	29.75	3.80

These findings, obtained from teachers about burnout levels indicate that teachers working in public primary schools of TRNC face burnout syndrome. Although EE and DP are at an average level, the high level of PA,

which is one of the most important dimensions of burnout, is a serious finding and it is considered as a problem that needs to be addressed urgently.

Findings Obtained from Statistical Tests:

Comparison of Burnout Levels According to Gender:

Table 7 shows Independent T test results by gender. Table 7 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in all three dimensions of burnout according to gender. P values for all three dimensions were found to be less than 0.05, (0.002, 0.000 and 0.028), respectively. EE, DP and PA burnout levels were found to be higher for male teachers. When male and female teachers are compared, it can be said that men have been experiencing more burnout levels due to various reasons.

Table 7. T test results according to gender.

BURNOUT DIMENSIONS	Male		Female		Significance (2-tailed) (P Value)
	N	Mean	N	Mean	
EE	256	20.57	640	19.15	0.002*
DP	256	9.78	640	8.78	0.000*
PA	256	29.28	640	29.93	0.028*

* P value < 0.05

Comparison of Burnout Levels According to School Type:

Table 8 shows Independent T Test results by type of school. According to Test results, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the burnout levels of the teachers working in primary schools and pre-schools. P values were calculated as 0,000 for EE, DP and PA dimensions, which is less than 0.05. When Table 8 is examined, it was observed that the burnout levels of the teachers working in pre-school departments are quite low compared to the teachers working in primary schools. While primary school teachers experience average levels of burnout in all three dimensions, it has been found that pre-school teachers experience low levels of burnout for the same dimensions.

Table 8. T test results according to type of school.

BURNOUT DIMENSIONS	Primary School		Pre-school		Significance (2-tailed) (P Value)
	N	Mean	N	Mean	
EE	786	20.01	110	16.28	0,000*
DP	786	9.31	110	7.37	0,000*
PA	786	29.57	110	31.02	0,000*

* P value < 0.05

Comparison of Burnout Levels According to Seniority:

Table 9 shows the ANOVA test results for the burnout levels of the teachers according to their seniority.

When the EE scale, which is one of the burnout dimensions, is examined, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference between the burnout levels according to the seniority.

Table 9 ANOVA test results for seniority.

BURNOUT DIMENSIONS	Seniority	N	AVERAGE	F VALUE	P VALUE
EE	5 years or less	97	16.92	5.031	0.000*
	6-10 years	171	19.39		
	11-15 years	120	18.73		
	16-20 years	152	20.05		
	21-25 years	192	20.34		
	26-30 years	127	20.25		
	31 years or more	25	21.45		
DP	5 years or less	97	8.67	3.049	0.063
	6-10 years	171	9.34		
	11-15 years	120	8.72		
	16-20 years	152	8.50		
	21-25 years	192	9.59		
	26-30 years	127	8.89		
	31 years or more	25	10.28		
PA	5 years or less	97	29.40	1.961	0.069
	6-10 years	171	29.89		
	11-15 years	120	30.25		
	16-20 years	152	29.91		
	21-25 years	192	29.49		
	26-30 years	127	28.05		
	31 years or more	25	29.75		

* P value < 0.05

The P value is calculated as 0.000. This difference is observed among teachers with seniority of 5 years or less and teachers with 16-20, 21-25, 26- 30 and 31 or more seniority. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference for DP and PA dimensions according to the seniority of teachers. P values were calculated as 0.063 and 0.069, respectively. Table 9 also gives detailed information about the level of burnout of teachers, according to different levels of seniority. Although there are exceptions, it can be said that there is an increase in the levels of burnout in general, as the seniority increases

V. CONCLUSION

Burnout is defined as emotional, mental and physical fatigue and exhaustion caused by excessive and constant stress. It occurs when one feels overwhelmed and cannot meet fixed demands. As the stress continues,

you begin to lose your interest or motivation that leads to a specific role in the first stage. Burnout reduces your efficiency, leads to energy loss, and makes you feel increasingly unhappy, helpless, and selfish and distaste. At the end you may feel that you are exhausted.

The aim of this study is to measure burnout levels of teachers working in public primary schools of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Besides, burnout levels of teachers, according to teachers' gender, type of school and seniority were analyzed and compared.

As a result of the study, it was found that teachers experienced an average level of burnout in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization dimensions and high level of burnout in personal accomplishment dimension. In general, it can be said that teachers working in public primary school experience burnout.

T-test and ANOVA tests were used to find out whether teachers' burnout levels differ according to different demographic variables or not. As a result of detailed analyzes, it was found that there were statistically significant differences in burnout levels between male and female teachers according to gender and school type. The test results also indicate that, according to seniority variable, only a significant difference in emotional exhaustion dimension was found to be statistically different.

From the results, one can say that burnout among teachers has a big potential to cause serious problems, such as physical, mental and other health related issues. As a result, higher level of burnout may lead to absenteeism, may increase turnover and can result in decreasing quality in the education level in TRNC.

The results highlight the fact that the TRNC Ministry of National Education should consider burnout issue seriously. Beginning of creating awareness for teachers who are facing burnout, in-service training, planning and providing psychological support to teachers who are experiencing burnout can be listed as the most important issues.

It is of great importance that this study is extended to teachers working in secondary schools in the TRNC and that the authorities take measures according to the picture that will emerge.

In the light of the data obtained as a result of the statistical analyzes, authorities and policy makers who are responsible for improving the working conditions of the teachers in primary schools should seriously take into account the results of this study for the sake of community.

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